Chapter 1

Introduction

The twenty first century promises to be an era of equal opportunities for all, particularly men and women in political, economic, social and personal areas [Rajadhyaksha, 2004]. Today we are in the midst of industrial revolution- one driven by a new wave of global economic forces and rapid technological transformation. The changes in the workplace are not confined to Western societies alone as many Asian countries including India have experienced similar trends [Khatri and Budhwar 2000] due to the globalization.

Socio-demographic changes in India due to globalization

India has remained largely agrarian and traditional, despite decades of modernization efforts since its independence in 1947. In recent years, with the increased pace of urbanization and modernization, Indian society is undergoing rapid changes. In addition other factors like demographic and social changes, increased female literacy rate, focus on higher education, exposure through media and increasing work opportunities and the widespread acceptance of women working outside the home have also resulted in women taking up employment. Indian women irrespective of their social and economic classes have entered into paid occupations. In recent years, exposure to educational opportunities for women in India is substantially higher than it was some decades ago (especially in the urban setting) which has contributed to women’s employment and an in increase in dual career couples [Moorhead et.al. 1997]. This would mean a host of new challenges for today’s workers as they struggle to cope with the often competing pressures of work demands and personal responsibilities with an increased concern for the boundary between employee work and non work lives [Hochschild, 1997]. Work and non-work
domains tend to spill over into one another, rather than being two segregated aspects of life [Adams, King &King 1996, Frone, Russel & Cooper 1992, Williams & Alliger, 1994].

Until modern times, legal and cultural practices, combined with the inertia of longstanding religious and educational conventions, restricted women's entry and participation in the workforce. Economic dependency upon men, and consequently the poor socio-economic status of women, had gender connotations have had the same impact, particularly as occupations have become professionalized over the 19th and 20th centuries.

**Women’s participation in the workforce and its impact on family and society**

Indian Studies on employed married women have reported economic need as the primary reason for their employment [Srivastava 1978, Ramanna and Bombawale 1984]. Increasing number of women are beginning to work full time and aspire to climb the same ladders as their male counterparts [Davidson and Cooper, 1984]. Increased awareness of having fewer children compared to olden days has resulted in women getting more free time where they can opt for jobs outside, and it is not just seeking the “jobs” but “careers”. Indian women of all social classes have entered professional occupations. While the entry of unmarried women into professional occupations may be relatively less problematic, the case of married working women who have multiple roles to fulfill results in strains and tensions within herself owing to role conflict. The employed woman who has to divide her energies between the working world and her traditional role as a woman faces adjustment problems peculiar to her Gender. The married woman has both home and job responsibilities somewhat different from those of her male counterpart. Considering that Indian society is quite conservative, though
women take up employment they are expected to give priority to the household roles than to their employment roles. According to a UN study [2010], women in India approximately spend 35 hours each week on household chores and family responsibilities against 4 hours per week by men. Striking a balance between home and career is one of the biggest challenges faced by the women workforce resulting in negative consequences on family life and work-life.

Current Indian urban families are characterised by nuclear structure, failure of traditional support system, changes in the familial roles, issues related to single parenting, caring for elders etc. due to women’s employment [Bruke and Greenglass 1987]. These trends indicate that the conflict between work and family role is likely to become even more pronounced in the future. Achieving Work-life balance is thus a necessity to enhance quality of life and life in general especially for the working couples.

The importance of work-life balance Maintaining work-life balance has been the focus of industries human resource practitioners amidst the demanding nature of work and the workers’ personal endeavors in the age of information and technology. The fast-paced life, the instant accessibility to information pushes the person to do more rather than making him to live with ease and comfort. The world of work operates on 24/7 basis ably supported by advanced technology further reduces the boundary between work and personal life. Work-life balance “is the stability characterized by the balancing of an individual’s life complexity and dynamism with environmental and personal resources such as family, community, employer, profession, geography, information, economics, personality or values” [Crooker et al, 2002]. Gibson et al. [2006] offered two explanations regarding the interconnectedness of work and life in the organizational setting: (1) the compensation effect implies that employees tend to compensate for low work or personal
life satisfaction by seeking contentment in the other domain; and (2) the spill over view that indicates that job satisfaction spills over into one’s work life and vice versa. The linkage of work and personal aspect of lives has always been emphasized [Bruck et al., 2002; Gibson, et al., 2006]. Gibson et al. [2006] offered two explanations regarding the interconnectedness of work and life in the organizational setting: (1) the compensation effect implies that employees tend to compensate for low work or personal life satisfaction by seeking contentment in the other domain; and (2) the spill over view that indicates that job satisfaction spills over into one’s work life and vice versa. Women in the workforce earning wages or a salary are part of a modern phenomenon, one that developed at the same time as the growth of paid employment for men; yet women have been challenged by inequality in the workforce.

Women's lack of access to higher education had effectively excluded them from the practice of well-paid and high status occupations. Entry of women into the higher professions like law and medicine was delayed in most countries due to women being denied entry to universities and qualification for degrees, in the modern era, the phenomenon of women in the workplace is closely tied to economic and social trends. Most work had been divided by gender until the advent of the knowledge worker, a phrase coined by Peter Drucker [Sullivan, 2006]. The knowledge industry created greater access for women, and greater opportunities for career growth along with fulfilling the traditional familial roles. As a result, the family became an organizational stakeholder. This powerful social trend became the beginning of the work/life balance paradigm shift. The dynamic elements of organizational life and family life create an ideal scenario for a systems management approach as a problem solving tool.
The tipping point of the paradigm shift in the work/life balance model was caused by the number of women in the workforce and the resultant demands of the “families”.

The change in the paradigm itself occurred when organizations responded interactively with their stakeholders to dissolve problems which had been caused by rigid, inflexible policies, plans and practices. The transition, which is the result of a collective psychological inculcation of the value of the paradigm change, is unique to each organizational culture. The effectiveness of the life/work balance transition lies in the ability of each organizational culture to fully adapt to a model in motion – evolving and dynamic – like its environment from higher education and the ability to be evaluated based on knowledge performance rather than physical capabilities, as was previously required in factory or farm work.

The metaphor of balance does not denote an equal division of time, energy or other resources between the work and non-work domains (in economic sense), but is a highly individualized and reflexive concept of being able to manage one’s work, family and leisure life in a self-fulfilling way. Individuals and households combine employment and family responsibilities not only on the basis of individual attitudes and aspirations but also under the influence of wider social trends such as developments in the economy, demography, social policy and national cultures [Crompton and Lyonette, 2006]. Work life balance refers to simultaneous pursuing of the roles in work and life without any conflict or imbalance. While the term work-life balance is widely used, there is no one universally accepted definition [Frone, 1992]. Most often the term is linked to a lack of a conflict between the needs arising from paid work and family responsibilities and a satisfaction with their integration. Other terms that are used interchangeably, although with somewhat different connotations, are work-family interface, work-family integration
and work-family spill over. Some authors argue that the term ‘balance’ is outdated and a new approach should be used – work-personal life integration [Fletcher, 1996; Lewis and Cooper, 2005] which goes beyond the dichotomy between home & work life and underlines the role of organisations and supervisors in providing a family-friendly environment. Others prefer to use work-wider life or work-personal life balance as to denote the wider range of roles that people play outside the domain of paid work. Related concepts holding a negative evaluation that are studied in empirical research are work-family conflict, work-family stress, combination pressure and on the positive side – work-family enrichment, flow and wellbeing.

Research on work-family balance has traditionally focused on the conflicts and strain that fulfilling multiple roles brings about. Role conflicts arise when trying to meet competing, irreconcilable demands and role stress denotes the sense of tension experienced in such conflict situations. Studies [Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985] have distinguished between three forms of work-family conflict: time-based, strain-based and behavior-based and two directions: due to work interfering with family and due to family interfering with work. Work-family interference has a number of negative outcomes such as stress, lack of commitment and reduced quality of life. Barnett and Gareis [2006] argue that it is not the number of roles that causes conflict and strain. Rather, it is the quality of the roles that is most predictive of well-being and life satisfaction. Following this argument it can be assumed that a rewarding work-life balance is achieved when combining high quality work with high quality family life.

Many scholars have recently called for examining the positive effect of fulfilling multiple roles. According to Carlson et al [2000] enrichment between roles occurs when resources – skills, flexibility, social capital, material assets - gained from one role improve the
performance in the other. Enrichment is bi-directional and involves the transfer of competences and positive feelings from the family domain into work, as well as from the work place to the home [Llorens et al, 2007]. It is expected that enrichment between work and family brings about a sense of enjoyment from the activities and satisfaction with the achieved work-home interaction.

Various factors have been found as influencing the patterns of and the degree of satisfaction with work-life balance at national, organisational and individual level [Crompton and Lyonette, 2006]. Widely researched influences are the forms of division of paid and unpaid work [Drobnic and Treas, 2006] and cross-national comparisons of utilizing parental leave and childcare facilities [Dulk et al, 2003]. Besides statutory provisions, organisational supports and obstacles have also attracted much academic attention [Dikkers et al, 2005, Dulk, 2001]. Research has measured the effect of occupational level on relative work-home satisfaction [Hochschild ,1997]. When employees are pressed to do more and more for their organization’s role functions, they are able to invest less time and energy for their family responsibilities.

In most of the situations achieving the perfect balance between the work and family will be a major cause of stress in women in the highly demanding occupations such as police, transport, media, health and IT sectors etc.

Work-life balance is different for every individual in different stages of life. An individual who is fresh out from college and single would have a different notion of work-life balance compared with an individual who may be single but have certain ‘obligations’ to his/her family and again different for a married individual with kids, more so for single parents. The employees’ age, lifestyle, and environment play important role in one’s perception of work-life balance. The conflict between work and family spheres is
also considered especially when there is role conflict and strain [Friede and Ryan 2005; Kossek and Lambert 2005]; added to this is the productivity requirements in the workplace that often interferes with family responsibilities of individuals employed in sectors relying heavily on shift work [Williams 2008]. Organizational culture has been found to play a mediating role between policies and their use for achieving a desired work-life balance and satisfaction [Thompson et al, 1999; Dikkers et al, 2005]. Research has identified work/life interface as a stressor that can have consequences for individuals and organizations therefore employees need to adopt strategies for balancing their work and home lives, usually referred to as work-life balance.

The imbalances that can occur in work and ‘life’ responsibilities have direct impact on “social and economic status, participation in public life, health and emotional wellbeing” (Duxbury& Higgins, 2008).

Studies suggest that employee morale, satisfaction, and performance are improved among employees who have received work/life programs such as onsite child care, time for elder care, opportunity to study, opportunities for telecommuting as these reduce the level and intensity of stress that employees experience [Bruck, et al., 2002; Gibson et al., 2006].

**Role of Personality factors on work –life balance**

Along with the socio-demographic factors one of the personality factors namely locus of control has been found to be affecting the work life balance and psychological well being and family life satisfaction as the individuals with internal/external locus of control would differ in their perception and evaluation of stressors/situations both at the working place and at the family.
Locus of control concept is related to the extent to which an individual (believes) is self-motivated, directed or controlled (internal frame of reference) and the extent to which (he believes) the environment (luck, fate, chance powerful others) influence his behaviour. It is a correlate of the kinds of cognitive activity which should facilitate the maintenance of personal causation [Lefcourt, 1976]. Many differences between internals and externals are significant in explaining aspects of behaviour in organizations and other settings [Muller and Thomas 2001]). Research has shown the importance of not only perceptions of control in the immediate work environment, but also of a person's more general beliefs about control. Locus of control, perhaps the most studied control-related variable, reflects a person's belief in personal control in life (internality) rather than in control by outside forces or individuals (externality). It has been noted that internal control beliefs are an important component of emotional adjustment and ability to handle stress in general life and at work [Spector, 1982]. Locus of control in the workplace in particular (that is, belief that one has control at work) has likewise been linked to employee wellbeing [Spector, 1988]. In sum research supports the notion that internality is associated with positive well-being both on and off the job.

Generally research has found that external locus of control is related to work and life stress as well as work family conflict [Noor, 2002] along with lower degree of work life balance resulting in destabilizing effects on both the individual and the organization. Satisfaction and productivity at the individual and organizational level is thus dependent upon the nature and degree of adapting to work life imbalance, mediated by one’s locus of control. Inability to adapt or poor strategies to achieve work life balance often results in personal and occupational stress. Griffin et.al (2010) defined job stress "as a worker’s
feelings of job-related tension, anxiety, frustration, worry, emotional exhaustion, and distress"

Stress as well as its prevention and management has now become an integral and essential part of the modern life. Behaviour scientists as well as management experts advocate the need for addressing issues related to work life balance to overcome the ill effects of personal and occupational stress. Failure to handle stress effectively or failure to manage work life balance is found to result in a lower degree of perceived psychological well being.

Psychological well-being is the perceived satisfaction in different areas of life such as health, marriage, peer relationships and life in general and absence of negative affect. Psychological well-being is based on subjective experience instead of the objective conditions of life. It has positive as well as negative affect and it is global experience as opposed to experience in particular domains such as work. It is generally agreed that work-life balance is important for an individual’s psychological well-being, and that high self-esteem, satisfaction, and overall sense of harmony in life can be regarded as indicators of a successful balance between work and family roles. The concept of “psychological well being” acquired more importance in the field of Psychology over the last decade and in recent years psychological well being is the focus of intense research attention [Diener and Diener, 1991]. Psychological Well Being is described as the quality of life of a person. It includes what lay people call “Happiness”, “peace”, “fulfilment” and “life satisfaction”. Ryff (1991) states that convergence of similar features of positive psychological functioning constitutes the core dimensions psychological well being.

Dynamics of work life balance and psychological well being is very complex and several factors like the nature of the organization, occupational roles along with certain
demographic factors like marriage, work shift, years of experience etc are likely to influence this subtle relationship between the two. Hence in the present study the influence of these factors on the work life balance and psychological well being is being studied.

The factors contributing to work life balance especially among women is assumed to be influenced by the nature of occupation. Though the participation of women in employment is not new the components of work life balance have changed over a period of time. In addition due to an increase in women’s participation in higher and technical education, women are entering into occupations that were hitherto considered as occupations for men only.

The entry of women in to different occupations hitherto considered as occupations for men such as mechanics, conductors and journalists etc. is on the rise. Further women in non-traditional occupations especially those who are married have to simultaneously balance the family and work responsibilities which might affect their psychological well being, work life balance and family life satisfaction and due to which they may experience more stress. This could be due to failure of the coping and support mechanisms that would was found effective to deal with stressors arising from the traditional jobs/occupations. Professions like nursing, journalism though had women employees earlier the degree of professionalism, level of technology, changes in role expectations and role functions, has affected the personal life of the women employees challenging their mechanisms of maintaining work life balance. Hence in the present study women in traditional and modern occupations (nursing and journalism, vs conductors and BPO employees), occupations differing in the required level of technology usage and personal and human contacts were studied. Occupational and
organizational background of the jobs chosen for the study would help in understanding work life balance.

**Women in BMTC**: Bangalore metropolitan transport corporation is a government undertaking. In 1997 BMTC was formed as the result of a split of the Karnataka road transportation corporation in the context of the city's expansion. The Bangalore Transport Service (BTS) became Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation. BMTC has adopted an inclusive policy and has recruited women Conductors, in good number. BMTC has indicated at the time of recruitment that once recruited as Conductors, they will not be shifted to other jobs, special gender-specific facilities should be provided to meet the peculiar/natural needs of a woman [study report on BMTC 2005/06].

For example for women conductors and mechanics are provided the required shift so that they can attend to their family needs, at times of emergency they are allowed to work in the different shifts on mutual basis and also during their pregnancy period they will be deputed to desk work in the office so that they are more comfortable than in their regular work. If both husband and wife are the employees of the BMTC as far as possible they will be deputed in the same depot.

It has been the experience that the women Conductors are not feeling comfortable in isolated Bus Stations. It has been found that there is no properly maintained rest room for Ladies in most of the Depots.

**Job profile of women conductors**

1. Though the job is on shift basis with each shift scheduled for 8 hours often they need to spend more than 10 hours at the work place.
2. City transport being an essential service need to operate on all the seven days of the week. The weekly holiday has to be taken on rotation basis.

3. The job requires physical activities such as moving along, issue of tickets, etc.

4. Women conductors need to interact with cross section of the public that is quite heterogeneous.

5. The nature of interaction with the public are also prone to conflicts, arguments etc.

Responsibility of maintaining the cash, catering to the needs of the commuters often could be stressful.

Thus the job of the conductors needs lot of patience and physical energy on the part of the individual and also they have to sacrifice some of the family commitments as they have to attend to their work, for example they may not be able to spend time with their children and husband during general holidays and Sundays. Most of the time they will be standing during their working hours. They will be exhausted by the time they reach their home and there also they may not get sufficient time to relax. Due to the crowded buses managing the commuters is stressful for the conductors. Thus they find it difficult to balance work and life which will have a negative effect on their psychological wellbeing and family life satisfaction.

**Women in nursing profession:** The health care industry in India is one of the largest economic and fastest growing professions. Nurses play the major role in health care industry and are the first ones who are thought about when we talk about health care. The
demand for nurses is also increasing not only because of the attractive salary and job security but also because of the care they provide thus making a difference in others lives which is generally not found in many other careers [Neates, 2010]. The role of nurses has expanded from a health care provider to health educator, diagnostic assistant, post care supporter, Health advisor, Physicians assistant, operation theatre assistant, health counselor, health promoter, administrator, health researcher, Provide appropriate reassurance to patients and family members, health supervisor, maintenance of health reports, records & documents.

Forces and trends such as changing organizational structures, increased knowledge and technology, increased specialization and interdisciplinary collaboration, consumerism, shifting health problems, health-care policy, women in the work force, and nursing education have a part to play. All these affect the nursing profession and the roles, functions, and skill requirements of nurses. Quality of working life is dependent on the extent to which an employee feels valued, rewarded, motivated, consulted, and empowered. It is also influenced by factors such as job security, opportunities for career development, work patterns, and work life balance. Hospitals usually follow different shift timings. Sometimes the nursing staff have to cope with long shift hours or have difficulty travelling at odd hours (Bailyn, Collins and Song, 2007).

Over the past two decades, there has been a growing belief that the experience of stress at work has undesirable effects, both on the health and safety of workers and on the health and effectiveness of their organizations (Cox, Cox and Griffiths 2010). Dewe (1987) found that the nursing staff have enclosed atmosphere, time pressures, excessive noise or undue quiet, sudden swings from intense to mundane tasks, no second chance, unpleasant sights and sounds, and standing for long hours” which contribute to nurse work stress. He
concluded that nursing is, by its very nature, a “stressful” profession. Job-related stress is one of the commonly cited symptoms of poor quality work. Today a fast lifestyle is the norm (Scott, Rogers, Hwang, & Zhang, 2006) People expect quick results and want to accomplish things very quickly. Employees in the organisation have to meet many challenges, and demands of modern customers which lead to high levels of tension. Also, many other organisational factors such as shortage of staff, lack of resources, poor policies, lack of relationship etc., add to the stress of the employees [Janne, Taylor and Pinczuk, 2004].

Nursing is acknowledged to be stressful work, and there is a need to understand the nature of that problem and to better manage it. Both, anxiety on tangible hazards of nursing, and exposure to the psycho-social hazards associated with that work can give rise to the experience of stress. In turn, that experience can detrimentally influence job satisfaction, psychological well-being and physical health [Cox, Cox and Griffiths, 2010]

The psychosocial work conditions has been defined as psychological work demands, influence and control over work, good contact with and support from supervisor and fellow workers, stimulation from work and opportunities for development [Källestal, 2004; Theorell, 2003]. The major psychological conditions which affect the work environment are stress and emotional strain, physical strain, competence, work satisfaction, quality of care etc. The current work load, work distribution, duty scheduling shall create more or less physical strains for the staff.

**Job profile of nurses:**

1. writing patient care plans, implementing plans through tasks such as preparing patients for operations, wound treatment and monitoring pulse, blood pressure and temperature,
observing and recording the condition of patients, checking and administering drugs and injections, setting up drips and blood transfusions.

2. Assisting with tests and evaluations, carrying out routine investigations, responding quickly to emergencies.

3. Communicating with and relieving the anxiety of patients and their relatives, advocating on behalf of patients.

4. Educating patients about their health.

5. Organising staff and prioritising busy workloads, mentoring student and junior nurses.

6. Maintaining patient records, making ethical decisions related to consent and confidentiality.

Thus the above mentioned responsibilities of the nurses make the nursing profession more strenuous. Gaining the trust and confidence of each patient is an important aspect of the job for nurses, especially as they have more contact with the patients than other members of the medical team. This extends to developing a good relationship with the patient’s relatives as well, particularly in cases of chronic illness where the patient may be returning regularly for treatment. Due to the advancement in technology these employees also needs to be updated and also they should have the knowledge about the operation of the modern equipments. Because of the usage of internet and mobile phones they need to attend to the emergency calls even when they are not working in that shift. This might lead to work life imbalance. Prolonged exposure to chemicals, radiation contagious and infectious diseases, walking or standing for long hours etc may lead some health problems also. Thus it is quite natural that these factors affect their psychological wellbeing and family life satisfaction.

Women in Media: From a historical perspective, women journalists clearly have made great advances in the last two decades – their share of jobs in all media has increased,
they are not restricted to fashion, cookery, art and culture but are also reporting from the battlefields, stock market and the Parliaments press gallery. In fact women journalists are radically changing the media and giving it a broader base by mainstreaming health, environment, social concerns and women’s issues. As a profession, very satisfying and stimulating but work environment needs to be egalitarian and encouraging. At present enthusiasm often watered down by unresponsive organisations that are not sensitive to gender specific requirements which are often viewed as liabilities- transport, maternity leave, childcare facilities, rest rooms etc [Advani, 2002]. The survey conducted by Advani (2002) also revealed that several newspapers are reluctant to employ women because they would take maternity leave or have to be provided transport after night duty. Sexual harassment at work is a reality and despite the Supreme Court ruling that there should be a permanent committee in every organization to look into complaints of sexual harassment, in reality there no such committees existed [Advani,2002].

Journalism profession is dynamic in its nature of work. The work schedule under critical circumstances, the irregular job hours, fewer holidays all are the part and parcel of this profession. On the other hand, the glamorous world, the social status, expression of own ideas and views are the influencing factors which attract the minds of the people to pursue their career in this profession.

The number of women entering media is increasing but stereotyped attitudes, sexual harassment, unfair treatments in assignments and promotions, traditional gender hierarchies and lack of support mechanism for working women are some of the components which may lead to some psychological and physical consequences. The late working hours for women journalists still carry a stigma for women.
Though the Women’s participation in the print media is common the participation of women in the electronic media is relatively new. Since it requires creativity and novelty on the employees part it is more interesting occupation and even financial aspects are concerned it is quite attractive occupation.

**Job profile of journalists**

1. Print and electronic media works on 24x7 basis. Hence the journalists are required to work in the shifts and also on Sundays and general holidays.

2. People must have a strong stage presence, ability to keep the audience's attention and effectively communicate information in electronic media.

3. The employees working in this occupation has to cope up with the time factor where they have to work within the stipulated time to reach the public either in the print or in the electronic media.

Prolonged work schedule often results in a higher degree of risk and hazard. Gender discrimination for promotions and allotments of assignments for women journalists and also the hazards of night shifts and lack of maternity leave facility and other benefits they find this occupation as more stressful. The nature of the job itself is not tenable for promotions like other occupations. Gender related issues like bias, and assault is also high for women in media depending on the issues they report for example crime reports, or some sensitive issues such as communal clashes or some sensational reports about the popular personalities in the society. This might have negative consequences on their psychological wellbeing. When these journalists are assigned some sensational news reports they have to spend more time than the scheduled working hours in the office/field. Thus during this they have to sacrifice their family commitments which will lead to work–life imbalance and it may affect the family life satisfaction.
**Women in BPO:** Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is a developing industry that is receiving significant attention from all other sectors such as government, business, as well as from the academe. BPO is basically formulated to outsource processes to a third party that are not core to a company but are necessary in its everyday operations. India has the most number of BPO companies in the world and consequently the most studies and researches made on this subject. With the sustained growth of this industry, BPOs are now receiving considerable academic attention dealing with multiple aspects like work conditions, organizational environment and specific organization and work-related issues.

General organizational and work environment in BPO’s are largely different from traditional organizations as “the customer-oriented nature of work often challenges the traditional conceptions of control and coordination” [Tripathy, 2006]. It is fast-paced with a 24/7 operations leading to “possibilities for novel modes of conceptualizing and organizing work, leading to discernible changes in work cultures” [Tripathy, 2006].

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is still considered one of the fastest growing industry [BPA/P, 2006; Hechanova, 2008]. The BPO industry is divided into different sectors: (1) Contact Center (voice BPO); (2) Back Office (non-voice BPO); (3) Transcription (non-voice BPO); and IT BPOs represented in: (4) Animation, (5) Software, (6) Engineering Services [BPA/P, 2006 & 2007].

BPO companies foster the latest global human resource models and practices in strengthening management-labor relationships and work force empowerment, for example if they have to take up some assignments in foreign country their spouse’s occupation and children’s education gets affected. Thus it will be difficult to balance their work and life which might have negative consequences on their psychological wellbeing and family life satisfaction as well as their career growth.
BPO employees occupation is completely different in nature compared to other occupation.

**Job profile of BPO employees**

1. They have to work for the global standards and timings.
2. They have to work even during the night which has a lot of health and social consequences.
3. Shifts are often based on global timings than Indian standard time (IST) resulting in odd hours of shift.

The physical strains like sleep disorders, depression, odd working shifts, learning foreign accents, constantly handling abusive calls and high stress levels are making them more prone to hypertension and heart attacks. Various surveys and research conducted amongst the BPO employees have shown that depression is the most common problem faced by them. And also working in the night shifts by women is not accepted by the traditional Indian culture. Hence they are not accepted by the society. Most of the BPO’s does not observe any of the Indian holidays. The employees get very less time to spend with the family members as well as any social gatherings. They have the hazards of travelling during night hours and because they work in the “unusual” time which might have its consequences on their health also. But at the same time they also get some benefits from the organization and their pay scale is also relatively high compared to employees with similar educational qualifications but working in different organizations. BPO employees also get some benefits such as financial assistance from the company for medical expenses, health and recreational clubs within the workplace, incentives for the outstanding performances and even some foreign work assignments assisted by the company etc. which makes them attracted to this occupation.
Thus all the employees belonging to different occupations are working in the 24x7 work schedule except for conductors. Thus they may find it difficult to balance between the work and family, which may result in the difference in their degree of psychological wellbeing, family life satisfaction and stress.

**Need for the study**

A steady increase in women’s participation in the world of work is found to be affecting both occupational as well as personal life unless the factors contributing to work life imbalance is not addressed either by the organizations or by the employees.

Changes in the level of technology and global HR measures has also affected the role performance of the traditional occupations that was hither to being managed well by men.

Women employment is inevitable in the modern time both from the personal and economy perspective.

Gender stereotyping and discrimination is also common and a major behavioural concern that need to be addressed to enhance quality/satisfaction/productivity. Factors inherent in the jobs/occupations have detrimental effects especially on the women in terms of managing work life balance and psychological well being. Hence the present study was undertaken to examine the dynamics of work life balance especially among married women employees. In order to draw specific objectives of the study a detailed review of literature in undertaken and presented in the next section

Further the need for the present study is substantiated by a comprehensive presentation of the literature review pertaining to this field.