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Analyzing the impact of COVID-19 on work-life balance: An empirical study

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Abstract---Work-life balance has been a global issue for decades. Literature has revealed that the women have been constantly with it, which is a reality too, having so many reasons and consequences behind it but during this pandemic COVID-19 lockdown which compelled everyone to work from home, it became a challenge for women as well as for men to make a balance between work and life. As simple as if you are doing work sitting at home so there will be some expectations and duties which are the demand of this time only due to the pandemic especially when no one can go out. Some little eyes will be looking for your concern, some elderly hands will be raised for your help irrespective of whether you are a male or a female to focus on work has become a big challenge during this time of uncertainty when the question of a job security and job stability automatically stands in front of you in such an unimaginable situation which was never ever thought. Then what would be the response and strategy to make a balance between work and life? To know about it a study was conducted which was not merely for women as well as for men too. For the study, an online survey was conducted with the help of a structured questionnaire. As it was impossible to go for a door-to-door survey during this lockdown. For this purpose, 55 males and females were selected randomly as respondents.

Keywords---analyzing, impact COVID-19, work-life balance.

Introduction

Today, work as well as personal life has been drastically changed by Covid-19 and now there is a very thin line of demarcation left between work time and home time which is almost unclear and sometimes even hard to differentiate. Balance of work-life actually lets people enable to discard the thought of being a perfect performer in both at home as well as at work, instead, they work on being more focused, sincere, and even ready to take on risky tasks. The changes which have

been inculcated in day-to-day life due to the COVID-19 pandemic have been accepted and acknowledged. The precautionary measures that have to be taken care to stop the spreading of the virus have wiped out the gap that separated the work from our comfortable personal life. This situation left us to think about the work-life balance. This term came into the limelight in the 1980s when the increasing number of women entered the paid workforce, they have additionally taken up the charge of domestic and household chores. It's somewhat hard to define the concept of the term work-life as it is primarily based on many assumptions. The concept actually describes mainly the "absence of clashes" between work and private life. The situation which people are facing due to Covid 19 pandemic is actually started fading the lines between work and leisure. As people started working from home and thanks to the social distancing norms that have been issued by the Government time to time which left working people with no personal space to take breaks. The weekend breaks are very much needed as it's been claimed that the breaks actually increase productivity and stabilize mental health. Families with kids and elderly members are especially facing difficulty while working from home as they have to take up the responsibilities of home and school simultaneously along with office work. In this situation, the problems related to the workplace allow family support and thus perceive a sense to be part of the lives of each other. Those leaders or individuals who helped in such transformations realized well that their efforts to adapt to the current situational changes strengthened as the nature of accepting and inculcating various demands upon one talent and time, without making attempts to spin many plates at a time.

Importance of work-life balance

Increase individual efficiency — people are more productive in the office when they've had leisure time out of the office. Relaxing and breathing space are needed for fresh ideas. Increase crew effectiveness — The Mental Health Foundation found that about 27 percent of people working long hours feel depressed, 34percent feel anxious, and 58 percent experience irritation. To reduce those feelings and prosper teamwork is of great help. Improve employee engagement — many studies show that people are not happy in the workplace. Encouraging work-life balance helps individuals feel more positive — which is the key to increased productivity, performance, and retention. Easing recruitment — when organizational culture genuinely promotes work-life balance, that fact becomes an important part of the employer's brand. This makes talented brands more competitive, so it is easy to attract better people, faster. Boost diversity — work-life balance makes the company accessible and attractive.

Review of Literature

Lockwood, N. R. (2003) 1 Analyzed the challenges like global competitiveness, personal life, and an aging workforce that are creating problems in work-life balance. Further suggested that the companies should invest and look after these factors to meet the challenges to take one step forward in the global market. Rajadhyaksha, U. (2012) 2 through a case study of different organizations analyzed the problems faced by Indians in work-life balance like caste system, gender inequality in the workplace, and large informal working sectors which

create difficulty in work-life balance. The author also discussed the suggestive policies and measures that should be implemented by organizations to strengthen the morale of their employees. Kanthisree, G. (2013) 3 studied that more than 89 percent of employees of the targeted organization have a positive response toward work-life balance and they are able to manage both personal and professional life smoothly, but the rest are not able to do so due to various reasons like lack of motivation, low morale, labor turnover, and so on. The researcher further suggested that the organization should adopt some good practices like recreational facilities, restrooms, and regular breaks to keep the employees motivated to help them have a balanced work-life.

Kim, H. K. (2014) 4 found in his study on Work-Life Balance and Employees' Performance that there is no direct relationship between work-life balance and employees' performance. But it was found after the quantitative study that experience of work-life balance has enhanced the attitude towards commitment and that attitude has a positive impact on in-role performance. Fisher, J. et al.(2020) 5 in their empirical study found that there is a positive relationship between employees' work-life balance and job satisfaction as well as the reputation of an organization. They also studied on hoe the support of employers of any organization can help to enhance and motivate employees for a balanced work-life. Anderson, D., & Kelliher, C. (2020) 6 examined that in the situation of the pandemic, the employee managed to work from home without fail and both organizations, as well as employees, should be grateful towards each other for such working arrangements.

Research Methodology

The objectives of the study are

1. To know the priority during an epidemic family safety or job security
2. To know the level of management to complete work from home
3. To find out the strategies to make work-life balance during covid-19 lockdown especially when working from home.

The method of study

A study was conducted empirically to authenticate and corroborate the conceptual model. For this purpose, a questionnaire was designed, and an online survey was adopted to manage the questionnaire. The random sampling technique was adopted to collect information. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by mail. The respondents were asked to answer those questions. The work obstacles they faced at this pandemic time were noted to understand their satisfaction level.

The various research studies identified many variables that are actually responsible for the work-life balance level. Family size, children's age, number of working hours outside the home, the flexibility of working hours, one's control over his or her hours of work, and the support of society or home affect the experience of work-life balance level. Though these variables are taken as the base of work-life balance level but the impact these variables have on the

emotional and lifestyle of working women should also be considered., This research has been conducted to study the factors and reasons that could lead to work-life balance levels among those who are married as well as employed. Their work and life during this covid-19 lockdown. They were also asked what they had opted for and what they would like to change to make it more feasible in the future.

An analysis and results

Table 1: Summary profile of participants

Summary profile of participants	Male	30
	Female	23

Table 2: Work status

Sector	Number of Participants	Percentage
Private Sector	30	56
Public Sector	10	19
Self Employed	13	25

Table 3: Job security

Response	No. of Participants	Percentage
Strongly Agree	5	9
Agree	9	17
Neutral	7	13
Disagree	12	23
Strongly Disagree	20	38

Table 4: Gender cross-tabulation

Gender	Strongly agrees	Neutral	Disagree
Male	13	10	77
Female	0	13	87
Chi-Square Tests			
Sig. (2-sided)		Value	Df Asymp.
Pearson Chi-Square		3.343a	2 .188
Likelihood Ratio		4.827	2 .089
N of Valid Cases		53	

Job Security Response

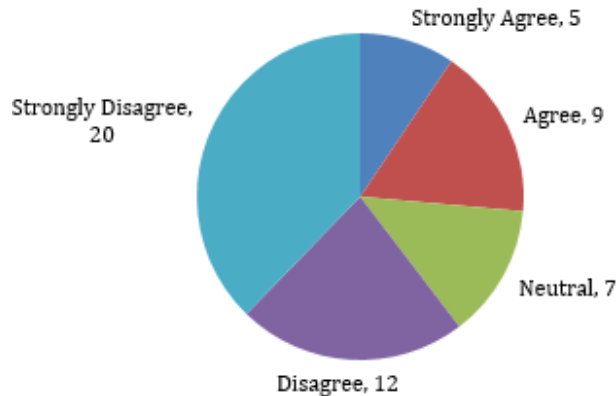


Fig. 1: Family mess up and gender

A comparison was made with regard to responses of participants and whether there is a significant perception difference in respect of mess up in the family during COVID- 19 or not. The summary of responses is tabulated below: The above table shows that majority of participants disagree that there is a mess up in the family during COVID- 19 and there is no significant difference between genders in this response.

Conclusion

This study on the work-life balance among male and female professionals during this covid-19 lockdown led to the following: The research conducted through various studies, has recognized various variables that affect the level of work as well as family balance. Variables such as working hours, family size, job security, job flexibility, and support the organization provides, have an impact on these. However, these variables also have an emotional impact on the anxiety and well-being of working women. Since there was less research done on this in India as compared to other developed countries the study was conducted to make an attempt to find the balance between work and personal life of the working groups due to this pandemic.

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