CHAPTER-II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Call centers and other out sourced businesses such as software writing, medical transcription and back office work employ more than 1.6 million young men and women in India, mostly in their 20s and 30s, who make much more than their contemporaries in most other professions.

They are, however, facing sleep disorders, heart disease, depression and family discord, according to doctors and several industry surveys.
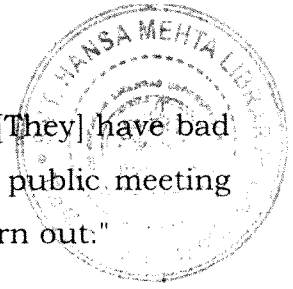
Experts warn the brewing crisis could undermine the success of India's hugely profitable outsourcing industry that earns billions in dollars annually and has shaped much of the country's transformation into an emerging economic power.

Heart diseases, strokes and diabetes cost India an estimated US$9 billion in lost productivity in 2005. But the losses could grow to a staggering US$200 billion over the next 10 years if corrective action is not taken quickly, said a study by New Delhi-based Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations.

The outsourcing industry would be hardest hit, it warned.

Reliable estimates on the number of people affected are hard to come by, but government officials and experts agree that it is a growing problem. Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss wants to enforce a special health policy for employees in the information technology industry.

"After working, they party for the rest of the time ... [They] have bad diet, excessive smoking and drinking," he said at a public meeting last month. "We don't want these young people to burn out."

The Minister's comments have since infuriated the technology sector, which says it has been unfairly singled out for problems that also exist in other professions.

The outsourcing industry has come under fire because the sedentary lifestyle of its employees combined with often stressful working conditions makes them more vulnerable to heart disease, digestive problems and weight gain than others. Some complain of psychological distress.

Most call centre jobs involve responding to phone calls through the night from customers in the United States and Europe -- some of whom can be angry and rude. It is monotonous and there is little meaningful personal interaction among co-workers. That can also be true of other jobs such as software writing and back office work.

After years of night shifts, junk food and abuse from irate callers, the youthful generation that made India the call-centre capital of the world are facing burnout.

Reports of heart attacks, depression, suicides and diabetes among workers in their twenties have so alarmed ministers that they are to draw up a health policy for the flagship IT sector.

The problem is so acute that some estimates suggest that £100 billion could be wiped off India's national income unless more is done to protect the health of its workers. Anbumani Ramadoss, the Health Minister, said of the IT sector: "It's the fastest-growing industry in our country but it is most vulnerable to lifestyle diseases. Its future growth could be stunted if we don't address the problem now."

The rhythm of servicing clients in the UK, 5½ and the US, 12 hours behind on the West Coast, takes its toll. Divorce rates among IT *employees in Bangalore have risen fourfold in the past three years.*

A report published by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations reveals that India could lose £100 billion over the next decade because of lack of preventive healthcare. The Delhi-based research group said that the IT services industry could be the worst affected. Burnout is common, with three out of ten workers changing jobs every year. One in seven is forced to leave the industry altogether because of stress. Some develop diabetes. Common complaints include sleeping disorders, voice loss, digestive problems, repetitive strain injury, blurred vision, headaches and dizziness.

Many do find the time to play hard too. *A first-year call-centre executive, straight out of school or university, earns about £2,300 a year — twice what a trainee accountant or lawyer might earn. On weekends, they can be found in Western-style bars and nightclubs spending it.*

India's Union Health Minister a Ramadoss called for a "health policy for the tech sector", ***stating "(BPO employees) have a sedentary lifestyle. They smoke, go for late-night parties, and even take drugs. Some get heart attacks in their mid-20s...."***

However, strain as a reason for leaving a company ranked seventh while health issues stood at number six, according to the survey, "Health as a stress factor is indeed a concern with a fifth of employees citing health as a stress factor. The good part is that the industry is sensitive to this and many companies are taking real measures, from checking indoor air quality to testing food in labs." ***said Kapil Dev Singh, Country Manager, IDC India.***

Study on health and safety of call centre employees conducted by Data Quest Survey.

There is a concern regarding issues of health and safety that are unique to this new and developing industry. There is a need to discuss the issues and concern regarding the health of the call centre employees.

The background for the study was a data quest survey whose results were disturbing.. The call centre ranked high for attention due to health reasons, *for sleeping disorders – 83% compared to industry average of 39.5%, voice loss – 8.5% as against 3.9%, Other problems were ear problems (8.5%), digestive disorder (14.9%) and eye sight problems (10.6%).*

This study was undertaken to-

- ➤ Identify the health problems for the employees.
- ➤ Assessment of the risk perceived.
- ➤ Suggest measures to reduce the risk identified.
- ➤ Review the health stratus of the employees.

Findings:

The major outcome of the *study was a perceived need for medical assistance to identify their problems and suggest measures to reduce then and also recommended to the management the importance of pre-employment and periodic medical examination and the need for counseling session to tackle the stress at job.*

Other issues were related to *loss of identity, isolation, drug abuse and work pressure due to long hours of work, permanent night shifts, and high work targets. 30-40% of the employees working in the call centre had complained of eyes problems. Digestive disorder was also common among employees in the call centre.*

A Study on 'Increased empowerment, declining health for India's female call centre employees' by Shri P.Singh & A.Pandey in 'Economic & Political Weekly, 2005.

The study looks at aspect of employment women in call centres in India, based on a survey of 100 women employees. In examines the recent phenomenon of women working in night shifts, as well as the impact of call centre employment on women's health, family life and decision –making powers. The study finds a direct and adverse effect of night shifts employment on the health of women but there is also greater acceptance of such "non-traditional" jobs by families across a larger segment of society.

This study deals with the problems occurring due to the unusual hours of work, particularly the biological implication of working night shifts for a long period of time. The authors also look into the changes in the urban outlook, where it was once taboo for girls to travel alone out of the house after dark, and where now they are encouraged to work and do night shifts at call centres. In the present transitional developmental state of the economy, such changes are accepted to have a profound influence upon different dimension of the family system. The authors found that 90% of respondents said that they had no interaction with their families, due to their work schedule.

A recent survey by Dataquest magazine and technology consulting company IDC showed sleep disorders topped health complaints among outsourcing industry workers.

About 32% of respondents complained of sleep disorders; 25% had digestive troubles; and 20% reported eyesight problems, said the survey, which covered 1,749 employees at 19 outsourcing companies.

The Dataquest-IDC surveys note that while large firms ranked better in parameters like work culture and image, niche companies were better in terms of salary and job content. *Of 1,749 employees surveyed as a part of the survey, 32 percent complained of having digestive disorders and 20 percent of having eye-sight problems. The survey measured employee satisfaction was based on 11 parameters.*

The Dataquest-IDC BPO E-Sat survey 2007 was based on the feedback from 1,749employees belonging to 19 companies located in cities like Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Bangalore.

But India's case is alarming because of the sheer number of people affected and the factors that make them vulnerable to these diseases, said **Dr. Ravi Kasliwal, a cardiologist at New Delhi's Indraprastha Apollo Hospital**. These include India's fat-rich diet, genetic factors make them highly vulnerable to diabetes, and abdominal obesity that gives rise to insulin resistance and heart disease.

"To top it all, there is lack of awareness," Kasliwal said. "One out of 10 persons aged 35 years or more in this country is prone to heart attack

A Study on Sleep Patterns and Their Impact on Lifestyle, Anxiety and Depression in BPO workers. : By J. C. Suri, M. K. Sen, Padam Singh, Rohit Kumar, Puneet Agarwal Department of Pulmonary, Critical Care & Sleep Medicine, Vardhman Mahavir Medical College & Safdarjang Hospital, New Delhi.

Material & Method: One hundred and eighty-one individuals employed in the BPO industry (call centers) around New Delhi, and a similar number of age and gender matched subjects not thus employed, serving as controls, were included in this study. A

questionnaire was submitted to each of them. *It included a set of 42 questions, responses to which would yield information pertaining to items related to sleep, lifestyle, anxiety, depression and personal particulars.* Appropriate statistical methods were applied to analyze the data.

Results: The sleep pattern of BPO workers was found to be markedly different from normal. They were sleepier (ESS of 10-14 was found in 51.4% in the BPO group as against 20.5% in the control group); Total sleep time values were found to be in the similar range amongst the BPO workers as well as in the control group population.

They were more depressed (imperative depression was observed in 62.9% as against only 4.6% in the control group); they were also seen to suffer more from anxiety disorder (an imperative anxiety disorder was found in 33.9% of BPO workers as against 1.4% of the control group) and the use of stimulants (tea, coffee, and cola), other substances (alcohol, narcotics) was also commoner in this group than in controls. Significant correlation was observed between sleep score and depression, sleep score and stress at work, sleep score and abuse of alcohol, sleep score and abuse of narcotics, Sleep score was also found to correlate with lack of exercise.

Conclusions: The present study has highlighted some of the redeeming features associated with sleep patterns, depression, anxiety and lifestyle that are noted in the BPO workers.

The various health issues in the call-center industry include those related to *stress, sleep disorders, digestive system, depression, eyesight problems, ear problems, personal habits, discipline & behavioral issues and interpersonal relationships etc.*

Majority of individuals who perform night duties or shift work are unable to sleep adequately during daytime and hence develop cumulative sleep debt leading to significant sleep deprivation. *Features characterizing sleep deprivation include fatigue, mood changes (depression, erratic behavior, and irritability), decreased cognitive functioning (attention, focus, memory, and concentration), poor executive functioning (decision making, fading of judgment, decreased productivity), impaired vigilance and a predisposition to infections.* **Sleep disorders in the chosen segment of population in this study (namely BPO workers), may be associated with features of anxiety, depression and an impairment in the lifestyle.** It is with a view to decipher comprehensively the pattern of sleep in this population, the prevalence of anxiety and depression and the overall impact of the nature of their employment on their lifestyle.

Another study on Stressed-out IT women tempted to quit, survey finds By Kathleen Melymuka, Computerworld March 15, 2001.

STRESS AND LACK of work/life balance in the IT workplace is taking such a toll on women in the industry that 41 percent of respondents to a recent survey reported they were considering leaving their jobs.

That and other findings led the survey authors to conclude that women in IT are the "canary in the coal mine," warning that the New Economy workplace is destructive for employees -- both men and women -- and for organizations in the long run.

The survey of 265 members of World Women In Technology (World WIT), an online networking community of more than 7,000 women, found that they are passionate about the creative freedom and relative lack of barriers to leadership in the IT world, but they have

equally strong negative feelings about the around-the-clock lifestyle in the technology industry.

"You cannot live your life on burst mode. It's not sustainable," said Liz Ryan, founder of World WIT and Ucentric Systems, a home networking startup in Maynard, Mass. "You will not win and your employer will not win." *The survey found that 73 percent of respondents reported a great sense of achievement, impact, satisfaction, and opportunity for growth and creative freedom in the IT world.* Further, they are willing to spend more time working if they can have flexible hours or work at home and have their success tied to performance rather than "face time" in the office.

Women were equally passionate about the downside of IT, however, with **68 percent saying that they are worried about the stress of the around-the-clock lifestyle and the lack of work/life balance, and 65 percent reporting that work has had a negative impact on their personal lives.**

The bottom line is that despite the positive aspects of their work in IT, 41 percent were considering leaving their jobs. "The reasons we got involved in the first place are still there," Ryan said, "but they're being countered by the enormous draining pace and expectations. Women are asking, 'Is it still worth it?' And that's a very big question mark."

Mary Mattis, a senior research fellow at Catalyst, a New York-based research organization that focuses on women in business, said the survey is in line with other research on women in IT, and the implications for managers are clear. "Managers in IT need all the talent they can get, and turnover is costly, especially with people working on projects."
The survey findings, Mattis said, underscore what has been called

"the stupid curve." "Fifty-five percent of your hires are women, but you lose a much larger percentage of them than men. This business case doesn't work," she said. "Turnover costs money."

The survey was conducted by Mindy L. Gewirtz and Ann Lindsey, principals in GLS Consulting in Brookline, Mass. They said IT managers should realize that what women are experiencing in the IT workplace is very likely a reflection of men's experience and that unreasonable stress and lack of work/life balance have the power to destroy productivity in the long run.

The Work and Families Act: What are employers doing in practice about flexible working? 27 March 2007, This article first appeared in Personnel Today magazine.

Flexible working is high on the agenda, thanks to the Work and Families Act, but what are employers doing about it in practice? Our exclusive work-life balance research reveals that awareness is high, but staff feels organizations could do better.

Research found that 74% of respondents believe the Work and Families Act will have at least some impact on employees' work-life balance, while 92% believe that offering flexible working hours to staff improves their job satisfaction.

Almost 70% of respondents believe their employer addresses work-life balance to some extent, but only 19% think they address it to a great extent, according to our survey. Almost half think that the flexible benefits on offer at their organization are not enough, and this includes those where their employers already offer a range of flexible working options.

Sixty-five per cent of employers offer no family-specific working practices, such as family experience days or childcare vouchers, according to our survey.

While 95% agree that family- specific benefits would be attractive to staff, few actually offer them increasing holiday allowance for workers with families would have the greatest impact on work-life balance.

And only 14% would consider offering vouchers for family members as a benefit. In fact, 75% strongly agreed that flexible working

According to our survey, most staff (87%) leave an employer for career progression, closely followed by salary. Only just over one-third (35%) leave for family reasons.

The Personnel Today / Red Letter Days research was carried out among 1,015 HR professionals during early March 2007.

Almost one-third of respondents were from organizations employing more than 5,000 employees.

Flexible facts:

➢ The benefit staff would find most motivating is free travel to work (33% of respondents), closely followed by private health insurance (27%).

➢ 58% of respondents don't know how much their organisation spends on staff incentives.

➢ Only 2% of organisations surveyed currently offer 'duvet days'.

➢ Of staffs who leave an organisation for family reasons, 78% are women.

➢ Christmas parties are the most popular way to encourage staff to socialise with each other (71%).

➢ Only 33% of organisations offer a formal wellbeing programme.

➢ Employer recognition has the most impact on staff satisfaction, chosen by 94% of respondents.

Work-life balance benefits offered by organization.

- Flexible working hours: 74%
- Home working: 54%
- Family-related benefits: 48%
- Wellbeing programme: 33%
- Duvet days: 2%
- None: 13%

Work-life balance benefits organizations consider:

- *Wellbeing programme: 26%*
- *Home working: 17%*
- *Family-related benefits: 15%*
- *Flexible working: 13%*
- *Duvet days: 9%*
- *None: 52%*

Important factors that improve work-life balance in organization:

- Enabling staff more quality time with family/loved ones: 52%
- Reducing working hours: 21%
- Stress management schemes: 15%
- More holiday benefits: 8%
- Flexible hours: 1%

Satisfaction level of flexible working benefits offered by organization:

- There are too many: 2%
- It's about right: 52%
- Not enough: 46%

A study conducted on Indian workers fed up of 'dead end' offshore call centre jobs, by Andy Mccue, 2005.

Indian offshore call centre and BPO operations are suffering from high staff turnover rates because disaffected workers see it as a dead end job.

The study, by risk management consultancy Hill & Associates, puts *the current staff attrition rate in Indian call centres as high as 40 per cent.*

This has in the past been put down to the long unsocial hours associated with servicing overseas customers in different time zones and higher salary offers from rivals who poach each other's staff.

But the **survey of BPO workers found the main reason for leaving, as cited by over 50 per cent of respondents,** *was that it is a* **dead end job.** *The staff attributed their exits to a lack of growth opportunities, expectation mismatches and dissatisfaction with company policies.*

Night shifts, monotony of work and better salary offers elsewhere were given as reasons for moving on by only 39 per cent of the BPO workers questioned in the study.

Over a third said the main reason for taking a job in the BPO industry is to be part of an international work environment, ahead of salary and lifestyle incentives.

Ashish Sonal, country manager at Hill & Associates in India, said the offshore outsourcing sector needs to better manage employee expectations from the outset if it is to keep up current phenomenal growth rates.

"Attrition has become one of the biggest risks faced by the outsourcing industry as it not only pushes up costs incurred on the training of employees but also affects productivity along with the ideal level of 'knowledge maturity' of the organization and the employees," he said.

Dr.Srinivasan (Associate Professor, IIM Banglore) shared with some findings of a study that was done about ***work-life balance among women IT professionals.*** A common perception is that women drop out of the work force once they get married. But the study showed that marital status does not lead to women dropping out but they moved within the industry. So marital status does not impact work-life balance but parental status does. When children come into the picture, your work-life balance is noticeably affected. Dependent care also directly impacts work-life balance.

Another important Study on the Impact of Poor Work life Balance by CIPD, 2005 found that

➢   45% of the respondents indicated that working hours had put strain on personal relationships.

➢   11% of the respondents believed that this strain had contributed towards divorce,

➢   Over 60% of the respondents stated that working long hours had a negative impact on their work performance, including making mistakes and taking longer to complete tasks.

Such findings are also consistent with the increasing prevalence of stress in the workplace and problems of stress-related absenteeism.

Workers reduced spending on food but try hard to preserve educational expenses:

Workers surveyed in the field studies all report complete or partial reductions in spending against almost all expenditure categories, again often reflecting a gendered pattern.

A similar pattern was observed among Philippine workers in the BPO and electronics sectors, with over half of workers and households having cut back their food, clothing and health-related expenses. Personal food expenses have been partially cut by 69% of workers,75% of male respondents compared with 64% of females. Furthermore, 30% reported cutting back on expenses for education and communications. Among young and single electronics workers, 86% said that they have partially cut their contributions to the household income and28% said that they have stopped contributing. This contradicts with only 38% of BPO workers responding that they have cut back their income contributions to their household, and 7%reporting having increased their household contributions, possibly as a response to increased difficulties faced by their parents to meet household expenses (Lopez 2009). 20% of women from the BPO sector in the Philippines reported having to cut back on expenses for their own further education (Lopez 2009), which has negative implications for their skill acquisition and future employment prospects.

In an article published by R.Shankar on " BPO employees are not made of nuts and bolts, treat them well revealed that,

The gruesome rape and murder of 24-year-old Pratibha Srikantamurty, working in a multinational call centre, in the dead of night has shaken the collective psyche of Bangalore and, understandably, the confidence of thousands of workers in the Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) sector across India.

The 20-plus crowd, never afraid of the dark or working in the 'graveyard shift, now have to live in the fear of the unknown.

When companies outsource work where security is an issue, they invite trouble. Transporting employees involves security at various levels. But to avoid fleet maintenance and hiring drivers, companies thought it fit to outsource transportation to travel agents.

Companies have little control either over the drivers or the way the vehicles are driven. Over 20,000 trips are made every night in Bangalore to transport employees to their work centre and back home.

Yet, there are no standard operating procedures. The police had formulated guidelines for late night pick up and drop. But many companies dismissed the valuable suggestions as just a piece of paper and courted danger in the night.

Gopal wrote: *Are BPO workers exploited? Do they work in slave-like conditions? If you ask a resident of Bangalore or Noida or Pune, where BPO employees are ferried in large Toyota Qualises, where they are seen buying the latest gizmos in fancy malls, they would respond that you are out of your mind.*

But if you are one who trusts reports, here is something interesting. The VV Giri National Institute of Labour Report on BPOs states that BPO workers are working in conditions comparable to slave labour in   Rome.

But he admitted that, "all is not well in the BPO industry. Employees face health risks and problems with their families, and most BPO firms do not provide a very exciting career path to their employees.

However, these are problems that can be tackled, but that is something the unions are not interested in doing.

Evaluation:

Pratibha's unfortunate end should be the beginning of some soul-searching by companies that know only to see the colour of money and not the danger lurking in the dark. There must be strict guidelines in picking up and dropping employees at night.

The antecedents of the drivers must be verified and they must be subject to training and periodical renewal of their license. Companies that flout the rules must be penalized. The police must constitute special trained squads to check the system of night pick up and drop facility.

There must be a mechanism to address critical issues like safety, health and working conditions.

In an another article published in Times of India by Netizens, " There's more to BPOS than big bucks and booze" 2007

Who says there are only two sides to a coin? Indeed, there are many invisible sides as India's BPO story proves. *Fast money, high spending power, a yuppie lifestyle which is more American than Indian, being mall rats during the weekends, wearing branded clothes and accessories – are these young folks only about glam and glitz?* Although it has been easy for most to generalise young people working in BPOs with an upwardly mobile lifestyle and high spending power, many miss the fact that this sunrise industry has added to India's IT growth and provided employment opportunities to millions, who otherwise would have been bearing the yoke of being educated, but without a job.

So when we ran a debate on the TimesofIndia.com whether BPOs had altered Young India's social milieu, an overwhelming majority of Netizens (70 percent) replied in the affirmative. Being young has never been easy, and history has proved that. And being a fairly young entity in corporate India, the BPO workforce has managed to make news – be it credit card fraud, snatching American jobs, rising safety concerns of female employees or inducing changes in social mores of youngsters.

There were many Netizens who thought that the average BPO members, in the 19-21 bracket, definitely seemed to be more at ease with the American dream as they quickly attuned themselves to the fast life, shedding their inhibitions. *Odd work hours, social and economic independence (with most of the call centre employees staying away from their families), peer pressure and a lavish lifestyle what is making them more prone to acquiring unhealthy cultural practices.*

Slamming the BPO culture, *A S, from Dubai says, "BPOs are badly affecting their employees. Most of the time, they are high on cigarettes and coffee to stay awake. Lifestyle of the individuals are altered to suit the needs of their time spent at the offices."*

K R Venkataramaiah from Toronto writes in to say, "BPOs are damaging the Indian culture. Just to make a living, one need not surrender one's identity that has survived thousands of years. The family system has broken down in the alien culture. The dress code is provocative, to say the least. Drugs, cigarettes, booze are all perverting morals. Even the work environment has become temporary and stressful. In trying to catch the train, one should not leave one's luggage and family on the platform. The warning is on the wall, one can only ignore it at one's own peril."

Apart from the charges of promoting cultural degradation, youth-driven BPOs are also drawing wrath over the security concerns. The rape and murder of a young girl working for Wipro in Pune has brought to focus the insecurity of employees and unsatisfactory working conditions of BPOs and call centres across the country. In December 2005, a young woman employee of Hewlett Packard's call centre in Bangalore was raped and killed. Both girls were killed by their cab drivers ferrying them from their place of work late in the night.

Expressing deep shock over such incidents, the National Association of oftware and Service Companies (Nasscom) stated that such murder reflects the need for greater safety and security and emphasised that every possible measure should be taken to eliminate such crime. According to Nasscom, the information technology (IT) industry, as a major employer of women, is proud of its role in providing employment and opportunity to a growing female workforce. It stated the industry has taken steps for the safety of its employees in the sector where a large number of staff is women and nature of the work dictates the employees, both men and women, to work at night.

Several surveys conducted at these call centres and BPOs that have mushroomed in Bangalore, Pune and Gurgaon have pointed towards inadequacies in service conditions of employees. *The latest survey done by Prof. Phil Taylor of HR and Business School, Glasgow (UK) and Prof. Ernesto Noronha of IIM Ahmedabad also highlights the security problem of employees among other things. Over 65% BPO and call centre employees expressed concern about working times which included shift length, night-time working and effects on well being.*

The study was conducted on "Union Formation in Indian Call Centres/BPO: The Attitudes and Experiences of UNITES

Members." By Prof. Phil Taylor and Dr. Dora Scholarios., Department of Human Resource Management, Strathclyde Business School, Glasgow, United Kingdom & Prof. Ernesto Noronha and Dr. Premilla d'Cruz , Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India.

UNITES Pro (the Union of Information Technology Enabled Services Professionals) as an organisation seeking to represent the interests of the nascent BPO workforce.

Findings of the study:

➤ The majority of UNITES members responding (70%) was based in Indian domestic companies with 22% in captives and 8% in Indian third-parties.

➤ UNITES has succeeded in recruiting equally from both genders. Membership also reflects the strikingly youthful nature of the workforce; the mean age of UNITES members surveyed was 24.

➤ More outstanding are the statistics on working hours. The mean of 216 hours per month (54 hours per week) demonstrates the prevalence in Indian BPO of a long hours culture, most pronounced in captives and domestic centres. Comments made by respondents repeatedly referred to the long hours of work, comprising both contracted and scheduled hours, and quite extensive overtime working. Average tenure was 1½ years, although this was lower in domestic companies at just over one year.

➤ The evidence on career orientation provides fascinating insight into the intentions of this cohort of employees.

Aspects of work which contribute to pressure of work:

Supervisory pressure was identified by relatively large numbers as a source of pressure. Again, more in captives and third parties (69%) than in domestic centres.

(52%) reported that this contributed either a great deal or to some extent. Specific mention too must be made of inadequate staffing levels as many as 75% in Indian third parties, and 44%in captives, reported this as contributing to the pressure of work compared to a mere 15% of respondents in domestic centres.

When asked to identify additional sources of pressure, many mentioned *not having enough time to spend with family and children,* and others further emphasised the pressure from team leaders and manager to achieve targets.

Having to meet targets	87%
Travelling times to and from work	83%
Number of calls queuing/waiting	80%
Working evening/night shifts	67%
Pressure from a supervisor	57%
Not enough breaks	51%
Difficult customers	45%
Not enough time between calls	42%
Breaks not long enough	41%
Fear of making mistakes	39%
Monotony/repetitiveness of job	37%
Not given enough information to do the job	32%
Difficulty with screen menus/software	31%
Physical discomfort at work station	29%
Not being understood by the customer	29%

Not enough time to talk to Colleagues	25%
Always having to 'smile down the phone	24%
Call monitoring	23%

> **Degree of pressure felt on a normal working day:**

Two-third of respondents reported that they were either 'very' or quite pressurised' as a result of their work on a normal day. Nevertheless, there were notable differences according to sub-sector, gender and nature of calls as far as voice agents were concerned. Firstly, it can be seen that respondents in the domestic segment were more likely to report being pressurised. No fewer than 77% stated that they felt 'very' or 'quite pressurised' on a normal day. This compares to 44% in captives and 31% in third party centres. Women were more likely to report being pressurised, and handling outbound calls was more likely to be a source of pressure.

> **Effectiveness of Management:**

In this respect, management was seen to be most unsuccessful (73%) in listening to employees' ideas about how the service could be improved. Slightly fewer overall thought that management was either very or quite unsuccessful (68%) in involving respondents in target setting and then slightly fewer still in involving them generally in decisions that affect them.

Majorities perceived management as being either very or quite unsuccessful in relation to giving feedback on caller satisfaction (58%), developing effective teamwork (55%) and giving employees the information they needed to do the job (51%).

Almost two thirds (64%) stated that they perceived management as being either very or quite unsuccessful in terms of fair allocation of

tasks. More specifically as far as voice work is concerned, 59% reported that management was unsuccessful in monitoring calls fairly.

> In general areas of employee involvement and communication. In this respect, management was seen to be most unsuccessful (73%) in listening to employees ideas about how the service could be improved.

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> Majorities perceived management as being either very or quite unsuccessful in relation to giving feedback on caller satisfaction (58%), developing effective teamwork (55%) and giving employees the information they needed to do the job (51%).

> **Work/non-work relationship and Family-life balance:**

It is hard to get time off to take care of family/personal matters	62%
My job prevents me from spending enough time with family/partner	71%
I feel exhausted after work	74%
Poor shift patterns adversely affect my social life	72%
My sleep is disrupted by work concerns	81%
My work keeps me from spending enough time with friends	66%

A study on Lifestyle of women working in BPO sector(1997-98), conducted by Ms.komal Kanthariya, lecturer, Dept. Social Work.

Sardar Patel University, found that most of the women respondents were very young, dynamic and career oriented. They have taken up this profession for double income and for social status. These young ladies are mostly unmarried and often aspire to lead a luxurious life.

But they hardly realize that they had landed in a vicious circle of whirlpool of bad maladies. It affects their health in no. of ways. Working against our biology leads to no. of problems like bad Ache, Sensory Problems, Insomnia, Lack of Concentration, Ill Effects, and disturbed Menstrual Cycle etc.

They also *psychologically distress, working in highly stressful conditions. They have insufficient sleep* which leads constant headache, lack of concentration. They also live in *constant threat firing.* Thus working in stressful condition lead to hypertension and they have *no family & sexual life.*

These people *do not have social life as they hardly have time to join any social gatherings.* They have money, lead a luxurious life but *do not have time for recreation and peace of mind.*

The outsourcing industry has come under fire because the sedentary lifestyle of its employees combined with often stressful working conditions makes them more vulnerable to heart disease, digestive problems and weight gain than others.

After years of night shifts, junk food and abuse from irate callers, the youthful generation that made India the call-centre capital of the world are facing burnout.

In a BPO environment, with odd timings and the performance matrix right behind them, their biological clock is muddled up since they are in a stressful setting. The primary factor of working in night shifts is that the internal biological clock inside our body is

unable to adjust to the day and shift. This result in chemical changes in our body causing problems.

Major findings:

NO. OF CUPS OF TEA OR COFFEE:

➢ 48.67% of the respondents consume 5 to 6 or above cups of tea / coffee.

PROBLEM OF MENSTRUAL CYCLE:

➢ 46.67% of the respondents had problem of menstrual cycle

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS:

➢ 30.67% of the respondents had psychological problems like tension, anxiety, boredom and feel nervousness.
➢ 28.00% of the respondents had lack of concentration, tension and anxiety.
➢ 18.67% of the respondents had like boredom, unhappiness depression and tension

SOCIAL GATHERING:

➢ 69.33% of the respondents sometime go for social gathering

HESITATION IN ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY OF SOCIAL FUNCTIONING:

➢ 50.67% of the respondents often felt hesitated in accepting the responsibility of social functioning due to lack of time.

***Study conducted by Anilkumar C.S & Sandeep K. Krishnan;
Balancing work & life-the new age dilemma; Human Capital ,
August 2005***

The increasing emphasis on team work especially in the new age industries like IT implies that an employee stays with the team and participates even if his/her presence is not essential.

Research studies have found that most of the new age professionals especially knowledge workers spend more time at work and it directly impacts on the health of individuals and family life. Lesser time is devoted to personal health and leisurely activities. On the family front time spent with family is also decreasing. Many new age professionals feel that extended work hours is taking a toll on the social network. Lack of time leads to missing key social functions and leisurely time spent with friends and relatives.

Human Capital (August 2005)

In a work life balance quiz conducted on a 19-member top management team of a major IT firm in kerala it was found that 63% of the respondents faced trouble in balancing work and non-work activities.

The same quiz was administered on Homeopathy Medical Officers (HMO). It was expected that they had a better work life balance as compared to IT professionals it was found that lady HMO's were having more trouble in managing work /life balance.

***Center for Organization Development Hyderabad; Women in IT;
December 2004.***

In a research conducted by Centre for organization development Hyderabad, December 2004 on women IT it was found that three aspects that did not receive much attention from IT companies across the industry are the crèche, work from home and company

transportation that left the women professionals highly dissatisfied, indicating that companies do not have family friendly policies which help women balance their family and work life.

Vikas Shrotriya; Balancing the see-saw of work and life; HRM Review, September 2004.

Balance between professional and personal life improves performance at work and also helps in gaining job satisfaction. It gives a feeling of contentment and motivates the individual to shoulder responsibilities with greater accountability. It also helps to create congenial environment at work place and also strengthens family bonds of the employee.

Working Moms magazine.

In a research conducted by working Moms magazine it was found that only 16% of employees were satisfied with their organization's work-life practices. Nearly a third of female workers are skimping on work to meet personal commitments. The majority of people don't even know what's available to them. Fewer than one-third of employees are aware of their employer's work-life benefits might include permission for telecommunicating, flexible hours and on-site or subsidized child care.

When asked about the three most desirable employer practices it was found:

➢ 63 percent of employees included a flexible work schedule
➢ 62 percent cited an appropriate workload
➢ 13 percent was the average for all other work life practices

Bruce Katcher, President; Discovery group; July' 04, have conducted a study on more than 50,000 employees from a variety of manufacturing and service organizations found that two out of every five employees are dissatisfied with the balance their work and

their personal lives. The lack of balance "is due to long work hours, changing demographics, more time in car, the deterioration of boundaries between work and home, and increased work pressure," says the study's author.

Catalyst, 2003; Women in US Corporate Leadership Business, have conducted a study on women executives from fortune 1000 companies were surveyed, to learn about what's keeping women from the top and what strategies they employ to succeed.

What's holding women back?

➤ Lack of significant General Management or line experience

➤ Exclusion from informal networks

➤ Stereotyping and preconception of women's roles and abilities

➤ Failure of senior leadership to assume accountability for women's advancements

➤ Commitment to personals or family responsibilities

A study conducted Preeti singh ; Women in the Corporate world in India – Balancing Work and Family Life; Conference in Sweden : Alva Myrdal's Questions to our time reveals that the kind of problems faced by women in balance in that family and work life and how they solved such problems. The emphasis is primarily on professionalism.

A study by True careers; work/life balance survey; 2002.

It states that 70% of more than 1500 respondents said that they don't have a healthy balance between their personals and professionals lives.

A study conducted by the Work/life Today Survey; Alliance For Work/life Progress, 2002.

Survey indicated that top two benefits provided were EAPs and flexible schedules. It should be noted, however that each survey is organized differently, whether it be family-friendly or work/life.

A study conducted by Mary McLeod and Professor John Ermisch and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, children of working progress, BBC, March, 2001.

In an article published by BBC on 14 March , 2001 based on the research conducted on children of working progress it was found that children of full time working mothers are more likely to perform badly acts school.

The researchers say the government should adopt a more family friendly employment policy with greater opportunities for part time work, flexible hours and longer maternity leave.

The long term studies for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, based on over 1200 young people, says that where mothers went back to full time work children were less likely to achieve A-levels. But where a parents was working part time these negative associations were much less pronounced, leading researchers to query the benefits of welfare-to –work schemes which emphasized full time employment.

Purnima Kumar; Women, Business and the Family-are they compatible?

Finds out that as the rank of women managers swell the conflicting demands of the work place, they family and their role in society, places and unequal burden on women. As more and more women enter business, they will have to face the strains on managing their dual managerial roles-corporate manager and family manager.

A study conducted , Rhona Ochse; "Why there are relatively fue eminent women creators "; Gournal of creative behavior, 1991.

She says, when it comes to high-quality professional work there is often a direct conflict between maternity and career in those years (25 to 40) when creativity tends to peak in many fields which might reflect in their performance and advancement.

Child rearing concerns were cited as a major source of stress in studies for mothers. Although financial resource can be used to meet the children's physical needs, guilt and anxiety may result from a perceived failure to meet emotional needs.

Nancy J. Wanamaker & Gloria W. Bird; Gender Role & Family Analysis; 1995.

Gilbert et al., commented that dual-career mothers indicated having cognitively resolved conflict between the professional and parental role, but are still reacting on emotional level. In their research findings stated that "although women can assume the role of a business career, they do experience difficulty in shedding their role as housewife or mother".

Conference Board and Catalyst:

There is an interesting survey done covering 500 women and 132 men in 20 countries by the Conference Board and Catalyst, research organization based in New York. The study suggests that women believe stereotyping is the biggest road block to advancement of women in business in Europe. The survey also found that the dearth of senior executive women for younger women to look up to is another barrier to advancement.

A study was conducted by Challenges and opportunities women face for their advancement in business world: A study jointly organized by AIMA and Ohio University, 1998.

The sample consists of 163 managers, 63 percent of who are and 37 percent females. In terms of hiring practices and in terms of advancement of women in corporate India, both men and women perceived that employment in their companies was based on merits and not gender. However both also believed that pregnancy makes women less desirables employees to recruit. The study also found that more women believed that they must work harder than men; were paid less for the same qualifications; and were forced to prove their competence all the time. There appeared to be a lack of sensitivity to gender.

TUC Survey, 1996 reveals that,

It concludes the following from its study on the impact of lack of suitable childcare which has a detrimental effect upon both women in the workplace and those intending to return on maternity leave:

➢ 73% reported that is has affected job and career prospects in some way

➢ 20% reported that it caused a break in their career

➢ 14% reported that it made them less reliable and available at work

➢ 13% reported that it had prevented them from seeking promotion

Thompson, C.A., Beauvais, L. L., Lyness, K.S. :When work family benefits are not enough: The influence of work-family culture on benefit utilization organizational attachment, and work family conflict; Journal of Vocational Behaviorr,54

The study by Thompson, Beauvais and Lyness at the City University New York and University of Rhode Island considered the links between an organization`s work\family culture, the extent to which

employees used work/life benefits, the extent of work/family conflicts, and the employees intention to stay with their company. The study revealed that more work/family benefits translated to greater commitment, less work/family conflict, and less intention to leave.

Gottlieg, B. H., Kelloway, E. K., & Barham, E; Flexible work arrangements: Managing the work-family boundary; John wiley & Sons, 1998.

The Research has documented that work/life programs can reduce absenteeism. Johnson & Johnson "found that there was a 50% decline in absenteeism among employees who used flexible work options and family leave policies"

A study conducted by SHRM®2003 Benefits survey by the society for Human Resource Management.

A review of more than 30 surveys regarding work/life balance published from 1997 to 2003 reveals that the numbers of employees who offer family-friendly benefits has dramatically increased. According to it, the percentage of employers offering family friendly benefits continues to increase.

The survey documents that the top five family-friendly benefits offered are:

➢ Dependent care flexible spending accounts(71% of respondents).
➢ Flexitime(55% of respondent).
➢ Family leave above required leave of the federal
➢ Family and medical Leave Act(FMLA) (39% of respondents).
➢ Telecommuting on a part-time basis(34% of respondents).
➢ Compressed workweeks(31% of respondents).

U Lalitha Devi: Status and employment of Women in India ; B R Publishers; 1982.

Employment of women is responsible for raising the age of women marriage was one of the key findings by researches conducted. Moreover it was found that unemployed women are settled earlier but when their daughter are employed, parents become more selective AND THIS tends to post pone their marriage.

Khanna & Varghese: Employment of Educated married women in India; National Publishing house, 1978.

It has been found in a research that working women have fewer children than non-working women. Moreover it was found that the nuclear family are more prevalent in working women.