A CROSS-CULTURAL REVIEW OF WORK-FAMILY BALANCE

Work-family issues differ across various countries as they are influenced by factors at the micro and macro level, which vary across countries. The macro level variations include differences in the social, economic, legislative and technological systems. These factors provide certain implications for employees who attempt to juggle their work and family domains (Joplin, Shaffer, Francesco & Lau, 2003; Poelman, 2003). Different working options and family-friendly work policies are features prominent in developed countries rather than in developing countries (Lewis & Ayudhya, 2006). Similarly, with the help of technological advancement, working from home is a possibility in Western countries. However, this may not be applicable to all countries (Joplin et al, 2003). But in developing countries, where even everyday survival is often difficult, working for longer hours becomes essential. Thus, in such a situation, people are bound to endure any kind of conflict or imbalance. Every society possesses certain social elements that can influence the manner in which people experience work-family balance. For instance, the family organisation in Western countries tend to be nuclear and distant but in other Asian countries, joint or extended families were common, where people lived in close proximity (Spector et al, 2004). Thus, demands in the family domain as well as support availability varies in different family structures (Joplin et al, 2003). In terms of community resources and infrastructure, there are variations across countries which helps in managing work and family life effectively. For instance, the government in some countries take the initiative for providing child-care and elder-care assistance to their employees, but this may not be applicable to other countries (Shafiro & Hammer,
Apart from these macro level variations, differences at the micro level also exist across regions (Poelman, 2003). The micro-level differences refer to the variations in the individual variable which include the levels of role demands assumed by individuals. In both Western and non-Western countries, the pressure which induces work-family conflict tends to be similar, but people’s responses to these pressures differ and tend to be governed by their cultures (Lewis & Ayudhya, 2006). Variations in work and family life are observed across different countries due to these macro and micro differences.

WORK RELATED ISSUES

In order to achieve top positions in executive jobs, women across the globe have to face obstacles and barriers. According to the International Labor Organization’s Report, 2001, titled “Breaking Through The Glass Ceiling: Women in Management”, women in United States had made more progress as compared to women in other countries, despite the fact that they held only a small percent of executive positions. The changing roles of women in business and government in more than 70 countries, steps to improve opportunities for women by highlighting the obstacles faced by them in their career development, and promoting gender equality, were some of the issues that were examined in the report. The report concluded that women in these countries were experiencing glass walls in addition to glass ceiling, where women were denied training and mid-level positions which could have helped them to reach top-level jobs. The predominance of male values and gender roles was considered as another factor that
prevented women from reaching top level jobs. The main hindrance faced by women in recruitment and promotion to management position was the dominance of male values followed by family obligations, according to the report of a survey conducted on bank managers in the European Union during the year 1999.

A study conducted on lawyers (Wallace, 1999) revealed that various work-related factors contributed to time-based and strain-based work to non-work conflict among married female and male lawyers. Work involvement, work-role stressors and work context were considered as three major factors for this study, out of which the single factor responsible for work-non work conflict for both male and female lawyers was work overload. Factors which contributed to work-non work conflict varied between male and female lawyers. Moreover, female lawyers preferred working in firms that had a significant proportion of female lawyers. Since the strain-based conflict of female lawyers was reduced by additional family roles, variables of domestic status such as the working status of the partners, having pre-school children did not have much effect on females’ work-non work conflict (Wallace, 1999). In a study (Martin, 2012) conducted among women who were employed as Professional Counsellors, women counsellors were observed to be at a higher risk of developing fatigue, burnout and secondary traumatic stress due to the emotionally demanding nature of their work. This study tried to examine whether a relationship between factors such as multiple role balance, number of dependents, age, experience, professional quality of life and well-being among women counsellors existed or not. The study revealed that women with a higher score on Multiple role balance were capable of balancing multiple roles in their lives,
whereas women scoring moderate scores were interpreted in several ways. It was assumed that these women simply accepted their roles without having a positive feeling towards those roles. Another assumption was that these women might feel that it is their sole responsibility towards the role. Moreover, there was an emphasis on giving importance to both the professional and personal life when the overall holistic wellness are analysed and evaluated (Martin, 2012).

There are several problems that a woman encounters when she decides to undertake a job in Indian society. The root cause of the problem is the patriarchal structure of the society where women are expected to give the highest priority to the needs of the family, irrespective of whether they work outside the house or not. Their primary role is considered to be looking after the home and children, and their employment outside the home is still regarded as secondary (Arora, 2003). Women’s pregnancy and maternity leave might result in a delay of their promotions as compared to their male counterparts. They also faced sexual harassment and exploitation in their work-place (Shukla, 2003). When working women try to manage both home and job along with the demands of child-care, they are bound to experience role conflict. One of the greatest drawbacks resulting from being focused on their career is the high chance of disharmony in their family life, where modern educated husbands too expect their wives to serve them and the household despite the women working outside the homes. Studies also revealed that the discrimination which a woman faced at the workplace was related to the lower job commitment which was acquired through the socialisation process. When women consider work as an additional role and do not set career goals, they are likely to face
problems at work. A low representation of women in the higher posts has been considered as a reflection of discrimination in recruitment policies or prejudices as well as the lack of orientation and commitment of women towards their career. In addition, there are also studies that focused on the changes taking place in women’s lives as a result of their employment. Women were able to create bigger space for themselves by emerging out of the traditional role (Abraham, 2002; Mahajan, 1996).

For Malaysian women, the task of managing work and family roles became even more difficult due to the limited work arrangement available to them. The majority of women employees worked for longer hours along with their male counterparts, since the number of working hours is fixed as being from nine to five by the labor laws under the Malaysian Federal Government. Other employment modes which were non-conventional in nature are either very new or not applicable in Malaysia. For instance, flexible working hours had been considered only recently by the Government with a view to motivate women to join the workforce, which in turn will help them in balancing work and family life (Aziz, 2011). Earlier, the different types of family friendly policies provided to the employees were various leave entitlements like unpaid leave, emergency leave, maternity/paternity leave and annual leave. However, there is still the absence of work arrangements such as part-time employment, job sharing or tele-working (Subramanian & Selvaratnam, 2010). Therefore, it can be concluded that combining work and family roles for Malaysian employed women is challenging due to limited work arrangements and the prevalence of traditional gender roles in the society.
Thus, employed mothers in Malaysia were likely to experience conflict and work overload in the process of managing work and family domains (Noor, 1999).

In China, women constituted 38% of the full-time workforce. The rate of participation in paid work was high throughout their working lives due to the intervention of the communist state in the past six decades in China (Cooke, 2007). Since part-time work was not an option, the majority of women in China were full-time workers. The concept of job sharing, flexitime and term-time working did not exist in Chinese society. Working mothers drew support from commercial domestic services, family networks and nurseries for the purpose of household chores and child-care. Earlier studies on Chinese women’s working pattern revealed that in order to accommodate their family commitments, Chinese women preferred work which was less demanding (Yi & Chien, 2002). Moreover, many working couples depended on their parents for child-care support as a result of the one-child policy and the early retirement age i.e. 55 years for men and 50 years for women. In Japan, the amount of time spent at work is highest in comparison to other developed countries. The working hours for Japanese male employees is 46.6 hours per week and for female employees 40.4 hours per week on an average. Thus, it can be seen that their personal time is limited as a result of more working hours, which in turn may lead to the feeling of imbalance and unhappiness. Moreover, working for long hours resulted in less time for family life. Thus, Japanese women most often quit their jobs after child-birth, and if they later decided to return to work they worked only on a part-time basis. In addition, women employees also felt uncomfortable in taking maternity leave as they considered their maternity leave to be a
burden on the company. They were also unsure whether they can balance child-care and job after they returned from their maternity leave. They also feared that they may fall behind in technical knowledge when they joined work after availing maternity leave.

Due to poor social security provisions for unemployment and absence of family based state welfare benefits, both men and women in China were forced to undertake full-time continuous employment. However, in Bangladesh, the majority of women are actively participating in the workforce as well despite the traditional structure of family roles being prominent in which men are considered as the sole breadwinners. The two important reasons for women opting for paid work are a change in mindset and the rising cost of living. Thus, dual-career families have replaced the traditional family system by bringing about socio-demographic changes in Bangladesh. A study (Uddin et al, 2013) conducted on female teachers of Bangladesh revealed that there was interference of work in the family life of female teachers as well as interference of family in their work life. As a result, they faced difficulties in balancing both the domains. The study suggested that ensuring better facilities to the female employees in terms of flexible working hours, transport facility, child-care centres, reduced workload etc would help them in achieving work and family balance in their lives. Several studies have been conducted on IT professionals of India in recent years. One such study showed that there is a direct proportional relationship between work-life balance and working hours. The findings revealed that women who worked for longer hours were bound to experience more conflict as compared to those female employees who worked for relatively lesser number of hours. There was a wide gap of work-life conflict between women who worked for eight hours and women who worked for ten hours per
day (Aishwarya & Ramasundaram, 2011). A study conducted from a Narrative Life Story Framework found that women who had a strong belief in faith connected the element of work with their faith. They believed that their purpose of life is work which is created by God. Hence, they considered their work as being significantly meaningful. For them, values are an inseparable part of coping strategies and their personal and professional lives are highly valued by them. The study also revealed that hardships and experiences encountered by women were affected by their cultural identity and cultural background. These women were able to understand their work and personal life in a much better way through the help of faith. Women also admitted that there was a positive affect of having multiple roles in both their work and family life. One of the most important factor for achieving a healthy work-life balance was flexibility, which is also supported by several studies in work-life balance. In order to achieve flexibility, women have a longing for their own business as they thought that in order to achieve a better work-life balance, flexible schedule at work was necessary. A sense of being self-dependent in all areas of work was another factor which gave them a feeling of elation. Thus, it was concluded that the most important factor in achieving work life balance or choosing a career field was faith which in turn also played a very important role in relationships for women. Faith was also a factor that helped them in deciding where they would prefer spending their time and moreover the adaptive style (i.e. how they coped with change) was also affected by faith (Krymis, 2011).
FAMILY RELATED ISSUES

Despite being equally well-educated as their husbands, Chinese women gave more priority to family responsibilities over their own career, either voluntarily or involuntarily, as a result of traditional Chinese cultural influence. The traditional norm of a family was that the husband would deal with external matters such as earning a livelihood, while the wife was expected to look after the household chores even though she was working outside the home (Cooke, 2007). The main source of work-family conflict for Chinese employees was the long working hours and limited or no leisure time. The worst offenders of work-life balance were government organisations because they did not have any formal work-life balance policy. Moreover, the government employees were expected to come to office even during non-working hours to attend urgent meetings or for other tasks assigned by their superiors. Another important reason for the work-family conflict was the heavy workload where employees had no choice but to work overtime in order to complete their tasks. Moreover, there was pressure to give high performance due to the competition in the market. In addition, frequent trips for business purposes also led to disruptions in family life. However, individuals adopted different strategies to cope with the pressures of work and family. In order to remain fit and healthy and socialise with like-minded people, individuals took the initiative and joined sports clubs. Some married women chose to focus on their career by postponing motherhood. The most commonly used coping mechanism by mothers to alleviate the work family conflict was by relying on their family members for support, or through outsourcing their housework. In addition, a small percentage of male
employees requested their spouse to quit their jobs and become full-time housewives. While for others, the only preferred option to avoid work-family conflict was withdrawal from family and social life (Xian & Cooke, 2012).

In Bangladesh, the identity of an individual is linked to the identity of the extended family. Women in Bangladesh are still entirely and solely responsible for performing household chores, child-care and other aspects of family responsibilities. On the other hand, in Japan, the two life domains that played an important role are balancing work and family, and balancing work and leisure. The spouses of these women employees were also unable to devote time to family and child-care as a result of work overload or job transfers. Thus, spending time with their husbands, family members and educating their children were limited. Another important aspect in balancing work and family is the care for the elderly which is considered as women’s primary responsibility, but nowadays full-time working women are facing difficulties in fulfilling the role of primary caregivers to the elderly due to the ageing population. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is lack of time and flexibility in Japan in terms of balancing work and family (Bienek, 2014). Similarly, another study conducted on female medical practitioners revealed that the important stressors which affected their entire family were work overload and reduced interest in family activities. In addition, the lack of support, time pressure, amount of official work and on-duty calls were identified as other stressors. The family lives of these women were affected by different factors such as bringing official work to their homes, getting telephone calls from work during family events, and spending time at official meetings away from home. Role conflict
was another important stressor for female practitioners as identified by the study (Rout, 1995).

Studies have also emphasised the consequences of social conditioning right from childhood days, which is responsible for the secondary status of women in Indian society, as a result of which it becomes difficult for them to break the norms of traditional roles despite being educated or earning substantially. Secondly, the prevalence of male attitudes, known as male chauvinism, is also responsible for the secondary status being accorded to women. In addition, patrifocal family which gave importance to men’s interests was also regarded as deeply affecting women’s access to achievements in education and employment. Studies have examined the modifications in marriage systems, inheritance and succession practices which were due to changes in the structure and functions of the family in India. Gender discrimination and occupational segregation are still prominent in Indian society. Women’s achievements are comparatively low and they are seen in the lower rank of the job hierarchy despite making recognisable advances to education and careers. In addition, women are often paid less for the same jobs. These factors indicates the prevalence of gender differentiated family roles, which eventually perpetuates the sexual division of labor (Thomas, 2007).

Another study (Seshadri & Kar, 2012) conducted in India collected viewpoints of women in dual-earner families on work-life balance variables and the type of support that they required from their employers. The study revealed that policies formulated by organisations that promoted flexible work arrangements had positive relationships with
work-life balance as perceived by working women. Thus, women employees considered time flexibility as one of the important factors that helps in balancing their work and family life. Their perception was affected by the following factors such as the ability to interrupt office work in order to attend to family matters and return to work, provisions to partially work from home, the ability to make a convenient work schedule arrangement, to avail leave whenever required, child-care provisions along with elder-care facilities etc. The majority of respondents stated that they expected their organisations to support them and allow them to attend courses or training which will enable them to upgrade their knowledge and skills. The study also revealed that getting support from the organisation is very crucial in getting opportunities in job as well as in achieving a desirable work-life balance. There was an indication of women giving more importance to their family lives, as respondents indicated that they would rather spend more time in fulfilling family responsibilities than fulfilling work demands. But respondents also mentioned that they would work equally hard in order to manage their work and family life. A study on IT professionals revealed that the emotional intelligence of IT professionals was positively related with personal life interference with work, work-personal life enhancement and overall work-life balance. Emotionally intelligent people are considered to be better focused, well-organised, they pursue their goals consistently, and barely lose their temper. Thus, the study indicated that emotionally intelligent people have the ability to adjust in all conditions as well as increase their productivity, thereby creating a better work-life balance (Kaur & Walia, 2010). On the other hand, a study conducted in the IT sector in Chennai and Coimbatore revealed that women professionals were experiencing high organizational role stress.
There was significant difference on the inter-role distance (i.e. conflict between organisational and familial roles with special reference to dual career families) between married and unmarried females. Inter-role conflict was expected to be less when at least one family member remained at home to look after the family. Since married women responded to a bigger set of significant others (i.e. conflicting expectations and demands by different role senders) they were more likely to experience role expectation conflicts as compared to unmarried females. Married women also complained of higher stress because of role overload which means too much is expected from the role than they can cope with. Also, the most potent stressor that was identified was resource inadequacy which means the absence of resources required for better role performance (Kavitha et al, 2012).

**BALANCE RELATED ISSUES**

Several factors are responsible for affecting the personal and professional lives of women in Western countries, which was demonstrated by a study conducted on female medical practitioners in Australia, U.K and Denmark. The study revealed that balancing a job and family, job satisfaction, autonomy, fair remuneration, availability of flexible work schedules and having an edge over the decision-making process were some of the factors which affected the lives of women. In addition to these, some of the personal issues were self-care, quality time with spouse, children, family and friends, and time-management in order to pursue interests which were non-medical in nature. The conflicts arising out of these demands reduced the job satisfaction of female
professionals, which in turn led to imbalance and stress in their lives. In order to achieve balanced and successful personal and professional lives; a supportive family, a flexible work environment and changes in culturally based expectations of female professionals were required (Kilmartin, 2002). A recent review of work-life research in Australia and New Zealand (Bardoel et al, 2008) revealed that labor demographics and the changing nature of work were two important factors responsible for research on work-life issues. Several existing themes of work-life issues in Australia and New Zealand were identified by this study, which included challenges posed by the changing nature of work especially the lengthening of work hours, maternity or paternity leave and child-care, legislation and government policy pertaining to child-care, different family structures facing work-life challenges, as well as gender issues in work-family research. The study concluded that some of the characteristics surrounding research in other developed countries were adopted by work-family research i.e. reducing negative employee outcomes by focusing on an organisation’s interventions.

A study on women in Secondary School Administration examined their different perspectives on ways in which they balanced their multiple roles, and it also talked about the social barriers and difficulties they face in playing multiple roles. The findings indicated that work commitments interfered with home commitments and vice-versa. Respondents revealed that they received support for a maximum work life balance from the districts where they were employed. In addition, they received support from their supervisors as well. Respondents admitted that they have a major responsibility at home and child-care, but the presence of another adult at home makes their work lighter.
Respondents also mentioned that there was stress was due to conflicting multiple roles in their lives. With regard to health, they believed that their health was affected by stress, which arose from multiple role demands. The women admitted that it was challenging and difficult to achieve work-life balance but they tried to achieve it by adopting different coping strategies (Byington, 2010). The study conducted on Korean workers (Kim, 2014) in order to investigate the effect of work-life balance in their lives revealed that there was an intersection of work and personal life due to the collectivist organisational climate in Korea. Workers did not regard work and family as independent domains. Korean employees gave more priority to their work life over personal life in order to preserve the unity and harmony of their organizations from being disrupted by their personal life. They did not separate their work life from family life as they feared that their work performance would be hindered by their family duties, which in turn imposed a burden on them. The study also found that the work-life balance of Korean employees might be hampered by the social situation and lack of organizational support. An empirical study also found that the in-role performance of the employees is indirectly affected by work-life balance. In addition, the findings also revealed that in order to reinforce the effect of work-life balance on in-role performance, affective commitment plays a role of a mediating factor. Being a traditionally collectivist society, Koreans have been experiencing changes in values wherein they are pressurised to accept individualistic values as a result of recent changes in the economy and culture. The introduction of a five-day workweek in 2004 led to many changes in work, people’s values and in their social environment. The individuals were able to spend more time with their families as well as in their personal development with the help of the five-day workweek.
workweek (Kim, 2014). Thus, these changes brought about an increasing desire and interest in the work-life balance in Korea.

However, a positive relation existed between work-life balance and level of job and income of employees in China. Employees holding higher posts in organizations experienced greater work pressure which affected their family life in a negative way. On the other hand, employees getting lower incomes experienced more struggle with work-life issues as they were unable to balance their work and family responsibilities. In comparison to men, the majority of women were affected by work-life issues since they spent more time on housework, child-care and elderly care than men. In addition, there is an impact of income level on work-life conflict in China. Work-family conflict is experienced more by women who contribute 40-60% of the income for family expenses. Thus, they struggled between work and family. This is because women with lower income gave higher priority to the family whereas women with higher income focussed more on their career growth (Wu et al, 2003).

With regard to work and family variables, several important trends were identified through a study conducted in Canada. The study pointed out that employees who worked in larger organizations saw a gradual increase in the working hours and overtime work which was further extended over the weekends. The heaviest work demands were experienced by male employees working in a non-profit sector. On the other hand, family demands which was heavier in nature was experienced by women employees and those with dependents. In general, employees’ work demands were exceeded by the demands of their family (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001). A comparative study on people
working in organizations and self-employed people was conducted in order to analyse the relationship between work and family responsibilities. The study revealed that there was a significant impact on gender and employment type on work/family issues. As compared to individuals employed in organizations, more autonomy, more schedule flexibility and higher levels of involvement were enjoyed by self-employed individuals. However, there were reports of greater work family conflicts and greater family role pressures due to parental demands, and lower family satisfaction experienced by self-employed individuals, as compared to individuals employed in organizations. The reason is that self-employed individuals are solely responsible for their business. Thus, they devote more time and commitment to work. This shows that women were more inclined towards family commitments and prefer spending more time with family. However, they suffer more than men from stress due to the multiple roles played by them (Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001). Malaysia has been experiencing changes in the composition of the workforce, which is similar to that of the West. However, there is a prevalence of traditional gender roles in their society. As a result, Malaysians faced a potential challenge to combine work and family roles, and that was especially with women employees (Noor, 1999). Women in Malaysia contributed significantly to the economic development of the country, due to an increase in the number of women in the labor force. In traditional society, Malaysian women were expected to perform household duties along with child rearing. However, in modern society, they have undertaken a new role with their entry into the world of paid work while continuing the traditional role of housewife and mother, since gender role ideologies are still traditional in Malaysia (Westman, 2005). The majority of women did not expect equality with their
spouses in doing housework as they are aware of the prevalence of different gender roles in society. Thus, they have to juggle different roles simultaneously (Noor, 2006). The situation of balancing work and family is even more difficult for divorced or widowed women when they are the sole breadwinners in the family. Studies on dual performance and dilemmas faced by working women in India observed that the role conflict was purely psychological in nature, which arose from the push and pull factors between the demands emerging from the domestic role and the occupational role and discarded factors such as caste, income, education and occupation as possible causes of role-conflict. Among several problems faced by working women, the common ones were work overload, burden of domestic chores, problems of coping with both the roles at the same time, as well as role conflict. On the other hand, the studies also tried to trace the predictors of work-family conflict among Indian women, where patterns of predictors were not identical even though they were similar, with spouse support being the strongest predictor. Studies have also highlighted women’s ability to handle both roles simultaneously. Role conflict was experienced by women who felt they were caught in the middle of two roles but otherwise women generally accepted and managed both roles.

In recent years, research on work-life balance suggests that individuals are able to achieve personal and professional goals with the help of successful work-life balance. Earlier, the nature of work was viewed as a necessity for everyday survival but in today’s society, work is perceived as a source of personal satisfaction by the employees. When a person is able to devote time to both work and family life, without neglecting
either of them, a balanced life is said to be achieved. Congenial conditions are required in the organisation in order to balance work with the family needs of the employees. Even in the family domain, such efforts are desirable. There is a significant relationship between work-life balance of female employees and variables like age, working environment, training programs, fringe benefits and family support. In comparison to the younger respondents, women above 40 years were capable of balancing work and family life much better. It was also mentioned that the ability to create a better work-life balance depended on a motivating work environment. Suggestions that were given by respondents in order to achieve better balance were time management, sharing workload, maintaining a positive approach and better communication with superiors and colleagues (Mitta et al, 2013).

Similarly, another study conducted on women faculty members in a Management College of Pune revealed that the majority of women faculty members had difficulty in managing their work and family lives. Their job-related stress spilt-over into their personal lives as a result of which it was difficult for them to manage time for self-interest activities or self-development. There was also a severe impact on their mental and physical health. A major barrier to the work-life balance for respondents was the time taken to travel to their workplace. Since women were particularly engaged in household responsibilities, child-care and elderly-care, spending more time on doing household chores, working over-time at the workplace eventually created problems by disturbing the equilibrium between work and family life. In the parameters of work-life balance, designation-wise differences were also observed where respondents with
higher designation were required to extend their duty hours. The maximum time was used in preparing lectures by faculty members of lower designation while maximum time was spent in teaching by higher designation faculty members. Lastly, among all designations, the lowest time was spent on work related to students’ projects (Dam & Daphtardar, 2012).

**ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONS IN WORK-FAMILY BALANCE**

Organizations across cultures are known to implement various work-life balance practices which are beneficial in reducing work-life issues as well as in enabling employees to be more effective at work and in performance of various roles. Organizations are pressurised increasingly in order to design various kinds of practices which will facilitate the efforts of employees to fulfil their personal and professional commitments. Several work-life balance initiatives have been initiated by organizations which will assist employees to balance their work and family responsibilities efficiently, gain improvements in well-being and provide organizational benefits. There are variety of family-friendly policies such as flexible working hours, part-time work, job-sharing, compressed work weeks, telecommuting, parental leave and on-site child-care facility (Lazar et al, 2010). In addition, organisation may also provide a range of benefits with regard to health and well-being of employees such as extended health insurance for the employees and dependents, personal days, access to programs and services in order to encourage fitness as well as mental and physical health. However, organizations are likely to have their own motives behind implementing various work-life practices. Firstly, in order to increase practices of female employees and make use of their
capacities; secondly, to keep employees motivated and well-performing; thirdly, to make the organisation more attractive to employees and lastly to have a better corporate social responsibility (Lazar et al, 2010). Factors which affect employees attitudes and perceptions through the introduction of work-life balance practices include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention and job stress. However, job performance, absenteeism costs, customer satisfaction and organisational productivity are in turn affected by these factors (Lazar et al, 2010). One of the barriers in achieving work-life balance is that employees often remain unaware of their work-life entitlements following the implementation of work-life balance practices which was highlighted through a research conducted amongst organisations in the U.K (Kodz et al, 1998).

**INFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGY ON WORK-FAMILY BALANCE**

A rapid change has taken place in the concept of work-life balance with the help of technology. Nowadays, the home and work domains are not considered as separate entities. In fact, dissolving of boundaries between home and work has been described by the term ‘work-life merge’ which was recently coined by popular culture. Particularly over the last 20 years, with the introduction of mobile technologies and portable WiFi, the merging of home and work domains has been possible where contact with home life can be maintained despite a busy working day, and the work can be completed even away from office (Golden & Geisler, 2007). A review of existing literature revealed that there are both merits and demerits of using mobile technology by the workers. The main
advantage of mobile technology is the flexibility that workers are able to regulate the location, time and pace of the day in which their work is conducted (Hill et al, 1998; Towers et al, 2006). In addition to this, it is the increased ability to accommodate work and fun into their lives (Towers et al, 2006) and being able to devote longer hours before their home life is encroached on by their job life (Hill et al, 1998). The potential for greater productivity and efficiency that technology usage offers is perceived by workers as a further advantage of mobile technology. Moreover, technology that allows access to colleagues when they are away from their office is another perceived benefit of technology (Towers et al, 2006). Other advantages of the mobile technology was considered to be the high morale and ability to manipulate employers by being ever available and appearing as dedicated employees (Bolino, 1999). On the other hand, there are numerous disadvantages of technology such as increased expectations from employers and colleagues, workload increase and a sense of never being off duty. Family life can also be affected in a negative manner as technology can increase the length of the working day leading to encroachment on family life, which in turn leads to conflict with family members (Middleton, 2008; Towers et al, 2006). In addition, mobile technology was also responsible for increasing the stress levels of employees and putting them at risk of developing mental health problems. The employees felt that they were being monitored by their employers through technology, which in turn increased their level of stress. Employees can be challenged by the fact that their organizations expects them to remain available 24 hours a day. Problems could also arise from the inability to separate the work and family domains. For the well-being and stress prevention of employees, it is essential to segregate home and work life (Park et
al, 2011). The use of mobile technology is considered to be widespread and pervasive for both work and social purposes. In terms of well-being and work/life balance, the technological usage and its flexible nature is viewed positively (Research Report, 2015).

The manner in which people work and connect to the outside world has been changed considerably by the revolution which took place in technology. The changes brought about by technology are so immense that homes have been transformed into permeable workplaces while the comforts of home are often displayed at the place of work. The landscape of 21st century life is said to be the mobility which is a new stage where our daily activities are placed. Relationships have been changed from boundaries and to place with the help of technology (Jackson, 2005). In fact, our relations with others have been altered by technology which is considered as a new tool for constructing a moveable and a multilevel space in the house and helps in connecting people wherever they go. The better alternative of face-to-face conversation has been virtual relations where families are living ‘on air’ for several important moments of their lives. The notion of togetherness and paying attention in unexpected ways have been redefined by our ability to be in multiple places at once. The another variable, in addition, would be the ‘always on’ nature of virtual relationships (Jackson, 2005). Today, a new space which is accessible and flexible for relations has been created with the help of mobile technologies. This trend has been driven by the fact that like gadgets, family life is becoming portable which helps in removing boundaries between people. However, there are also certain drawbacks of connectivity. Togetherness is said to be fragmented along with being disembodied. Employees today, with the help of mobile technology, are able
to reduce the boundaries of work and home by tele-working, checking official mails on weekends and by converting their homes into place of work. In addition, the designing and furnishing of homes are also evidences of how work and home are overlapping with each other. Furniture at home are now being designed in such a manner that helps in bringing work to the living area by inserting phone jacks and electrical outlets into them (Shaw, 1999). In coming years, this trend will extend even further where closets, clothing, kitchen counters, eye-glasses will all be converted into computers. Furthermore, INTEL is working over a program that can convert PCs, cars, cameras, even clothing and plants into objects that would be able to receive and send data through a program that incorporates a tiny radio into every micro-processor that is shipped by the company in seven years (Bolande, 2002). In fact, an innovation that will let people work or browse the net wherever they are sitting, walking and eating has been designed at MIT’s Media Lab by scientists which consists of more than 170 corporate sponsors. This kind of lifestyle is likely to change the perimeters of private time along with changing our relationship to place. During the feudal society, there was a perfect blend of home and work in the same space where everyday work was carried out by farmers and craftsmen. People could take rest whenever it was required by following the natural rhythms of the sun and different seasons. But this natural setting was altered as work shifted from the home with the help of machines and electric lights. People then started taking rest during weekends and vacations. However, the notion of weekends and vacations is also getting scraped off due to the advances in technology where employees are now expected to remain accessible even during the off-hours on their jobs. Thus, there is no fixed time for rest, no set day of work, no annual summer
vacation, or assigned time for leisure (Galinsky, Bond & Kim, 2001). In addition, homes have also become a moveable domain along with work. Starting from getting personal phone calls in the office number occasionally or getting personal letters posted in the official mailbox, domestic life now has been fully imported into the place of work which is possible due to the availability of various perks and benefits given by the company in recent years. However, this does not indicate that there has been a switching of places between the home and work. In fact, home and work have now developed to be portable in the real sense (Jackson, 2005). But, in the process, we are increasingly becoming nomadic by loosening our connections to place. The anthropologist, Peter Wilson in his book ‘The Domestication of Human Species’ mentioned that through the prism of focus, nomadic societies are able to navigate the world where boundaries appear to be hazy and relationships are both fluid and flexible, and individuals are expected to be self-sufficient. Rather than being formal or rule-governed, relationships are often personal. Thus, our society tends to be a system which is based on focus rather than being based on boundaries. In addition, due to technological influence, our relationships are becoming increasingly fluid at work, home and in the community. In today’s society, through advances in technology, people are able to work, learn and relate to other individuals without even knowing their physical location. The old stereotypical notion of home and work have been replaced by this new mobility. In fact, prisons are the only boundary which cannot be crossed. Today, there is an integration of work and home life. Employees are trusted to complete their assigned tasks without being monitored by their superiors. However, there are also certain disadvantages of this boundary-less, nomadic life. There is always a risk of losing the home as a space of
leisure and intimacy when this home is converted into a permeable workplace. On the other hand, when people look for friendship and emotional support in their workplace, such relationships tend to be governed by power and is based on conditional care and support. Despite gaining flexibility, there is a risk of making ourselves homeless emotionally when home and work become portable (Jackson, 2005). Today, parents are able to breathe a sigh of relief due to instant connectivity with their children through the help of technology. Along with providing a safety net when things go upside down, technology also provides a quick dose of family life during a period of time where families are routinely separated from morning till evening or even for a longer time, mainly due to official travel to different places. In other cases, however, email and virtual communication is considered as a preferred medium in the absence of voice tone or body language. Generally, divorced parents prefer to use the email as a form of exchanging information to each other as they consider it to be a neutral zone when they try to avoid talking to each other and not make it uncomfortable for other family members. Even teenagers prefer to use virtual space to discuss topics with their parents which they otherwise find uncomfortable to discuss face-to-face or through eye contact. Email as a form of virtual communication provides some amount of distance and intimacy which makes things easier. Internet relationships which are formed has been described as being a highly selective presentation of self, the manipulation of one’s perceived self and the highly restricted area of one’s self-disclosure clues (McQuillen, 2003). Even though there is less research on the impact of technology on relationships, a few studies based on online communications provide some hints on the merits and drawbacks of the media. According to a summary of research compiled in Cummings of
Cornegie, Mellon University and others in 2000, email as a form of computer-mediated communications is considered to be less effective for strengthening and sustaining intimate social relationships as compared to telephonic conversations or face-to-face contact. Research has shown that with the help of the Internet, people having strong social support, or extroverts, are able to increase their face-to-face interactions with friends and family while there has been a decrease in such ties for people with less social support, or being introverts (Kraut et al, 2002). There has also been a co-existence of virtual relations with other connections such as face-to-face and electronic links simultaneously. Thus, the blurring of boundaries between physical and virtual togetherness can be seen in today’s internet age (Baron, 2000). The concept of togetherness and paying attention to others have been redefined by mobile technologies. Along with carrying out day-to-day activities, people are able to multitask communication with each other with the help of tools such as emails, cell-phones or instant messaging. A mixture of technological tools and mobile society based on focus which produces multidimensional communication responsible for the occurrence of national attention deficit syndrome (Jackson, 2005). Even in the corporate world, a paucity of attention span can be seen among the business executives and as a result, use of cell-phones are increasingly being banned in the meetings. During events, performances, presentations or even during social outings, it has become a common scenario to see people fiddling with their gadgets. Relationships are based on knowing very small aspects of each other in this distractible culture. Therefore, users of technology hardly turn off their gadgets as the fear of separation from their loved ones seemed unbearable. Today, portable family is shifting into always-on relationship which
is similar to the concept of freedom of anytime-anywhere work (Jackson, 2005). To conclude, due to the impact of mobile technology, relationships have now turned out to be portable, flexible and fluid. Tracking and contacting children by parents which seemed impossible some generations ago is now made possible due to advances in technology. People are able to make plans and meet anywhere with the help of mobile technology. Employees too have the flexibility of working from home at their convenience. The constraint of remaining in one place has been freed by technology. Thus, people no longer sit down, plug-in and dial-up to remain connected. However, virtual relationships tend to be multi-dimensional and fragmented. Mobile technologies have been successful in blurring the boundaries effectively between face-to-face and virtual moments by giving us the ability to be present in several contexts and connecting us to several people at one go. Limitless connectivity has become the norm in this quick and easy communication world. However, there is a danger of dragging old ideals of togetherness and hobbling technological potential for a flexible lifestyle during the process of learning to utilise the powerful new technologies of Computer Age to our best advantage. Today, our lives have been changed by the portability of our home and work and our relationships are getting affected by virtual connectivity. However, technology cannot be considered as inert and a panacea for everything. It cannot be assumed that our problems will be solved through technology. It only gives us the license to use our new tools with innovation and creativity. The technological wonders are likely to get squandered when machinery use gets preference over issues of humanity (Jackson, 2005).
RECIPROCATING GENDER ROLES IN WORK-FAMILY BALANCE

Gender roles and work-family relationship needs to evolve and reciprocate in several ways. The association and separation of men with paid work and women with family life has led to assumptions about men being ideal workers and women being ideal carers. Psychological, physical and emotional demands are experienced by men from paid work and women from domestic sphere. Thus, gender role assumptions are not static and it tends to be deeply rooted in an individual’s identities and wider expectations from the society. Several countries have witnessed a dramatic change in women’s role over a period of time. In fact, attitudes and behaviour of men have also undergone some changes with regard to sharing the burden of housework with women. However, in comparison to women, the pace and intensity of this change has been slower with regard to men. One of the possible factors responsible for this delay is the existing notion that women are ideal carers and not men. This in turn, has resulted in men being excluded from parenting and other activities of caring, and women being held responsible for retaining the daily activities of child-care. Despite the recent evidence that parental care involvement is beneficial for the well-being and development of the child, the impact of father’s employment has not been given importance by research whereas the impact of mother’s employment on children has been dealt with and discussed extensively (Burgess & Rusell, 2003). During the discussions about parenting, when women are considered to be solely responsible for child-care activities, men would refrain from participating in such discussion by
assuming it to be irrelevant. Only a few countries such as Norway recognises the need to include men in debates about drafting strategies for balancing work and family domain.

A change in men’s attitudes and perception towards work and family life is required with regard to more women getting involved in paid work. The assumption of ideal worker and ideal carer will be likely to continue in the absence of such change. In addition, men will find it difficult to become involved in family issues while women will be penalised in their workplace continuously. Evolutionary and historical contexts are responsible for influencing this reciprocity of change, which is considered as an ongoing and dynamic process. However, women are expected to change further if there are changes taking place in men’s lives. These reciprocal changes are a must in order to balance paid work and personal lives. On a brighter side, women are offered greater opportunities for inclusion and progress in their career and there would be greater opportunities for men to become involved in family matters through this reciprocity of change. However, there are several barriers related to reciprocal change in gender roles and work-family relationship. These barriers can be understood in terms of power and competition experienced by men and women. Different perspectives have been discussed in order to determine how power plays an important part in holding back change. One important perspective that highlights the significance for men to focus on paid work and women on family care is wage difference between men and women. Another perspective emerges from the reluctance on making dramatic changes to ways in which men and women combine various life aspects due to the power given to men.
by paid work, and the status offered to women in family involvement. Both men and women are provided with a wider range of opportunities for equitable relationships through reciprocal change rather than developing competition between them. Men and women face difficulty in accepting change in their existing roles and the relationship which in turn can occur at the individual level, within the family, in their workplace and in the society at large. Personal beliefs and identity of people are likely to get challenged when they try to change their ways of thinking and believing.

In the process of adapting to change, couples are likely to experience interpersonal tensions and conflicts which can arise from culture and practices of their workplace, policies of the government, and assumptions from the wider society. The manner in which men and women experience these conflicts in relation to their changing roles and relationships tends to vary across different countries. Gender roles are internalised into the minds of men and women right from their childhood days. In fact, notions of masculinity and femininity notion become their identity from birth itself. The manner in which people treat the child is affected by the inquisitiveness of knowing whether the child is male or female. The traditional gender role assumptions have been challenged by the feminist movement as well as by the various day-to-day pressures which women face when dealing with work-family issues. Also, the way in which opportunities and well-being of men have been curbed by the idea of masculinity have been discussed in different contexts. Still, the notion of gender roles face resistance to change. In this particular context, changes not only involve unlearning old patterns but behaving in a manner that goes against the traditional gender role assumptions that can result in
painful, threatening and uncomfortable experiences. On the other hand, interpersonal relationships in families can also be affected by these individual gender role issues. Women can face difficulty in moving beyond social expectations about appropriate roles since there is resistance to change in domestic roles by both men and women. The relationship of couples can also be hampered due to individual identity issues when women are seen climbing the ladder of success in their career. The assumptions about men being ideal workers and women being ideal carers can also be subjected to challenge when men become more attached and involved in child-care activities, thereby leading to the emergence of conflict. Tensions in families are created through change which is evident when relationships go through a bad phase. In other contexts, when younger couples opt for more equitable relationships with each other, it can result in intergenerational conflict, especially in the joint family system, as equality between men and women is a rare fact in this kind of family structure.

Just as changes are required in men’s lives when there are changes in women’s values and behaviours, likewise, changes in workplaces are necessary when there are changes taking place within families. The significance of adapting to changing women’s needs have been acknowledged by many workplaces but it remains superficial in nature. In fact, workplaces have not fully recognised the importance to incorporate norms, structure and culture of organisation in order to highlight the changes taking place in the relationships between men and women despite the importance given to work-family issues (Lewis, 1997). Thus, several women in the workplaces continue to get marginalised while men are unable to bring significant changes in their work and family
lives (Lewis, 1997). Even though there are discussions about interpersonal and workplace conflict faced by a handful of men and women in their attempt to balance their work and personal lives, yet several men are unable to discuss these issues with their superiors or colleagues due to the fear of being labelled as uncommitted workers, which goes against the notion of ideal workers. In countries such as India and Japan, women are seen struggling at their workplace in order to get acceptance from the male colleagues in different contexts. In Japan, male colleagues expect senior women in their workplace to prepare and serve tea to them and during the process of recruitment, women are asked questions on personal issues. In India, men find it difficult to accept women in senior positions in their workplace. Resistance to reciprocal changes in gender role and identities take place at the government level as well. There have been variations in balancing the personal and professional lives of employees by the government, where there is reluctance on the part of the government to interfere in the private matters of men and women’s relationships. However, in reality, the policies of the government does not help men and women in resolving conflicts and tensions created by work-family issues in their lives. This, in turn, can result in lesser involvement of men in domestic work and women being burdened with the responsibilities of home and paid work. Other institutions such as the legal system can lag behind in implementing change even when individuals, couples, workplaces and government opt for reciprocal change in gender roles. For instance, in divorce cases, mothers are given preference in custody of the child by the legal system, rather than giving preference to joint custody arrangements. Likewise, The European Court of Justice still believes in the notion of ideal parent being the mother despite considerable
changes taking place in family relationships in Europe. The existing models of global
capitalism and growing consumerism also poses a challenge to the reciprocal changes in
gender roles. In fact, the ideal worker assumption tends to be exacerbated due to the
transformation and changes taking place in paid work as well as due to the growing
consumer demands in the global economy. Both men and women face difficulties in
harmonising their paid work with family life because of the increasing tensions and
conflicts arising from the workplace expectations and demands. With every passing day,
the demands of paid work are becoming more intense and acute as a result of which an
increase in the dilemmas about combining paid work and family responsibilities are felt
by both men and women. This, in turn, is subjected to further reduction of perceived
opportunities for combining paid work with family life in diverse ways by both men and
women. In response to the increasing hours of paid work, two trends are likely to be
crystallised. Reverting to the traditional gender roles in families might be the first trend,
while having no children would be the second trend. However, neither of these trends is
life-affirming. Moreover, intensification and extension of work are other trends which
are likely to jeopardise the progress made in terms of changing gender roles and
workplace changes, which can further restrict the opportunities to collaborate with
others for finding ways to balance work and family life. In sum, inequities between men
and women have been perpetuated within families, at their workplaces and in other
social institutions by the above mentioned barriers, and resistance to change, along with
trends in existing forms of global competitive capitalism. In some countries, women
employed in higher positions are dropping out and rejecting the image of a
superwoman, which is due to the pressure felt from balancing their work and family life
The desire to maintain a certain lifestyle pattern is also responsible for holding back change in gender roles. In this regard, the work of British Economist, Richard Layard (2005) can be considered, in which he argues that once a person’s income rises beyond the point of meeting his basic needs, it cannot render true happiness to that person.

**IMPACT OF WORK-FAMILY INTERFACE ON HEALTH**

There are numerous negative consequences encountered by employees who undergo extensive work-family conflict such as deteriorated physical health and emotional well-being, as well as reduced performance and lower satisfaction in the work-family domain (Bellavia & Frone, 2005). Due to the difficulties experienced by employees with health issues, the connection between health outcomes and work-family conflict is quite disturbing. In order to be considered as possessing good health, both physical and psychological components of health and well-being are essential for an individual (Sanderson, 2004). Reports of physical symptoms and overall health problems along with specific physiological condition assessment i.e. cholesterol, blood pressure are some of the indicators of physical health problems which are responsible for causing overall physical health problems. Likewise, health-related behaviour which are unhealthy in nature such as lack of physical exercise, unhealthy diets, excessive tobacco and alcohol consumption, also contribute to overall physical health problems. On the other hand, the experiences of dissatisfaction and negative emotions are considered to be psychological health problems. Along with specific emotions such as anger,
depression and frustration, the indicators of a variety of negative emotions comprises of overall psychological strain and life distress, while dissatisfaction includes negative evaluations of specific life roles i.e. work and family dissatisfaction along with one’s overall life dissatisfaction. Even though physical and psychological components of health and well-being cannot be completely separated, there are numerous causal linkages explaining the different pathways through which health and well-being is impeded by work-family conflict (Greenhaus et al, 2006).

The relationship between work-family conflict and depression have been examined by numerous studies. Instead of assessing a clinical depressive disorder, most of these studies have accessed depressive moods or symptoms. The assumptions that those employees who experience work-family conflict also experience high levels of depression is supported by the findings of these studies. In addition, depression is related to both forms of interference i.e. work interfering family and vice-versa (Frone et al, 1996). Moreover, a positive relationship between work-family conflict and depression have also been observed consistently by these studies. The relationship between work and family conflict and other aspects of psychological health like psychological strain, anxiety and life distress have also been examined by a handful of studies. Just as symptoms of depression, these studies have also found out that both directions of interference i.e. work interfering with family and vice-versa are believed to be associated with these forms of psychological strain (Parasuraman et al, 1996). The existence of significant relationship between work-family conflict and psychological outcomes have been illustrated by other studies that focused either on work interfering
with family exclusively or on bidirectional interference (Matthews et al, 1996; Parasuraman et al, 1996).

By using different types of expressions such as burnout, somatic-psychological health and psychological symptoms, several studies have combined psychological and physiological health items into a single measure. Despite being few in number, these studies have demonstrated that work interfering with family and vice-versa holds a significant relationship with outcomes of strain (Hughes & Galinsky, 1994; Kirchmeyer & Cohen, 1999). The consistent relationship between work-family conflict and overall life satisfaction has been highlighted by the literature. While assessing work interference with family and family interference with work, studies have found that both directions of interference were associated with diminished quality of life or reduced life satisfaction (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991). The fact that the impact of work-family conflict on life satisfaction was partially or fully mediated by satisfaction with work-family domain has been revealed by several studies (Aryee et al, 1999). Thus, there is clearly a positive association of work-family conflict with anxiety, depression and emotional strain, whereas, overall life satisfaction and indicators of combined physical and emotional symptoms is associated negatively. In addition, there have been an impact on the overall psychological well-being due to interference of both directions between work and family roles (Frone, 2000).

There are two different approaches taken by research which links work-family conflict and physical health outcomes. The first approach which involved a small number of studies examined physical conditions which are specific in nature such as blood
pressure, cholesterol level, hypertension and stress. On the other hand, general self-reports of physical symptoms, health complaints, somatic complaints and overall health issues have been assessed by a second approach that involves a large number of studies. Research revealed that work interfering family and family interfering work were both positively related to diastolic blood pressure level while family interfering work was linked with hypertension (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). In addition, individuals who underwent extensive work interference with family reported higher cholesterol levels.

There have been implications of other studies which predicted physical conditions for the impact of work-family interface on physical health even though these studies did not assess work-family conflict directly. One study reported that female managers’ blood pressure remained high and their norepinephrine secretion increased after work, whereas there was a fall in male managers’ blood pressure and catecholamine sharply at 5 p.m. Similarly, another study reported that after work, the norepinephrine elevation was significantly greater for women as compared to men, specifically for working mothers. These findings suggested that the rise in blood pressure and norepinephrine levels was a result of greater challenges faced by women in juggling work and family responsibilities as compared to men (Greenhaus et al, 2006).

The evidence of an indirect linkage between work-family conflict and physical manifestations of health was reported by a study that was conducted on female nurses (Goldstein et al, 1999). The study reported higher cortisol levels at night for married nurses as compared to unmarried nurses. Moreover, there were similar levels of norepinephrine on work days and off days for married nurses, while there was
significant decrease in norepinephrine for unmarried nurses on off days as compared to work days. The study also revealed that a decrease in heart rate was significantly greater for women without children from day time to evening as compared to women with children (Goldstein et al, 1999). Similarly, another study revealed that the production of high levels of systolic and diastolic blood pressure among white-collar women resulted from extensive family responsibilities and high job demands. To conclude, these findings suggested a possible linkage between physical health and family responsibilities for women wherein physical effects on health resulted from juggling work and family demands (Greenhaus et al, 2006). Researchers have examined the relationship between conflict and behaviour that can produce health problems by taking into account the potential impact of work-family conflict on physical health problems. As per findings, there has been an association of work-family conflict with substance dependence, extensive use of medications, alcohol-use and smoking (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). There has also been an association of work-family conflict with limited exercise and poor choices that has been either assessed directly or inferred from family responsibilities (Grzywacz & Marks, 2001). Stress is considered as an important variable by which we can understand how the health of employees are affected by work-family conflict. The roots of work-family conflict have been found in the study of organisational stress where conflict in work-family domains have been viewed from the stress perspective. In fact, the manner in which individuals react to stressful environments can be traced from the origins of health and well-being (Sanderson, 2004).
With regard to the choices of food and physical activities, there has been an impact of work-family on physical health of families who are seen to be racing against time in order to meet the demands of work, child-care, shopping for grocery and preparation of meals. In a qualitative study conducted in United States, workers were unable to prepare a healthy menu due to the constraint in time and energy which was required to shop and prepare meals (Devine et al, 2003). In fact, the main obstacle to eating healthy is considered to be time constraint faced by employees, which has been reported by various surveys. Notably, the time constraint has been attributed to work demands which resulted in loss of energy after work, due to which employees were unable to prepare healthier meals when they reached home. Thus, the factors responsible for determining food choices were speed and convenience. In order to reconcile work demands and nutritional needs of the family, different strategies have been adopted by the employees. The creativity and strong organisational abilities of families have been demonstrated by some methods while other methods seemed to be costly and there were questions raised about health issues when employees opted to eat in restaurants or when they bought frozen foods. Employees were unable to share meal times with their family members due to time constraints and hectic work schedules. Having meals with family is considered as a period of transition between professional and family obligations and not just a mere occasion of eating together. It also provides the opportunity for socialisation and transmission of nutritional culture along with providing opportunity for parent-child contact (Nathalie et al, 2007). In fact, a positive emotional effect on parent-child relationship has been observed by eating together as a family by a U.S. Council of Advisors in 2000 (Zuzanek, 2000). There has been an association of work-
family conflict with a myriad of indicators of poor health and impaired well-being as observed by the research. It includes poor mental and physical health, reduced life satisfaction, increased stress levels, higher emotional exhaustion, reduced physical exercise, consumption of alcohol, increased depression and anxiety levels, fatigue and poor appetite experienced by individuals who juggle between work and family demands.

**REVIEW OF WORK-FAMILY POLICIES**

The behaviour and attitudes of employees might be altered by formal policies through the use of different channels. First, in order to accommodate family circumstances, the policies may increase opportunities for employees in order to change their pattern of work. Thus, the formal policies are necessary but not sufficient (Eaton, 2003). The second channel is considered as symbolic, where the commitment of the organisation to their employees is expressed in the form of implementation of work-family policies (Grover & Crooker, 1995). As a result, policy utilisation is said to be induced since policies enhance the climate around work and family domains. Lastly, policies are also considered as stigma to some extent because it produces a division between employees where the policies are frequently used by less hard-working employees while committed or serious employees do not utilise the policies being provided to them (Bailyn, 1993; William, 2000). In this regard, instead of solving the problems of employees, formal policies are likely to exacerbate them. This suggests that there will be minimal effects of work-family policies on the behaviour of the employees. Moreover, the effects of work-
family policies will be reduced if employees remain unaware of these policies (Budd & Mumford, 2004). In a study conducted on a corporation, it was reported that there was a rare utilisation of work-family policies (Hochschild, 2007). On the other hand, even though a positive and significant correlation was exhibited by usable policies, it was revealed that there was no significant association of formal flexibility policies with organizational commitment. Moreover, it was reported that around 95 percent of the observed variance in work-family conflict, job satisfaction, stress and turn-over intent was due to the informal means of work-family support, whereas less than five percent of the variance resulted from formal policies (Eaton, 2003).

There was also evidence suggesting that formal policies are not as significant as the informal policies. The informal policies are interpreted in terms of supervisor support and organizational climate. Both these phenomena exert a strong influence on the ability of employees to balance their work and family demands (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). In order to be considered as family-friendly, policies must be able to adhere to certain key objectives. First, people must be able to fulfil the demands of family and work life with the help of policies. In order to do so, policies should be based on promoting gender equality and the sharing of family responsibilities between men and women. Thirdly, policies must be employee-friendly, non-discriminatory and should be accompanied by working conditions which are acceptable in nature. Lastly, for a family-friendly policy to be successful, a balance should be established between the needs of employees and employer, which is usually referred to as trust or invisible contract relationship between the employer and employees. In order to achieve work-family balance of the employees,
a wide range of work-family policies have been adopted by the organizations where they are employed. These policies comprise parental leave including maternal, paternal and adoption leave, flexible working hours, job sharing, telecommuting, day care facilities for children, arrangements for elder-care and sabbaticals (Kossek et al, 1994).

Various organizations provide their employees with different measures in order to balance their work and family life which has been highlighted by a number of studies. With this regard, the provision of child-care was provided to employees based on the following three reasons: First, it was argued that child-care provision was beneficial in eliminating problems of child-care that interfered with work efficiency, as well as enhancing the control of management over the workforce. Secondly, child-care provision was given due to the government or society’s coercive pressure to the organisation. Lastly, child-care provision was adopted in order to highlight the progress achieved by the organisation in taking into consideration the needs of their employees (Kossek et al, 1994). While implementing work-family policies, variations across firms was observed as policies were related to the strategy adopted by organisations in recruiting employees (Osterman, 1995). Work-family policies were effected by those organizations whose employees were professional or technical workers in comparison to organisations that comprised service workers or blue-collar employees. In other words, work-family policies were adopted by those organisations which demanded having high commitment and high performance work systems (Osterman, 1995). The introduction of work-family policies appeared to be greater in those organizations where women were holding top executive positions in larger proportion. In addition, companies also made
investments in measures such as flexible time, off-time practices, job sharing, child-care and part-time work who had women working in larger proportion as a workforce. On the other hand, work family policies were less often offered by those companies who employed workers on an hourly basis or where employees were paid relatively less for the amount of work that they were assigned to complete (Galinsky & Johnson, 1998).

There are several motives behind the introduction of flexible working arrangements by various organizations. Business benefits, well-being of employees and the desire to move along with legislations were some of the reasons for introducing these working arrangements. However, variations were observed in these motives depending on the size of the organisation, the manner in which employee relations were structured, and the type of arrangements adopted by the organisation (Dex & Scheibi, 2001). Moreover, the introduction of family-friendly policies were based on two important rationale. First, they were introduced to make necessary improvements in the process of recruiting the best employees, and secondly they were introduced to improve staff retention for the better functioning and overall progress of the organisation (Maxwell & McDougall, 2004). With regard to employees’ attitudes and well-being, there are numerous benefits provided by the implementation of work-family policies. There was a direct positive effect of supportive practices, flexible scheduling and supportive supervisors on employee perception of control over work and family matters. On the other hand, lower levels of work-family conflict, depression, high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, somatic complaints and controlled perception of the employees by the organisation (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Work-family policies were also responsible for improving
the performance and controlling the stress levels of the employees. In fact, it was observed that employees who were able to better access work-family policies were more loyal to the organisation, highly motivated at work, and paid back in terms of continuous commitment and improvement in performance (Maxwell & McDougall, 2004). An improvement was observed in terms of job satisfaction, and work pressures were reduced when the employees perceived that they were getting support to balance their work and family life from their employers in the form of family-friendly policies, which in turn resulted in reduced intentions of employees to leave their organisations. In order to enhance group processes and effectiveness, a cross-level model was developed which facilitated work practices. Flexibility in work and family issues which are supported by work practices have been proposed by this model. These include collaborative management of time, work contribution redefined, strategic self-presentation, enhancement of overall awareness of others needs and goals of a group, reduction of process losses and enhancement of organisation citizenship behaviour (OCB) at group level (Dyne et al, 2009).

However, the utilisation of work-family policies have been restricted by certain barriers which have been observed by the researchers. Due to the management distrust, limited training and communication, work-alcoholic culture, job design, incompatibility and stretching of scarce resources, there was under utilisation of policies such as flexible work schedules, part-time work and compressed work hours (Newman & Mathews, 1999). The major reason behind work-family policies being ineffective was its uneven distribution and these policies were not adopted by small organisations. In addition,
these policies were unwritten and informal in nature. The line managers who were untrained and had no knowledge about work-family issues had a direct control over these policies. Also, these policies were established and implemented without consulting employees. Lastly, there was no evidence of working hours being reduced due to the policies. In fact, the introduction of policies was done primarily to meet the needs of the business rather than that of the employees (Hyman & Summers, 2004). Other factors that created hindrance in the implementation of work-family policies were an increase in the demands of the work, which overshadowed personal needs, focus on programmes instead of culture change, involvement and communication with senior managers and which was insufficient in nature, attitudes of management, repercussions on career, peer influences and administrative processes and non-involvement of effective implementation of policies as well as lack of communication to employees (Waters & Bardeol, 2006). In India, prior to the growth of the IT sector, family friendly policies such as Maternity Benefits Act, 1961; Equal Renumeration Act, 1971 and Anti-Sexual Discrimination Policies, were already established. However, other policies such as job sharing, flexible work timings, telecommuting, gym, counselling and other programs of wellness were introduced only after the establishment of the IT sector in India. IT & ITES industry which initiated these family-friendly policies for their employees were an imitation of practices followed by western organizations rather than a sincere effort to help employees balance their work and family lives. As a result, these policies were not beneficial to the employees in a real sense (Rajadhyaksha & Smita, 2004).
There have been variations observed across different countries with regard to work-family policies. For instance, an emerging work-family policy in the Indian context is to provide safe public transport facility for women at night, from the workplace to their home. In Chile, due to the constant fear of violence taking place in their communities, several women preferred to work from home or nearby, as they do not want to leave their children alone at home. Working mothers in Chile do not utilise public-supported child-care provided by the Government due to lack of faith in the policy. Thus, they are deterred from participating in greater labour force in Chile. In Scandinavia, work-family policies are not considered to be a burning topic as compared to other developed countries since work-family policies are regarded as a part of the normal functioning of national cultural values. Moreover, there is cultural mainstreaming of work-family policies into the organisation of work and society, since both men and women spend equal amount of their time in working outside as well as taking care of family needs. In Greece, a global care-giving chain has been created with the help of immigration laws, which allows immigrant caregivers to cross borders. As a result, women from Philippines and Georgia are able to immigrate to Greece in order to provide child-care, house cleaning and elder-care. In the U.S, a large number of professionals prefer to work from home via telecommuting. Thus, there is a need to recognise the importance of separating their work from their family life, in order to avoid interference and clashing of two domains. There is a dilemma among the employees with regard to their psychological availability for family needs due to their constant physical presence at home. In addition, in the U.S, increasing schedule predictability has been related to work-family policies for single mothers who are working as low income retail workers,
and who face difficulty in arranging commutes for last minute schedules and child-care. The wide range and uniqueness of work-family policies across cultures have been illustrated through these instances from different countries (Kossek, 2012). By offering work-family balance policies which have competitive remuneration packages, employers will be able to attract better recruits. Moreover, there are several benefits of providing work family balance policies. These benefits include productivity enhancement, staff retention rates can be improved through cost reduction, negative spill-over can be decreased, reduction of extended hours, minimisation of stress, which result in healthier and safer working environment. Effective work-family balance policies are adopted by large firms which are globalised in nature and which encourages employers to introduce policies that will eventually result in the enhancement of their business performance. However, in low-skilled industries, there is less availability of work-family balance policies for low skilled workers (Wise & Bond, 2003). In order to neutralise the effects of work stressors on family satisfaction, the usage of flexible organisational policies have been implemented. On the other hand, in order to facilitate better work-family balance for employees, organizational climatic changes have been adopted (Kossek, 2012).
CONCEPTUALISING WORK-FAMILY BALANCE

INTRODUCTION

There are several theories that seek to explain the relationship between work and family. However, these theories have not been integrated into a comprehensive theory that can serve as a guide to research on work-family issues. The academic body of knowledge depends on different theoretical approaches with regard to work-family interface. These theoretical framework includes spill-over, compensation, work-family conflict, resource drain, enrichment, congruence, segmentation, integration and ecological theories (Clark, 2000; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Frone, 2003; Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). In addition to the above mentioned theories, researchers in recent years have tried to explain work-family relationship through theories such as border theory, boundary management theory, gender inequality theory, work-life management theory etc. All these theories provide insights into the relationship between work and family domain. Role theory has been considered as the most common perspective for explaining the nature of work-family relationship which is evident in the literature. Role theory has been discussed from two different perspectives- the scarcity perspective (also known as conflict perspective) and the enrichment perspective. The scarcity perspective argues that individuals have a limited amount of psychological and physiological resources to enhance their role performance. Thus, the involvement in multiple roles can damage one’s functioning as a result of conflicting demands placed on these roles (Gutek, Searles & Klepe, 1991). The enrichment perspective posits that resources acquired from participation in one role may directly or indirectly improve and enhance performance in another role (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).
CONFLICT THEORY

Work-family conflict occurs when demands of work life create problems in fulfilling the demands of family life. Work-family conflict has been defined in terms of inter-role conflict in which role pressures from work and family domains are mutually compatible in some respect i.e. participation in one role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Originally, work-family conflict was considered as unidimensional but it is now conceptualised as bi-dimensional, i.e. work interfering with family and vice-versa (Frone et al, 1992). Most research on work-family conflict showed that its greater prevalence was among employees, thus a greater focus was on the extent of work interference in family (Kelly et al, 2008).

There were three types of work family conflict identified and studied by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). These are time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behaviour based conflict. When the time demands of one role make it difficult to participate in another role, it is known as time-based conflict. For instance, to not being able to complete a presentation and be present at a family event on the same evening (Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 1997). Based on the work-family framework, the earlier studies done by Staines & O’Connor (1980) revealed that the most cited hindrance between work and family domain is the competing requirement for time. Thus, Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) advocated two forms in which time-based conflict is manifested in consistence with the works of Staines & O’Connor (1980). First, due to time pressures involved in one role, it becomes physically impossible to satisfy the time
demands of another role and secondly, despite being physically present and attempting to meet the demands of one domain, a person is mentally preoccupied with another domain. The second type of conflict which is known as strain-based conflict occurs when psychological symptoms (i.e. anxiety, fatigue and irritability) generated by work/family demands spill-over or intrude into the other role, making it difficult to fulfil the responsibilities of that role. For example, an employee might be less responsive to her family needs while preparing herself for an official meeting. Moreover, studies have identified that a negative psychological strain will lead to extensive time involvement in one domain, thereby reducing the amount of time available for role performance in another domain, which in turn will create conflict. Both strain-based and time-based conflict are believed to share a number of sources despite being conceptually distinct (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Behaviour based conflict takes place when expected or appropriate behaviour in family role (i.e. expressiveness, emotional sensitivity etc) is considered as dysfunctional or inappropriate in the workplace. For instance, an assertive working style of an employee which is considered as a sign of success at the workplace might create an atmosphere of tension when displayed in the home environment. In other words, behaviour based conflict is said to occur when there is an incompatibility between certain patterns of an in-role behaviour and the expectations regarding the behaviour in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Like a strain-based conflict, behaviour based conflict demonstrates a negative spill-over from one domain to another where behaviour in one domain is influenced by the behaviour desired and developed in another domain and
simultaneously inhibiting role performance in the latter domain (Edward & Rothbard, 2000). For instance, in a family setting where a warm, nurturing and cooperative approach is desired, an assertive and confrontational style of work environment may be considered inappropriate or out of place (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). In terms of job factors, the amount of working time is regarded as the most powerful and enduring predictor that influences work-family conflict. The highest incidence of work-family conflict results from long working hours. In addition, health, work and family outcomes are influenced by work-family conflict, which is supported by various studies (Frone et al, 1997). For instance, greater depression, physical health complaints and hyper-tension result from work-to-family conflict, while higher consumption of alcohol results from family to work conflict. Work-family conflict and work outcomes such as performance, absenteeism, turn-over intentions, burn-out, job commitment were examined by a meta-analysis done by Kossek & Ozeki (1999). The conflict of family interfering with work is negatively related to work attitudes and performance according to the findings. Moreover, regardless of direction, conflict between work and family was related to lower commitment to work and organizations and care-related absence. Family outcomes such as lower marital quality and family satisfaction are related to work-family conflict which has also been suggested by earlier studies (Matthews, Conger & Wickram, 1996).

The opposite of work-family balance is work-family conflict, and the latter is said to occur when the pressures experienced in fulfilling one role makes the fulfilment of the other role difficult (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Work-family conflict has been
described by other researchers as a situation where an individual does not experience any union of work and family roles, and because of the intervention of work and family responsibilities, this condition will lead to negative outcomes (Frone, Russell & Barnes, 1996). To achieve work-life balance, all stakeholders must work together as mentioned by Duxbury & Higgins, 1991. Family members and different members of work organizations are negatively affected by work-family conflict. Both the employer and employees can be affected by work and family conflicts, and it can lead to family problems and health problems, and the well-being of employees can be adversely affected if it is not resolved (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991). It is assumed that employees may ruin their career chances when they prioritise their responsibilities at home and conversely, these employees may be unable to perform their family responsibilities if they experience stress and fatigue due to long working hours. Due to the lack of commitment or motivation, employees who experience work-family conflicts are likely to assume that they are not capable of fulfilling their roles, which in turn will result in employees being absent from work or leaving the organisation (Netemeyer et al 1996).

**ENRICHMENT THEORY**

Another perspective of the work-family relationship is the enrichment perspective which has been investigated by researchers in recent years. Work-family enrichment theory argues that the activity in one domain can enrich the experiences in the other domain instead of depleting energy from the other domain. The positive side of combining work and family responsibilities has been examined from the enrichment
perspective. Different terms such as facilitation, enhancement and spill-over are associated with work-family enrichment. However, they vary in their emphasis of received benefits, experiences and improvement of role performance. For instance, work-family facilitation refers to a form of synergy when resources such as skills, self-esteem etc. from one role makes it easier to participate in the other role (Wayne, Musica & Flenson, 2004). The positive spill-over refers to experiences such as skills, moods, values and behaviours transferred from one role to another (Carlson et al, 2006). The work-family enrichment is in contrast to work-family conflict and it refers to the extent to which experiences in one role improves the quality of life in the other role (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

There are multiple benefits resulting from participating in different roles such as status security, personality enrichment, role privileges, status enhancement, which are revealed by initial research on work family enrichment (Seiber, 1974). However, later research indicated that different types of positive spill-over such as mood, skills, behaviour and value spill-over still exist (Edward & Rothbard, 2000). The transfer of one emotional status from one domain to another is known as mood spill over while value spill-over occurs when what is valued for at work is also demanded in the family domain. It has been pointed out that when the skills and abilities gained in one domain can be applied to another domain, it is referred to as affective enrichment. For example, conflict solving skills learned at the workplace can be applied to resolving conflicts at home. Flexibility and psychological, physical, social capital and material resources are considered as other instrumental benefits (Kirschnmeyer, 1992). A scale was developed
and validated by Carlson et al (2006) in order to further understand family to work and work to family enrichment. Carlson pointed out that there are two ways in which work-family enrichment takes place. First, it is instrumental when resources gained in one role either directly improves performance in another role, and the second one is affective, where work-family enrichment occurs indirectly through the influence of a positive effect.

Instrumental work family enrichment occurs when resources are directly transferred from one role to another as pointed out by Carlson (2006). On the other hand, the affective path focuses on the degree to which mood and emotions from one role can step in and positively affect an individual’s functioning in the other role. Thompson & Bunderson (2001) suggested that as long as time spent in a particular role is identity-affirming, one role can positively affect another role. In other words, when the time spent is meaningful to the individuals, they are likely to experience personal satisfaction. The notion that experiences in the workplace can enrich family life and vice-versa is supported by studies which found a positive relationship between family and work domains. For instance, according to Rothbard (2000), men’s psychological engagement in family life was positively related to psychological engagement (attention and absorption) in work, while work engagement of women was associated with psychological engagement in family life. Similarly, studies have found that positive parenting (i.e. good relationship with children, school performance and children’s emotional health) was the result of the positive impact of work-related effect (i.e. work satisfaction). Moreover, it was found that when an individual received more social
support at the workplace, he is more likely to experience a positive spill-over from work activities at home and vice-versa. In addition, the individuals experiencing more positivity and energy in their personal lives transferred it to their workplace.

There are several components of work-family enrichment from a theoretical perspective (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). There are directions and dimensions of work-family enrichment, different paths promoting work-family enrichment and generations of resources in the work and family roles. First, work-family enrichment is considered to be multi-dimensional wherein work provides resource gain that enhances performance in the family domain and vice-versa. With regard to work-to-family direction, development takes place when work involvement leads to acquiring new skills, knowledge or behaviour which enables the individual to become a better member of the family; affect is viewed as a positive emotional state wherein work involvement enables the individual to become a better family member and capital takes place when work involvement facilitates levels of psycho-social resources such as sense of confidence, security, self-fulfilment or accomplishment which aids the individual to become a better family member. With regard to family to work direction, development takes place when family involvement leads to acquiring new skills, knowledge or behaviour which enables the individual to become a better family member; affect takes place when family involvement leads to a positive emotional attitude which in turn helps the individual to become a better worker, and efficiency take place when family involvement provides a sense of urgency or focus which aids the individual in becoming a better worker.
Secondly, in order to promote work-family enrichment, Greenhaus & Powell (2006) have listed five types of resources. These are psychological and physical resources, skills and perspectives, flexibility, social-capital resources and material resources. Thirdly, Greenhaus & Powell (2006) identified two different paths through which the resources can be achieved, which in turn helps in promoting work-family enrichment. These are an instrumental path and affective path. Instrumental path is shown by earlier research that employees perceiving their family involvement have prepared them with the resources required to handle colleagues, or that resources have helped them to perform better at work. On the other hand, affective path facilitates work-family enrichment indirectly through moods and influence of emotions which resulted in role participation (Carlson et al, 2006). Individuals’ moods or emotional state increases as they gain greater resources through ongoing participation in that role i.e. work-to-family. This, in turn, improves their performance in the other role (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Work-family enrichment acts as a barrier against negative events and it will result in positive health for the employees as well as providing help in strengthening social relationships (Grzywacz, 2000). In connection with this finding, it has been pointed out that employers who possess a positive outlook towards work-life balance have benefits which are brought into the personal lives of employees as well, in their workplace. Nevertheless, if minimum business disruptions are to be considered, the major challenge faced by employers would be the implementation of working practices related to flexibility. According to Work-Life Balance Negotiators Guidelines (2006), efficient employers perceived that the provision of work-family enrichment to employees is a good business practice as it has several advantages such as increased
productivity, improved employee morale, retention of staff members, dedicated and honest employees, reduction of absenteeism, sickness and stress as well as employees flexibility. Similarly, there are multiple benefits of well-balanced work and family lives for employees, which comprise greater control over their working lives, improved health, self-esteem, confidence, concentration, the ability to strike a balance outside work as well as better relationships with management and other employees. In addition to these, there are several other outcomes of work-family enrichment (Grzywacz, 2000). There was a positive association of better mental health with higher work to family enrichment and family to work enrichment, where self-reported physical health was positively associated with work to family enrichment while family to work enrichment was positively associated with well-being and negatively associated with chronic health problems. Organizational culture has been successful in discharging family roles and has kept work-family enrichment policies, supervisor support and family oriented benefits into place which were considered to be predictive of work-family conflict (Frye & Breaugh, 2004).

**SPILL-OVER & CROSS-OVER THEORY**

Apart from the conflict and enrichment perspective, there are other theories which explains the relationship between work and family domain. One of these theories is the notion of spill-over between domains. Spill-over is said to occur when one domain impacts the other domain in the same way, despite having established boundaries between an individual’s family and work domain. Spill-over can be explained as a
process by which work and family affects one another, which in turn generates similarities between the two domains (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Both affective and instrumental types of spill-over have been identified by the researchers (Illies, Wilson & Wagner, 2009). Affective spill-over is defined as “work-related moods or attitudes are carried to home or family-related moods or attitudes are carried to work” (Illies et al, 2009: 87). On the other hand, specific skills and behaviours which are carried from one domain to another and which results in positive or negative consequences is known as instrumental spill-over (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Kirschmeyer, 1992; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Spill-over can take place in both directions. Initial research indicates that the “direction of the spill-over of interference has been found to be dependent on the salience of each role to the focal person as well as the negative sanctions associated with non-compliance with each role pressure” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985: 77). The second notion of cross-over is a similar construct to spill-over which can be applied to the study of work-life balance. Cross-over is defined as “the reaction of individuals to the job stress experienced by those with whom they interact regularly” (Westman, 2001, p.717). Cross-over is also described as “a bi-directional transmission of positive and negative emotions, mood and dispositions between intimately connected individuals such as spouses or organisational team members” (Macrtz & Boyer, 2010, p.589). Three pathways have been suggested by the literature through which cross-over can take place. The first path occurs when the stress experienced by one partner creates an empathic reaction in the other partner resulting in the increase of their own stress (Westman, 2001). The second path takes place when heavy demands on one partner decreases the leisure time they have as a couple which in turn leads to negative feelings
such as emotional exhaustion or stress (Demerouti et al, 2005). The final pathway occurs through a social undermining process where stress and time pressure leads a partner to engage in negative behaviour such as criticism or negative affect toward the other partner, which in turn results in increasing the stress of the other partner (Bakker et al, 2008).

CONGRUENCE, INTEGRATION AND ECOLOGY THEORIES

Congruence theory refers to the manner in which additional variables can influence the balance of multiple roles that are not directly related to work and family. Congruence theory shows a similarity between work and family through a third variable like personality traits, genetic and socio-cultural forces and behaviour styles. Both work and family domain can be positively affected by a third variable such as level of education or intelligence based on congruence theory (Edward & Rothbard, 2000; Zedeck, 1992).

Integration theory refers to the holistic view that work-life and community-life domains can be encouraged and facilitated through a healthy system of flexible and permeable boundaries (Clark, 2000). With regard to work and life, the incorporation of additional contextual elements such as community into a body of knowledge is best portrayed by integration theory. Integration theory makes all stakeholders (i.e. employers, workers and communities) active partners, with equal voices in the formation of a holistic model of work-life balance by focusing on contemporary understanding that rebuild traditional work-life paradigms (Morris & Maden, 2007). Instead of providing solutions which are shaped in isolation, an approach that includes all parties and shared responsibility will
provide better results within both the work and family domains. The Ecological system theory refers to the idea that work and life are symptomatic in nature where each and multiple characteristics provide an affective effect on the work-life experiences and are also considered as a joint function of process, person, time and context characteristics. However, the ecology theory was later converted into the person-in-environment theory, with a common link among diverse person environment variants as a recognition that there is a vibrant relationship of individuals and groups with their physical, social and natural environments (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000).

**COMPENSATION THEORY**

Compensation theory is considered as one of the relationships within the work-family literature. Compensation occurs when the resources are used to fulfil the need from one domain to another domain (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Lambert, 1990; Staines, 1980) which is similar to the buffering effect attributable to work-family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). The idea of compensation as a mechanism through which one role can support the other and which is induced by insufficient positive experiences has been discussed by Edwards & Rothbard (2000) in their paper on linking mechanisms between home and work domains. Two forms of compensation has been identified by Edwards and Rothbard (2000) i.e. Supplemental and Reactive compensation. Supplemental compensation is likely to occur when an individual does not receive the rewards they need from one domain and seeks them from another domain (Ibid, 2000). For example, an employee may become overly dependent on
praise from his family if he does not receive any praise for his efforts at work. Relative compensation takes place “when undesirable experiences in one domain are readdressed by an individual seeking contrasting experiences in the other domain (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000: 181). For example, a mother might seek out quality time with her children after a tiring day at work.

**BOUNDARY & BORDER THEORY**

Boundary theory is considered as an important theoretical contribution by providing a strong starting point for literature exploration related to work-life boundaries (Ashforth et al, 2000; Zerubavel, 1991). Boundary theory differentiates blocks of space and time in its most basic form, each block is covered by frames and can be attributed to differing roles in one’s life environment (Zerubavel, 1991). Boundary theory has been defined as a way in which individuals create and maintain boundaries as a means of simplifying and ordering the environment (Ashforth et al, 2000: 474). Boundary theory has been refined by another theory known as border theory which focuses on various forms of boundaries surrounding work and non-work domains (Clark, 2000). Three types of borders have been identified which individuals maintain between their personal and work lives. These are temporal, physical and psychological borders (Clark, 2000). Temporal boundaries refers to actual times within which work activities versus personal activities take place. For instance, an employee may set a time-based boundary of 6 p.m. to end the day’s work in order to collect his/her children from day care (Clark, 2000). Physical boundaries refer to actual locations in which personal and work activities take
place. This location may be home versus office, or for people who work from home, it may be the area where they perform their work role i.e. study or separate area. Lastly, psychological boundaries may be characterised by the perceptions associated with the activities of work and home roles (Ashforth et al, 2000; Clark, 2000). For example, psychological boundary can be an employees’ interpretation of attending a work-related meeting in the evening as a social activity with friends from work. Both border and boundary theory asserts that less conflict will be experienced when an individual manages work and non-work separately. However, the transitions between these roles is likely to be easier when these roles are integrated (Ashforth et al, 2000; Clark, 2000; Desrochers & Sargent, 2004). In addition, depending on the characteristics which are unique to the individual and the environment, both border and boundary theory suggest that segmentation and integration of work and home roles can result in positive outcomes such as their preferences for integration or segmentation and contextual factors like work environment which allows conditions of work to match or fail preferences of employees (Ashforth et al, 2000; Clark, 2000; Desrochers & Sargent, 2004). The contention that these unique characteristics can influence work-life outcomes has been supported by research. For instance, Chen et al (2009) in their study of managerial level employees in the U.S. found that the congruence between employee preference for segmentation or integration of work and non-work roles was positively related to time and strain based work-family conflict. Likewise, the ability of employees to successfully manage their professional and personal lives boundaries have been impacted by the organizational context in terms of “formal policies, job design, social support for work-family strategy choices and prevailing cultural expectations” (Kossek
et al, 1999, p.116). It was suggested by their framework that in order to classify effects of policies on managing work and family roles, research on policy should be enriched by greater reliance on work-family integration theories i.e. direct spill-over, indirect spill-over, segmentation (Kossek et al, 1999).

**SEPARATE SPHERE THEORY**

This theory considers work and family as distinctive systems wherein family is a domestic haven for women and work is a public arena for men. The family is understood as distinctive sex-toned traits and is characterised by different domains. Erikson (1965) identifies an inner sphere for women as wives and homemakers, and an outer sphere for men as decision-makers and bread-winners in psychoanalytic theory, while separate gender roles (instrumental and expressive) have been identified in Sociology by Parsons (1970). Parsons considered work as a public sphere mainly for men who are supposed to fulfil instrumental and materialistic needs. On the other hand, the family was understood as a private sphere for women who are asked to provide expressive and emotional support. This type of division of labor based on gender leads to sex-toned labor market where women are confined to low paying jobs which are considered as extensions of their domestic duties. The separate sphere theory asserts that the family and work domains should be separated so that they can function properly for the stability of the society. In order to avoid conflict, a sexual division of labor should be maintained. With regard to the labor market, the work that women perform for her family is not considered as a form of production with exchange value. On the other hand, men are considered as the only link through which family is connected to
the economic system as producers. In addition, society has placed a high value to productive activities in the public sphere, rather than to the domestic activities in the private sphere (Zaretsky, 1976). Male domination and female subordination are due to the differential allocation of rewards, resources and opportunities. In addition, the social structure is embedded with the primacy of instrumental over expressive, of father over mother, of producer over reproducer.

**INTERACTIVE THEORY**

In order to move beyond an understanding of women and their families or of men and their work, feminists have tried to integrate the study of work and family for a better understanding of the intimate relationship between work and family. The mutual interdependence between work and family has been highlighted by the interactive theory through considering the reciprocal influences of work and family, and taking into account their joint as well as independent effects either directly or indirectly on the social and psychological conditions of individuals. The Interactive model has been divided into two types which describe system interdependence between family and work. They are Marxist and Non-Marxist. Family and work are considered as economic units by Marxists and they study the linkages of work and family to the larger economy. Family and work are viewed as social systems or structural units by Non-Marxist and they examine the specific circumstances under which there is an intersection of occupational and familial roles. Specifically, Non-Marxist consider how family relationships, coping mechanisms and lifestyle are influenced by the work context such as occupational conditions, job characteristics, and in turn how work life is affected by
the family context. Non-Marxists use theoretical perspectives which vary from structuralist to social psychological in nature. Kanter (1977) has highlighted five aspects of the occupational structure and work-life organisations that shape the family system in a dominant way. These aspects comprise job absorption, rewards and resources, time and timing, emotional climate and cultural dimension of work. It has been suggested that work orientations, motivations, emotional energy, ability and the demands people carry to their workplace can be explained in terms of their family situation (Kanter, 1977). Moreover, the effects of maternal employment, whether negative or positive, depends on work and family conditions, reactions to work, use of resources, coping effectiveness, networks and other factors have been acknowledged by interactive theory (Acock, 1982). For some employees, stress, conflict and other problems are created through simultaneous membership in multiple systems. However, this theory argues that those consequences may be functional under certain circumstances rather than being dysfunctional (Marks, 1977). Earlier, the mutual impact of both spheres are adequately dealt with studies which focussed on dual-earner families with professional and managerial jobs requiring high commitment, greater job absorption, long work hours and career with a continuous upward mobility (Esther & Catherine, 1988).

**CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES THEORY**

Another theoretical foundation for examining the relationship between work and family is the Conservation of Resources (COR) model used by Grandey & Cropanzano (1999). For the study of work-family balance, the COR model offers a strong framework which
argues that individuals attempt to utilise and keep resources. Resources refer to the means of attaining those objects, conditions or energies and personal characteristics that are valued by the individual. It may be used in problem-solving and coping and it includes autonomy, social support, contingencies, established behaviour outcomes etc. An individual is likely to experience stress when she perceives a potential loss of resources or when an expected resource gain fails to materialise or when there is actual loss of resources. The COR model explains that the depleted resources resulting in negative outcomes like lower job satisfaction, lower commitment and poor performance is caused by the conflict between an employee’s home and work life. Work-life balance and positive outcomes can be achieved by anything that serves to replenish these resources. Resources such as job autonomy, family support and presence of spouse are responsible for a better balance of work and family lives. There is likely to be less conflict in the presence of the availability of resources. The responsibility for child-care and elderly-care are considered as a possible resource drain. The energy and time required for dependent care will result in a smaller pool of resources and higher conflict of work and family (Premeaux et al, 2007).

WORK-LIFE MANAGEMENT THEORY

Based on the self-determination theory, the work-life management model focuses on managing life by gaining insight from life-management (Freund & Baltes, 2002; Smith, 1999) and self-management (Lorig & Holman, 2003). Issues such as environmental, intrapersonal and developmental are simultaneously recognised by this theory where a
person living in a changing environment develops himself/herself through interaction over time with the environment. Workplace and home are those environments. The work-life management model which is proposed as an organising framework for coaching practice is deliberately structured around the acronym MANAGER. Each of the seven domains consist of an array of techniques instead of a single technique, and they are areas for consideration within coaching. This model allows practitioners to incorporate techniques based on evidences from behavioural sciences and is designed to be coherent conceptually. In addition, it gives more importance to the environment, unlike many individualistic approach to coaching. The manner in which the needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness for the individual are met by the home and work environment have been examined by this theory. The seven domains of work-life management model are M-manager, A- acceptance, N-nurturing needs, A-authenticity, G-goals, actions and time-management, E- environmental opportunities and threats, R-responsibility (Oades et al, 2005)

The first initial ‘M’ of the acronym MANAGER stands for mindfulness through which individuals are able to evaluate their own thinking, emotions and behaviour during its occurrence. This approach of mindfulness has become central forms of several therapeutic techniques and it is based on principles drawn from mindfulness meditation or Vipassana. Conceptually, it is related to the interpersonal component of emotional intelligence and it is useful in allowing individuals to divert from unhealthy habits and thoughts. The second initial ‘A’ of the acronym MANAGER refers to the ability of individuals to accept themselves and their situation. Prior to the process of change,
acceptance suggests that a clear view of reality is useful. The initial ‘N’ of the acronym MANAGER refers to the nurturing needs. Competence, autonomy and relatedness are considered as three kinds of psychological needs. Another initial ‘A’ of the acronym MANAGER refers to authenticity, highlighting the importance of being authentic to one’s personal values. The focus of the coach is moved from the ‘how’ of the goal to the ‘why’ of the goal by focusing on authenticity. The initial ‘G’ of the acronym MANAGER refers to the ubiquitous goals of the individuals which are closely connected with smaller actions and the ability to manage time and achieve these actions. This notion is similar to organismic theory which posits that individuals are active and they choose goals for which to strive. It has been suggested by empirical evidence of three decades that goal setting helps in increasing commitment and attainment of tasks. It has also been found that well-being can be achieved through autonomous goals (Sheldon et al, 2003). The initial ‘E’ of acronym MANAGER refers to environmental opportunities and threats. The structure and function of the organism may be presented with threats or opportunities by the environment which is consistent with the self-determination theory. Through the application of this dialectic, the manner in which a person responds to the external challenge or threat is examined by coaching. An individual is effectively changed by this response which helps her in becoming a more complex organism. The last initial ‘R’ of the acronym MANAGER refers to responsibility. It refers to the manner in which an individual takes his/her own responsibility as well as that of others and understands the importance of being self-determined. The motif of personal responsibilities has been underscored by Butler-Bowdon’s (2001) review of self-help research within the available literature. The
coaching practitioner cannot achieve this with the clients with just one single technique. Some clients tend to have high levels of personal responsibility while other clients have less due to the stress in their lives. Similarly, self-governance, autonomy and self-determination may not be familiar experiences to many clients. Hence, in order to address these issues explicitly over time, the coach practitioner utilises the acronym MANAGER. Thus, the work-life management theory based on MANAGER model is a preliminary attempt to develop a fertile ground for a theoretically coherent and evidence based coaching practice (Oades et al, 2005).

**GENDER INEQUALITY THEORY**

The theory of Gender Inequality is particularly significant as it helps in understanding the dynamics of work-family balance of women professionals. It provides a unique perspective and gives insights for unequal participation of women in the labor market as compared to men (Thomas, 2007). There are several underlying themes of Gender Inequality theory. Firstly, it argues that men and women are situated unequally in the society wherein women get inadequate material resources, power, social status and opportunities for self-actualisation as compared to men. Secondly, it posits that inequality is a result of society’s organisation and not because of biological or psychological differences. Thirdly, despite having variations in traits, potential etc, there is no significant pattern of difference in human beings in order to differentiate between the sexes. Lastly, there is a possibility for a change in the situation wherein theorists assume that both men and women will accept the egalitarian society (Thomas, 2007).
Liberal feminists explain gender inequality by identifying the sexual division of labour; the existence of social activity in separate public and private sphere where men are located within the public sphere and women are located within the private sphere, and the socialisation of children in a systematic manner, which will help them in identifying their future roles and spheres based on their gender (Thomas, 2007). Liberal feminists assert that gender inequality is created in society through women’s restricted access to the public sphere by the social system in the society. According to them, the actual rewards of social life like power, status, opportunity and money are provided by the public sphere, and gender inequality is said to be established when women are overburdened with activities of the private sphere and denied access to the public sphere.

Marxian feminism explains gender inequality through feminist social protest and Marxian class analysis (Thomas, 2007). ‘The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State’ (Engels, 1884) has been considered as the most notable exploration of the gender inequality issue. The major argument of this theory is that the subordination of women results from the social arrangement and not from her biology. Secondly, the patriarchal family is considered as the basis for the subordination of women, where women are confined to their homes and they do not possess any economic independence or occupational freedom. Other factors responsible for gender inequality according to the Marxian theory are the legitimisation of the patriarchal family and the emergence of private property and the exploitation of women. Thus, Marxian feminist argue that women are unequal to men because of class oppression and inequality of property, labor
exploitation and alienation as factors, and not due to any basic or direct conflict of interest between men and women (Thomas, 2007).

**EXPANSIONIST THEORY**

The classical dominant theories such as functionalist, psychoanalytic and sociobiological or evolutionary psychology theories on work-family issues tried to justify a highly gender-segregated division of labor in the family and the workplace by assuming pervasiveness of large gender differences in ability, social behaviour and personality (Barnett, 2001). However, such a classification made by these theories have not been supported by overall results from systematic studies (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990). In fact, several studies have emphasised that differences in gender are conditioned by the social context. In addition, these classical theories have become obsolete due to radical changes in the facts underlying the assumptions of these classical theories. Thus, in order to understand the reality of today’s society, expansionist theory is an attempt to fill this theoretical gap by articulating an inductive theory of gender, work and family (Barnett, 2001). Expansionist theory consists of four basic principles that are derived and tested empirically. The issues of gender, work and family have been addressed by first three principles directly, whereas the broader issue of men and women’s nature has been addressed by the fourth principle which in turn has implications for a better understanding of work, family and multiple roles. According to the first principle of expansionist theory, multiple roles are beneficial to both men and women. For women, participating in a work role is proved to be beneficial while for
men, adding or participating in a family role is proved to be beneficial. The idea that strong commitment to one role does not reduce strong commitment in another role is one of the consequences of the facilitation that occurs when men and women occupy home and work roles. The second principle of expansionist theory suggests that a number of processes such as buffering, added income, increased self-complexity, similarity of experiences, expanded frame of reference and gender-role ideology contribute to the beneficial effects of multiple roles. The third principle of expansionist theory states that multiple roles are beneficial only under certain conditions. Depending on the number and time demands of roles, the benefits of multiple roles can be seen. Overload and distress are likely to occur beyond certain upper limits. In comparison to the number of roles or the time spent on a particular role, the quality of the role is considered to be important for health. Multiple roles can also provide more scope for failure or frustration just as they provide opportunities for success, especially in terms of sexual harassment, low-wage work and discrimination at the workplace. The fourth principle argues that psychological gender differences are not immutable or large in general. The differences in personality of men and women do not force them to act in highly differentiated roles. It can be noted that the current historical period has been reflected by these four principles and thus it can be seen that current values and norms are useful in shaping these principles. Role practices can be affected by cultural norms, which in turn can be responsible for affecting the subjective role quality and capabilities. However, these four principles need to be amended if there is a change in cultural norms. These four principles need to be revised if there is a change in the practice associated with roles. Finally, with a change in experiences, expectations and
context, a change is likely to occur in the abilities and personality characteristics required by certain roles, which in turn are related to cultural definitions and the historical period (Barnett, 2001). Even though the expansionist theory may prove to be beneficial in providing a better framework for future policy and research, it is culture and time bound. Thus, it cannot be considered as a universal theory.

To conclude, the work family interface has become topic of increasing interest in the field of research with regard to greater participation of women in the labor market, increasing number of dual-earner families and significant and drastic changes occurring in the workplace. Several theoretical models have been constructed to understand the relationship between work and family. These models vary according to the terms of their underlying assumptions, their emphasis on the nature, degree and direction of the relationship between social systems and the nature and magnitude of system impact on the individual. In summary, the different perspectives with regard to work-family balance which are evident in the literature depict a similar connotation of balance i.e. juggling and managing multiple roles successfully despite their variations.