

## WORK LIFE BALANCE – A PRIMITIVE CHANNEL SOURCE FOR THE WORK CULTURE AT WORK PLACE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IT EMPLOYEES IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

The success of any business can be reckoned only through its growth and consistent market acceptance. The factors of production like material, money, men and management should be combined in an optimized way in order to label the success of business. The growth and expansion of any business through the set up of organization and institution can be achieved by the influx of materials, machines and money. The challenging human resources need to be revamped according to the need of business and availability of resources through the structure of organization. Today's organizations operate in an environment with global focus and local operational strength. The organizational effectiveness in terms of performance and dynamism can be benchmarked only with the references of existing human resources. Eventually, the human resources of any organization have to be made to perform by offering an ideal work environment that should be structured by the management and accepted by the respective individual employee. But an individual by nature viewed to be a riddle, will react differently at different work conditions. Make an individual or human resource to be balanced at work place and society including family, social web, brings benefit to individual and to the organization they belong. The perfect coordination of individual as a brand of employee at work place with respect to his/her attitude towards work, working condition and at positive focus towards their personal life generally connoted as work life balance. The consequences of ideal work life balance rewards eminent work culture which yields the success of any organization. In this aspect Information Technology (IT) is a recognized and fast growing sector in the world in general and India in particular offers permissible job avenues consistently for employable individuals. It is a sector where employees undergo for work pressure continuously. The work Life Balance in this particular sector continuously deviates among employees which in result turns with diversified work culture. The employees in IT sector should be reoriented with psychological match up to contribute at work place. This particular research paper aims to identify and address the work life balance of employees in IT sector and its impact on their work culture, the present status of IT sector in India and its growth, the impact of growth on Work life Balance and strategies to balance Work life.

**Keywords:** Work Life Balance, Work Culture, Information Technology, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment generation, market diversification,

**Introduction:**

The economic status of any individual will be reflected based on the occupation they hold, the monetary and non-monetary rewards and recognition they attain. The employees of any organization look for attractive packages and patronising with prerequisites. The individual earning sources through their occupation hold value and image for them in their formal family and informal social life. But at the same time an employee look for higher monetary packages and emoluments have to sacrifice their personal likes, sometimes which may cause impact either for individual or for their family welfare. The employees at this stage look for emotional balance in terms of physical and psychological background leads to the focus of work-life balance. The ideal work life balance posed by the employees brings needy work culture at work place which in turn abides conducive work environment leads to efficiency and productivity. The work life balance and work culture prevail at work places change from industry to industry in general and organization to organization in particular. Information Technology(IT) is the growing global industry enters with new ventures and new job avenues at work places and representing consistent business growth demands round the clock work culture patter fetches profound work life balance issues and work culture deviations.

Information Technology, one of the fastest growing sectors in Indian industry, contributes close to 16% to India's GDP. In a relatively short time, India has had a profound effect on the global software industry. From modest beginnings in low-end activities like code-testing and bug fixing to new ideas and technologies, the IT industry in India has evolved into a technology powerhouse to be reckoned with and India is now emerging as an innovation and research hub. Indian companies have built a strong reputation for high standards of service quality and information security. The domestic market has witnessed noticeable growth over the past few years and will be one of the future growth engines for the sector. The demand for higher productivity and efficiency in operations, improving business confidence, a robust economy, better availability and quality of infrastructure at a lower cost are factors driving this growth.

**Literature Review:**

**Burke (2002)**<sup>2</sup> observes that both women and men prefer working in organisations that support work-life balance. Men appeared to benefit more than women. Men feel more satisfied when they achieve more on the job even at the cost of ignoring the family. On the other hand, women stress that work and family are both equally important and both are the sources of their satisfaction. For them the former is more important. When work does not permit women to take care of their family, they feel unhappy, disappointed and frustrated. They draw tight boundaries between work and family and they do not like one crossing the others

**Morgan (2003)**<sup>3</sup> in his article outline that consequently, a larger part of them have tended to be present at their work place for longer periods of time, thereby reducing the time for which they are available at home. The internet and mobile phones have made it possible for the organizations to keep in constant touch with the employees both during the day and at night.

**Yasbek (2004)**<sup>4</sup> in his research work highlights that to a large extent in the IT sector, the employee is expected to be engaged on the job almost at all times. So the traditional distinctions between work-life and family-life have disappeared. Even during selection of employees for an organization, emphasis is placed on the attitudes the person exhibits, more particularly, whether the employee is flexible enough to be available for work at any time.

Simultaneously, family life is also becoming more complex. The extended family, even in India, is slowly disappearing (**Patel 2005**). Small nuclear families have come to stay, where both the spouses go to work. In addition, there are an increasing number of single parent households due to increase in divorces (**Amato et al. 2003**). Although this problem is not as serious in India as in the West, yet, it could become

a serious issue some time in the future. Participation by women in employment continues to grow since the past decade. In spite of more women going out to work, there has been little change in pat- terns of household responsibilities (Singh 2004)<sup>5</sup>.

These synchronous changes in working and family life result in a need for employees to continuously attempt a balancing act. Quite often the work intrudes on the family and social life, while at other times family pressures affect the work performance (Fu and Shaffer 2001). Hyman et al. (2003) observed that organizational pressures, combined with lack of work centrality, result in work intruding into non-work areas of employees’ lives. Such intrusions often manifest themselves differently depending on the type of work, extent of autonomy and organizational support (Hyman et al. 2003; Atkinson and Meager 1986). Fisher and Layte (2003) consider three distinct sets of measures of work-life balance, viz. proportion of free time, the overlap of work and other dimensions of life, and the time spent with other people. Several reviews have highlighted other issues such as age, gender, life-cycle stage, ethnicity, citizenship, and childcare arrangements which also merit attention (Wallace and Cousins 2004; Jager 20)<sup>6</sup>

Jenkins (2000) observes that issues like child rearing, the need to balance multiple roles etc. have consequences on health and family relationships. Securely attached individuals experienced positive spill over in both work and family (Summer and Knight 2001). These are pointers that there are gender differences in coping with work family issues. Women still primarily take care of domestic tasks, irrespective of their employment status. So, many women employees continue to face difficulties in balancing these two forces (Hyman and Summers 2004). Work based support to women is positively associated with job satisfaction, organisational commitment and career accomplishment (Marcinkus et al. 2007). The home working can lead to greater flexibility and independence, but it can make people work for longer periods of time, including weekends and evenings. Home environment also plays a very important role in the quality of life. Home working could be stressful, if young children have to be managed (Valcour and Hunter 2005). Gender has an important effect on home working (Gunkel 2007)<sup>7</sup>. Bharat (2009)<sup>8</sup> reviewed that many employees need to work on Saturdays and Sundays too. Moreover, there is a changing pattern in the working hours which is quite different from the standard one, which normally operates from 9 am to 5 pm (Bharat 2009).

**Importance of Information Technology in Modern Commercial Scenario:**

It is an accepted fact that the most important scientific and technological development of contemporary history is Information Technology (IT). ICT has pervaded all walks of modern life and society so profoundly that the modern society is colloquially known as Information Society. It has revolutionized the development process itself by influencing its manifold dimensions be it economic, social, political, cultural, environmental, ethical, behavioural, etc. The contribution of IT to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment generation, market diversification, operation of free markets, foreign exchange earnings, poverty reduction, environmental development, economic globalization and liberalization, women’s empowerment and gender equity are evidences to what extent it influences the economy. It fosters socio-cultural development and the concept of global village & borderless society by enhancing the promotion of social cohesion, harmony and integration, spread of education and knowledge through distance learning in cost effective manner. The degree of contribution of the IT to economies and societies vary according to their stage of development (developed, developing or underdeveloped), nature of political economy, availability of appropriate complementary infrastructure, etc.

The Indian Information Technology sector can be classified into the following broad categories

Indian Information Technology Sector			
IT Services	Engineering Services	IT Enabled Services	E-Business.

**The role of Information Technology (IT) in Indian economy:**

IT is not an individual item like the internet or computers, or telecommunications but it is a convergence of different electronic tools that facilitate the functions of information processing and communication, including transmission and display. Since no systematic and scientific data based on harmonized concepts, definitions and classifications has been developed in India pertaining to the IT sector, most of the available data are official by-products originating from different functional ministries/departments, business associations, research institutions and NGOs.

The Department of IT, Ministry of Communication and IT, compiles and publishes data under two broad headings viz. “Electronics Hardware” and “Computer software”. It is observed that “IT sector” as captured by this data is a fast growing sector of Indian industry with a recorded production of <sup>9</sup>Rs. 1182.9 billion during the year 2003-04, which reached <sup>10</sup>Rs. 3682.2 billion during the year 2008-09, recording a growth of more than three times during the last five years. Further the “IT industry” during the period from 2003-04 to 2008-09 has shown sustained growth. However, the annual growth rates during this period have shown fluctuations. While the growth rate during <sup>11</sup>2006-07 was 28.3%, it declined to 21.2% during 2007-08 and again bounced back to 24.5% during 2008-09.

**Table:1 Trend in production and growth of the Hardware and Computer Software Sector**

Year	Production(Rs. Billion)			Growth (% increase over previous year)
	Electronic Hardware	Computer Software	Total	
2003-04	438.0	744.9	1182.9	21.9
2004-05	505.0	1019.2	1524.2	28.9
2005-06	565.6	1337.0	1903.0	24.9
2006-07	660.0	1780.0	2440.0	28.3
2007-08	844.1	2114.1	2958.2	21.2
2008-09	946.9	2735.3	3682.2	24.5

**Source:** Department of IT, Ministry of Communication and IT

Electronics Hardware production increased from Rs.438 billion in 2003-04 to Rs.946.9 billion in 2008-09, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 16.6%. However, the annual growth rate in the production of electronics hardware was only 12.1%, during 2008-09 over 2007-08. According to the Ministry of IT, the hardware production in India constituted around 1.5% of global electronics production during the year 2008-09.

The Computer Software industry which was worth Rs. <sup>12</sup>744.9 billion in 2003-04 is achieved of Rs. 2735.3 billion during the year 2008-09. Software exports have become an important part of India’s exports. Indian Software exports have raised from <sup>13</sup>US\$ 17.7 billion in 2004-05 to an estimated figure of <sup>14</sup>US\$ 46.3 billion in 2008-09 (Table 1.2). This success in software has been built on the foundations of public investments in human capital, outward orientation in policies, and a highly competitive private sector industry.

**Table: 2 Growth of Exports in IT-ITES/BPO Sector**

Sr.No	Year	Exports (in US\$ billion)	Growth (%)
1.	2004-05	17.7	37.2
2	2005-06	23.6	33.3
3.	2006-07	31.1	31.8
4.	2007-08	40.4	29.9
5.	2008-09	46.3	14.6

**Source:** The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology

**Global IT players in India:**

There are a large number of multi-national IT enterprises operating in India in sectors such as: Integrated Chip Design, System Software, Communication Software, R&D Centres, Technology Support Sector, Captive Support Sector, BPO Sector etc reaping the cost and quality advantages. These multinationals include Siemens, Philips, Intel, Texas Instruments etc. (Chip Design); Siemens, Motorola, Lucent Technologies, Sony, Nortel etc. (Communication Software); Microsoft, Oracle, Sun Microsystems, HP, Compaq etc. (Systems Software); Google, Yahoo etc. (R&D Centres); Axa Business Services, Swiss Shared Services, Siemens Shared Services etc. (BPO Sector); Accenture, DELL, HSBC, GE Capital, Fidelity etc. (Captive Support Sector).

**Growth of the Indian IT Sector:**

The Indian information technology sector is one of the sunshine sectors of the Indian economy showing rapid growth and promise. The Indian IT-BPO sector is estimated to reach a target of US\$ 60 billion in exports and <sup>15</sup>US\$ 73-75 billion in overall software and services revenues by 2010. India's information and communication technology market is estimated to grow 20.3 per cent annually to reach US\$ <sup>16</sup>24.3 billion by 2011. The Indian IT (Information Technology) and IES (Information Technology Enabled Services) market is estimated to grow at the rate of over 16 percent to become a <sup>17</sup>US\$ 132 billion industry, significantly, the domestic market alone is expected to become over <sup>18</sup>US\$ 50 billion, with a CAGR of about 18.4 percent. Simultaneously, the IT and ITES exports are estimated to more than double to <sup>19</sup>US\$ 78.62 billion by 2012. Leading international companies have identified custom application development and maintenance as priority areas due to high offshore able component. The demand for domestic BPOs (Business Process Outsourcing) has been largely driven by faster GDP growth and by sectors such as telecom, banking, insurance, retail, healthcare, tourism and automobiles.

ITES now offers services such as Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO), Legal Process Outsourcing (LPO), Games Process Outsourcing (GPO) etc. More and more sophisticated products are being developed in India. The domestic BPO segment is growing annually at a rate of nearly <sup>20</sup>35 - 40 %. The revenues generated by the BPO's are almost \$1.18 million and the domestic market is expected to reach \$10 billion by the end of the financial year 2008. If it continues to grow by the current rate then by the end of the financial year 2012 then IT and IT enabled services will reach nearly <sup>21</sup>US\$330 million. The electronics hardware is growing at over 30% and is expected to grow rapidly in the coming years and is estimated to be <sup>22</sup>US\$62 billion by 2010. According to a recent World Bank study, India is the preferred location for software vendors for its quality and cost. India has strong UNIX base which provides opportunity for the development of products for internet based applications.

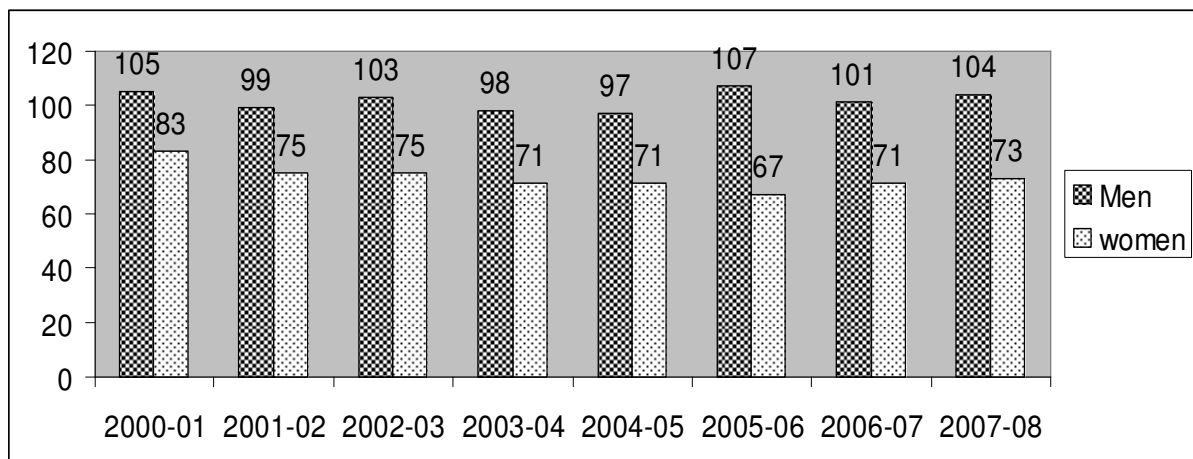
**Role of Human Resources in Indian Information Technology Sector:**

IT sector is attracting considerable interest not only as a vast market but also as potential production base by international companies. Therefore India is considered as a pioneer in software development and a favorite destination for IT-enabled services. The rapid growth in the sector is a consequence of access to trained English speaking professionals, cost competitiveness and quality telecommunications infrastructure. Companies operating from India are able to leverage the advantage of the Indian time zone to offer 24 x 7 services to their global customers. Several world leaders including General Electric, British Airways, American Express, and Citibank, has outsourced call centre operations to India.

The following are some of the strengths of the Indian IT sector:

1. Highly Skilled Human Resource;
2. Low Wage Structure;
3. Quality of Work;
4. Initiatives taken by the Government (setting up Hi-Tech Parks and implementation of E-governance projects);
5. Many global players have set-up operations in India like Microsoft, Oracle, Adobe, etc.

**Figure 1. Number of persons engaged in Indian IT Sector- Gender Wise (in ‘000)**



**Source:** Annual survey of Industries, India, 2000-01 to 2007-08.

From the above diagram 1.0 it is observed that during the year 2000-01 the intake of employees in IT industry was 105: 83[Male to Female] and the same was less in 2001-02. Again in 2002-03 the intake of employees was increased and the intake of employees on gender wise shows inconsistency between “2003-2008”. This is because of marketability of software and a hardware product from India to exportable countries varies and also the consultancy projects from foreign countries to India disproportionate due to the competitive cost models of china, Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia. Even though the inconsistency in employable city, the IT industries are believed to be the favourable contributors towards countries employment and GDP of economy.

**Work culture in Indian organizations:**

India amassing people from all strata of the economy, religion, faith and workforce is a country where a gradual change in work culture can be seen. People here are bound by their family values and even

in their choice of careers and its perusal, they cannot neglect the same. The choice of work and the employment also depends on them. One can be seen doing terrace farming or sitting in an air-conditioned office doing managerial work. The people here can be hardworking or leisurely, modern or fanatic, orthodox or somewhere in between. All these variations can be linked to the ancient family traditions and their being followed. Few follow their head and few their heart, so unlike the west where the work culture is independent of the family relations, India very much is not free. The people of India have a definite expectation from their work and they have a definite way of following it. Here one has to work 6 days a week unlike most of the foreign nations where weekends are off. Here the timings are another factor that varies according to the jobs, their nature and requirements. One utmost important fact is the role of the bureaucrats and politicians (Govt.). A good example can be seen in the recent withdrawal of TATA motors from the West Bengal. The company had moved there to contribute to the progress of the state and provide employment to the locals but the clash and bad politics did not let it thrive. So any outsider if coming to India for work or investment will rethink of the repercussions. To work in the country one has to be acclimatized to the behavioural and cultural variations of the country.

Another issue in the country is the holidays in an annum, which cannot be ignored as cutting down upon them will be a lethal blow to the very roots of the diversity of the country. This factor although can make few negligent but it certainly strengthens the bond of the family and that in turn of the whole nation. In India the people can be earning meagrely from their handicrafts, or be earning enviously through a software course but the country has a place and heart for both. One saddening effect is the corruption that eats up the system like termites eat a wood block and in hindsight one feels that this either vents from the poverty or from the unhealthy competition to imitate the fortunate ones. But another a rather shameful and important issue is the safety of women and their struggles in coping up with them. Here working women like in the profession of medicine etc. that seek duties at odd hours have definitely a cause to panic! So India a country of diversity also can boast of diversities in the work culture and its related issues.

### **Work culture – Parameters**

1. Pride of the organization:
2. Orientation towards (top) achievements:
3. Teamwork and communication:
4. Supervision and leadership:
5. Profit orientation and cost awareness:
6. Employee relationships:
7. Client and consumer relations:
8. Honesty and safety:
9. Education and development:
10. Innovation

### **Work life Balance**

The role of work has changed throughout the world due to economic conditions and social demands. Originally, work was a matter of necessity and survival. Throughout the years, the role of “work” has evolved and the composition of the workforce has changed. Today, work still is a necessity but it should be a source of personal satisfaction as well. Work-life balance is a broad concept including proper prioritizing between "work" (career and ambition) on one hand and "life" (pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development) on the other. Related, though broader, terms include "lifestyle balance" and "life balance".

**Impact of work life balance in IT sector:**

Whether small enterprises or large scale multinational companies, most of the people in IT organizations say that working long hours in a day. A business community of traders that supports such a practice may reap the benefits for a short period of time, but shouldn't expect 100% productivity from employees in the long run. The current economic situation forces businesses to control costs. Visiting a community of businesses to find a trading forum for trade related information and traders is a way to reduce your marketing cost via B2B Marketing, but making your employees feel stressed-out and have no personal life or work life balance is not a good practice at all.

Poor work life balance leads to many disastrous things like tardy, bad performance, lack of motivation, more errors, absence from work and so on. The worst thing is that poor work-life balance reduces work quality and productivity without any doubt. When an employee won't be able to give time to his family at home, he will feel stressed out at work.

**Reason for Work Life Imbalance among IT employees:**

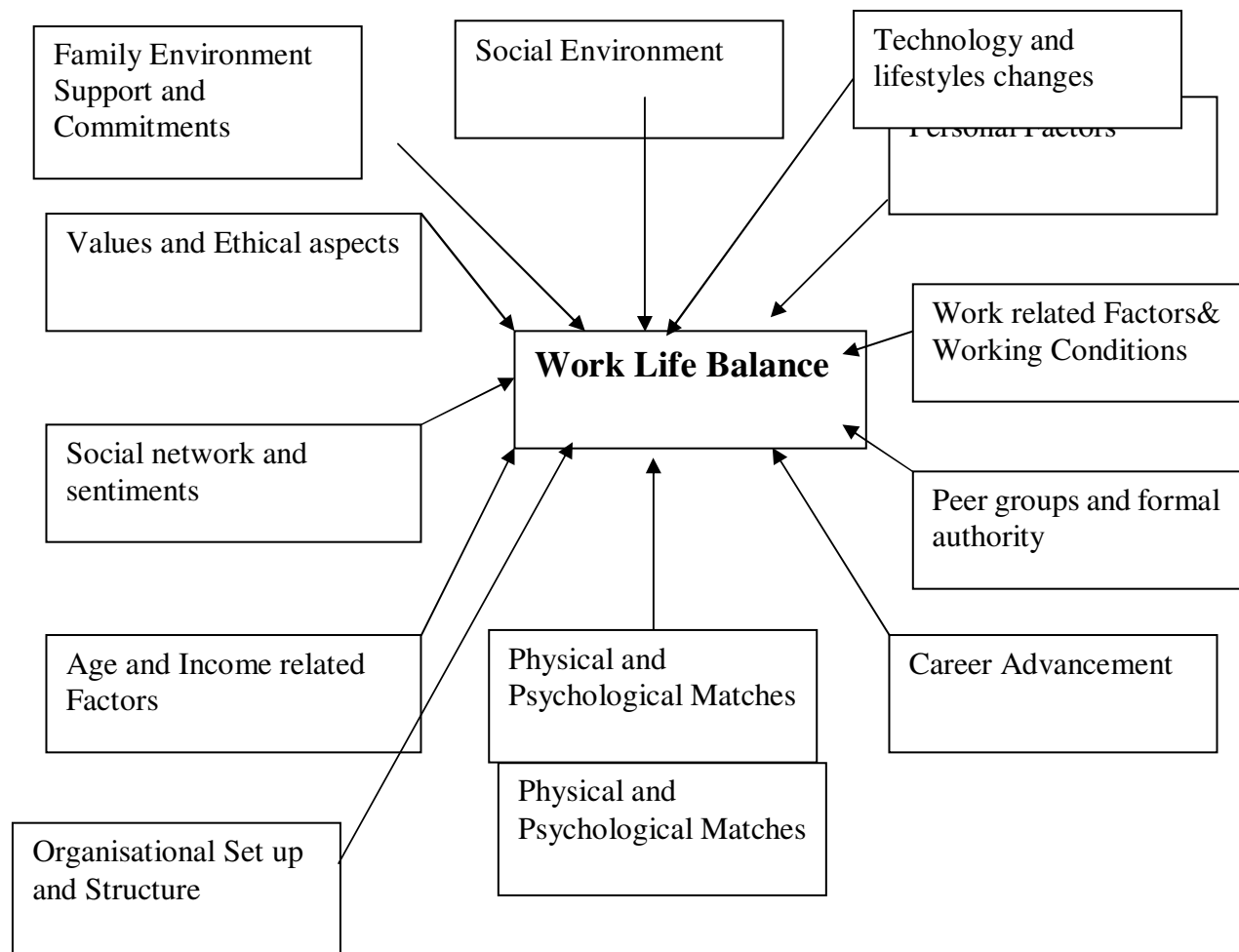
IT sector is a unique in its operational methodology while compare to manufacturing sector, where knowledge based activities are centrifugal for the business operations, the individual employees knowledge and skill are the strongest investment for the successful operations of the organisations in this sector. The employees are expected to work for long working hours and flexible in their attitude towards work and work environment. It is being recognised as highly paying sector which attracts both male and female through attractive packages and demanding profound contribution at work places, the psychological attachment of mind and involvement of physical factors of individuals at work place and method of operations take place across the tables creates work environment to focus the completion of task in a competitive pressure. So the employees have to concentrate more on work by investing their psychological backgrounds leads to work life imbalances in this sector. Since the employees work for foreign software companies or Indian companies work for foreign projects needs a different work culture and working pattern also induce work life imbalances in this sector.

**The Work Life Balance Environment in IT sector**

The work life balance in IT sector are highly depending on family, social, organisational, economical, personal, technological, competitive factors. The combination of all these factors and its influences at work places towards an employee frequently leads to perplexed work life balance,. An employee who can manage the influence of all these factors can contribute effectively and manage his/her health and environment related aspects. But the dynamism of this sector and demanding flexible working hours, target based work contribution and the competitions for personal career and growth emulates work life imbalances. Due to the work life balance issues the working environment and the expected work culture leads to work factor diversity and which in turn affect the effectiveness and efficiency of both organisation and individuals in long term.



**Diagram 1.1. Work Life Balance Environment Model of IT employees in India**



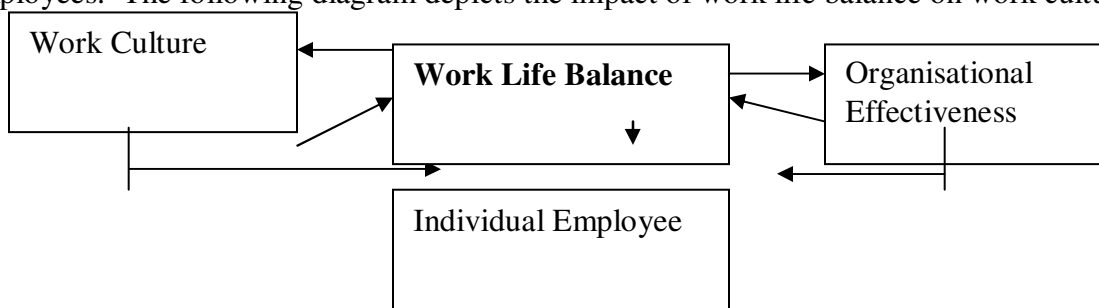
Source : ( Self Defined Model by Authors)

The above diagram depicts the factors affect or influence the work life balance of employees working in IT Sector. The factors highlighted in the diagram will go for changes and according to the changes the work life balance will be favourable or unfavourable based on individual employee based on their age, gender, income status, role and responsibility, experience. The perception and attitude of individual also an important aspect about the work life balance attributed by them. So from the model it is understood that the work life balance faced by an individual is not only based on the physical, environmental factors but also the influx of psychological factors like individual personality, perception, value and attitude.

**Impact of Work Life Balance on Work Culture among IT employees:**

Work culture is the imaging building process for any organisation and to its employees, the prevailing work culture in an organisation will make employees to invest their contribution towards the work and responsibilities and help the organisation to move towards its desired objectives and mission. The work culture either in practice or in policies needs the real involvement and support of employees to transform it at work spots. A simple romantic picture of work culture in terms of work, delegation, superior and subordinate relationship, existing communication, rewards, punishment, achievement may

not be executed without the employees involvement, interest and commitment. But an employee in an organisation will be really committed when they face an ideal work life balance. For the success of any organisation over the future time need an identical work culture and that should be supported by the employees. The following diagram depicts the impact of work life balance on work culture.



**Role of IT Employers to structure Work Life Balance in IT Sector**

- Specific Counselling programmes on Work Life Balance
- Awareness about the impact of work life balance at employees personal and organisation life
- Well designed flexible working hours
- Employee centric policies towards work life balance
- An ideal work culture leads to work life balance
- Family welfare programmes
- Family counseling
- Employees’ social gathering programmes
- Employee – public contact programmes
- Tailor made employees reward and recognition programme

**Role of IT Employees to structure Work Life Balance in IT Sector**

- Favourable attitude about organisation and employers
- Work place understanding
- Periodic physical check up
- Psychological testing
- Emotional balance
- Discrimination skill of demarcating work, family and social roles
- Enhancing reasoning and aptitude skill
- Regular exercises, mediation and other soft skill practices

**Self Designated Model of Work Life Balance and Work Culture and its impact on organisational Effectiveness**

Work life balance and work culture are the imperative parameters for the organisational effectiveness of IT sectors. Work life balance and work culture are mutually inclusive each other for the success of any organisation and individual employees. Especially sector like Information technology which are running with the asset of individual knowledge and skill need a perfect balance between work culture and work life balance. The following model helps to understand the impact of work culture and work life balance on organisational and employees productivity and effectiveness.

		Work Life Balance of Employees				
		High		Low		
Work culture	Collaborative Organisations (Star Performer)			Promising organisation ( Able to perform)	Effective	
	Dark side organisation ( Need to redesign)			Fallside Organisation ( unable to perform)	Ineffective	

(Source: Self designated Model by Authors)

**Conclusion:**

Information technology one of the fastest growing sector at global level and which gives more contribution to the GDP and national economy of our country. It is a sector which deals with employment problem of our country at macro level. The work pattern of this sector, the professional employed at various levels in IT sector undergo for various changing issues interms of organisational policy and individual commitment. The growing competition among various companies in this sector, the job shift, recent economic slow down, the market rehabilitation strategies adopted by the companies need the employees of IT sector to contribute more at work places irrespective of time schedule in the form of job expansion, work load enrichment and customer satisfaction. Due to this changes the work life balance of IT employees’ deviates and leads to mismanagement of various overlapping factors among individuals in terms of work, family, social, development and personal. The result of poor work life balance leads to ineffective work culture at organisational level. The ineffective work culture affects the individual vs organisational relationship, individual vs family and social relationship. To overcome from this issue an ideal work life balance should be possessed by the employees at different level in IT sector. The work life balance and work culture issues need to be addressed at IT sector on priority basis by adopted tailor made HR Strategies for the benefit of individual employees and their social belongings, organisation and economy of our country.

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