

An Exploratory Study on the Work – Family Balance of Working Women during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract— The Corona Virus pandemic is the greatest challenge that each and everyone in the universe faced health crisis of the current time in India as well. The WHO, which has officially declared the outbreak a pandemic, called on “all countries to continue efforts that have been effective in limiting the number of cases and slowing the spread of the virus”. The work culture across the world has been changed during the pandemic and people faced many problems especially working professionals. Among them, working women faced so much discomforts and troubles during covid-19 and have more possibility of being disturbed in physical and psychological problems. Women also faced high risks of job and income loss, and faced increased risks of violence, exploitation, abuse or harassment during time of crisis and quarantine. There is a possibility that working women faced mental stress and lack of work-life balance, increasing household chores. The purpose of this study has taken to inter-relate and evaluate some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs - 3 and 5) among the working professionals and considered the convenient sampling method for the primary data collection. Exploratory Data Analysis and Chi-square method are used to assess the cause for the working women either for passion or family circumstances and to investigate the situation of increase in household works and work life balance especially during COVID-19 pandemic environment.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pandemic, SDGs, Work, Descriptive Statistics, Chi-Square Test

I. INTRODUCTION

Women are the epitome of Strength, Love, Sacrifice and Courage. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) was one of the great revolutionary and visionary leaders of India with the philosophy of “*Nothing is more important than to build a new society with equal status of men and women in Independent India*”. Accordingly the role of women in today’s scenario has changed significantly and for the better future. Now, women are self-sufficient, well aware and financially independent. 21st Century has brought a new hope and empowered women in a positive manner and showing immense entry and success in every field such as Sports, Science, Armed forces, Politics, Academics etc. Mother Teresa, M.S. Subulakshmi, Pratibha Patil, Indra Nooyi, Kalpana Chawla, Indira Gandhi, Kamala Harris, Droupadi Murmu and lot more have been played and playing a very significant role in their own sphere and are an idol for every woman in India and across the globe. According to recent studies, Women in India with 48.1% of the total Indian population make up to 25.7% of the world’s total population. Globally the female literacy rate is 80% whereas in China it is 83% and India’s female literacy is 65.5% (1951 it was only 9%) with dramatic increase in recent years. While there are

certain improvement pointers which show that their quality of life is improving – maternal mortality rates lessening. Literacy rates escalating, more women having access to sanitation and education and above all, there have been several cases that make a strong mention of how women are working parallel with the men folk.

Women form an integral part of the Indian workforce. Nationally, female labor participation in the market is 31% that means 50 million young women in India are neither working or in education. One of the recent case studies reveals that when Income is handed over to the lady of the house, the survival probability of a child increases manifold. The reason behind saying this is because mothers will indeed invest a larger portion of their income in the health and well-being of their child/children. Women are the necessary part of the society and their education impacts the upcoming generation. The development of society mainly depends upon the women’s education. So the education of women is considered to be the important part of the society. Every educated woman can run a house well and make appropriate decisions for their future. In the democratic nations, both men and women are considered to be equal and there is a big question whether it is followed in the family, society and workplace of various sectors. Every woman is having knowledge about their rights and duties.

The role of women has changed and changing tremendously and they have been able to create a positive impression/identity in the society. From housewives to CEO’s, the transition can be seen at accelerating rate. Modernization and the advent of technology have widened hope and opportunities for women. Recently, Avani Chaturvedi has set a perfect example by creating a milestone by becoming India’s first female Fighter Pilot. As this transition is taking place in one side, a situation happened during the month of December 2019 where global Pandemic due to Novel Corona Virus was identified in China and named as Covid-19 that disturbed each and everyone nook and corner of the sphere in the all the forms throughout the World.

The Covid-19 pandemic has explored the inner potentialities of women of all age groups. “Corona” in Latin means “Halo” or “Crown”. Amid Covid-19 or corona virus outbreak, India has been hit by many major outbreaks since 1900’s. India has witnessed many outbreaks since the 1990’s such as SARS outbreak, Swine flu outbreak, etc., but none of the outbreak was as widespread and as fatal as Covid-19. The First case of Novel corona virus is identified in Wuhan, Hubei province, China. The WHO and other organization named the new illness caused due to Corona virus as COVID-19. In 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic, female labor force participation in India was 23.5%, according to ILO estimates. The pandemic has made this situation worse and this situation hit women disproportionately. Working women faced so

much difficulties and discomforts during Covid-19 times and have a more chance of being affected by physical and psychological problems.

Women also face high risk of job and income loss, and face increased risk of violence, exploitation, abuse or harassment during time of crisis and quarantine. Millions of women were already supporting themselves and their families are major wages before Covid-19 mitigation lock down sent unemployment rates skyrocketing and millions of jobs disappeared. And working mothers were already shouldering the majority of family care-giving responsibilities in the face of childcare systems that is wholly inadequate for a society in which most parents work outside the home. There is a possibility that working women faced mental stress, lack of work life balance, increase in household chores, etc.

In Recent years and days, everyone's center of attention as well as the responsibility is to focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals which is a collection of 17 intertwined global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nation General Assembly (UN-GA) and is intended to be achieved by 2030. They are included in a UN-GA Resolution called the 2030 Agenda or what is colloquially known as Agenda 2030. This purpose of this study is to inter-relate and evaluate two of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs - 3 and 5) among the working professionals. This study contributes to the existing literature by identifying the challenges and filling the gap by highlighting the strategies to overcome the unstable situations. Based on the sample survey and research methods applied describes the results followed by discussion and conclusion.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this section, the literature of various studies related to the working women who are faced the challenges and issues during the pandemic situation of this century is reviewed and presented as per the understanding.

A. *Women, Work and Pandemic: An Impact Study of COVID-19 lockdown on Working Women in India by Amithy Jasrotia / Jigyasa Meena*

studied that among 203 women professionals participated in the survey and conclude that the majority of respondents reported that they have to give big share of their time to household activities by compromising their work efficacy on the job. 23 percent employees has increased in 2017-2018. The Economic survey in 2019-2020 published by Government of India also reported that the proportion of women workers in regular wage/salaried employees category has also increased by 8 percent.

The ongoing pandemic crisis has given the chance to scholarly revisit and revives the engrained socio-historical patriarchal dominance. The present study also proved that although the modern world has opened many paths for the women to upgrade their social status in the society, the kind of additional burden that women have to bear especially in the crisis times worsens their position as reported in the study. Therefore, there is a requirement to maintain a good home

environment to bring some normalcy. Hence, the family needs to work as a unit and lessen the sexual demarcated work stereotypes. Working women have to prioritize their home life, professional situations and their physical well-being, which needs constant motivation and support from the family members.

The proximal determinants of this are based on the stereotyped gender roles which are assigned in a patriarchal setup of the society. Gender roles and the expectations around them need to change according to the demands of the changing public and private spaces.

B. *First Post: "Negative Impact of Covid-19"*

The First Post is a newspaper article which describes the negative impact of Covid-19 in New Delhi. With longer work hours and a work from home set-up during the COVID-19 pandemic, a large percentage of working women in India have been negatively impacted in some form or the other due to the work-life balance becoming worse, a survey said. According to the report, Women at work on the effects of COVID-19 on the women workforce in the formal sector in India, over 80 percent of working women in India, who participated in the survey, said they have been negatively impacted in some form or the other during COVID-19 with the work-life balance becoming worse.

As per the report, 38.5 percent of working women surveyed said they were adversely affected by the burden of added housework, childcare and eldercare while 43.7 percent said that work-life balance has become worse. The research was conducted with a sample size of 800 women across the metropolitan cities of Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bhubaneswar, Ranchi, Jaipur, Pune and Ahmadabad. The research had the highest representation from the corporate sector (41%), followed by academic (21%), Self-employed (10%), healthcare/essential Service (9%), Government (5%), Civil Society (1%) and others (13%).

C. *In the paper, Mental Health Issues Among Working Women During Covid-19: Authored by D. Bharathi, R. Radha, K.R. Murugan,*

Mental health is one of the most important public health issues as it is a major contributor to the global burden of disease worldwide. It means the ability to respond to diverse experience of life with flexibility and a sense of purpose. It can be described as a state of balance between an individual and her surrounding world, a state of harmony between oneself and others. Mental health is the foundation for well-being and effective functioning for an individual and for a community and that of women is important both for their own health and for the well-being of their children and families. Women are more likely than men to be adversely affected by mental disorders, the most common being anxiety and depression.

Among 65 respondents, 49.2 percent agree that the working women have tension and 23.1 percent strongly acknowledge that they have more anxiety. As a conclusion, we come to know that working women need community based orientation programs regarding various aspects of mental health should be organized at regular intervals like yoga and meditation.

Women in leadership positions are more likely to suffer from depressions, social tension and isolation due to negative perceptions around women in power. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown many women are working at home and so working from home and need space as well as freedom.

D. The reviews of various literatures regarding the Women Employees forecast their discomforts and other issues during the pandemic situation. A Study on Challenges Faced by Women Employees Working from Home during Covid-19: Latha, Swarna

Work life balance is still a problem for all workers, since it is not easy to work at home and at work, but it is a major challenge for women. The economic crisis has forced many families to work under the same roof, and they're struggling to cope with what is now obvious to all. The paper addresses the problems and challenges encountered by workers and recommendations for strengthening work at home during pandemic.

E. Qualitative Analysis of Covid-19 on Working Women: Konica Kansal,

In Indian scenario, women are rarely given top priority to career and primarily responsible for their family. This study has revealed that during lockdown working women do work from home they feel burden of excessive office and house work. To fulfill family expectations and not having time for themselves are the prime factors affecting work life balance of working women. As a consequence many women suffer high level of stress and anxiety and also do not enjoy family life. Informal discussions with working women revealed that those who had family or husband support and flexible work schedule enjoyed better work life balance. It also provides suggestion to maintain healthy work life balance during lockdown.

III. OBJECTIVES

During Covid-19 times,

- To assess the reason for the cause of working.
- To analyze whether their household works got increased during pandemic.
- To analyze which variable is influencing the Severity.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN & DATA COLLECTION

The present investigative study is based on "Primary data". The data have been collected from working women who are currently working in public and private sectors. Due to COVID -19 the study is designed to take the Questionnaire through Google form has been prepared for collecting data.

V. SAMPLING METHOD

The Non- Probability Sampling Method (Convenient Sampling) is used to determine the sample size for collection of primary data and accordingly 120 responses received from the respondents and making the sample size as 120.

VI. STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS

The data collected is analyzed using the following Statistical methods and valid interpretation of the results is determined using SPSS-20.

- Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA)
 - Percentage Analysis
 - Frequency Analysis with Charts
- Chi-square and Cramer's V test

VII. ANALYSIS & RESULT

The responses are analyzed with some of descriptive statistics and presented the table with details of characteristics. In the table 1, among the total respondents, 18.3% working women are above the age of 40 years, 47% are 21-25 years, 12% are 26-30 years, 10% are 31-35 years and 13% are 31-35 years. Most of the respondents belong to the age group of 21-25 years (47%). From the table 1, it is seen that 49% working women are married and 51% working women are unmarried that is more of the respondents are unmarried.

Among the working respondents, 91 % are working in Private sectors and only 9% are working in Government sectors. In that women are working in different sectors such as 29% working women are Teachers, 47% are Corporate workers, 7% are Health care workers, 12% are Self-employed and only 5% are Entrepreneurs. Out 120 respondents the majority of women belongs to Corporate sectors. Based on the work experience 22% working women are Fresher, 32% are having experience around 1-3 years, 13% are with experience 4-6 years and 33% are with experience above 6 years.

It is identified that 48% working women are having Passion in working and 52 % (62 respondents) are working for the betterment of Family in the way of finance and for the welfare of the children such as education and others. 52 % working women are working for their family situation, among that 22% are due to Financial crisis, 0.8% are due to compulsion and majority 44% are due to support Parents/Spouse. Among the working women 84% working women are able to manage financial crisis during pandemic environment and 16% are unable to manage it. Also it shows that 54% women are able to feel that there is a lack of work life balance and 46% are doesn't feel any kind of lacking.

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	75	35
Female	142	65
Age in years		
21-25 years	56	47
26-30 years	15	12
31-35 years	12	10
36-40 years	15	13
> 40 years	22	18
Marital Status		
Yes	59	49
No	61	51
Working in		
Private	109	91
Government	11	9

Job Type		
Teacher	35	29
Corporate Sector	56	47
Health Care	9	8
Self Employed	20	17
Working Experience		
Frehser	27	23
1-3 years	39	33
4-6 years	15	12
>6 years	39	32
Working for		
Passion	58	48
Family Situation	62	52
Work Life Balanced		
Yes	65	54
No	55	46

Table: 1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=120)

VIII. PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS (PIE DIAGRAM OF RESPONDENTS)

Respondents are questioned based on Psychological variables as well which is presented in bar diagram and pie charts. At the initial stage of Pandemic, respondents' outlook is that the COVID-19 virus is a disease by 69% of them and remaining thought that it is a rumor and syndrome. Suppose the respondent affected by COVID-19 has not taken any medications and they themselves quarantined at home and got recovered which is shown in the charts given.

In this study, among the respondents considered 44% Covid affected people experience Mild severity only. Out of the three medications - Self, Quarantine, Hospitalized, 55% of the Covid-19 affected has chosen Self Quarantine as the best option. From the chart, 70 % working women's household workload got increased during pandemic situation. 35% of working women are highly satisfied in spending their time with their family members during the Pandemic environment and only 7% are highly dissatisfied. Also most of respondents 53% working women faced no health issues may be due to stress free lifestyle without any outside pressures, 26% working women faced other health issues, 3% who faced BP and Sugar, 4% faced Ulcer and 14% faced Eye problem.

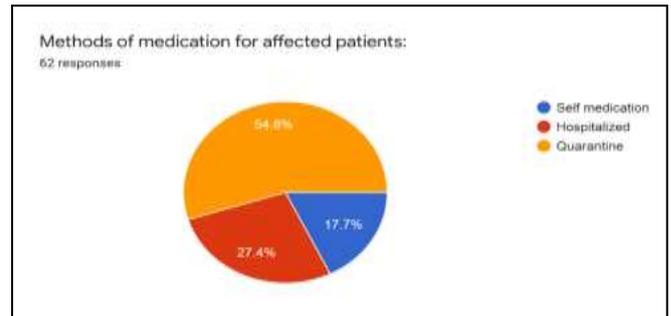


Fig. 1: Medication of Covid-19 respondents

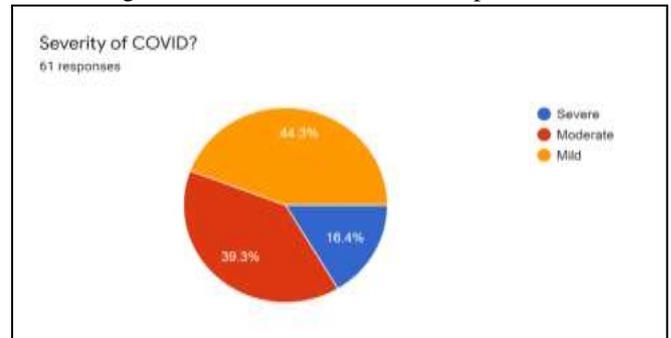


Fig. 2: SeverityCovid-19 respondents

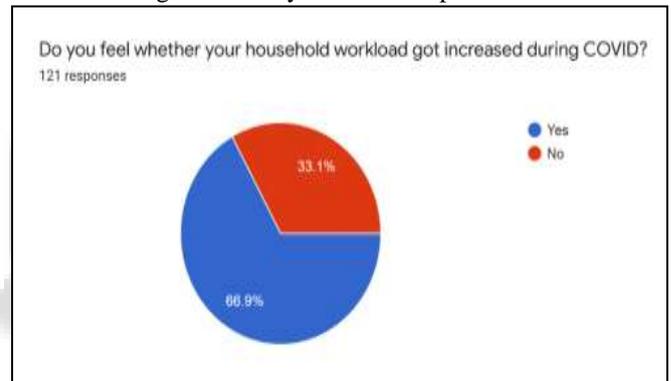


Fig. 3: Increased during COVID

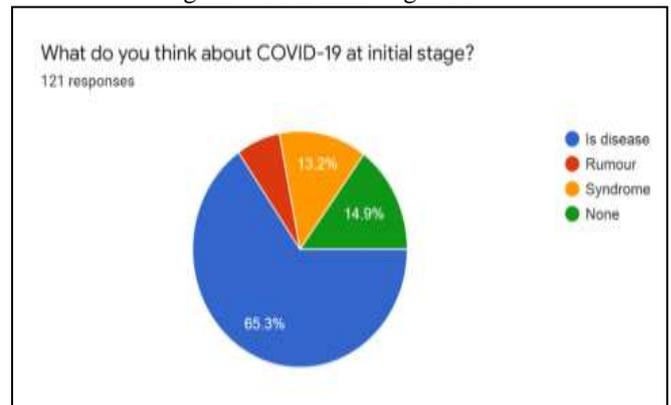


Fig. 4: Covid-19 initial stage

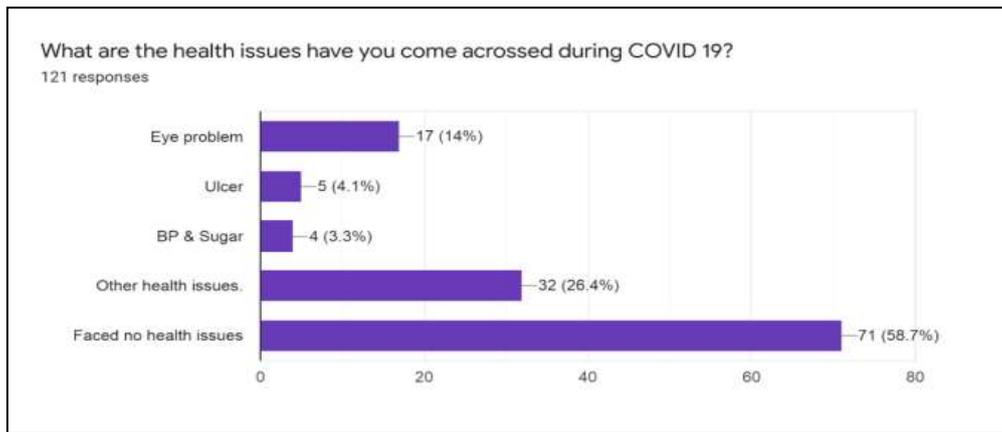


Fig. 5: Health issues during Covid-19

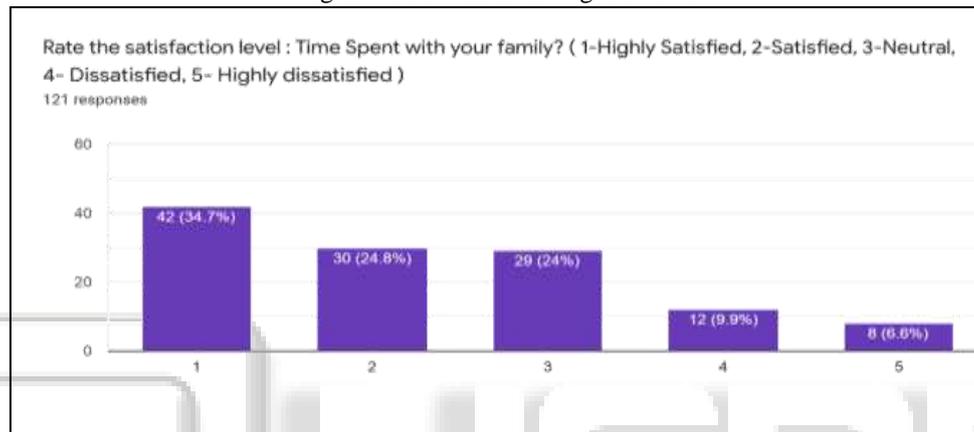


Fig. 6: Time spent with family

IX. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS:

Chi-square is used to test the significance among the dosages and severity of the respondents with Cramer's V test in order to assess the degree of association among the doses and severity of Covid-19. The significant value (0.750) is greater than 'p' value 0.05. Which implies do not reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no association between Severity and doses?

The Cramer's V value is 0.126 which implies that there is a Weak relationship between these variables. Similarly the severity and recovery duration are tested and the significant value (0.42) is less than probability value implying that there is an association between Covid severity and recovery duration. According to the immunity and resistance power the recovery time duration varies from one to another and hence showing significance.

X. CONCLUSION

From this study, the transformation of women's participation is happening in cities at present. There are many hindrances in their journey of life and society's expectations regarding the different roles of women, for example, father is accepting his daughter as a working professional with full freedom in home but the same father is not accepting the for his wife, where the daughter and wife belongs to same category female, but the mentality and perception differs in their view. With all these difficulties, Women contributed in a variety of ways in meeting the emergent situations at home, working

place and in the society as well. The Covid-19 surfaced the commitment and resolve of women to wear the garb of a multi-tasker and continue working from the dawn to the dusk in keeping the home and the hearth functioning. Conclude that the Working Women faced so much difficulties and discomforts during pandemic period mentally as well as physically. Obviously their household chores got increased and 48.3 percent of the working women go to work for their passion and 51.7 percent working women goes to work for their family situation like financial crisis, due to compulsion, to support either for their Father or to Spouse. The variable Severity is most influenced by the variable Recovery time rather than the variable doses and medication.

The transformation of women's participation in the workforce occurred in an incremental manner. Even then there were many obstacles in the way, society's expectations regarding the roles of women, household responsibilities, inability to control procreation and other burdens that are not spoken out till today. Hence the change in the mindset is very much essential for all the human living in this earth and joins hands with women for a enhanced and health society.

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