INTRODUCTION

Definition of Terms – Objectives – Research
Questions   – Methodology -
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Rapid changes in the business environment have led to a variety of responses from industrial organizations. Globalization, the rate of technological innovation, and marked difference in consumer demand are some of the factors that have been instrumental in increasing the dynamism of business environment. A band of happy, committed, competitive and effective human resource is an absolute necessity to face the challenges and be successful in the present day business environment. Efficient and effective human resource is capable of producing quality, and productive individuals. Such individuals will help in minimizing problems like job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, turnover, better work-life balance (WLB), etc. Further, a number of aspects like employees' intention to leave, levels of job satisfaction, and organizational commitment are influenced by various HRM practices.

Previously working from 9 in the morning to 5 in the evening was considered to be a normal full-time job. The price and time competition have created a situation that challenges certain already set and defined conditions, norms and practices. Since the present IT/ITES work settings demands 24/7 work activity, shift work has become an essential requirement. The pattern of shift work has changed through the years. Today, it comprises of regular night and evening work, rotating and split shifts, casual/on-call jobs, and even irregular shifts. In a, work/life balance has become a predominant issue in the workplace. With the society being filled with conflicting responsibilities and commitments, and increase in average age of the labour force, WLB has become increasingly important and a matter of researcher focuses. Shift working can have a wide range of negative effects on the health of employees, and can complicate the scheduling of their family activities (Halpern 2005, Levin-Epstein 2006, Costa 2003). Further, the shift works are now not just restricted to weekdays. This makes finding time for child care, parent care and family affairs, as well as making plans for holidays and social activities highly complicated and difficult.

Definition of Terms

Human Resource Management (HRM)

HRM is 'a strategic and coherent approach to the management of organization's most valued assets – the employees who individually

and collectively contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the business' (Armstrong, 1995).

Work Life Balance

Kofodimos (1993) defines WLB as:

> 'a satisfying, health and productive life that includes, work, play, and love; that integrates a range of life activities with attention to self and to personal and spiritual development; and that expresses person's unique wishes, interests and values. It contrasts with the imbalances of a life dominated by work, focused on satisfying external requirements at the expense of inner development, and in conflict with a person's true desires.'

According to Greenblatt (2002) WLB is acceptable levels of conflict between work and non-work demands. This will also involve managing competing demands for resources.

Employee Wellness

Employee wellness is defined by Ardell (1985) as 'a conscious and deliberate approach to an advanced state of physical, psychological, and spiritual health'. Corbin & Pangrazi (2001) define it as 'a multidimensional state of being describing the existence of positive health in an individual as exemplified by quality of life and a sense of well-being'.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To list out the common HRM practices prevalent in IT/ITES companies in Kerala regarding working hours, shift work, leave rules, etc.
2. To find out the position of WLB of the employees of IT/ITES companies in Kerala.
3. To find out the relationship of WLB on:
   a. The employee wellness, and
   b. Various demographic particulars,

   of the employees of IT/ITES companies in Kerala
4. To list out the unique HRM practices of IT/ITES companies in Kerala.

It is proposed to provide due importance to the gender dimension regarding WLB and Wellness of the staff.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions to be addressed in the proposed study are the following:

1. Do IT/ITES companies of Kerala employ sound practices with respect to working hours, shift work, leave rules, etc.?

2. Do certain HRM practices like shift work, leave rules, etc. of the IT/ITES companies impact the work life balance of employees?
3. What is the level of wellness and quality of life of the IT/ITES employees in Kerala?

METHODOLOGY

Universe of study

The universe of study is the IT/ITES employees working in the state of Kerala. The unit of study is the employee of the industry. Employees, whose origin is from other states, have also been included in the purview of the study. Data pertaining to the conditions of employment and unique HRM practices in various organisations have also been collected. This has been done from either executives or heads of the Human Resource Development department. For this the HR personnel have been interviewed towards the final phase of the study. Though the HR personnel were willing to share the unique practices followed in their respective organizations, they have specifically requested not to name their organization.

Sampling

The study employed random sampling method for the collection of data. Data for the study was collected from a sample of 262 employees of IT/ITES companies, applying random sampling technique.

Instruments used

Questionnaires have been used to collect the required data for the study. The questionnaires used for the present study are the following:

Work family conflict

For measuring Work Family Conflict, The 'WFC questionnaire' developed by Carlson et al (2000), modified by and cited in Jayaweera (2005) was used. The tool consists of total of 12 items on a five point scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. The tool consists of three factors – Work to Family Conflict, Family to Work Conflict, and Stress Based Conflict. Each factor had five, three and four items respectively.

Employee wellness

Employee wellness was measured using the 'Physical Dimension' of a well known Wellness Questionnaire developed by Robbins, Powers & Burgess (2011). The questionnaire consists of 10 items on a three point scale, ranging from 'Almost always' to 'never'.

Both the tools are validated and standardized by experts in the field. All the required demographic information was also elicited. Some of

the information elicited includes age, marital status, salary, experience details, qualification, etc.

A few live cases studies pertaining to IT/ITES employees relevant to the topic of study are also presented.

Period of data collection

Data for the present study was collected in four months from April 1, to June 30, 2013.

Analysis

The data so collected was analyzed using statistical techniques like t-test, ANOVA, correlation, etc. For the purpose of analyzing the collected data, advanced version of Software Package for Social Studeis was made use of.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

A few limitations identified for the study are the following:

1. The working conditions of IT/ITES employees are unique in various ways. Meeting them directly to collect data has not been done, and the same was limited to online collection of data.
2. The study has been limited to the relationship between WLB and wellness. There may be other variables that may have direct

relationship with the topic of research, which has not been considered.

3. A number of IT/ITES organization have implemented unique employee-friendly HRM Practices, which have been found to be highly successful. Due to specific request from the respective members of such organizations, naming such organizations have been dispensed with.

CHAPTERIZATION

The report is chapterised as under:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction – Work Life Balance –
Employee Wellness – Research
Studies

INTRODUCTION

Ever since Human Resource Management (HRM) became popular in the early 1980s, there has been increasing academic interest in the concept. It is defined in a number of ways. Armstrong (1995) defines it as 'a strategic and coherent approach to the management of organization's most valued assets – the employees who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the business'. HRM is a system, a philosophy, policy and practices that influences the work of individuals in any organization. It deals with a

host of management decisions that affect the relationship between the organization and employees. In India HRM has undergone a drastic change since the liberalization of the economy in 1991.

Concerned with the most effective use of people to achieve organizational and individual goals, HRM consist of the following four essential functions:

1. acquiring,
2. developing,
3. motivating, and
4. retaining human resources.

Though all the four functions are important and varies from industry to industry, retention of employees is the most complex and challenging one in today's competitive business environment, especially for IT/ITES organizations. This function aims at providing a conducive environment to the employees and nurturing them so that they feel committed as well as psychologically attached to the organization.

The IT/ITES industry has its own peculiarities, which are beyond the control of employer. Some of them include the time differentials in India and the overseas client organization; the socio-cultural, economic and currency differentials between the countries; the varying dimensions of global competition; etc. The employer in India has a number of limitations, and he is totally helpless regarding the conditions of labour due to such aspects.

Patil, Patil and Waje (2011) lists down the various challenges faced by the IT industry as under:

- Recruitment planning,
- Performance management,
- Training and development,
- Compensation management, and
- HRM as whole

HRM Trends

The HRM trends have undergone a sea change since it evolved from Personnel Management. The changes have been centered mostly on liberalization. Thus there can be said to be a pre and post liberalization phase. Each of the phases is now detailed.

Pre-Liberalization Phase

Personnel Management started evolving in the 19th century. At that time the industry was having a boom with phenomenal increase in franchising and related aspects. It was at this time that Trade Unions entered the scene, and started influencing the industrial conditions. They called for better industrial conditions and working atmospheres. It was at this time that employee welfare and industrial relations got the due importance. World War II brought in need for the need for increased production of war materials. This led to the indispensability of Personnel Management and Personnel departments. The welfare administration and personnel management functions were carried on

by the Personnel Department. To a certain extend both these functions were enjoying a 'happy' time till the onset of liberalization.

Post-Liberalization Phase

The onset of liberalization occurred in the world economy in the early 1990s. The new conditions have made situations like presence in the office irrelevant. The eight out working has become more or less irrelevant. The workers have learnt to work while travelling, socializing, and at home. Further, the liberalized policies facilitated floating of human resources from one part of the world to another. Employees started migrating and gravitating towards economies offering opportunities. This resulted in diversification of workforce around the globe. Cross culture work teams became order of the day, brining in mixed organizational culture. This made HR profession more challenging.   In any organization HR professionals had to play a challenging role in coordinating the workforce of different cultures.

Emerging HR Trend in India

Post liberalization, Indian companies have become multinational giants. They have spread themselves across the globe and are racing towards a borderless world. Further, a sizeable population of Indians has become part of multinational and foreign organizations. Now human resources have become the most valuable asset in any organization. There is a constant need to develop capabilities, and leverage them to ensure growth and success of an organization, and at

the same time add value to an organization is of paramount importance.

In such a scenario, the HR professionals have a critical role in serving as facilitators moving beyond their administrative roles, and should emerge as strategic business partners. This is crucial in providing radical solutions to organizational success. Today HR professionals no longer work in independent silos. They have been aligned with the strategic goals. Further, due to changes in the market trends, HR is faced with several challenges, the major one being retaining and nurturing of talent. HR professionals need to think differently and experiment with varied processes & methodologies that could benefit the human capital and the organization at large. Though the changed market conditions have opened up enormous opportunities in diverse fields, HR is saddled with the critical and crucial aspect of Attracting, Managing, Nurturing, and Retaining talent.

The new generation talent is the knowledge professional who is 'innovative, business savvy, quick on the uptake, has an instinctive ability to network, and possessing unbridled ambition'. They are propelled by an inner urge to experiment, and continuously scan for new avenues that can spur their creativity. The knowledge professional has the natural instinct to gravitate towards organizations that are flexible, have strong values, a robust performance ethic and provide a challenging work environment with the latest technology. Due to these, organizations are bound to take proactive measures on three fronts:

1. Creating an organizational ambience where talent can bloom,
2. Putting in place systems that could help unleash their potential, and
3. Building a reward and recognition mechanism that values people.

HR Trends in IT/ITES Industry

Technology is often found to generate unexpected consequences. The most obvious being its ability to disseminate information at rapid speed, with minimal costs. The IT industry has been in the forefront towards accomplishment of this task. The Human Resource trend in the IT industry is also unique in many respects.

Due to the effects of globalization, employees in general and those in IT companies in particular are blessed with good opportunities. There is now a tendency to switch jobs, the moment they feel dissatisfied with the current employer or the job. Due to this IT companies are facing talent crunch, making competition for talents manifold, and many companies going to great lengths to retain their best employees. A number of studies have shown that employee turnover could result in the organization incurring almost 4 to 5 times more than the annual salary budget. As such there is a definite need for an effective retention strategy. Employee retention involves a lot of energy, efforts and resources but its results are worth it. Employee retention strategies involve five major aspects:

1. Compensation,

2. Environment,

3. Growth,

4. Relationship and

5. Support.

An appropriate retention strategy needs to involve the above factors. They should place the employee's needs and expectations at the centre of the company's long-term agenda in order to ensure the professional satisfaction and to create a trusted relationship. Such a relationship will help the employees to be retained in the organization by personal choice, based on free will and considered decision. Employee Retention is thus a systematic effort on the part of the employers to create and foster an environment that encourages current employees to remain employed through policies and practices that address their diverse needs. Retention is beneficial both for the organization and the employee.

In this scenario, the role of HRM in integrating employees into the organization, ensuring high levels of performance becomes more critical than ever. Technology in the form of HR systems also aids the HR department in doing this, keeping pace with the growing needs of Indian business.

Need for studying HRM Practices

The study of HRM practices has become an important subject for management scholars and practitioners due to its contribution in

enhancing and sustaining employee and organization performance. A large volume of literature exists with respect to the effect of HRM practices on the attitude of employees. Almost all the studies have established a strong impact of HRM practices on the employee and organizational performance as well as WLB. Forward-thinking organizations seek innovative ways to augment their competitive advantage in the marketplace use WLB as a win-win solution. According to Lockwood (2003) there are three major factors that contribute to the interest in, and the importance of, serious consideration of WLB. They are:

1. global competition;
2. renewed interest in personal lives/ family values; and
3. an aging workforce.

WORK LIFE BALANCE

Though coined in the middle or the 1980s, as a result of the increasingly unhealthy choice made by many towards workplace, neglecting family, socialization, leisure, etc., the concept of WLB evolved over a fairly long period of time. The evolution of the concept is worth considering.

Evolution of WLB

The known history of WLB begins in the second half of the 19th century. It began with the campaigning of reformers against long

factory hours. They were, to a certain extent, successful in reducing the working hours. This could be accomplished as they were able to demonstrate that certain amount of reductions in working hours did not impact the levels of output. This momentum was continued during the early part of the 20th century. Reformers were, with the help of a series of pioneering studies, capable of demonstrating that there existed a complex relationship between time spent at work and the level of output (Myers, 1924).   Considering the importance of a number of aspects like motivation, morale, fatigue, concentration, and attention; these studies established that reduction in working time led to increased production.

Importance accorded to a number of factors in the 1960s and 1970s to
- health and safety at work,
- international competitiveness,
- equality, and
- flexible labour markets;

helped in the coining of the term in the following years.

The changes witnessed in the three decades starting 1960 in the field of WLB are detailed below:

In the 1960s the most of the debate was focused upon informal work group organisation and the joint regulation of working practices like working hours, over time wages, etc. within the framework of collective bargaining. Overtime wages was paid at premium rates. At that time, though long overtime hours were not necessary, they were

often 'manufactured' to boost individual earnings. This ultimately resulted in a low productivity culture. This led to re-negotiation of new productivity packages, which included flexible patterns of work organization, increasing basic rates of pay and curtailing overtime working.

The 1970s brought in a wide range of changes in the work culture. This included change in technology, increased international competition, new forms of organisations, increased female participation, as well as wide diversity in the working-time requirements of individuals. Issues related to social equity and justice become more prominent and explicit. It was recognized that long working hours among men in the child rearing years resulted in disadvantages in women. Some of them included making it less possible for men to share childcare and home building, leaving the onus upon women to carry those responsibilities, etc.

The 1980s saw liberalization in the economy and labour markets. There were major structural shifts in the labour market, and employment started moving from the production to the service sector. Organisations also started favouring female employment. There was also a gradual shift towards flexible patterns of work. Temporary and fixed-term employment, flexible forms of work, etc. became popular. It was at this time that WLB was coined, and began to be discussed with the required importance. The 1990s saw various Governments playing an interventionist role providing employees with certain rights with respect to establishing work-life balance that suited them.

The term WLB which was coined in 1986 is now used in everyday language in the last few years. It was coined as a result of the increasingly unhealthy choice made by many towards workplace, neglecting family, socialization, leisure, etc. WLB is now an increasingly pervasive concern, for both employers and employees. The concept of WLB received recognition India only in the recent years.

WLB is reported to have chameleon effects with different meaning being assigned by deferent groups. The meaning of WLB often depends on the context of the conversation and the user's viewpoint. For instance Kofodimos (1993) providing emphasis on the individual and his physical and mental well being defined it as:

> 'a satisfying, health and productive life that includes, work, play, and love; that integrates a range of life activities with attention to self and to personal and spiritual development; and that expresses person's unique wishes, interests and values. It contrasts with the imbalances of a life dominated by work, focused on satisfying external requirements at the expense of inner development, and in conflict with a person's true desires.'

Providing an opportunity for fair balance between paid work and life outside work, Jones (2003) defines WLB to be:

> … meant to articulate the desire of all individuals – not just those with families or caring responsibilities – to achieve and maintain a 'balance' between their paid work and their life outside work, whatever their 'life' involves, from childcare and housework to leisure or self-development.

According to Aggarwal (2006) WLB is a term used to describe those practices at workplace that acknowledge and aim to support the needs of employees in achieving a balance between the demands of their family life and work lives. Gunavathy and Suganya (2007) provide a comprehensive picture when they opine that WLB:

> 'is about the interaction between paid work and other activities, including unpaid work in the families and the community, leisure, and personal development. It is about creating a productive work culture where the potential for tension between work and other parts of the people's lives is minimized. This means having appropriate employment provisions in place, and organizational systems and supportive management underpinning them.'

WLB is also said to be a self-defined, self-determined state reached by a person who is able to effectively manage multiple responsibilities at work, at home, and in the community. It is a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal. It is capable of supporting physical, emotional and family health without grief, stress or any negative impact. When viewed from the employee viewpoint WLB is 'the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal/family responsibilities'. From the viewpoint of employers WLB is 'the challenge of creating a supportive company culture where employees can focus on their jobs while at work' (Lockwood, 2003).

According to Baral and Bhargava (2011), organisational initiatives with respect to WLB are only picking up. Further, they opine that despite the numerous benefits of WLB initiatives only a few organisations have introduced them. However, WLB is now a subject of concern for

research scholars and business leaders due to large scale changes in the contemporary demographic, technological, market, and organisational conditions. In general, achievement of WLB is difficult for full-time workers irrespective of their work schedules. Studies have shown that in the event of work schedules being regular, or when workers have some control over their shifts, it is easy to reduce the conflicts relating to family and work. Further, with the growing diversity of family structures in the new millennium, it is imperative for the organisations to understand the interface of work and family relationships and the resulting impact in the workplace. It is also established that though various segments of workforce are often subject to unique family and work pressures, they have few sources of support to look upon (Parasuraman and Greenhaus, 2002). This has lead to a major gap in employers' understanding of their needs in the right perspective as well as work/family research.

As WLB is a combination of interactions among different areas of one's life, the advantages and disadvantages associated with that balance/imbalance can affect multiple levels of society (Schoenfeld, 2005). The disadvantages of WLB are innumerable and can affect both employees and employers. For the employee, consequences could have a negative impact on 'work and life satisfaction, on well-being, mental health, physical health and on individual performance in organizations,' (O'Driscoll, 1996; Guest, 2001). If the employers do not take steps to improve WLB it could lead to poor performance, absenteeism, sick leave, higher staff turnover, and recruitment and training costs. According to Spinks (2004) positive WLB would allow

employees to 'reach their full potential, be fully engaged, and be able to meet their personal and professional goals and objectives' as well as promote a balance wherein work can enhance life off the job. The complex nature of WLB requires whole hearted participation and support from all those involved, including the employees and the employers. However, there is a general perception that employers are not fully supportive of the employees in this regard.

Some of the working definitions of terms used regarding WLB, which is continuing to evolve, are the following:

Work-family balance: This is a term that was frequently used in the past than today. The current trend is to use titles that include the phrases like work-life, providing as broader work/life connotation referring to specific areas of support.

Work-family conflict: The push and pull between work and family responsibility.

Work-life initiatives: Policies and procedures established by an organization with the goal to enable employees to get their jobs done and at the same time provide flexibility to handle personal/family concern.

Work-family culture: The extent to which an organization's culture acknowledges and respects the family responsibilities and obligations

of its employees and encourage management and employees to work together to meet their personal and work needs.

Theoretical background of WLB

Four theoretical positions have been outlined to explain the factors associated with adoption of WLB practices in the organizational context, according to Felstead et al (2002). They include:

1. **Institutional theory**: According to this theory organizations reflect and confirm to normative pressures in the society at varying degrees. These variations are explained by the extent to which organizations need to maintain social legitimacy.

2. **Organization adaptation theory:** This theory while retaining the predictors proposed by institutional theorists attributes certain other factors to organizational predisposition towards WLB concerns. These additional factors include the characteristics of the workforce, the way in which work is organized and the management attitude towards the issues related to WLB. some examples of workforce characteristics include gender composition, nature of work profile, experience, skill profile of employees, etc.

3. **High commitment theory**: This theory suggests that there is a link between an organization's human resource strategy and its adaptation of family friendly employment practices. This is based on the worker management relations that are expected to enhance employee commitment towards their organizations.

4. **Situational theory:** This is also known as Practical response theory. This theory is more pragmatic as it suggests that work life provisions are organizational reposes to the pressures attached to talent attraction and retention.

A good and positive WLB is found to enable employees to easily combine work with other aspirations and responsibilities, while involving achievement and enjoyment. Understanding the importance, advantages and disadvantages of WLB, a number of organizations have started offering various WLB Programmes (WLPs).

Organizational Policies and Practices that Facilitate WLB

Almost all organizations are increasingly developing formal policies that facilitate WLB. This is born out of the realization that WLB facilitates the employees in coordinating and integrating both work and non-work aspects of their lives. In the IT industry the three most commonly used work/life strategies that help in enhancing WLB include flexible work options, specialized leave policies, and dependent-care benefits. A few policies and practices that aid in implementing the above three strategies include compressed work week, flextime, job sharing, home telecommuting, work-at-home programs, part-time work, shorter work days, bereavement leave, paid maternity leave, paid leave to care for sick family members, paternity leave, on site/near site company childcare, company referral system for childcare, program for emergency care of ill dependents sickness care insurance for self and family, childcare programs during

school vacation, phased retirement, sabbatical leave, professional counseling, life skill programs, subsidized exercise for fitness centre, relocation assistance, etc.

These policies and practices enable flexibility, support employees with child-care, and elder-care obligations; thereby alleviating various negative impacts of interference between work and non-work commitments and responsibilities.

Range of different organizational work/life balance initiatives. Source: Bardoel (2003)

In IT organizations WLB is now a strategic goal. This is born out of the realization that better WLB helps in deriving benefits like improved organizational commitment, reduced turnover and higher retention, reduced absenteeism, greater productivity and reduced work/life conflict. Due to the ever changing nature of IT organizations, they should encourage the employees to put to maximum use the available WLB programs. Further, the managements should also demonstrate to the employees the need for balancing paid work and non-work activities; and making them positive for maintaining physical and psychological health of each and every individual.

Work Life Balance Programmes

WLBPs are institutionalized structural and procedural arrangements, as well as formal and informal practices that make it easier for individuals to manage the often-conflicting worlds of work and family lives

(Osterman, 1995). WLBPs in its crude form existed as early as the 1930s. Before World War II, the W.K. Kellogg Company replaced the traditional three daily eight-hour shifts and created four six-hour shifts. The new shifts resulted in substantial increase in employee morale and efficiency.

In the 1980s when WLBPs were initiated, they were primarily meant to support working women with children. However, presently the WLBPs are less gender-specific and recognize other commitments, including those of the family. Baral and Bhargava (2011) classified WLBPs into the following three major categories:

1. **Policies:** Policies cover the formal and informal ways by which employees' work and leave schedules are handled, including part-time work, flexitime, and parental/family leave.
2. **Benefits:** Benefits cover different forms of compensation that protect against loss of earnings, payment of medical expenses and sponsored vacation.
3. **Services:** Services include on-site or near-site childcare centers, medical facilities and counseling.

WLBPs can include mandatory and discretionary programmes. Certain WLBPs like maternity leaves and benefits are mandated by statutory policies. Discretionary policies and benefits offered by various organisations include flexi-time, telecommuting, employee assistance programmes, stress management programmes, etc.

Constituents of WLBP

Though, WLB has received considerable attention and has been in focus in the organizational scenario as a matter of policy and strategy, there are still ambiguities regarding what constitutes WLBPs. There are a number of organizations that provide a bundle of policies and programmes such as alternative work arrangements, leave policies, child-care centers, etc, in the name of WLB. Yet others provide physical services like gymnasiums and recreation facilities at work. However, these policies and practices differ across organizations.

WLBPs have undergone a sea change in the recent past. Earlier, adoption of WLBPs was viewed as practical response to the increasing proportion of women employees in the workforce, employees with caring responsibilities and the problems such as absenteeism, and turnover associated with them (Lambert, 2000). However, of late the scope of WLBPs has been broadened to include programs and policies that are capable of implementing a 'high commitment work systems' (Osterman, 1995).   It is expected that such programmes would ensuring high levels of employee commitment and innovation. Further, WLBPs are now increasingly being considered as a crucial aspect that is strategic, innovative, and progressive (Lambert, 2000; Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000).

In today's global marketplace, were cost cutting, downsizing, outsourcing etc., forms part of organizational strategies; the human resource professionals should go the extra mile to understand the

critical issues pertaining to work life balance and champion work life programs. There should be special focus on single mothers who find it difficult to raise their children and make a living, both Generation X & Y employees who value their personal time, couples struggling to manage dual-careers, people living far away from their place of birth, etc. It should be borne in mind that companies stand to lose critical knowledge if employees leave for other opportunities. In such situations work life programs offer a win-win situation for both employers and employees.

Benefits of WLBPs for Employees:

Studies have proved that WLBPs have been found to increase employee control over time and place of work (Thomas & Ganster, 1995), reduced work-family conflict (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998) and stress (Thompson & Prottas, 2006). Despite the strong support for WLBPs, cautionary examples suggest these benefits are not universal and some policies that appear to be family-friendly may in fact be detrimental to the working conditions of employees. For example, telecommuting and flexible work schedules are arrangements that may allow or encourage employees to work more (Glass & Fujimoto, 1995).

Benefits of WLBPs for Organisations

Organisations benefit in more than one ways by providing WLBPs. Empirical findings suggest a strong positive relationship between WLBPs and reduced absenteeism (Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness,

1999), increased productivity (Sands & Harper, 2007), improved recruitment and retention rates (Anderson, Coffey & Byerly, 2002; Konrad & Mangel, 2000). Available evidences show that though WLBPs have been proved to be beneficial in various ways, they are yet to be made into well established organisational practices.

Overall the WLBPs have the potential to significantly improve employee morale, reduce absenteeism, and retain organizational knowledge, particularly during difficult economic times. Effectiveness of WLBPs can be evaluated by considering the extent of adoption and implementation by employers and use by employees.

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

In the past, when majority of the economies were in the transition phase, human morbidity and mortality were attributed to improper sanitation, poor nutrition, and the lack of immunization. These have undergone a sea change now, with infectious and contagious diseases being replaced by a wide range of lifestyle diseases. Some of such diseases include cancer, cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, alcoholism, emphysema, gastrointestinal disorders, and certain other chronic conditions (Ramsey, 1982).

There is no universally acceptable definition for wellness. Wellness is badly defined because there is little agreement about what the definition should contain (Sieberhagen, Pienaar, & Els, 2011). A few available definitions are presented. According to Ardell (1985)

wellness is 'a conscious and deliberate approach to an advanced state of physical, psychological, and spiritual health'. To Gilmore (1979) wellness is the daily striving for the goal of becoming healthier through ongoing assessment, intervention, and reinforcement. Corbin & Pangrazi (2001) define it as 'a multidimensional state of being describing the existence of positive health in an individual as exemplified by quality of life and a sense of well-being'. An entirely different dimension is presented by Hettler (1984) when he describes wellness as an active process through which the individual becomes aware of, and makes choices toward, a more successful existence. Corbin, Lindey, Welk and Corbin (2002) describe wellness as a person's state of well-being that contributes to an improved quality of life. The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (as quoted in The Journal on Active Aging, 2006) defines wellness as:

> 'a multidimensional state of being describing the existence of positive health in an individual as exemplified by quality of life and a sense of well-being'.

It is also defined as 'an integrated and dynamic level of functioning oriented toward maximizing potential, dependent on self-responsibility'. Wellness involves preventive health behaviors coupled with a shift in thinking and attitude. It is thus a comprehensive mind-set of lifelong growth and achievement in the emotional, spiritual, physical, occupational, intellectual, environmental, and social dimensions. Thus through wellness an individual strives toward higher levels of functioning for a lifetime, keeping complacency and passivity at bay. Wellness is not a goal to be attained but a continuous process that need to be maintained.

Wellness, in short, is a way of living which seeks growth and improvements in all areas. It involves a lifestyle of deliberate choices and self-responsibility that require conscientious management and meticulous planning. Wellness is much more than curing sickness, counting fat grams, jogging, and measuring body fat. It is a mind-set of personal empowerment and approaching life with optimism, confidence, and energy. Wellness is a lifelong quest toward optimal functioning. Individuals who strive for wellness have an exceptional openness to experience, and never fear new experiences and life's changes. They welcome changes, take control of their life and face it with creativity and freshness. Studies have shown that living a wellness lifestyle has tremendous potential for increasing longevity. Wellness is thus the idea of being aware of, and actively working toward better health. It can be commented to be 'making the rest of your life the best of your life.'

Wellness is a continuous, active process which is an ongoing, lifelong effort that is oriented toward maximizing one's potential. It is a commitment and determined choice to move toward optimal well-being. It is a proactive approach to living, which involves loving, working, and playing based on values. Wellness is also said to be a self designed lifestyle that facilitates optimal health. Overall it is integration and an appreciation that everything which is done, thought, felt, and believed has an impact on the well-being. There is now increasing general interest in wellness which has made it easier for individuals to adopt a wellness lifestyle.

In management literature the terms wellness and well-being are often found used interchangeably (Martin, Kirkcaldy & Siefen, 2003). According to Sieberhagen, Pienaar, & Els (2011), the absence of a universal definition, and confusion about a preferred term to describe wellness are aspects that pose innumerable difficulties in developing guidelines for good wellness practices in present day organisations.

From the available literature it can be seen that EWPs are intervention strategies that are intended to promote the well-being of employees. They could take the form of either curative or preventative in nature. The main purpose of a wellness programme in is to create an awareness of wellness issues among the employees, to facilitate personal change and health management among them, and the promotion of a healthy and supportive workplace.

Experiences show that EWPs often do not form part of core business structures (Bennett, 1999). This is because organisations fail to realize the extent to which employee wellness contributes to organisations' bottom line. However, according to Dhanesar & Hales (1994) organisations that invests time and resources in EWPs, with the focus on being proactive rather than reactive, have harvested sufficient returns on their investments. Some of the possible returns on investment include lower absenteeism, healthier employees, fewer accidents and lower staff turnover.

In the contemporary world which is market-driven, a band of capable and resilient employee would be the most important resource, and fundamental to the badly needed productivity. The World Economic Forum states that, in India lifestyle-related illnesses caused due to poor diet, physical inactivity and to a certain level tobacco and alcohol consumption accounts for 27% of illnesses among working population. India also has the highest rate of diabetes in the world, presently affecting around 6-8% of the population. Projections indicate that this is expected to rise to 40% by 2030. It is also projected that in India, productive years of life lost due to cardiovascular disease is set to double between 2000 and 2030. A survey conducted by the World Economic Forum in India found that one quarter of the firms surveyed lost around 14% of their annual working days due to employee sickness. Studies also showed that such chronic diseases are the prime cause of lost work time in the working-age population. These can be avoided only through employee wellness activities.

Towards this, interventions are required to be made to improve healthy nutrition, increase in regular physical activity and avoiding the use of tobacco and harmful alcohol. This is estimated to reduce by up to 80% ill health and premature deaths caused by chronic diseases. Further, according to World Economic Forum, reducing just one health risk would increase the employee's on-the-job productivity by 9% and cut absenteeism rate by 2%.

Organisations in general and IT organisations in particular are aware of these issues related to employee wellness. There is also increased

interest in integrating wellness activities with employers' responsibilities (Hillier, Fewell, Cann & Shephard, 2005). This has led to the introduction of various programmes which include Employee Wellness Programmes (EWPs), Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs), etc. EWPs allow employees to take charge of, and the responsibility for, their own well-being (Derr & Lindsay, 1999). EWPs include all the activities that focus on relieving the stress of employees caused as a result of a host of factors like personal finances, substance abuse, health problems, career crises and job demands (Leiter and Wahlen, 1996).

EWPs has its origin in the older industrial medicine and hygiene programs that were concerned with first aid and medical care; occupational and environmental hazards like toxic components and noise; and with safety programs the primary stress of which were in accident prevention. Later the occupational safety and health programs expanded in scope and depth, and evolved in focus. The modern EWPs are intervention strategies intended to promote the overall well-being of employees. They can be either curative or preventative in nature. Organisations introduce EWPs to create awareness about wellness issues, to facilitate personal change and health management and to promote a healthy and supportive workplace. EWPs include activities that focus on relieving the stress of employees that may be caused due to aspects like personal finances, substance abuse, health problems, career crises and job demands (Leiter and Wahlen, 1996).

While EWPs address wellness issues at the workplace, EAP according to Berridge and Cooper (1994) is:

> a programmatic intervention at the workplace, usually at the level of the individual employee using behavioural science knowledge and methods for the recognition and control of certain work-and non work-related problems.

EWPs are also described as programmes that cover the identification, assessment, monitoring, referral, counselling, and follow-up activities that aim at addressing employees' problems (White, McDuff, Schwartz, Tiegel & Judge, 1996; Zarkin, Bray & Qi, 2000).

Dimensions of Employee Wellness

A review of literature provides that employee wellness is seen by different people in varying dimensions. For instance while organisations focus mostly on health, dimensions of wellness and positive work influences; service providers focus mostly on the recognition of dual benefits to organisations and employees. Labour unions however focus on another dimension – the legal requirements, and occupational health and safety.

Six dimensions of wellness have been identified. They include emotional, vocational, physical, spiritual, intellectual, and social.

Reasons for introducing EWPs

A few reasons why organizations introduce EWPs are the following:

1. **High levels of stress and the consequent absenteeism**: Consequent to globalization, competitions have increased manifold. This has resulted in increase in incidence of work stress. Work stress can affect the health of employees directly. This could ultimately lead to higher levels of absenteeism and even turnover.

2. **To show organisatons care**: EWPs induce in the minds of the employees that they are being cared by their organizations.

3. **Social responsibility:** Many organizations introduce EWPs as part of corporate social responsibility. Increasing link is now evidenced between corporate social responsibility, improvements in their value to shareholders and the morale of employees. Organizations now list EWPs as under CSR activities. This would also enhance the image and prestige of the company.

4. To help reduce health care or medical costs: EWPs will help employees maintain a healthy mind and body, thereby reducing the incidence of health issues and the consequent costs associated with it.

5. To increase employee productivity: Since the EWPs address the welfare and morale of employees, it will help in increase the morale and productivity.

6. To improve retention: As employees feel at ease and will be in high spirits in the organization, since there is adequate focus on their well being, retention will not be a big issue.

EWPs are now an economic imperative for corporations, and should be accorded strategic priority in India. The need for these programmes is highlighted further when viewed against the backdrop of rising burden of a large number of non-communicable diseases in India. It is estimated that these diseases account for around 53% of total deaths.

Benefits of EWP for Employees

EWP provide a number of benefits to employees. The first and foremost benefit is that it allows the employees to take charge of, and responsibility for, their own well-being. It would help the employees in relieving stress that may arise out personal finances, substance abuse, health problems, career crises and job demands. Further benefits according to Renaud, Kishchuk, Juneau, Nigam, Tétreault, & Leblanc, (2008) include increased mental wellness, energy, resilience, life and job satisfaction, reduced stress and depression.

Benefits to the organization

Through introduction of EWPs employees would be able to derive a host of benefits like meeting relevant provisions of labour legislations, improved industrial relations, reduced absenteeism, increased employee performance and productivity, reduced health care costs, and substantial reduction in accidents (Addley, McQuillan & Ruddle, 2001; Goetzel & Ozminkowski, 2008; Hemp, 2004; Makrides, 2004; Shaw, Alfonso, Howat & Corben, 2007; Thogersen-Ntoumani & Fox, 2005).

According to Sieberhagen, Pienaar, & Els, (2011) wellness of employees has the capacity to influence the wellness of the organization in which he works and vice versa. However, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of EWPs because the measurement ultimately rests on the subjective perceptions of the organisations. It can be stated that improving positive employee outcomes and reducing negative employee outcomes could indicate the effectiveness of a EWP.

Elements of Effective EWP

EWPs would be effective if it is done in an objective manner. For this the following elements are suggested:

1. Establishing clear goals and objectives,
2. Linking the programmes to the business objectives,
3. Communication to and engaging the employees for the need of such programmes,
4. Creation a supportive environment,
5. Using appropriate incentives to achieve the desired results,
6. Appropriate social environment, norms and necessary all round support, and
7. Implementing a programme that is multi component and tailored to the specific needs.

A few Lifestyle Practices that could enhance wellness are:

1. Exercising aerobically at least four to five times per week.
2. Eliminateing all tobacco products.
3. Limiting animal fats, cholesterol, transfats, and saturated fats in the diet.
4. Having a few servings daily of fruits and vegetables and including other high-fiber foods and whole grains every day in the diet.
5. Assessing personal stressors and practice stress management techniques, including maintaining a strong social support system.
6. Eliminating the consumption of alcohol.
7. Pursuing and maintain a healthy weight.
8. Practicing safe sex habits.
9. Balancing work, social, and personal time, including getting 7 to 9 hours of sleep every night.

RESEARCH STUDIES

Though the concept of WLB is only a few decades old, volumes of literature exist regarding its effects among employees. The concept has been subjected to empirical examinations at varying levels and dimensions. Sociologists, Psychologists and Management experts have studied the concept in detail.

Ezzedeen and Swiercz (2002) developed and tested a cognitive approach of WLB, and termed it the 'Cognitive Intrusion of Work'. According to this approach WLB is not just about finding 'physical time' to do all that needs to be done, but is about the 'cognitive space' necessary to process, organize, and respond to the thinking demands of life within a complex society. They found that the cognitive intrusion of work could lead to lower job satisfaction, less happiness, a greater incidence of work/life conflict, and more frequent burnout. There is also ample empirical literature to prove that conflict between home and family leads to negative job related attitudes like reduced job satisfaction, increased tardiness, absenteeism, sickness, turnover, and reduced performance levels (Cooper and Cartwright, 1994; Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000; Quick et al., 1997).

Of late there has been radical change in the demographics of the workforce. Some of the changes include, increasing number of women in the workplace, dual career families, multiculturalism, etc. These changes have generated an increasingly diverse workforce; and a consequently greater need of employees to balance their work and non-work lives (Bharat, 2003; Komarraju, 1997; Rajadhyaksha & Bhatnagar, 2000). This has prompted employers to introduce innovative practices that allow employees to find greater WLB (Friedman, Christensen, & DeGroot, 1998).

Increasing attrition rates and increasing demand for WLB have also forced organisations to look beyond run of the mill HR interventions. As a result, initiatives such as flexible working hours, alternative work

arrangements, leave policies and benefits in lieu of family care responsibilities and employee assistance programmes have become a significant part of most of the company benefit programmes and compensation packages. A poll by the Society for Human Resource Management found that professionals viewed flexible workplace schedules as a key to employee retention and accorded this working condition top priority to deal with employee attrition.

Studies have also shown that satisfaction with WLB vary with the type of shift. Day workers were found to be satisfied with their WLB most, followed by regular evening workers. The least satisfied were those workers with the least control of their work schedules – those with split or irregular shifts. Certain other studies have established that an integrated set of flexible HRM policies have the capacity of significantly and positively impacting aspects like employee satisfaction and firm productivity. It can also develop the much needed sustainable competitive advantages (Forsyth and Polzer-Debruyne, 2007; Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). A number of experts, for instance, Brennan (2007) have opined that most HR practitioners have reported concern regarding the lack of significant linkage between WLB policy development process and the job design, as well as job evaluation process functions that are closely connected to strategic HRM.

Linking HRM policies to WLB, Elloy & Smith (2003) suggest that to effectively conceptualize and manage WLB, there should be a fundamental shift towards a holistic approach of HRM. The organizations should have awareness about not just the hours that the

employees spend at work place, but also of their daily lives. Another study explored the issue of providing a finer understanding of disconnect between HRM practice and WLB policy development. The study concluded that there needs to be a clear conceptualisation of HRM framework so as to provide a rigorous basis on which the effectiveness of its WLB initiatives can be identified. The present study intends to provide inputs in this direction.

HRM Trends in IT/ITES Industry in India

Trends in IT/ITES industry reveal that attracting, managing, nurturing talent and retaining people are the most important and critical issues that HRM has to face. It is an absolute necessity to reap the enormous opportunities offered by the globalized market. The human resources of this industry consist of talented knowledge professional that have the qualities of being innovative, business savvy, has an instinctive ability to network, and an inherent quality of unbridled ambitions. According to Garg, Sharma and Pandey (2010) these professionals are propelled by an urge to experiment, and always scan for new avenues wherein they can spur their creativity. The knowledge professionals are on the lookout for organizations that are flexible, have strong values, and provide a robust performance ethic. The work should be challenging and have the latest technology.

Garg, Sharma and Pandey (2010), listed three significant growth trends in the Indian IT industry, which have been pressuring the HR managers to look towards technology for solution. They are:

1. An explosive growth in CEO level searches and hires by Indian companies,

2. Search for middle and entry-level talent in large number of companies,

3. Inheritance of a large number of employees by Indian companies through global acquisitions.

All these aspects have prompted the companies to take proactive measures and create a climate wherein talents can bloom. These aspects would facilitate unleashing the potential of employees in addition to being rewarded and recognized. Further, employers have also introduced a host of innovative practices that allow employees to find greater WLB. On the other side, increasing attrition rates and demand for WLB have forced organisations to look beyond normal HR interventions. Initiatives like flexible working hours, alternative work arrangements, leave policies, benefits in lieu of family care responsibilities and employee assistance programmes have become a significant part of most of the IT/ITES Company's' benefit programmes and compensation packages. Such policies, practices and benefit programmes are generally termed 'family-friendly policies' (FFPs) or 'work-life benefits and practices' (WLBPs) (Kopelman et al., 2006). The significance and implications of such HR interventions are many. Research findings suggest that WLBPs not only help employees better manage their work and family roles but also affect employee attitude and behaviors such as organisational commitment (Grover & Crooker, 1995), job satisfaction, organisational performance and effectiveness (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998) and intention to quit (Lobel & Kossek, 1996).

Work/life initiatives have found to promote employee commitment, higher productivity, lower turnover, fewer employee relations challenges, and decrease the likelihood of unethical business practices (Lockwood, 2003). This would also lead to better quality of life among the employees.

All these facts points towards the need for a fair knowledge and awareness of the impact of employment conditions on the employee wellness and WLB. This knowledge is of paramount importance for framing HRM practices and policies suited for the employees. The proposed work is a humble effort in the direction of knowing the impact of certain HRM practices like continuous working hours, shift work, strict leave rules, etc. on the wellness and WLB of IT/ITES employees.

WLB in IT/ITES Industry

In IT/ITES industries, due to the interplay of a number of factors like competition, their unique nature of work wherein it has to be in tune with the working hours of the client nation, there is a requirement to world long hours – beyond the 9 to 5 slot, and even during weekends. These non-standard working hours and weekend work has now become a norm in the industry. This pattern of working could lead to a mismatch between the light/dark sleep/wake cycles and could disturb the normal 'circadian rhythms of psycho-physiological' functions (Minors and Waterhouse, 1986). According to Costa, 2003) this would result in 'shift-lag syndrome'. This syndrome is

characterised by feelings that include fatigue, sleepiness, disorientation, digestive troubles, irritability, poorer mental agility, and reduced performance efficiency. Wilson, Polzer-Debruyne, Chen, and Fernandes, (2007) states that, though shift-lag symptoms could affect the individual directly in the first instance; it also has a wider impact on the family and social environment of the individual; ultimately affecting the organisation employing shift workers. According to Colligan and Rosa (1990), such people tend to be frequently 'out of sync' with the society, which could lead to social marginalisation. Wilson, Polzer-Debruyne, Chen, and Fernandes, (2007) is of the opinion that this gets aggravated if they live in a family with school-aged children, as there is the possibility of social activities being organised around the normal day-oriented rhythm. Further, time pressure could become a constant problem when they organize family time tables with personal compulsions (like school and house work), and social and community services. These time pressures could have negative and even disastrous influences on children's education, marital and parental roles, and relationships (Costa, 2003). Constraints placed on effective participation in social and domestic life can produce a sense of social alienation and could be a major source of role conflict for these workers (Bohle and Quinlan, 2000).

A study by Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1992) established that the relationship between work to family conflict and job related affect is not a direct one. It is mediated by the frequency of family to work conflict. This shows that family environment have a crucial role to play

in the lives of employees who engaged in shift works and long working hours like IT/ITES employees.

Hill et al (1998) found that virtual office and telework enabled greater productivity, higher morale, increased flexibility and longer work hours. Though it has negative impact on teamwork, it had positive influence on WLB. This was established through a comparative quasi-experimental design study conducted on 157 IBM teleworkers and 89 employees in traditional office setting. Another study by Hill et al (2001) on 6,451 employees of IBM observed that perceived flexible work timings and location of work place impact WLB. A group of individuals with the same workload and with perceived job flexibility were found to enjoy good WLB, and were capable of working longer hours before workload could negatively impacts them.

Ferrer and Gagne (2006) found that IT/ITES companies implemented more family friendly policies that can ease the level of tension between work and life/family in comparison to other industries. However, according to Costa (2003) though IT/ITES industry provides a number of advantages to the economy, it is found to lead to a number of health, social and cultural problems to its employees.

MacInnes (2005) based on review of evidence from the British Social Attitudes Survey, 2002, explores the myth regarding the reduction of working hours in order to enhance work-life balance. The author asserts that work-life policies designed for the reduction of working hours are of particular interest to workers with family responsibilities.

However workers in Britain report that the kind of time-stress bought in by "long hours culture" has little relationship between workers family situation and preferences for working few hours. Families with responsibilities and young children may not be in a position to work for shorter hours as they need the income to support their families that only substantial working hours bring. On the contrary workers with no family responsibilities have the option to swap income or career progression for increased leisure time.

Studies in India

A number of studies have been done in India regarding the WLB of IT/ITES personnel. Bhargava and Baral (2009) studied the scope and coverage of WLB practices in Indian companies and found that lot needs to be done to treat WLB practices as strategic aspect of organizational performance. Though Indian organizations offer a lot of benefits in the name of WLB, they fail to form an integral part of the companies polices. He found that while statutory policies such as maternity leave and benefits are common in this industry, practices such as flexi-time, work from home and part-time work are yet to be widely implemented. Further, stress management workshops and training programs on WLB conducted normally as part of welfare provisions, are not followed up regularly in most of the organizations. Another important finding was that many employees did not recognize the WLB programmes implemented by their respective organizations. This point to the need for properly and effectively communicating to the employees the various WLB practices. This should be done with

the conviction that employees feel committed to the organization and indulge in organizational citizenship behaviors when organizations offers policies, practices, benefits and services that help them to integrate their work and family responsibilities.

Chavan and Potdar (2011) lists down the various health, social and cultural problems of ITES industry in India as under:
- Stress, tension, depression and burnout,
- Headaches,
- Eyestrain,
- Repetitive strain injury (RSI),
- Digestive disorders,
- Disruption of biological clock and the consequent sleeplessness,
- Low backaches, etc.

The various social and cultural problems that occur to ITES employees, according to them, include issues arising out of addiction towards alcohol and smoking, involving in social taboos, indiscipline, detachment from social and family life, etc. Quantifying the problem Chavan and Potdar (2011) established that a large number of respondents had severe headaches (60.2%). This was accompanied by problems like short temper and feeling of irritation (29.3%), complete sense of exhaustion (28.6%), cold (24.7 %), restless sleep (23.9%), lack of concentration (23.9%), muscular and cardiovascular disorders (20.5 %) and lack of appetite (10.8 %). Ironically the problems were highly prevalent in the age group of 20 to 25 years of age.

Madhavi and Vimala (2011) conducted a study on IT personnel in Chennai. They found that employees in the age group 25 to 35 years have more work family issues than other age groups. Work-family issues among the middle aged women were due to commitment towards the organizational and family roles. Another finding was that there exists no relationship between work-family issues and demographic factors (like education levels, designation, experience, family type, income, etc.). However association was found between factors like age, physical exercises/relaxation methods, marital status, and number of family members of the employees; and the work-family issues experienced by employees. Employees with less number of family members had more work-family issues. This could be due to non availability of the possibility of sharing responsibilities. Rangreji (2010) who studied WLB and emotional intelligence of IT personnel in Bangalore found that there is no significant difference with respect to age, qualification, marital status, overall experience and WLB.

A review of literature thus shows that though a number of studies have been undertaken in WLB and wellness separately, a study in the proposed dimension is found lacking. The present study attempts to fill this gap.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Data collection – Analysis
Of Data

Taking into consideration the importance and pervasive nature of WLB and Wellness in the IT/ITES industry, the changes that has occurred in the demographic set up of the working population, and the challenges faced by the HR department, the present study attempt to study the complex relations between the two variables. There is a need to have good HR practices and substantially higher levels of WLB and wellness among the IT/ITES employees. These aspects have prompted setting of the objectives for the study as under:

1. To list out the common HRM practices prevalent in IT/ITES companies in Kerala including working hours, shift work, leave rules, etc.
2. To find out the position of WLB of the employees of IT/ITES companies in Kerala.
3. To find out the relationship of WLB on:
     a. The employee wellness, and
     b. Various demographic particulars,
   of the employees of IT/ITES companies in Kerala
4. To list out the unique HRM practices of IT/ITES companies in Kerala.

Towards this data were collected from 256 employees working in the IT/ITES companies across Kerala. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The details of data collection are presented in the following sections.

DATA COLLECTION

Sampling

In Kerala majority of IT/ITES business in concentrated in the districts of Trivandrum and Ernakulam. The majority of the data collected from 262 personnel were also from these districts. However, efforts have been made to collect data from other districts as well. While certain IT organizations permitted collection of data from their employees, certain others which were approached were reluctant to permit data collection. Data has been collected from respondents working in a number of IT/ITES organistaions. Naming of the organistions from where the data has been collected has been dispensed with as the officials of the respective organisaions who have allowed collection of data have been promised not to name them. Random sampling procedure has been used to collect data from those organizations which permitted collection of data. The collection of data lasted over a period of 90 days. The breakup of the data is presented in the following sections.

Tools for Data collection

Two sets of structured questionnaires have been used for collection of data. The details of the tools are as under:

1. **Work family conflict:** A modified version of a standardized questionnaire **'WFC questionnaire'** developed by Carlson et al (2000); modified by and cited in Jayaweera (2005) was used to measure Work family conflict. The tool consists of total of 12 items. The measure was of likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

   The tool has three factors, the details of which are provided in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Particulars regarding Factors of WFC questionnaire

Factor No.	Factor Name	No. of Items	Eigen value
1	Work to family conflict	5	3.551
2	Family to work conflict	3	3.192
3	Stress based conflict	4	2.197

Source: Jayaweera (2005)

The first factor called **'Work to family conflict'** accounts for the most variance at 36.416%. It consists of items like 'interference caused by work schedules to family', 'interference caused by time spent at work towards family' and 'work issues interference with family issues'. This factor is capable of providing insights on

the work family conflict of respondents. The second factor called **'Family to work conflict'** accounts for 32.721 % variance. This factor elicits information regarding interference from 'family responsibilities towards work', 'time spent on family activities on work' and 'tiredness caused by doing home activities'. The third factor is known as '**Stress-based conflict** has a variance of 23.211%. 'Work stress affecting family' and 'family stress affecting work' are included in this factor. A high reliability score of 0.8638 using Cronbach's alpha has been reported for the scale.

2. **Employee Wellness:** Employee wellness has been measured using the 'Physical Dimension' of a well known Wellness Questionnaire (Robbins, Powers & Burgess, 2011). The present study has used only the physical dimension out of the seven dimensions. The questionnaire consists of 10 items on a three point scale, ranging from 'Almost always' to 'never'. A few sample items used in the questionnaire include:

   a) I engage in exercise such as jogging, brisk walking, swimming, etc.
   b) I participate in physical activities
   c) I maintain a healthy weight avoiding overweight and underweight
   d) I limit the amount of fat and cholesterol content in my diet; and so on.

The Cronbach Alpha of the Wellness questionnaire was found to be .687. Thus the present study has made use of valid tools to collect the required data.

Demographic particulars

All related demographic particulars of the respondents were also elicited. The particulars collected include the type of the company in which working, the experience of the respondent, qualifications, income, age, gender, marital status, particulars regarding number of children, employment of spouse, the number of shifts in the company, state of origin, etc. Almost all relevant and comprehensive demographic data has been collected from the respondents.

Method of Data Collection

Taking into consideration the peculiar type of work culture prevalent in the industry under study, data collection using physical questionnaires were dispensed with. A Google doc having all the items with choices were constructed and directly mailed to the respondents after obtaining permission from their respective office authorities. The advantages of using Google docs have enabled hassle free data collection from maximum number of respondents. The link for the Google docs is as under:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/16LK5kFggChNG6QgGb8Iuac45dPSX A-Q0f1ql4L5YpiY/viewform

On clicking the link a window containing the questionnaires will appear. All the items of the questionnaire are compulsory and the "Submit" button at the end of the window will be activated only on responding to all the items. Thus there is no requirement of rejection of any questionnaires. A screenshot of the window is provided as Annexure I.

A short interview schedule was also prepared to collect the required date about the HRM Practices from the HR executives. The schedule helped in eliciting the required data about the various WLB practices in vogue in their respective organizations. Based on discussions with various HR executives data were also collected for a few case studies pertaining to WLB, relevant to the present study.

Data has been collected from a total of 262respondents. Of this 199 respondents (76%) were in IT employees and the balance of 63 (24%) were ITES employees. While 253 respondents had their origins in the state of Kerala, 9 hailed from other states. The demographic particulars of the respondents are presented in the following tables:

Table 3.2
Marital Status of Respondents

Gender	Married	Unmarried	Divorced	Total
Male	74	81	0	155
Female	53	51	3	107
Total	127	132	3	262

The gender wise, marital status of the respondents is provided in Table 3.2. Of the total 155 males 74 are married and 81 are unmarried. 107 were females, of which 53 were married, 51 unmarried and three were divorced.

The age wise distribution of the sample is presented in Table 3.3 below:

Table 3.3
Age wise Distribution of Respondents

Age groups	<25	26-30	30-35	36-45	46-55	55<	Total
Number	82	101	39	31	8	2	262
Per cent	31.30	38.56	14.90	11.83	3.05	0.76	100

In tune with the general trend in the software industry, majority of the respondents belonged to the younger age groups. It is evident from the above table that 69.86 per cent of the respondents were below 30 years of age. 39 respondents (14.90 %) belonged to the age group 30 to 35 years, and 31 (11.83%) belonged to the age group 36 to 45 years. Only 10 respondents (3.81) were aged over 55 years.

The distribution of the sample based on qualifications is presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4
Distribution of Respondents based on Qualification

Qualification	Diploma	Graduate	Prof. Graduate	Prof. Post Graduate	Total
Number	17	59	72	114	262
Per cent	06.49	22.52	27.48	43.51	100

Majority of the respondents were Professional Post Graduates. It can be observed from the above table that 114 (43.51%) respondents were Professional Post Graduates (MBAs, MCAs or MTechs). 72 (27.48%) were Professional Graduates – mostly BTechs or BEs. 59 (22.52%) respondents were normal graduates and 17 (6.49%) were diplomas holders (mostly in engineering discipline).

The salary wise distribution of the sample is provided in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

Distribution of the Sample based on Annual Salary

Salary (Rs. Per Annum)	< 150000	150000 to 250000	250000 to 500000	500000 to 800000	800000 to 1200000	> 1200000
Number	27	79	83	40	12	21
Per cent	10.31	30.15	31.68	15.26	04.59	08.01

Majority of the respondents (83 – 31.68%) belonged to the Rs.250000 to 500000 group, followed by Rs.150000 to 250000 group with 79 (30.15%). The least number of respondents (12 – 4.59%) were in the Rs.800000 to 1200000 group. There were 21 (8.01%) respondents in the above Rs.1200000 group. Thus there is a fair distribution of respondents belonging to almost all income groups.

The classification of the respondents based on years of experience is presented in Table numbered 3.6.

Table 3.6

Experience wise Distribution of Respondents

Years	< 1	1 to 3	4 to 5	6 to 10	11 to 15	15 <	Total
Number	34	89	33	62	29	15	262
Per cent	12.97	33.97	12.60	23.66	11.07	5.73	100

Response was also elicited regarding the number of shifts in the respective organizations of the respondents. The data is presented in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7

Distribution of Respondents Based on Number of Shifts

Number of shifts	Single	Two	Three	Total
Number	117	36	109	262
Per cent	44.66	13.74	41.60	100

Majority of the respondents were working in organizations having more than one shift. While 109 respondents (41.60%) where working in organizations with three shifts, 36 (13.74%) were having two shifts. The rest were working in organizations having a single shift.

From the above tables that present the various demographic particulars of the respondents, it is clear that the sample data collected presents a fair picture of the population under study.

DATA ANALYSIS

Both quantitative and qualitative analysis was done in the present study. Quantitative analysis of data was done using the following statistical techniques:

1. Descriptive statistics like Frequency, Means, Standard Deviation and Percentages;
2. Pearson's Correlation analysis;
3. t-test; and
4. Analysis of Variance ANOVA).

Case study method was done to analyze the data qualitatively. The details of data analysis and its interpretation are provided in the following chapters.

CHAPTER IV

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF DATA

Levels of WLB – Results of
Correlation analysis – Results
of ANOVA and t-test

As stated in the earlier chapter the collected data were analyzed using statistical techniques like descriptive statistics t-test, ANOVA, correlation, etc. The analysis of data was done by using advanced version of SPSS. The results are presented in the following sections.

LEVEL OF WLB

An attempt was made to categorize the sample into high, medium and low groups based on their respective scores in WLB. This was done to find out the percent of sample that were having either high or low WLB. The categorization was based on the following criteria:

Group	Method of categorization
High	Those samples having Scores above the value of Mean + ½ Standard Deviation
Low Group	Those samples having Scores below the value of Mean − ½ Standard Deviation
Medium	Those samples having scores between the High and Low groups

Based on the above, the breakup of the sample as High, Low and Medium Groups are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1
Categorization of the sample into High, Low and Medium Groups

Group	Number	Per cent
High	95	36.25
Medium	93	35.50
Low	74	28.25
Total	262	100

From the above table it can be inferred that 28% are having low levels of WLB. It is heartening to note that 36% are having high levels of WLB followed by 35.50% with medium levels. Considering the high and medium categories of sample to be having acceptable levels of WLB, it can be seen that 71.75 per cent have fairly good WLB.

The profiles of the three categories were analyzed to have a fair understanding of WLB among the samples. The same is presented in table 4.2.

Table 4.2
Profile of the three WLB categories

Particulars	Category	High group	Low group	Medium group	Total
Gender	Male	60(38.7)	50(32.3)	45(29.0)	155
	Female	35(31.8)	43(40.2)	29(27.0)	107
Marital status	Unmarried	48(36.4)	46(34.8)	38(28.8)	132
	Married	45(35.4)	47(37.0)	35(27.6)	127
	Divorced	2(66.7)	0	1(33.3)	3
Number of shifts	1 shift	40(34.2)	43(36.8)	34(29.0)	117
	2 shifts	14(38.9)	17(47.2)	5(13.9)	36
	3 shifts	41(37.6)	33(30.3)	35(32.1)	109
Employment status of spouse	Employed	35(37.6)	22(23.7)	36(38.7)	93
	Unemployed	10(29.4)	13(38.2)	11(32.4)	34
Age group	<25	27(33.0)	23(28.0)	32(39.0)	82
	26 to 30	37(36.6)	31(30.7)	33(32.7)	101
	31 to 35	13(33.3)	11(28.2)	15(38.5)	39
	36 to 45	13(42.0)	9(29.0)	9(29.0)	31
	46 to 55	4(50.0)	0	4(50.0)	8
	55<	1(100)	0	0	1

Note: Figures in brackets denote per cents

The gender-wise breakup of the high low and medium group of WLB based on number of shifts is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3
Gender-wise breakup of WLB

Gender	Number of shifts	High group	Low group	Medium group	Total
Male	1	22(30.1)	24(32.9)	27(37.0)	73
	2	11(47.8)	4(17.4)	8(34.8)	23
	3	27(45.8)	17(28.8)	15(25.4)	59
	Total	60(38.7)	45(29.0)	50(32.3)	155
Female	1	18(41.0)	10(22.7)	16(36.4)	44
	2	3(23.1)	1(7.7)	9(69.2)	13
	3	14(28.0)	18(36.0)	18(36.0)	50
	Total	35(32.7)	29(27.1)	43(40.2)	107

Note: Figures in brackets denote per cents

From the above tables it can be seen that Males, unmarried and employees whose spouse are employed have higher levels of WLB than their respective counterparts. An earlier study by White et al (2003) among British employees found no negative job-to-home spillover for dual-earner couples. The present study also substantiates this finding of While et al (2003). Further, those in the age group of 26 to 30 years are having higher levels of WLB than the other age groups.

RESULTS OF CORRELATION ANALYSIS

The relationship between the different variables, viz. Work to Family Conflict, Family to Work Conflict, Work Life Balance, and Wellness was found out using Pearson Correlation. The results are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4
Correlation between Variables

	Mean	SD	WFC	FWC	SBC	WLB	WEL
WFC	16.84	4.17	1	.561**	.610**	.897**	.194**
FWC	11.13	2.10	..	1	.672**	.805**	.277**
SBC	14.75	2.90	..	..	1	.864**	.296**
WLB	42.92	7.93	..	..	..	1	.283**
WEL	20.70	3.23	..	..	..	..	1

Notes   N= 262   ** Correlation significant at the 0.01 level.
WFC –   Work to Family Conflict FWC –   Family to Work conflict
SBC –   Stress Based Conflict   WLB –   Work Life Balance
WLP –   Work Life Practices   WEL –   Wellness

It can be found from the above table that all variables have significant positive correlation among themselves. The same is discussed in the following sections.

Work to Family Conflict (WFC) and Family to Work Conflict (FWC)

The value of correlation analysis between the two variables is .561 (Table 4.4). The value is significant at 0.01 level, thus denoting that the two variables, viz. Work to Family Conflict and Family to Work Conflict are related.

Work to Family Conflict (WFC) and Stress Based Conflict (SBC)

Significant correlation at 0.01 level was also found between the variables Work to Family Conflict and Stress Based Conflict. The value of the correlation analysis is .610 (Table 4.4).

Work to Family Conflict (WFC) and Wellness (WEL)

The variables Work to Family Conflict (WFC) and Wellness (WEL) are found to be related as there existed significant correlation at 0.01 level (r = .194). This finding is partly in tune with the findings of the study on IT professionals of Chennai by Madhavi and Vimala (2011).

Family to Work Conflict (FWC) and Stress Based Conflict (SBC)

Family to Work Conflict (FWC) is found to be related to Stress Based Conflict as the correlation analysis revealed significant correlation at 0.01 level (r value = .672).

Family to Work Conflict (FWC) and Wellness (WEL)

Significant correlation at 0.01 level also exists between the variables Family to Work Conflict (FWC) and Wellness (WEL). The r value for these variables is .277.

Stress Based Conflict (SBC) and Wellness (WEL)

The r value for the variables Stress Based Conflict (SBC) and Wellness (WEL) is found to be .296 in the analysis, thereby denoting significant correlation at 0.01 level.

Work Life Balance (WLB) and Wellness (WEL)

Significant correlation is also present between the variables Work Life Balance (WLB) and Wellness at 0.01 level. The correlation value between the variables is .283.

The study thus proves that all the variables have a positive relation among themselves.

RESULTS OF ANOVA AND t-TEST

To find out whether there is any difference in WLB and various demographic particulars t-test and ANOVA was done. The results are presented in the following sections.

Difference in WLB and Wellness based on gender

The result of t-test of WLB and Wellness with respect to gender is provided in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5
Data and t-value of WLB based on gender

Variable	Gender	Number	Mean	SD	t-value
WLB	Male	155	43.19	7.86	.658*
	Female	107	42.53	8.07	
Wellness	Male	155	21.05	3.369	2.142**
	Female	107	20.19	2.969	

Note: * Not significant
              ** Significant at 0.05 level

The above table shows that there is no significant difference in WLB between males and females. Males are having marginally higher WLB as their mean value is 43.19 as against 42.53 of females. This may be due to the fact that the IT industry is hailed to be a gender-neutral industry given its almost complete dependence on knowledge skills, as against physical skills. This has been achieved by a host of family-friendly policies (Gayathri & Antony, 2002). Empirical investigation by Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan (2005) established that there is coexistence of

traditional and modern gender role expectations in India, wherein men are increasingly taking household responsibilities while maintaining their breadwinning role; and women are harmoniously managing household responsibilities regardless of their employment status. These changes in typical Indian family structure have helped them in effectively managing both work and family (Poster, 2005; Rajadhyaksha & Bhatnagar, 2000). This could be the reason why there is no difference in the level of WLB with respect to gender.

However, there is significant difference between the male and female respondents in wellness. The male respondents are having higher wellness as they have high mean value. This may be due to the better facilities available for males for working out, engaging in indoor/outdoor games, etc. Detailed breakup of the responses for the males and females are presented in the Annexure for a better understanding.

Difference in WLB and Wellness based on marital status

Table 4.6
Data and t-value of WLB and Wellness based on marital status

Variable	Gender	Number	Mean	SD	t-value
WLB	Unmarried	132	43.20	7.413	.649**
	Married	127	42.57	8.374	
Wellness	Unmarried	132	20.73	3.215	.123 **
	Married	127	20.69	3.289	

Note: ** Not significant

No significant difference was observed between the married and unmarried employees in their levels of WLB as the t-value is .649. Since the mean of unmarried employees are marginally higher, they can be considered to have better WLB than married employees. The results of t-test for wellness did not reveal any difference between married and unmarried IT/ITES employees.

Difference in WLB with respect to number of shifts

ANOVA was done to find out if there exists any difference in the level of WLB with respect to the number of shifts in their respective organizations. While 117 employees worked in companies having only one shift, 36 had two shifts and 109 had three shifts. The ANOVA revealed there is no significant difference between those employees having varying shifts in their organizations. The ANOVA is presented below:

Table 4.7
ANOVA of WLB based on number of shifts

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	241.439	2	120.720	
Within groups	16185.877	259	62.494	1.932**
Total	16427.317	261		

Note: ** Not significant

Difference in Wellness based on number of shifts

ANOVA was done to find out if there existed any difference in Wellness based on the number of shifts of the employees. The results, presented in Table 4.8 below do not show any significant difference between the employees working in companies having more than one shift.

Table 4.8
ANOVA of Wellness based on number of shifts

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	10.733	2	5.366	
Within groups	2718.447	259	10.496	.511**
Total	2729.179	261		

Note: ** Not significant

Difference in WLB based on qualification

The ANOVA conducted to find out the difference in WLB of the respondents having different educational levels did not reveal any difference. The results are presented in Table 4.9 below:

Table 4.9
ANOVA of WLB based on qualification

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	163.272	4	40.818	
Within groups	16264.045	257	63.284	.645**
Total	16427.317	261		

Note: ** Not significant

Difference in Wellness based on qualification

The ANOVA conducted to find out if there existed any difference in the level of wellness based on qualification of the respondents did not reveal any significant difference. The results of the ANOVA are presented below:

Table 4.10
ANOVA of Wellness based on qualification

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	74.439	4	18.610	
Within groups	2654.740	257	10.330	1.802**
Total	2729.179	261		

Note: ** Not significant

Difference in WLB based on Age Group

No significant difference was found in the ANOVA conducted to find out if there existed any difference in WLB of the respondents belonging to different age groups. The results are presented below:

Table 4.11
ANOVA of WLB based on age group

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F
Between groups	190.442	5	38.088	
Within groups	16236.875	256	63.425	.601**
Total	16427.317	261		

Note: ** Not significant

Difference in Wellness based on Age Group

The ANOVA did not reveal any significant difference in the level of wellness among different age groups. The results are presented in Table 4.12:

Table 4.12
ANOVA of Wellness based on age group

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F
Between groups	78.903	5	15.781	
Within groups	2650.277	256	10.353	1.524**
Total	2729.179	261		

Note: ** Not significant

Difference in WLB based on Experience

The ANOVA did not reveal any significant difference in WLB based on the experience level of the respondents. The results are presented in Table 4.13 below:

Table 4.13
ANOVA of WLB based on experience

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F
Between groups	185.199	5	37.040	
Within groups	16242.118	256	63.446	.584**
Total	16427.317	261		

Note: ** Not significant

Difference in Wellness based on Experience

No significant difference was found in the ANOVA conducted, based on the years of experience of the respondents. The results are presented below:

Table 4.14
ANOVA of Wellness based on experience

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F
Between groups	110.627	5	22.125	
Within groups	2618.553	256	10.229	2.163**
Total	2729.179	261		

Note: ** Not significant

Difference in WLB based on number of family members

ANOVA was done to find out if there existed any difference in the level of WLB based on the number of members in the family. The results did not reveal any significant difference. Table 4.15 provides the results of the ANOVA:

Table 4.15
ANOVA of WLB based on number of family members

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F
Between groups	763.793	10	76.374	
Within groups	15663.524	251	62.404	1.224**
Total	16427.317	261		

Note: ** Not significant

Difference in Wellness based on number of family members

The ANOVA based on the number of members in the family did not reveal any significant difference. The details are provided in Table 4.16:

Table 4.16
ANOVA of Wellness based on number of family members

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F
Between groups	54.832	10	5.483	.515**
Within groups	2674.348	251	10.655	
Total	2729.179	261		

Note: ** Not significant

The gist of all the above results is presented in the following table:

Table 4.17
Gist of Results of t-test and ANOVA

No	Variable	Demographics	Significance
1	WLB	Gender	Not significant
	Wellness		Significant
2	WLB	Marital status	Not significant
	Wellness		Not significant
3	WLB	Number of shifts	Not significant
	Wellness		Not significant
4	WLB	Qualification	Not significant
	Wellness		Not significant
5	WLB	Age group	Not significant
	Wellness		Not significant
6	WLB	Experience	Not significant
	Wellness		Not significant
7	WLB	No of family members	Not significant
	Wellness		Not significant

It can be seen from the above table that most of the demographics, barring wellness based on gender, does not reveal any significant differences among themselves. The findings of this study regarding WLB, which was against the expectation of the researcher, was however, in tandem with the earlier findings of Madhavi and Vimala (2011). In a study conducted on IT personnel in Chennai, they found that there exists no relationship between work-family issues and demographic factors. Some of the demographic particulars they studied included education levels, designation, experience, family type, income, etc. However, their finding that employees with less number of family members had more work-family issues is not substantiated by this study.

The suggestions based on the findings of the study are presented in the following sections.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF DATA

Qualitative analysis – Case
studies

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. It describes social phenomena as they occur naturally; through considering the opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals and produces subjective data. No attempt is made to manipulate the situation under study. Data is collected for qualitative analysis through direct encounters with individuals, through one-to-one or group interviews, or by observation. Since this method is intensive and time consuming, data collection necessitates the use of small samples. There any different approaches of qualitative research, of which case study are one. The present study made use of case study to do qualitative analysis.

Case study

The qualitative approach to case study involves in depth analysis of a single or small number of units. Case study research describes an entity that forms a single unit such as a person, an organisation or an

institution. At times case study describes a series of cases. Case study could be as simple as describing a single event or occurrence to analysis of a social situation over a period of time. There could also be extended case studies in which the same actors over a period of time are considered, enabling analysis that reflects phenomenal changes and adjustments.

As a research design, the case study offers richness and in-depth information, not usually offered by other methods. By attempting to capture as many variables as possible, case studies can identify how a complex set of circumstances come together to produce a particular manifestation. It is a highly versatile research method and employs any and all methods of data collection from testing to interviewing.

The present study made use of case study, and a few cases have been analyzed. A few of them are presented in the following sections.

CASE STUDIES

Case study number 1

Mr. Anil is a smart young engineer who graduated from an engineering college in North Malabar. He was placed in an IT organization based in Technopark, Trivandrum immediately after his graduation. He was so capable, efficient and dedicated that within three years he was promoted to the position of Project head. He had also gone offshore a number of times for interaction and working with the overseas clients.

At the age of 26 he married a girl from a business family, who as residing a few kilometers away from his residence. It was an arranged marriage. The girl belonged to a large family with a number of members including her parents, sisters, brothers a number of nephews and nieces. Being the youngest of all siblings she was the pet of all brothers and sisters. His wife was doing her BA in English Literature when he married her. She was aged around 20 years at the time of marriage. It took another six months before she finished her graduation. After her graduation she moved to Trivandrum to reside with her husband. Anil had rented a two bedded flat near to his workplace at Technopark, Trivandrum.

One of the works of the company where A was working involved developing high end computer programmes for a world renowned Japanese company. The long term project was in a crucial phase, and the work required the collective efforts of a large number project heads and staff. Anil, a top performer was heading a nine member team that had a critical role in the project. The present phase involved working long as well as odd hours. For the past many days his official assignments compelled him to be in office for long hours. He could leave office very late, and had to work even on weekends.

His wife was alone at home all these days. She did not have any relatives or friends, whom she could look to in Trivandrum. But for the maid servant who visits the house daily for a few hours, she had nobody to talk to. Having being bought up in a large family, and being

a pet of all the members, she felt lonely and desperate. Though she repeatedly complained to her husband, due to his peculiar situation at office, he was helpless. The situation became so worse that she could tolerate it no more. This compelled her to attempt suicide. Had not the maid servant reached there on time, she would have been killed. The timely intervention of the maid servant alerted the occupants and the nearby flats, and with their help she was shifted to the hospital. She was admitted to the ICU. Anil was also duly informed.

The President of the company in which Anil was working was apprised of the situation. He promptly asked Anil to be by her side. The other staff members rose to the occasion and saw to it that the absence of Anil in no way affected the overall success of the project. As Anil's wife was brought to the hospital on time, her life could be saved. This incident made the top executives of the company to ponder over the situation. Though the company had many employee friendly policies, this unique situation made them to introduce a number of innovative HR policies. An assessment by the management about the demographics of the staff members revealed that nearly half of them were from central or north Kerala. To help such employees and to provide them with better WLB, the company decided to set up a nodal office at Kochi. The working conditions were so changed that employees who were residents of central or north Kerala could report to this nodal office. Facilities were also made for them to work from office, report frequently at the Nodal office, and visit the Trivandrum office only for specified reasons.

The experiment proved to be a big boon with the staff as they started enjoying better WLB. There was also positive impact on the margins of the company. Productivity increased manifold and the employee turnover was also reduced to a considerable extend. The innovative practice is still now in force in the company.

Case study Number 2

Ajay was the only son of his parents. When he got employment in a multinational IT company, very far off from his residence, he had no option but to bring his parents along with him. His father, a retired Government servant, had a mild heart attack recently. When he went to office, he had to leave his father under the care of his mother. All these years, she had been a faithful home maker, who had seldom ventured out of her house, as everything was taken care of by her husband. Ajay was not confident of leaving his father under his mother's care, as she was not well versed with the intricacies of heart disease and its care. However, he had no other option but to rely on his mother to look after his father. Though he was well paid as per the industry standards, his income did not permit him to hire the services of a home nurse.

Since the project he was working pertained to a US client, he had to work according to their timings. This involved working at odd hours and often reaching home late. His worries about his father's disease coupled with his work had a toll on this physical and mental health. His stress levels were so high that it started affecting his attitude and

morale. The situation even compelled him to think about quitting. However good sense prevailed and he decided against it.

Though in the initial stages he desisted from discussing the issue with any of his colleagues, the situation compelled him to speak about it to one of his friends. His friend advised him to discuss the matter with the Chief Operating Officer (COO). The COO being apprised of the veracity of the issue directed him to the HR head, with a note to consider his case with all the required compassion.

Ajay was relived from the current project which involved heavy responsibility, and was assigned a project that involved lighter responsibility. In the mean time the health condition of his father deteriorated. When it was found that the change in assignment is did not suit his requirement, an arrangement was made wherein he could work in 'part-time' mode whenever it was possible for him. He was also allowed to telecommute. These steps helped him to take care and be with his father in his final days. Though his father's life could not be saved and he left for his heavenly above, Ajay was satisfied that he could do everything possible for his father. Since the company had offered Mediclaim for the employee and their dependant parents, Ajay did not have financial burden as the hospital bills were also taken care of by the insurance company. All these would not have been possible in any other industry.

Case study number 3

Saranya is a senior executive in a listed IT company. She has over 15 years' of experience. Her job involves talent acquisition, retention, performance assessment, etc. It is her responsibility to see that the attrition level in her unit is maintained a considerably acceptable levels. Saranya's husband owns a business in the Middle East. He visits India only twice a year. She resides with her parents and two sons a few kilometers away from her workplace. Her father is aged and is suffering from multiple disorders. Her children are studying in the 10th and 7th standards. She has an elder sister residing in the neighborhood whose son was diagnosed as having juvenile diabetes, at the age of 11. He has been under insulin treatment for the last eight years.

Sarayna has to take care of the affairs of all these family members, including the educational requirements of her children. Over and above all this, she had to involve in her job which requires a high level of responsibility. Being an organization that provides priority for quality, they have zero tolerance towards errors. She says *'had not for the family friendly policies of my organization, it would have been near to impossible for me to look after all these personal and family issues. Quitting the job would have been my only option. The company offers a number of facilities that help in maintaining a good work life balance. I can have 'remote working'; even when there is a meeting I need not be physically present, I can take a call from home. There is no maximum or minimum number of days that can be availed*

for working from home. It is all based on the trust between the officer and the executive. Over and above all these the company also offers vacation leave, which the company advises the employees to invariably avail'. Due to all these benefits, she is capable of working for the company with all the required dedication and commitment. As a result of these facilities that are in fact company policies, both the company and the employee benefit.

She holds the company in high esteem. Her level of employee engagement is very high. Taking into consideration the multitude of issues and problems faced by here at home, but not for the progressive policies of the company, it would have been impossible for her to balance her work and life. She asks *"which industry other than IT, offers such flexibility?"*

Case study number 4

Lal is a Project Manager of an Indian IT company. He was in charge of five project teams involved in overseas project. The project was in its advanced stage of completion. Lal has been working in the company for over 10 years. Disaster struck his family when his four year old daughter was diagnosed as having brain tumor. She had to be treated in a super-speciality hospital in Trivandrum. His world turned topsy-turvy when the treating doctors advised him that surgery is the only option. However, there was only a 50:50 chance. Possibilities were that she may be cured completely after the surgery, or she may

survive but could be in a vegetative stage, or may not even survive. Lal was heartbroken, and found it difficult to concentrate on his work.

On coming to know about the ill fate of Lal, the company was willing to help in all possible manners. He was allowed to remote work completely. He was eased from the responsibilities of two project teams. Through these steps he could take the responsibility of taking care of his child unhindered. Due to some complications, when the surgery was delayed, all his facilities were extended further. Since he had to be with his daughter throughout, he found it difficult to carry on his duties. When he informed this to his organization, they offered him the facility of extended leave with a reduced salary till the surgery was over. This helped him to fully dedicate his efforts for the welfare of his daughter.

The surgery was conducted, and by the grace of the Almighty, his daughter was completely cured of her illness. She recovered completely and was discharged from hospital. But not for the employee friendly policies of the organizations, Lal would have found it difficult balancing his work and his family needs. The magnanimity of his organization has helped Lal to a very large extend, and his now highly obliged to it. This act of the organization helped in enhancing its prestige in the eyes of the peers and subordinates of Lal. The employees now perceive the company to be a real friend who can be relied on, at times of need.

All the above cases provided how the unique HRM policies helped their employees with respect to WLB. Such unique policies help in enhancing and maintaining the morale and productivity levels of the employees at sufficiently higher levels. Due to such policies both the employees and the organizations benefit. It is beneficial for the employees as they have a very high positive feeling that they are taken care of. The organizations are benefited as these policies lead to reduced attrition rates. High performing, experienced employees can be retained within the organization. As a result recruitment, training and related costs are not incurred, leading to higher profit margins. Many of these unique policies may not be possible in any other industry other than IT. However, it is high time other industries take a cue from the IT industry and implement unique HRM policies that may be suited for their particular and peculiar requirements. This will go a long way in presenting to the employee that their organizations are friendly and they care for their wellbeing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Study in Retrospect – Results of the study –
Case studies - Suggestions – Implications of
the Study – Limitations – Suggestions for
Further Research

STUDY IN RETROSPECT

Changes in the demographic set up of the working population that ranges from nuclear families, dual career families, to diversity of work settings, etc. are posing a plethora of challenges to the HR department. The biggest challenges include dealing with WLB related issues and retention of talents. WLB is now a pervasive concern for both employers and employees. It is all the more important for IT/ITES organizations as they are totally dependent on human resources for their existence and development. Taking into consideration the need and importance of having good HR practices and substantially higher levels of WLB and wellness among employees, the present study has set the objectives of the study as under:

1. To list out the common HRM practices prevalent in IT/ITES companies in Kerala including working hours, shift work, leave rules, etc.
2. To find out the position of WLB of the employees of IT/ITES companies in Kerala.

3. To find out the relationship of WLB on:

    a. The employee wellness, and

    b. Various demographic particulars,

    c. of the employees of IT/ITES companies in Kerala

4. To list out the unique HRM practices of IT/ITES companies in Kerala.

Data were collected from 256 employees working in the IT/ITES companies across Kerala. While 199 (76%) were from the IT sector, 63 (24%) were from the ITES sector. The sample consisted of 155 males and 107 females. They also pertained to various age groups. The demographics of the respondents provided elsewhere shows that the sample is representative in nature. The data was analyzed using statistical techniques like Correlation, t-test, ANOVA, etc.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Objective 1

The first objective was to list out the common HRM practices prevalent in IT/ITES companies in Kerala including working hours, shift work, leave rules, etc. Particulars regarding the HR practices prevalent in the IT/ITES companies were collected from HR personnel through direct interview. Based on the interviews, the particulars regarding the common HR practices prevalent in IT/ITES companies in Kerala are presented in the following sections. The practices presented are those which are generally followed in various organizations. Not all the listed

practices are followed uniformly in the surveyed organizations. Different practices were followed by the large (multinational) medium and small organizations. Small organizations were found to have only a few (mostly statutory) practices. The practices were narrated by the respective officials based on the promise that confidentially of the organizations regarding particular practices would be adhered to by the investigator. As such naming of the organizations against the different practices is dispensed with. All the organizations studied had written leave rules that were invariably adhered to. The leave rules are communicated to the employees without fail. They meticulously followed almost all statutory rules regarding leave. While majority of the ITES organizations had three shifts, IT organizations had one or two shifts only. However, in certain organizations, though as per record there were only two shifts, in practice the shifts used spread over and 24 hour work was prevalent. This work however is reportedly voluntary in nature.

For the sake of convenience and better understanding the other HR practices followed by the organizations are presented based on the 4Rs of HR – **Recruiting, Retaining, Retraining**, and **Restructuring**.

Recruitment

Recruitment is the most important component of HR that facilitates good people management. Recruitment helps in bringing in quality human assets into the organization. Unless due importance is provided to recruitment and selection, it is difficult to get the best talents for

the organization. The common practices prevalent in the IT/ITES organizations in Kerala are the following:

a) Campus selection,

b) Advertisements on the media,

c) Job portals,

d) Head hunters/ Consultants,

e) Referrals and connections,

f) Student interns,

g) Selection is based on competency-based job description,

h) For the selection process aptitude tests including quantitative, logic and trade tests, multiple level interviews, etc. are done.

i) In almost all organizations new hires are required to undergo induction programmes of varying length and appropriate on-job trainings.

The first two practices were limited mostly to large and medium organizations. A large number of medium and small organizations made liberal use of the rest of the practices. While big and most of the medium organizations did HRP in a quarterly frequency, this system was not prevalent in certain medium and small organizations.

Retaining

Retaining is now the biggest problem faced by the HR. With quality talent being of high demand, extra care should be taken to retain the best talents. It has been empirically proved that a few HR practices

including realistic job and WLB are strong predictors of executive turnover (Ruwan, 2007). This highlights the importance of retaining the available talents. The challenge lies in creating a performance culture that can provide opportunities to enhance performance, and make optimum performance a way life in the organization. This is now accomplished through:

a) Routine orientation exercise for new recruits: This is done for acclimatizing new entrants towards this young industry's culture and philosophy.
b) Mentoring program,
c) Global exposure,
d) Retention bonus
e) Project pay
f) Telecommuting
g) Job sharing
h) Recognition programs
i) Challenging and interesting assignments / projects,
j) Work from home options,
k) Flexi-time,
l) Open door policy,
m) Identification of star performers and providing them with fast track growth,
n) Working through self managed / autonomous teams,
o) Periodical orientation programmes,
p) Bereavement leaves, etc.

According to an HR executive of an organization that provides flexi time, *"It allows the employees the flexibility to drop off their children at school in the mornings and pick them back. This facility works well within a supportive team; as someone of the team is always present in the office to take care of calls from overseas clients, as and when it comes in. They take their turns in having their lunch breaks between 12 and 2pm. Flexi time provides all the required flexibility for the members, and does not in any way adversely affect the work."* According to another official of an IT organization that introduced work from home and telecommuting *"when we first introduced these concepts I was skeptical, in fact all of us at the top were skeptical. Will this work in our country? This was the question we all had in our minds. Now it has been years since we introduced the concept, and I can say with pride that the concept is well taken by the staff. It has provided the much required boost to our employees. I would say that morale and productivity has increased manifold."*

Says a young executive of a multinational IT organization headquartered in the US *"our organization provides all the required facilities for those who want to work in a really competitive international environment. A number of employer friendly HR policies that is capable of making them contribute their might are in vogue. We have even introduced a 24 hour counseling facility for our staff in need. Just recently we have also inaugurated our FM radio facility for our staff and family members. However, we are strict regarding disciplinary issues. We do not tolerate any acts of indiscipline, and they are dealt with an iron hand."*

According to the CEO of a small IT organization *"though ours is a small organization in the industry – or may be a minor one as per the industry standard, we go out of the way to help the employees. For instance there was a lady employee who had to take fairly long periods of leave due her medical condition. We provided her with all the facilities we could offer. She was allowed to work completely from home during that period. She became so attached with the organization that, I am sure; she will never quit our organization."*

There are certain others who look the other way too. Another comment is worth considering *"the problem with some WLB policies is that they fail to bring in affective commitment. The policies only enable paying people and giving them conditions so that they feel that they 'cannot afford to leave'. Some WLB policies even work to just retain the employees, they don't get them to perform more effectively in their job. Certain policies are not capable of improving anything as people use it just because it is offered. I consider such policies as just 'golden handcuffs'. Further, I have my reservations about working from home. When work from home was not available I worked from 10 to 5, as efficiently as I can. Now in the name of work from home am I not made to work more than I used to work earlier, I wonder."*

Retraining

This is another challenging area in IT industry. Time bound and appropriate strategies are required to equip the employees to handle the evolving challenges. Training programmes are mostly skill specific

and project specific. While large and medium organizations have their own internal training departments/sections, small organizations hire external technical trainers or send their employees to external training centers. The large and medium sized organizations have the practice of maintaining a regular training calendar. Some of the aspects covered in training include leadership and behavioral skills, global cultural sensitivity, etc. Some strategies adopted by the IT/ITES organizations for training their employees in Kerala are:

a) Creating a learning environment,
b) Job rotation,
c) Team assignments,
d) Skill inventories,
e) Competency development,
f) Reimbursement of fees for certain courses,
g) Certifications: Higher educational certifications are offered to potential employees.

According to the HR Manager of a multinational company based in the US, "*our organization provides a learning environment. We provide all facilities for our staff to acquire further knowledge on any area of their choice. We have entered into agreements with a number of professional bodies around the globe. Our employees are free to join any course or certifications offered by these bodies. The happiest part of this is that many of them are availing these facilities to develop themselves.*" Says another executive, "*we are particular that our employees enhance their competencies. We provide periodical*

technical training to update their knowledge in their respective domains. If this is not done in a timely manner they will become redundant in due course of time. Over and above this we also provide outward-bound training (OBT) to our staff. This training has been found to be a big hit for areas like team building. Normally such trainings are provided by outside experts."

Restructuring

The HR department of IT/ITES cannot function within the four walls of the traditional system. The prime role of the HR department is to act as a facilitator of change process. For this the HR department will have to involve the entire organization and act as a guide, coach, counselor and facilitator. These efforts are an absolute necessity to build a high performance driven culture. Some common practices adopted by the organizations include:

a) **Broad job descriptions**: Most IT/ITES companies strive to create an environment that stimulates the creation of knowledge, as its future sustenance is based on this factor. For this, people are groomed to get in with the required performance culture.

b) **Flexible compensation programs:** IT industry, being highly competitive, is one of the high paying industries. The pay structures are broad banded, with base salary being high. Over and above all this, a number of other benefits like annual bonuses, value addition bonuses, transportation facilities, canteen facilities, etc. are provided in most companies. In

medium and large organizations, compensation is largely driven by external (market forces) and internal (performance) factors.

c) Performance bonus concepts are implemented in a number of companies, over and above the fixed salary. In most cases strict confidence regarding salary is maintained.

d) Benefits like Mediclaim, health checkups, interest free loans, value addition bonuses, preparatory leave for exams, flexi-timing, flexible jobs and positive problem solving spirit, cafeteria services (in large and medium companies), etc. are provided with varying intensity in many organizations.

e) Internal and external equity are attempted to be maintained in the organizations.

f) Vacation leave, tickets, vacation trips, coupons redeemable at stores, early time-offs, anniversary and birthday allowances, presents for employees.

According to an HR executive of a multinational IT organization, *"among many other benefits, we have the concept of vacation leave. It is 1.25 days for every month worked. We are very particular that our employees avail that. With that in mind, we offer encashment of this leave only once in the entire service period – at the time of leaving the organization. When an employee avails vacation leave, extra care is taken not to bother him. Even in case of exigencies and grave requirements at the office, we go to the extreme not to bother the employee with even a phone call. It is out policy that the employee should be allowed to recuperate before he rejoins duty. This leaves in the mind of the employee the message that 'my company*

cares'. In the current competitive environment, such employee friendly policies reflect in the accounts of the company as better margins." Even smaller organizations have a number of such unique HRM policies. *"The redeemable coupons provided by us to our employees and the arrangements we have with certain stores for extra discounts are an instant hit with our employees"* says an executive of a small IT organization. The open door policies followed by most companies help in proactively solving many issues, *"which otherwise would be snowballing into problems. Due to such policies employees never ever think in terms of having a representative to help solve their problems."* Reiterating this, an Administration Manager of an IT organization says *"I came from a PSU background. There we had a multitude of labour unions to 'look after the problems' and requirements of the employees. Here, there are no unions – and the employees have no problems either. They don't even have the need to think about the requirement of a labour union or an association."*

Objective 2

The second objective was to find out the position of WLB of the IT/ITES employees. Towards this end, data was collected using a standardized questionnaire. Based on the data collected, it was found that 36.25% respondents perceived their WLB to be high. This was followed by 35.50 with medium, and 28.25 with low levels of WLB. Given the fact that the medium group could go either way in the event of small change in the work settings, and near to 30% are having low

levels of WLB (the combined per cent being 64.75) appropriate steps need be taken to enhance the WLB levels.

Further exploration into the respondents with low levels of WLB, revealed that majority of them was employed in the small organizations (those which employed less than 100 employees). Due to a variety of compulsions like their size, acute global competition, limited resources, etc., such organizations have a number of constraints and limitations with respect to the employee friendly HR policies. They may not be in a position to provide such HR policies that favour WLB, like that of their bigger counterparts. However, making the employees adequately aware of the turf in which the organization is in, and keeping them informed of all major developments in the market and the steps taken by the organization to combat such changes would definitely go a long way in addressing the problems faced by employees of such organizations. There are a few examples of small organizations that have taken such steps and have been capable of keeping their employees in good spirits.

Another section that had low levels of WLB was the fresher. The employees, being fresh out of colleges and institutes would take some time before they adjust to the new situation at the organization. They may in due course of time adjust to the situations in the organization and may move up to higher levels of WLB. Attaching fresh employees to mentors who have adequate experience in the industry would be a solution to such issues. Such mentors would be capable of inculcating in the minds of the fresher a sense of beingness and involvement so

that they may not have the feeling of alienation and consequently lesser levels of WLB.

Objective 3

The third objective was to find out the relationship of WLB on:

      a. The employee wellness, and

      b. Various demographic particulars,

of the employees of IT/ITES companies in Kerala.

Correlation analysis, t-test and ANOVA was done for testing this objective.

Correlation

Correlation analysis revealed significance positive correlation between WLB and wellness. The different variables of WLB, viz, Work to family conflict, Family to work conflict and Stress to work conflict; also had significant positive correlation. Each of the said variables also had significant positive correlation with Wellness. This denotes that the two variables are related and are likely to influence each other.

t-test and ANNOVA

t-test and ANOVA was done to find out the relationship of WLB on various demographic particulars. In tune with earlier studies conducted in the field in other states, the IT/ITES employees of Kerala

also did not have significant differences in WLB and WLB with respect to the various demographics studied. No significant difference was found in WLB with respect to demographics like Gender, Marital status, Number of shifts working, Qualifications, Experience, Age, Number of family members, etc. With respect to wellness significant difference was evident only in gender – with males having higher wellness than females. In tune with WLB, there was no significant difference with respect to other demographics. This may be due to fact that the IT industry has been adopting proactive and progressive measures to deal with almost all the requirements of all levels of staff. Due to increased demand and competition for talent, the IT/ITES staff of Kerala is provided with facilities that are almost at par with international standards. This has made them to perceive that they enjoy fairly good levels of WLB irrespective of their demographics.

Objective 4

It was also an objective to list out the unique HRM practices that enhanced WLB. Though a large number of these practices are affordable only for large companies, some of them are replicable even by small companies. A few unique HRM practices employed by some IT organizations are presented here.

1. In the event of an employee working on a declared public holiday, he/she is paid double the normal salary for that particular day, in addition to being provided with a compensatory off.

2. Certain organizations have initiated 24 hour FM radio station for the benefit of their employees and family members. The employees could tune into the radio from their laptops or mobiles and request for songs or other related programmes. It also makes announcements regarding the recent developments in the company. This provides a sense of belongingness to the employees as well as helps in refreshing the minds of the employees.

3. Spouses of employees who are designated to work onsite are sanctioned leave for a period of 90 days to accompany their respective spouses overseas (in the case of both working in the same organization).

4. Team-wise paid partying is provided for all members every month. This is normally for half a day. Paid outings with family members for few days are also provided periodically.

5. Phone-in anonymous counseling is provided to employees and their family members to deal with mental health issues.

SUGGESTIONS

The study shows that organizations IT/ITES organisations have realized the need for WLB of employees and are offering policies and programs that are employee growth oriented and family-friendly. Though these policies and programs differ across organizations, it is providing new directions for organisations to adopt progressive HR initiatives to recognize and accommodate the diverse needs of the

employees. Since balancing work and non-work roles is likely to remain one of the key issues in the foreseeable future, organisations should look for innovative ways to cater to the diverse employee needs and these programs should not be seen as optional extras but as integral to core business strategies in both the public and the private sectors.

Further, after over two decades of existence, the IT/ITES industry has evolved into a matured one, with a number of unique employee friendly programmes and practices. Barring a few small companies, where not many practices are followed, the employees of most companies are happy with their levels of WLB. As the industry is moving towards their third generation of employees, the fact that they have to work in odd or long hours have been forgotten. This pattern of working has become the order of the day or routine for many, with employees and their families adjusting to it. In such a situation, it would be better to 'leave them alone', in the way they are. Recently the Government of Karnataka decided to make certain statues like Industrial Employees Standing Orders Act mandatory, and allowing trade union activity in the IT sector. However, heeding to the request of industry sources they have decided to defer this for a further period of five years. This step could be emulated by the Government of Kerala too.

This study establishes that the benefits intended to be achieved by making the statutes mandatory, is already available to the employees of the IT/ITES employees in Kerala. Many companies are well ahead

of the level expected of being accomplished by implementing these statutes. As such it would augment well for the state of Kerala too to adapt progressive measures, and to defer or even do away with making the statutes mentioned above as mandatory.

There are many IT organizations that have implemented a number of unique employee friendly practices. The Government should think in terms of providing appropriate recognition to those organizations that adapt such good practices. Classifying the organizations into large, medium and small; for both IT and ITES; the Government could institute an award wherein the voluntary WLB practices are identified, and appropriately rewarded/recognized. This could be done in the line of recognition provided to the tourism industry, wherein annual awards are presented to organizations which make substantial contributions in their respective fields.

The IT/ITES industry has matured substantially and grown in terms of number, size, employment potential, contribution to the economy, etc. The Government should consider making it mandatory for IT/ITES organizations, employing over certain number of employees (say 1000), to implement Wellness programs aimed at enhancing the mental, physical, social, emotional and spiritual well being of their employees. It could be made mandatory that professionally qualified health practitioners, Psychologists, etc., be appointed in such organizations to oversee wellness programmes (as in the case of Welfare Officers under Factories Act). These aspects could also be

added as a factor while providing any preferential treatment to companies.

Certain organizations have been providing voluntary stress management programmes for their employees. This could be made mandatory for all medium and large organizations in the sector.

The HR policy in general and the job evaluation process in particular could be linked to the WLB practices and wellness programmes. There should also be a strong congruence between the various employee needs and organizational values. This would go a long way in according strategic position to WLB in this industry. This would require more elaborate scientific research to be made a reality.

Organizations could also decide on a career break system for employees who have put in substantial number of years of service. This could be for short or long term, subject to a maxim of one year. The break should be such that those who avail it do not lose their lien for employment, and have continuity of service. This break could help the employees in recuperating and rejoining the organization with freshness and vigor. This period could even be used for reorienting, having trainings or updating themselves with the latest developments, etc.

Where there are concentrations of IT/ITES companies like Technopark, Infopark, the proposed Smart City, etc., initiatives may be taken to provide adequate and appropriate facilities like clubs, health care

centres, child care centres, day care centers for old people, etc. This would help the employees in concentrating fully in their work without Family Work Conflict.

KILE could take initiative in this regard to appraise the Government of Kerala and take lead in formulating policies, procedures, guidelines, etc. with regard to the above aspects. They could also take initiatives in training IT/ITES personnel in the areas of wellness and stress management.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has a number of implications in the field of WLB among the population studied. The general perception, even among experts, is that the IT/ITES employees lack WLB, and that the HR policies and working conditions are not conducive in nature. This study has proved that this perception is off the mark. The HR policies, in general, and the leave and related rules in particular, prevalent among IT/ITES organizations are well accepted by the employees. The high level of WLB has been contributing to the bottom lines of the employers to a large extend. In the present competitive environment both the employees and the employees are well aware that it is only the good work of the employees that would be capable of taking on the completion in an effective manner as well as enhancing the profit margins of the organizations which are constantly under pressure due to various internal and external reasons.

There was a general discussion related to implementing certain statutes like Industrial Employees Standing Orders Act to IT sector, as certain policies and procedures adopted by the industry are not in favour of the general welfare of the employees. This has been proved wrong. The HR policies and procedures in vogue in the industry are accepted and appreciated by the employees. The productivity of the employees, according to majority of the HR departments have increased manifold in the last few years subsequent to the implementation of various WLB friendly policies and wellness programmes. Further, they are of the opinion that the morale of most of the employees is also very high. As in the case of the state of Karnataka, which deferred the implementation of Industrial Employees Standing Orders Act, for another five years, KILE could advise the Government in the same lines. Appropriate policy formulations could be advised to make it mandatory to appoint Wellness Officials after dividing the organizations into small, medium and large taking into consideration aspects like the size, the number of employees, etc. The study has also brought out the requirement to focus on the wellness aspect, and to device policies to make stress management and wellness policies mandatory.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. This study has been limited to a comparison of WLB with respect to various demographics of the employees belonging to various companies.   Here the employees of companies having good HR practices and not so good HR practices have been clubbed

together. Another study, with a higher sample, to compare the WLB of employees of companies providing different levels of HR practices could be carried out.

2. IT/ITES companies form a 'young industry' having its own characteristics, some of which are superior to the other industries. They also have a number of unique policies, programmes and practices that may not be prevalent elsewhere. A study to compare the WLB of employees pertaining to IT and other industries (like factories) will provide more insights into the effect of the unique HR practices of the IT sector.

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ANNEXURE

Table 1
Response and Per cent of Males and Females for Work to Family

No	Item	Score	Males	Per cent	Females	Per cent
1	Time I spend at work often causes me not to spend time with my family members	SD	3	1.94	3	2.80
		D	51	32.90	33	30.84
		NAD	24	15.48	17	15.89
		A	60	38.71	43	40.19
		SA	17	10.97	11	10.28
2	My work responsibilities often interfere with my family responsibilities	SD	5	3.23	3	2.80
		D	33	21.29	29	27.10
		NAD	40	25.81	15	14.02
		A	56	36.13	46	43.00
		SA	21	13.55	14	13.08
3	Work schedules tend to clash with my family schedule	SD	4	2.58	2	1.87
		D	46	29.68	32	29.91
		NAD	32	20.65	12	11.21
		A	57	36.77	48	44.86
		SA	16	10.32	13	12.15
4	My work keeps me away from family activities	SD	2	1.29	3	2.80
		D	33	21.29	19	17.76
		NAD	35	22.58	20	18.69
		A	66	42.58	53	49.53
		SA	19	12.26	12	11.21
5	I concentrate more on work related issues and that interferes with my family	SD	3	1.94	2	1.87
		D	26	16.77	14	13.08
		NAD	36	23.23	21	19.63
		A	81	52.26	56	52.34
		SA	9	5.80	14	13.08

Table 2
Response and Per cent of Males and Females for Family to Work

No	Item	Score	Males	Per cent	Females	Per cent
1	My family responsibilities prevent me from effectively performing my job	SD	1	0.65	3	2.80
		D	9	5.80	8	7.48
		NAD	18	11.61	13	12.15
		A	93	60.00	58	54.21
		SA	34	21.94	25	23.36
2	I often feel tired doing home activities and even feel tired when going to work	SD	2	1.29	2	1.87
		D	15	9.68	25	23.26
		NAD	26	16.77	18	16.82
		A	91	58.71	50	46.73
		SA	21	13.55	12	11.21
3	Time I spend on family matters interferes with work	SD	0	0.00	1	0.93
		D	17	10.97	9	8.41
		NAD	26	16.77	10	9.35
		A	91	58.71	72	67.29
		SA	21	13.55	15	14.02

Table 3
Response and Per cent of Males and Females for Stress based conflict

No	Item	Score	Males	Per cent	Females	Per cent
1	Due to all pressure at work, when I come home I am too stressed to do things I enjoy	SD	4	2.58	6	5.61
		D	25	16.13	29	27.10
		NAD	23	14.84	17	16.89
		A	81	52.26	47	43.93
		SA	22	14.19	8	7.48
2	The stress from my job often makes me irritable when I get home	SD	5	3.23	4	3.74
		D	25	16.13	25	23.36
		NAD	27	17.42	13	12.15
		A	74	47.74	53	49.53
		SA	24	15.48	12	11.21
3	Due to stress at home, I am often preoccupied with family matters at work	SD	0	0	0	0
		D	4	2.58	8	7.48
		NAD	29	18.71	18	16.82
		A	91	58.71	64	59.81
		SA	31	20.00	17	15.89
4	Coping with family problems make me unable to concentrate on job	SD	0	0	0	0
		D	6	3.87	9	8.41
		NAD	32	20.65	15	14.02
		A	83	53.55	65	60.75
		SA	34	21.94	18	16.82