FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Software employees working in IT industry in Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune and Hyderabad were selected for the study. The researcher embarked on studying various demographic variables and their impact on family-to-work conflict, work-to-family conflict with an objective to study the importance of family and work in conflict management, and the role of family support and work support on managing conflict caused by the family domain variables and work domain variables. The relationship between Work-life balance and major factors of work life issues were acknowledged. While considering various demographic variables, it was found that Work to Family conflict was generally higher than Family to Work Conflict. That’s why the researcher embarked on ascertaining various stress factors that are encountered by the employees at the work place. From the analysis of various Conflicts, Work support, family support, and stress factors considered for this research, the following findings, suggestions and recommendations are provided to assist organizations reduce stress by providing relevant work life balance initiatives.

7.2 FINDINGS:

7.2.1 CHI-SQUARE TEST RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Null hypothesis</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Strength of Association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>H01: There is no significant association between work-life imbalance and work to family conflict</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>H02: There is no significant association between work-life imbalance and family to work conflict</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>H03: There is no significant association between</td>
<td>.039*</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The association between work life balance factors of the respondents is measured. The null hypotheses are rejected for work life imbalance and work to family conflict, work life imbalance and family to work conflict, work life imbalance and work support, job stress and work to family conflict, job stress and family to work conflict. In all the cases the significant value is less than 0.05, which means that there is a significant association between work life balance causative factors. The extent to which the variables are associated is measured by the symmetric measures of Phi, Cramer’s and contingency table which gives the strength of association. The strength of association between the variables is 4.5% to 47.9%.
## 7.2.2 ANALYSIS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE FACTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>Factor name</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Work to family Conflict</td>
<td>.756</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family to Work Conflict</td>
<td>.922</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Work Support</td>
<td>.801</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>.944</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Work to family Conflict</td>
<td>.002**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Work to family Conflict</td>
<td>.048*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>.027*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>.002**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Organization type</td>
<td>Work to family Conflict</td>
<td>.034*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family to work Conflict</td>
<td>.034*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>.048*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>.019*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Work to family Conflict</td>
<td>.038*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>.030*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Working hours</td>
<td>Work to family Conflict</td>
<td>.002**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family to work Conflict</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>.007**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Working Days</td>
<td>Work to family Conflict</td>
<td>.001**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family to work Conflict</td>
<td>.046*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Working Shifts</td>
<td>Work to family Conflict</td>
<td>.028*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>.014*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Annual Salary</td>
<td>Family to work Conflict</td>
<td>.006**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Work Support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Spouse Employment</td>
<td>Family to work Conflict</td>
<td>.044*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Family Type</td>
<td>Family to work Conflict</td>
<td>.001**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dependent Children</td>
<td>Family to work Conflict</td>
<td>.022*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dependent Elders</td>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>.019*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was found that there were significant differences in work related factors interfering with personal life between male and female employees, married and unmarried employees, types of organization, experience categories, work schedules and working days. There were significant differences in family related factors interfering with professional life between different types of organizations, working schedules, annual salary, Spouse employment, family type and dependent children categories. Various reasons were identified for these differences in the software industry employees. There was significant difference between work-family supports with respect to gender, marital status, type of the organization, designation, working schedules, annual salary, spouse employment and dependent elders’ categories because of environment and contingent reasons.

### 7.2.3 FACTORS INFLUENCING JOB STRESS

Factor analysis is a data reduction technique used to describe variability among observed, correlated variables in terms of a potentially lower number of unobserved variables called factors. Before proceeding for factor analysis the eligibility of the data has to be tested by conducting KMO-Bartlett’s test. This KMO and Bartlett’s test is a measure of sampling adequacy and multivariate normality among variables.
The KMO value in this study is 0.732 > 0.5 which says that the sample taken is adequate. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity value is 0.000<0.005, indicate multivariate normality among variables. Through the factor analysis 6 factors were identified and are accounted 61.634% of variance. This is arrived by using Extraction method and the analysis is principal component analysis.

Identified factors causing Job Stress:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Factor Name</th>
<th>% of Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Organizational snags</td>
<td>30.737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sedentary Self</td>
<td>9.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Self-perceived Competence</td>
<td>7.334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adaptability to situations</td>
<td>5.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hierarchical Pressure</td>
<td>4.792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Non-compliant colleagues</td>
<td>4.546</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2.4 ANALYSIS OF STRESS FACTORS

For each of the demographic variables taken into consideration, the stress factors are identified have been analyzed and various reasons were identified for these differences in the software industry employees.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>Factor name</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Organizational snags</td>
<td>.010**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-perceived Competence</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hierarchical Pressure</td>
<td>.015*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Organizational snags</td>
<td>.002**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-perceived Competence</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hierarchical Pressure</td>
<td>.027*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adapatability to situations</td>
<td>.045*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-compliant colleagues</td>
<td>.005**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Organizational snags</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sedentary Self</td>
<td>.045*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-perceived Competence</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hierarchical Pressure</td>
<td>.013*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Self-perceived Competence</td>
<td>.014*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Organization Type</td>
<td>Hierarchical Pressure</td>
<td>.024*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>Self-perceived Competence</td>
<td>.002**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Sedentary Self</td>
<td>.037*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-perceived Competence</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adapatability to situations</td>
<td>.017*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Working Hours/day</td>
<td>Sedentary Self</td>
<td>.039*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Working Days/week</td>
<td>Organizational snags</td>
<td>.004**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sedentary Self</td>
<td>.050*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Working Shifts</td>
<td>Organizational snags</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Annual Salary</td>
<td>Self-perceived Competence</td>
<td>.002**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Spouse Employment</td>
<td>Organizational snags</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sedentary Self</td>
<td>.003**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self-perceived Competence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Family Type</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dependent Children</td>
<td>Organizational snags</td>
<td>0.017*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sedentary Self</td>
<td>0.006**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-perceived Competence</td>
<td>0.008**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dependent Elders</td>
<td>Organizational snags</td>
<td>0.001**</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-perceived Competence</td>
<td>0.042*</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.2.5 REGRESSION FIT FOR JOB STRESS

A Regression equation was fitted for measuring job stress of software professional by identifying the coefficients for the various causative factors of job stress. The equation is as follows:

\[
Y = 0.147 + 0.111F_1 + 0.546F_2 + 0.276F_5 + E_{ij}
\]

Job Stress = 0.147 + 0.111 (Organizational snags) + 0.546 (Sedentary Self) + 0.276 (Hierarchical Pressure) + E \(_{ij}\)

Where E \(_{ij}\) is the error term which is summation of other factors.

### 7.2.6 REGRESSION FIT FOR WORK LIFE BALANCE

A Regression equation was fitted for measuring Work-life balance of software professional by identifying the coefficients for the various causative factors of WLB including job stress. The equation is as follows:

\[
Y = 3.113 - 0.445F_1 - 0.142F_2 - 0.297F_3 + 0.265F_6 + E_{ij}
\]

Work-life Balance = 3.113 -0.445 (Work to family conflict) -0.142(Family to work conflict) -0.297 (job stress) + 0.265 (Family support)+E \(_{ij}\)

Where E \(_{ij}\) is the error term which is summation of other factors.
7.2.7 WORK–LIFE BALANCE INITIATIVES:

The aim of this section is to identify the awareness and usage of existing work life balance initiatives in software organizations and to examine the outcome of benefit use. Not surprisingly, awareness of the availability of WLB initiatives was strongly associated with initiative use. All initiatives used in this study were available within the organization except retirement support, work from home all the time and leave of absence for education. Further some participants reported that some initiatives were unavailable. For example compressed work week was placed as not available, but I could use it by majority of respondents. Lack of awareness may be preventing employees from using initiatives. The differences between awareness and usage are acknowledged to spring the valid suggestion to software organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Attractive Score Percentage</th>
<th>Likely to use Percentage</th>
<th>Difference Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Flexible work Schedules</td>
<td>99.33</td>
<td>75.00</td>
<td>24.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Leave of absence for education</td>
<td>98.67</td>
<td>38.33</td>
<td>60.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Part-time work</td>
<td>96.00</td>
<td>37.33</td>
<td>58.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Job sharing</td>
<td>96.33</td>
<td>66.00</td>
<td>30.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Brief (1-2 months) paid sabbatical</td>
<td>88.67</td>
<td>57.00</td>
<td>31.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Work from home Occasionally</td>
<td>99.67</td>
<td>75.67</td>
<td>24.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Work from home all the time</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>43.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Compressed work week</td>
<td>81.33</td>
<td>47.33</td>
<td>34.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Paid maternity leave</td>
<td>99.33</td>
<td>54.33</td>
<td>45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Paid paternity leave</td>
<td>99.33</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>55.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Use of all earned</td>
<td>98.33</td>
<td>60.67</td>
<td>37.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Paid leave for sick family members</td>
<td>98.67</td>
<td>45.33</td>
<td>53.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Career breaks</td>
<td>97.67</td>
<td>41.00</td>
<td>56.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Retirement Support</td>
<td>98.33</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>98.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.3 SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.3.1 Measures to reduce Work to Family Conflict:

- Flex-time
- Work-family integration
- Part-time work schedules
- Work from home options
- Tele-work on an adhoc basis
- Early or late arrival

- **Flex-time:** It is clear from the findings that the demands of work that interfere with family are more for female employees, those that are married and those that work above ten hours, and during alternate shifts with 6 working days instead of a five day shift. It is necessary that organizations must be able to think beyond the ordinary, in imaginative approaches to working practices to restore some work-life balance for these employees. It is important for restoring work-life balance to reduce the impact that work-life imbalances have on the stress levels of employees. It is also necessary that organizations realize that there is no common approach for all employees as practices that better work-life balance for one employee may not be that useful for another employee to improve work-life balance. However, from the research done, it is
obvious that the organizations that participated in this research must address changes that have affected one and all. Today’s generation has moved to dual-earner families, sandwich generation with child and elder care responsibilities. Female employees face the brunt of these situations with added responsibilities at home and at work. They struggle to balance to get things done at home, work pressure making things worse with odd hours of work, longer work day and longer weeks. These result in higher work-life imbalances and thereby contributing to higher stress levels. This view is also reinforced by the regression analysis measuring work-life balance of software professionals by identifying causative factors of WLB including job stress. It is obvious that work-life balance is negatively impacted (44.5%) due to work to family conflict. It is therefore necessary for these organizations to address issues to reduce pressure on employees’ ability to fulfill familial responsibilities. This could be achieved utilizing some of these suggestions that are based on research findings.

- **Flexible work hours:** IT companies may utilize flexible work hours to achieve a dual purpose - one to reduce the number of hours that an employee must stay physically at the workplace and thereby afford the employee of the possibility to equitably distribute her/his time between family and work. Second, it has been researched and evidenced that flexible working hours contribute to increased productivity within organizations. It is also supported by the intuitive view that an improved work-life balance stemming from this initiative translates to a more committed employee and higher productivity during the reduced but more substantial time that she/he invests at the workplace. There are several benefits that can accrue using this approach in improving work life balance. Some of them include, attending to familial responsibilities, working in quieter times to achieve more, result in better scheduling work, options of staggering work times across the day, options of attending fitness training to stay fit and more productive at the workplace. The employer stands to gain from this approach as well. The flexi-time approach provides an option to the employer to reschedule work in a more flexible way,
achieve better utilization of facilities, workstations, computers, office spaces and infrastructure. This approach can also ensure for the employer to effectively retain talented employees for a longer period of time as satisfied employees tend to be more loyal than others. Flex-time also enables managing work during the physical absence of any of the employees.

Some of the challenges that organizations might confront while implementing the strategy of Flex-time is the need for trust on employees and the type of supervision while employees utilize flex-time option. A positive trust cycle must be developed through interactive communication with employees to effectively implement flex-time. Further, interactive technology should be used efficiently to provide the necessary supervision while an employee uses the flex-time option to restore positive work-life balance. Ensuring fairness in implementing this practice is important from the employer’s perspective. It is necessary that organizational practices reinforce fairness in implementing a practice with a clearly enunciated policy that governs actions that are central to the implementation of the practice. One of the important ways that an organization can ensure fairness in implementing this practice is to make it available for all employees and to track the number of hours worked. This two-pronged outlook empowers employees and holds them accountable at the same time. This initiative could immensely benefit employees who work with Medium-scale IT companies as these employees experience the highest strain arising from excessive work pressures leading to family conflict. Flexibility in work hours could also be easier for medium-scale IT companies to implement. While these are the most affected employees among others, these companies could take this route to address work-life imbalances. Research in the past also shows that medium-sized enterprise find it easier to offer flexible work hours/flex-time than small or larger enterprises. The findings from this research indicates that employees who belonged to medium-sized enterprise were the most adversely affected by work triggered family conflict. This suggestion in this context is appropriate for medium-sized enterprise to
implement with ease of application of such an initiative taken into consideration.

- **Work-family integration:** IT companies could take the initiative to introduce measures that support work-family integration. Employees would like to take responsibilities to serve a community, to support a charity, to work in furthering a community cause. These companies could initiate these opportunities integral to the company’s corporate social responsibility. Efforts to offer leisure time for employees to pursue meaningful work beyond the workplace could be central to retention, motivation and productivity. Fairness in policy implementation is crucial to address the fact that employees with the least experience (0-5 years) are impacted most by family conflicts that result from work-related pressures. Employees across the board including those with low experience must have the access to these work-life balance supporting initiatives and should be able to exercise the option of using them situationally.

- **Part-time work schedules:** When female employees attend to child care responsibilities or while dual earners attend to elder care responsibilities, part-time work schedules may be used to accommodate these employees’ needs to attend to familial responsibilities. These periods during which families transition through a very demanding phase of their lives, it is important that the organization treat each employee as an individual and offer these initiatives that are customized and cater to their needs during these critical phases of their lives.

- **Work from home:** Software companies could also choose to use work from home using several technology support tools to facilitate such an initiative. The option to work from home during times of necessity for employees ensures that the company remains an ‘Employer of choice’ rather than being a stop-gap before an employee finds an Employer with mature work-life balance initiatives.
- **Tele-work on an adhoc basis**: Certain situations may demand that employees attend their meetings using their tele-work platforms. Apart from letting employees balance their family work better with added flexibility, this initiative lets employees connect through a virtual environment across time zones. With most IT companies operating in several time zones, implementing this initiative during planning, coordinating and client-discussion stages is logistically relevant and contributes to restoring work life balance.

- **Early or late arrival**: IT companies could also offer the options of early or late arrival for all their employees to afford the time for married employees to attend to their children, dropping them at school, attending to family chores when their time is required by elders at home. This option ensures that the employee once in the organization is rest assured committed and therefore more productive at the workplace. With distractions taken care of, stress felt is considerably lowered because of this innovative work-life balance initiative.

These work-life balance initiatives, it has been shown, have a bearing on improved employee health; employees slept better, exercised often and experienced lower levels of stress. It is imperative that organizations in the IT industry realize the full potential of employees by offering such initiatives.

### 7.3.2 Measures to reduce Family to Work Conflict:

Under the Family to work conflict, suggestions discussed include

**Shorter work week and working hours:**

- The researcher has also found that there were significant differences in family to work conflict - family related issues that were affecting professional life. It is clear from the findings that employees who worked for longer number of hours experienced the greatest family to work conflict. This is logical to the fact that such employees had lesser time for their families. As suggested above, flex-time, part-time schedules that are contextual, and early or late arrival options could address this factor.
A shorter but more productive work week would achieve benefits for both the individual employee and the organization. An employee would find time over an extended weekend to address familial responsibilities and therefore minimize family related issues that could trigger work conflict. Employees who have attended to their family work and with these priorities given the time that they deserve, they can focus better on their work and stay committed during their work time. A shorter work week can be used either with extended hours during the shorter week or by focusing on improved productivity resulting from a more focused employee. It is for the IT companies that could creatively design and implement such an initiative. What is important is not to extend work hours in a day beyond a particular limit as the findings from this research show that employees who work for more than 10 hours experience greater interference of family factors that contribute to work conflict. To strike a fine balance between the appropriate number of work hours versus a shortened workweek is important to ensure an improvement of work-life balance.

It is clear from the regression analysis that Family to work conflict significantly impacts negatively (14.2%) work-life balance. Hence, it is necessary that software companies address factors studied under Family to work conflict and initiatives required to improve work-life balance. Employees who are part of nuclear families experience greater interference of family related factors that interfere with their work. It is obvious that these families do not have enough domestic help and it would do a world of good for these employees if organizational support addressed some of their concerns. A creche to take care of their children should be a good starting point to afford some Family support for these employees who belong to nuclear families. Employees whose spouses were employed experienced greater interference than those employees whose spouses were not employed. This also supports the argument that organizations must support married employees and those belonging to nuclear families to ensure that they do not feel compromised in their responsibilities toward their children or elders.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility**: As part of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) these IT companies could run creches, accredited schools and old age recreational homes in support of families that need to attend to child care and elder care. The ongoing discussion is also supported by the fact that employees who have two children are most affected by familial responsibilities than those that have lesser than two children. Child care demands employee time, and any flexibility offered in work schedules or infrastructural and personnel support to meet their demands would restore work-life balance to a great extent. Further, medium-sized IT companies have the need to bolster their work-life balance initiatives the most as employees who worked for such organizations had the greatest amount of family to work conflict. Mid-sized companies while trying to establish themselves or compete with big players in the industry push hard on their employees with tougher targets, more work, extended work weeks, and longer days at the workplace. These explain the findings from the present research.

- **Pay**: While salary of employees is an area that would need extensive research to suggest on, IT companies may be well advised to ensure equitable pay for equitable work. Employees with a salary of less than 5 lakhs per annum were the most disgruntled and let pay play an integral part to family triggered workplace disturbances. It is very clear that constrained and inequitable pay in the context of soaring prices of commodities and rentals in Indian cities, a low pay would add to the familial complications resulting in workplace interference. Pay was considered by Frederick Herzberg as a hygiene factor. It meant that have an equitable pay necessarily did not satisfy or motivate an employee, but would contribute in preventing dissatisfaction. Hence, IT companies must ensure the presence of such a hygiene factor to begin with to prevent dissatisfaction. Dissatisfied employees often display and show their dissatisfaction in active and passive ways that are both detrimental to any organization. Any employee who chooses to voice their displeasure arising from inequitable pay could dampen the morale of fellow employees and undermine the commitment of his/her peer group in the future. A more active
display of dissatisfaction could result in absenteeism which is dysfunctional to organizational effectiveness. Further, it could result in talented employees leaving the organization. Such actions have further consequences as a fallout resulting in poor retention of talented employees. A more passive but detrimental display of dissatisfaction would be if employees continue to stay and work at below par levels and do not utilize their potential to contribute substantially. In this context, pay must be taken as a serious factor, researched and reviewed from time to time to ensure equitable pay for employees. This point of view is reinforced by the finding from the research that states that work support while being equal for all employees, the impact of inequitable pay contributes majorly to the work support that employees expect to create a sense of security and stability at the workplace.

- **Processes:** IT companies may want to adopt a clearly defined policy and procedure to offer these initiatives to their employees. For instance, scheduling and work-from-home requests may be submitted, reviewed by the manager and accorded permission to exercise their options based on their needs. Forms to be filled in may be clearly designed, guidelines to support work-from-home requests, and training required to do well while utilizing these options must be integral to support all these work-life balance initiatives. These initiatives are accorded to individuals on a need-based manner and follow a discussion with the individual employee to assess individual employee’s needs and situation. It necessarily means that these work-life balance measures are a benefit and a privilege at the same time. It is for those employees who choose to stay responsible, committed and are self-managed. Further, the number of privileges and benefits that an individual employee can utilize would in most cases also depend on her/his performance standing. These policy issues if properly drafted and implemented would ensure that these initiatives are used in ways that support flexibility and productivity without the risk of one of them being compromised.
- **Approach:** IT companies must choose to begin with working on creating an organizational culture that supports flexibility and the same message gets communicated across the organization. It is important that the organization has enough values that respect the needs of an individual, realizes that an individual is integral to a family and a larger community while working for the organization. The premise that an individual should be trusted and fairness is a value that is practised in offering benefits to all employees. The belief in quality, productivity, time and client satisfaction should be emphasized to let employees stay responsible while they request and use these work-life-balance initiatives. Organizations may also pilot a few of these initiatives to test their utility, employee satisfaction, logistics involved, and their formal incorporation in the company’s benefits. IT companies should also set forth some eligibility criteria for employees to make these requests. The process for making the request, procedure for accord of permission, training, and supervision while using these privileges must be specified. Dialogue on who is eligible for these benefits, modus operandi, and accord of permission must be integral to engage employees at all levels. While managers and supervisors retain the discretion to discuss and accord the use of these benefits, the onus to train employees sufficiently and ensure productivity rests with them. That would also mean that managers and supervisors must be trained well on all flexible work schedules and ways of implementing and accounting these benefits. If these concerns for the approach, culture, processes and procedures are taken care of, IT companies should also audit the usage, utility of these benefits, and satisfaction of these benefits for employees.

7.3.3 Measures to improve Work Support:

Under Work support, the suggestions presented are:

- Team building
- Leadership
Factors such as the willingness of friends and family to listen to work-related issues of the employee, assistance from them, the role of coworkers and their recognition of work-related accomplishments have the same effect on all employees. It is not amiss to state here that employees who enjoyed a stronger support of family members and coworkers were less likely to be stressed and were more productive. Family and coworkers contribute to an employee’s well-being.

- **Team building:** IT companies must strive to create and foster teams that act as a support mechanism for all employees while they are confronted to stretch goals and challenging tasks at the workplace. Team building could begin with careful selection of the right employees, bringing together employees who have complementary skills, stayed divergent, interacted often, disagreed in a civilized way, set forth challenging team goals, came up with the right set of strategies to achieve these goals, implemented them, and evaluated their collective performance to raise the benchmark of what the expected norms of good team performance meant. Team building interventions such as Process consultation and Confrontation meeting could be used to strengthen cohesiveness in teams. Cohesive teams with inspirational leadership achieve more, stay motivated and cope better during stressful conditions.

- **Leadership:** Often there is this view that is being discussed that employees work for great leaders. IT companies may train their managers and supervisors on the use of transformational leadership. If managers and supervisors could comprehend and utilize ‘Idealized Influence’, ‘Inspirational Motivation’, ‘Individualized consideration’ and ‘Intellectual stimulation’ while they lead their employees, it would certainly help in improving employees’ perception of work support in the company. Leaders are role models, and ‘Idealized influence’ connotes to the ability of the leader to act as a role model and lead from the front. It is important that a manager realizes the importance of his/her role as a mentor and be able to channel employee efforts to accomplishing organizational goals. The manager must also fulfill his role of being playing a catalytic role in letting employees think divergently and contribute in creative ways to the organization. This role would satisfy the transformational leader’s
characteristic of ‘Intellectual stimulation’. While engaging employees on work and work-life-balance issues, the manager/supervisor is giving ‘Individual consideration’ to each employee. These type of managers-supervisors are able to engage employees beyond everyday work chores and succeed in distressing employees.

7.3.4 Measures to improve Family Support:

Research findings indicate that there have been significant differences between various demographic factors. Presented hereunder are suggestions that tap the potential of family support to positively influence work-life-balance in positive ways.

- Tapping the Social Support Network
- Team goals and activities

**Tapping the Social Support Network:** Networks that comprise of family members, friends and peer group is the social support network of an employee. IT companies can do their bit by offering counseling to employees to leverage the strength of support available with the employee’s peer group. Further, counseling sessions could include tips to the employee to tap the full potential of support available with family members and friends. One way that an organization can create a supportive network is to offer the employees the benefits of

- Gym and Spa facilities
- Membership to recreational and/or hobby clubs
- Online educational groups
- Employee driven/supported learning activities

Supportive networks contribute to psychological well-being and a sense of self-worth. If employees are aware of the benefits of their social support network, they can
realize the following benefits of the support that their social network has to offer them.

- Sense of belongingness
- Felt sense of self-worth
- Increased sense of security

However, an organization can ill-afford to overdo this initiative as it often means employees sharing personal and sensitive information with casual acquaintances making them vulnerable in more ways than not. It is therefore wise for that organizational counseling address activities that are a drain on employee energies and resources. Counseling and mentoring sessions can enable employees find ways of letting go such negative and energy-draining activities to restore and improve work-life-balance.

**Team goals and activities:** IT companies necessitate employees to work on project teams that client organizations seek solutions from. It would make common sense that along with team goals for accomplishing client satisfaction and meeting client expectations, these teams engage in team activities that are for improving interpersonal relationships, team cohesiveness, camaraderie, and morale. Activities that some companies have hitherto successfully employed with great positive effect on participant team members have been

- Hiking and trekking trips
- Yoga and meditation retreats
- Family reunions
- Off-site infotainment tours
- Training customized to personal needs
A less stressed employee’s perception of work, work hours, and longer workweek would considerably change for the positive and restore work-life-balance in the team and for the individual employee. An initiative like family reunion would engage the elders at home which could facilitate a positive perception of the organization among elders at home. Their (elders at home) appreciation of organizational goals and deadlines could result in higher levels of empathy for the individual employee and in turn translates to better family support.

7.3.5 Measures to reduce Job stress: From the analysis, the researcher concludes that job stress is one of the major causative factor of work-life-balance (WLB). Job stress has an adverse impact on work-life-balance with a 29.7% (negative) impact on work-life-balance. If work-life-balance needs to improve, it is important therefore to address job stress factors that were considered for this study.

Under Job Stress, the suggestions presented are

- Non-directive counseling
- Mentoring/Coaching

**Non-directive counseling:** It is necessary that these IT companies must provide employees with professional non-directive counseling. This would help employees

- Create for themselves a planned work schedule - schedule of official work, tasks, prioritized goals, family commitments, and handling other responsibilities without burnout.
- Ascertain what needs more attention, those that are ‘urgent’ and those that are ‘important’. It lets employees understand ways of channeling their efforts in right directions without sacrificing the more important for the not so important tasks that seem compelling at the moment.
- Lets employees plan better and in short help them with some sensible time management techniques.
- Drives home the point to employees that each of them need to know and understand the importance of taking short breaks and they could possibly time their breaks to their advantage.

**Mentoring/Coaching:** It has been researched and found that peer mentorship enables mentees to overcome anxiety and cope with stress better. Mentors let mentees the skill of planning, setting priorities and keeping oneself ahead of work to reduce the effect of stress. Mentors guidance lets employees build confidence in their work and contributes to their performance. The benefits of mentoring/coaching are

- Better cognitive and behavioral reactions to stressful situations
- Accepting situations that employees normally do not have control over
- To overcome patterns of anxious behavior that undermine an employee's’ ability to cope with stress
- Often an employee's safety needs such as information on job security, a new project, contractual continuity, information on insurance, health benefits are addressed by a dialogue between the mentor and mentee
- The mentor could possibly address motivational issues, facilitate learning on the job, provide useful information that positively influences mentee’s performance, and also support the mentee’s engagement in social activities.
- The overall confidence of the mentee could be improved
- The feeling of being important, ‘significant’ is strengthened with the mentee receiving attention as an ongoing activity
- Awareness of oneself adds to the one’s ‘self-concept’ and ‘self-image’.
- Awareness of the organization’s policies, procedures and support-mechanism calms the mentee to feeling more secure and confident of the future
What is important is that these IT companies must also closely watch for challenges faced while offering a mentoring/coaching program. Mentor’s own problems, prejudices, and personality issues could adversely affect a mentee’s outlook for himself/herself and the organization. It also means that mentors must receive prior training before a mentorship/coaching program is offered across the board for all employees of an organization.

7.3.5.1 Organizational Difficulties: This research indicates that there are significant differences in organizational difficulties while taking into consideration different demographic variables. Employees below 30 years of age, junior-level, those that worked during day shift, for a longer workweek experienced greater organizational difficulties. The regression analysis shows that organizational difficulties contributed up to 11.1% to job stress which in turn contributed negatively (29.7%) to work-life-balance (WLB). Therefore the IT companies considered for this research must address issues under organizational difficulties, reduce job stress and thereby improve work-life-balance.

Presented hereunder are suggestions to reduce organizational difficulties and reduce job stress:

- Job Design

- Job rotation

- Work-planning and Review Technique

- Goal-setting

**Job Design:** The IT companies must endeavor to assess jobs from time to time not just to update their job descriptions but in their efforts to create jobs that motivate employees and let them contribute to their true potential. The Job design or redesign can be based on Hackman and Oldham’s Job Characteristics model that focuses on the following important elements.

  Skill variety
Task variety

Task Significance

Autonomy

Feedback

- **Skill variety**: Jobs must be redesigned in such ways to utilize the entire gamut of skill range that employees possess. IT as a field provides opportunities for employees to continually update their skills through training and professional certification. It is imperative that their newly acquired skills must be utilized by an organization. Employees’ whose skills - both breadth of employee skills and depth of skills are utilized by their jobs experience more meaningfulness at their workplace.

- **Task variety**: It is important that tasks handed to employees must not only utilize skills acquired but also ensure that the employee stays motivated as the tasks assigned are both innovative and challenging.

- **Task significance**: Tasks assigned to each individual employee must be significant in the final outcome. Only those employees who feel that tasks assigned to them have a significant in goal accomplishment can stay persistently motivated. Motivated employees stay committed, involved and less distracted by sundry that surrounds them.

- **Autonomy**: Employees feel trusted when they are given the elbow-space to decide on their own strategy to accomplish what they set forth to accomplish. Freedom to choose at the workplace is a valued motivator and it must be integrated in the jobs that are assigned to them.

- **Feedback**: Feedback that is timely, descriptive and facilitative is valued by employees. It lets them know how well they are doing on their job, the subtle nuances expected at work, the finer adjustments to be made to refine their outputs and offers them valuable recognition.
**Job rotation/job shadowing:** IT companies could utilize job rotation or job shadowing to accomplish the following advantages for employees.

- Offer better opportunities to prove themselves
- To be able cope with different situations and turn out to be more versatile
- Expose employees to challenging tasks and offer the chance for employees to learn and grow while working
- To prepare for future jobs that employees may be expected to shoulder
- To retain the employee interest as these initiatives present situations of learning and development
- Be recognized for quality work and their ability to handle higher responsibilities.

**Work planning and Review technique:** Letting employees to carry out the following keeps employees interested and beats monotony.

- Plan their work
- Develop an argument of why they consider work should be scheduled the way they did at the first place
- Create action steps that they would like themselves to follow in trying to accomplish organizational or team goals
- Implementation of these action plans must be followed by self-appraisal, reviews that are objective involving all relevant stakeholders and immediate recognition and feedback
- The technique offers the chance for immediate corrective measures, removes the elements of surprise for any negative feedback and presents a plethora of opportunities for immediate and meaningful recognition of employee efforts.
**Goal-setting:** Edwin Locke’s goal-setting method is a useful tool to achieve planning, motivation, feedback, corrective action and recognition. Goals must be set in ways that they satisfy the ‘SMART’ acronym for defining goals.

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-bound

Such goals allow employees to participate in goal-setting, set forth to achieve goals that are realistic but challenging at the same time. Goals that are ‘stretch goals’ in nature keep the talented lot of employees interested and involved for a longer time. Goals that are relevant and significant in superordinate goals are motivating and directs employee efforts in the right way. These goals also let employees take training seriously, build on competences and enable them to face tougher situations with renewed confidence. It lets employees develop a strong internal locus of control and thereby add to their confidence levels. These initiatives by the companies will let employees perceive organizational difficulties as being manageable and thereby reduce their stress levels. Lower stress would connote to better work-life-balance (WLB).

**7.3.5.2 Sedentary self:** The biggest contributor to job stress is sedentary self (54.6% from the regression analysis). IT companies considered for this study must focus on addressing this important contributor to job stress. If this factor is addressed properly, it should lead to reduced stress and in turn to better work-life-balance. Suggestions to address Sedentary self are presented hereunder:

There is growing evidence that lack of physical activity at the workplace is contributor to obesity and health-related issues. In continuation with a few suggestions that promoted physical activity like offering employees with facilities of a
gym and a spa, it would be appropriate to suggest a few more initiatives that address this important contributor to job stress.

- IT companies could design zany office spaces to add to the ‘feel-good’ factor at the workplace.

- Office spaces apart, companies could have hallways with subway grates, conference rooms that are graffiti laden, chandeliers that are creative in their outlook.

- Useful playful design incorporating the local culture in designing office spaces.

- Space-age type egg-chairs in designated areas with ivy and floral designed walls for stimulating creative ideas.

- Brainstorming rooms that are designed to appear as kiddie funhouses.

- Areas that resemble University spaces with bowling alleys, climbing wall and confined beach volleyball area.

- Hammock areas that employees use while addressing niggles and projects that need meticulous attention to detail and out-of-the-box thinking.

- Dedicated spaces for meditation and relaxation techniques.

These layouts, design elements and infrastructural improvisations let employees walk out from their usual office space to overcome their sedentary lifestyles. Further, these IT companies can have policies to organize their several meetings, project detailing sessions, review calls, and other videoconferencing sessions in different locations. These initiatives will let the company beat the ‘sitting disease’ that has detrimental effect on employee health.

**7.3.5.3 Hierarchical pressure:** Another contributor to job stress is hierarchical pressure (27.6% from the regression analysis). IT companies considered for this study must focus on addressing this important contributor to job stress. If this factor is
addressed properly, it should lead to reduced stress and in turn to better work-life-balance. Suggestions to address Hierarchical pressure are presented hereunder:

Further to job design suggestion of ‘Autonomy’ at the workplace, more suggestions are presented hereunder to address the issues of ‘Hierarchical Pressures’.

- Decentralized/organic structures: IT companies always have demanding jobs/tasks and tough time deadlines. These present a veritable concoction of stress generating environment. Organizations should make efforts to move toward a more organic/decentralized organizational structure to provide the necessary autonomy at the workplace. Demanding jobs and excessive centralization have detrimental impact on psychological and physical well-being of an employee. It is therefore necessary that these IT companies use some of the following suggested initiatives to support decentralization.
  - Participative decision-making
  - Management by Objectives (MBO)
  - Quality circles
  - Self-managed teams (High performance work teams)

These suggestions are elaborated further below:

- IT companies can choose to let their employees be trained in facilitating group decision making without being prejudiced by group decision-making errors such as ‘Group shift’, ‘groupthink’, ‘escalation of commitment’ and ‘social loafing’.

- These organizations also can use the concept of MBO to let employees plan their goals collectively, discuss through dialogue support and resources required to achieve goals, and to review progress made and initiate corrective action to reduce the gap between goals and actual performance.
These organizations can also utilize more voluntary small groups like Quality circles to facilitate discussion on quality of products being development and issues concerning quality of work life. These groups are coordinated by team facilitators who report to a central steering committee their recommendations for improvements in products and work life. These recommendations are acted upon in prioritized manner with the approval of the top management team.

Self-managed teams are comprised of experienced and mature individuals who share the responsibility of goal-setting, strategizing, implementation and review. Among other things, an important element is that these teams have members who share leadership responsibilities too.

Using these initiatives should enable support initiatives to foster and improve decentralization of decision-making and support participation at all levels.

7.3.5.4 Self-perceived Competence: IT companies may well be advised to support initiatives that improve employees’ self-perceived competence. Self-perceived competence lets employees set goals for themselves, improve their ability to learn and exerted efforts, and it influences their ability to be persistent in pursuing goals. Some of the suggestions are elaborated hereunder:

- Training
- Leadership
- Reinforcement

These suggestions are elaborated further:

- Employees must be trained on skills that they require at their workplace. Customized and need-based training sessions that impart requisite skills, knowledge of practices, updated software training, on-site assignments that let employees gain valuable exposure and experience contribute to their perception of competence.
Training may also be imparted on soft skills that employees require to succeed in foreign assignment. Language training, cultural training and information of the host country are integral to expatriate success and in general contribute to the employee’s perceived self-efficacy.

Understanding the job requirements, ability to filter the more tougher elements of the task, willingness to learn skills required to do well on these tougher elements needs a passion to learn, apply and contribute to goals. Training that helps in letting employees motivate themselves and stay passionate about their work would be crucial to sustain self-perceived competence.

The House’s Path-goal theory would be an ideal leadership model to inculcate self-perceived competence among employees. Among the leadership styles that managers/supervisors can use could be Directive, Supporting, Participating, and Achievement oriented guidance to employees. Managers/supervisors could progressively use any of these leadership styles in letting employees achieve their chosen goals using a different but effective path toward that goal. This suggestion also means that managers and supervisors must be trained on requisite leadership skills, models, and the outlook to support employee progression in their careers.

Reinforcement: As described by Thorndike, only those behaviors are repeated that are receive positive reinforcement. It means that these IT companies must devise effective compensation and reward systems that recognize achievements and employee contributions.

Senior-level employees must also pass on their valuable experience and share tacit knowledge. They will need to be trained to use the Social Learning theory to support employee learning on the job. They must be role models for employees to pay “attention” to their ways of performing tasks, reinforce their learning through ‘repetition’, support their willingness to try newly learnt methods through ‘motor reproduction’ and then reward employees for having exhibited the right behaviors that support goal accomplishment.
7.3.5.5 Adaptability to situations: IT companies also must let employees be prepared for change, changing nature of business and jobs and support their willingness to adapt to different situations. Some suggestions in this area are

- Change management
- Action research
- Organizational mirroring
- Versatility transfers

Each of these are briefly elaborated below

- Employees in these IT companies must be trained to learn Change management methods, change processes, and ways of coping with change. Another important facet is to teach employees to embrace change and initiate change. Training sessions with ‘lessons learnt’ from John Kotter’s best-selling book ‘Our Iceberg is Melting’ could be one of the many sessions that could change the employee's’ perspective about change.

- Employees could be involved in several stages of a very important Organization Development (OD) intervention - Action Research. Kurt Lewin famously said that there is no action without research and no research without action. Every activity within the organization must be studied, relevant data collected, analyzed and then necessary action plans created and implemented to remedy shortcomings. This is an iterative process as change is the only constant.

- The top management team could form a microcosmic group to test various changes as a pilot effort. These changes should unfreeze regular employees as they observe changes with the microcosmic group bear results that are beneficial to all stakeholders. This OD intervention is known as Organizational Mirroring and acts as source of implementing planned change.
• Versatility transfers or job postings could be used to provide employees the opportunities to learn and contribute on various platforms. Foreign assignments must be need-based, both satisfying client requirements and the individual employee’s learning requirements. This approach to job postings or foreign assignments confirms the perception that the organization evinces a genuine interest in individual growth and development.

These initiatives are essential to support employees readiness to change. Eventually, these initiatives will improve employee’s ability to adapt to situations and thus reduce the levels of stress at the workplace.

7.3.5.6 Non-compliant colleagues: IT companies studied for this empirical research can use a combination of several initiatives to reduce stress caused due to non-compliant colleagues. These suggestions are listed below

• Team goals

• Process Consultation

• Team rewards

These suggestions are elaborated further:

• Setting team goals is necessary for any IT company as the nature of work in natural ways supports teamwork. Enough training and emphasis must be placed in building teams and working in teams. Selection tools must ascertain ability of prospective job incumbents to work in teams. Team goals would go a long way in ensuring that teams exert conformance pressure on non-compliant colleagues.

• Edgar Schein’s OD intervention of Process consultation should be used often to everyday operations, problem-solving methods, interpersonal skills, and intergroup team building. An OD consultant or facilitator observes teams’ functioning by observing members’ interaction, problem-solving, and procedures used. He/she then provides insights and valuable feedback to
participant members on how each of the team member must modify their behavior to contribute substantially to team goals. Non-compliant members are then required to change/modify their behaviors that are beneficial to the whole team.

- Rewards could be tied to team performance rather than mere individual performance. Individual contribution should still be monitored to avoid piggybacking and free-riders. Members who are used to social loafing must be counseled to contribute to accomplishment of team goals if they need to share from the pie of team achievements.

7.3.6 WLB initiatives:

IT companies may focus on several of the initiatives that lessen fatigue and strain for employees as respondents in this study have indicated ‘less fatigue and strain’ as the most important benefit they perceive from work-life-balance measures. As discussed in the suggestions under various heads, work-life-initiatives such as flex-time, shorter work weeks, flexible work scheduling, could be used effectively to achieve this very important outcome perceived by employees.

Productivity and quality could be the result of retaining motivated and capable workforce. As this is the second most important benefit perceived by the respondents, IT companies that were part of this research may concentrate on providing effective training, improving perceived self-competence and offer enough autonomy at the workplace to achieve this important benefit for the employees.

Equitable pay for equitable work, fairness in policy - in offering foreign assignments, in distribution of rewards, and fairness in offering work-life-balance privileges should ensure that organizations can achieve a higher level of satisfaction for employees. Appropriately designed jobs that utilize the entire skill set of employees, assign tasks that are significant along with feedback should let employees experience heightened meaningfulness at the workplace. These will also ensure that employees have increased sense of responsibility and job satisfaction.
Performance management methods that are transparent, based on credentialled achievements and are without bias would reinforce the intent of employees to work harder and perform better. Vroom’s expectancy model may be used to design an objective and fair appraisal method for the organization. Employees must have a positive preference for an outcome - ‘valence’, must see evidence that effort will lead to a first level outcome - ‘higher appraisal rating’ and that there is a high probability that a first level outcome will lead to a second-level outcome - ‘reward’. These rewards must be ones that employees value to receive. If these IT companies can strive to put in place an appraisal that connects efforts to rating to perceived equitable reward, they will succeed in motivating employees to work harder and perform better.

Managers and supervisors must be trained in decision heuristics that are instrumental in supporting participative decision-making. Only when employees are integral to decisions that they make, can anyone expect them to stay committed to decisions. Herbert Simon’s decision-making models could be a good place to start getting managers acquainted with decision heuristics.

Team building interventions like Confrontation meetings, Process consultation, Likert’s System 4 Management, and Organizational mirroring could be used by these IT companies to strengthen team efforts. Team goals and team rewards reiterate to the employees that teams are indispensable in achieving synergies that organizations depend on.

Better working conditions, well trained managers, equitable pay, and fairness in policy discussed above are all the Hygiene factors enunciated by Frederick Herzberg. If these are present in an organization it does mean that employees are not dissatisfied. Further to providing all the Hygiene factors, motivators like interesting and challenging work, opportunities to learn and grow, recognition, higher responsibilities would keep employees motivated and interested. Having Hygiene factors and Motivators in place, an organization can rest assured be optimistic of reduced turnover and absenteeism.
Training for Managers on Change interventions including Kurt Lewin’s Force Field Analysis, mapping change and implementing change should enable improvements in employees’ willingness to embrace change, plan change, initiate change, implement and review change rather than simply having to adapt to change. Change is the only constant, change or perish is the mantra for today’s organizations to succeed. Techniques like Job rotation, job enlargement and versatility transfers could effectively direct employee behavior to accepting change. Training, potential development and learning opportunities are all steps towards adaptation. Peter Senge’s model of a learning organization could work very well with all the IT companies that are integral to this research. The model focuses on

- Personal Mastery
- Mental models
- Shared vision
- Team learning
- Systems thinking

All these initiatives will serve the IT companies in good stead to achieve the benefits that respondents perceive as being important from their perspective from the Ranking used for this section of the research instrument.

7.4 Conclusions:

Work life balance is an emerging phenomenon in the context of modern day organizations. The organizations have to pay more attention on strengthening of human resources policies to augment its employees’ performance and satisfaction. Concentration on life over work or work over life will not yield anticipated returns to both the employees and employer. The work-life balance is a prominent issue concerning both the employees and the employers in the software industry and hence this present work is taken up.
From a sample of 450 software employees of IT Industry using five factors with 45 variables and five – point scale sampling survey, work life balance issues and job stress are addressed. Work to family conflict, family to work conflict, work support and family support are analyzed by using t-test and ANOVA test. It is observed from the analysis that the impact of work to family conflict is greater than the impact of family to work conflict and family support is higher than the work support. Further factor analysis is applied to explore factors to study the root causes of job stress and their impact on work life balance of the software professionals. Organizational snags occupies 30.74 % of variance, sedentary self explains 9.12% variance followed by self- perceived competence 7.33%, adaptability to situations 5.10%, Hierarchical pressure 4.79% and non-compliant colleagues 4.55% on the total variance of 61.63%. Multiple linear regression analysis highlights that ‘organizational snags’, ‘sedentary self’ and ‘hierarchical pressure’ have significant impact on job stress of software professionals. Further work life balance policies / initiatives offered by the companies are analyzed by using descriptive statistics to know the gap between attractiveness and usage.

Organizations were suggested to reduce Work to family conflict by implementing selectively flex-time, work-family integration, part-time work schedules, work from home options, tele-work on an adhoc basis and early/late arrival.

Further, Family to work conflict can be reduced by allowing employees find more time to fulfill family responsibilities effectively by implementing shorter but productive work week. Running crèche’s, accredited schools, old age recreational homes in support of families would help employees to balance work and personal life.

Software organizations may train the employees on the use of transformational leadership. Managers could comprehend and utilize inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation while they lead their employees it would certainly help in improving employee’s perception of work support in the organization. Sense of belongingness, felt sense of self-worth and
increased sense of security would increase the family support to positively influence work life balance.

The biggest contributor to job stress is sedentary self. Organizations could design different layouts like brainstorming rooms, hammocks areas, office spaces, and video conferencing sessions in different layouts. Autonomy at work place, decentralized organization structures, quality circles, self-managed teams would reduce the hierarchical pressure at work place and helps in reducing stress levels.

Organizational initiatives on improving the self-efficacy through helping employees mastering a task, modeling the behaviors of others who have succeeded, and “verbal persuasion”— be taken up.

7.5 Scope for further Research

The study can be replicated for other industries and the work life balance and stress management practices can be assessed to conceptually bring out a concrete linkage between the two. A longitudinal study on the impact of the initiatives of the organizations on the improvement of work life balance and stress management levels would throw greater light on the concept. Further, a study on the role of self-efficacy on work life balance and stress management levels also would be a significant contribution.