

Work Life Balance Challenges During Covid-19 Pandemic For Working Women

Kavleen Bharej¹, Renu Sharma²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Sanatan Dharma College, Ambala Cantt

²Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Sanatan Dharma College, Ambala Cantt

ABSTRACT:

Work-life balance is a term which depicts the balance between a person's personal and professional life. Women holding a key position at home face several challenges and problems to strike a balance between family and workplace especially during lock down situation in COVID pandemic. This paper highlights the meaning of work life balance, the challenges faced by women in particular during the COVID scenario, the psychological and psychological effect it poses and the possible solution.

KEYWORDS: Work life balance, Women, COVID-19

1. INTRODUCTION:

Spread of COVID-19 has affected the whole world to a great extent, with economic distress, organization's shut down, human resource being retrenched to people working from home, these were the observable changes since 2020. The pandemic has created social, physiological and psychological shock worldwide and brought changes in the working style and conditions (Fedakova and Istonova, 2017). The work from home policy has been adopted by many corporate and educational institutions time and again for the safety of the people. Working women ratio in our country is on an increasing trend, which increases the burden on maintaining a balance between work and personal life.

With the advent of COVID-19 the challenges for working women have raised, which lead them to role conflict and looking into the elements of work life balance such as workplace environment, schedule, workloads, leave policies, incentive and reward structures (Nizam and Kam, 2018). Home has become workplace for many forcing them to reorganize their life as the home turned into office, school, college, and playground, entertainment centre (Anderson and Kelliher, 2020). The burden on women has manifolded specially the working women as they are homeschooling their children, care giving their loved ones and family and working towards their organizations without time frames.

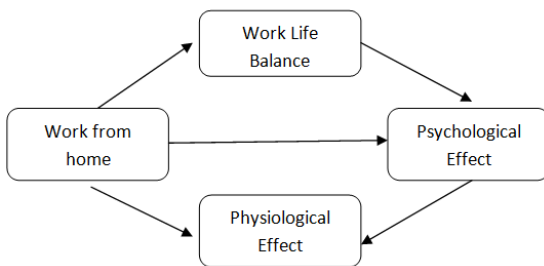
The concept of work life balance has an underpinned role theory which states that an individual behave differently in different situations and act according to their attitude and society (Turner, 2001). Work life balance have different components namely stress, time, self, technology, change and leisure management as stated by Davidson, 2014.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS:

2.1 Work Life Balance

A balance between employees personal and work life is described as work life balance, as both the lives complement each other and represents the personality and perfection in one's life (Jyothi and Jyothi, 2012). COVID -19 has exposed working women to juggle with their work and family obligation (Anderson and Kelliher, 2020). Women's domestic responsibility, societal pressure, physical capabilities harm their concentration on the work front which results into conflicts, frustration, poor performance and mental illness.

Conceptual Model:



Conceptual Model developed by researchers

2.2. Work from home

Due to COVID - 19 majorities of the organizations shifted their working from offices to home, which has affected the work life balance and the health of the people. In order to practice the social distancing and to prevent employees from the respiratory illness social distancing practices have made employees from all over the world to work from home. The concept of work life balance have different meanings in this scenario as people have been occupied mostly with home chores, anxiety and fear of this new virus prevalent in their surroundings. The balance between office work and personal work was hampered due to the work from home concept. The working hours were not fixed in these times and the children were also home arrested due to shut down of schools for their safety, which made this imbalance occurred. There were problems of working even from the remote areas which added to the frustration. Internet connectivity, distractions at home, being in different time zone than the other team mates, staying motivated to do the work without outside motivation are among such problems faced by the employees. Due to continuous working people found difficulty in unplugging after work, some were lonely due to lockdown and lack of collaboration and communication led to many hazardous psychological and physiological effects (State of remote report, 2019)

2.3 Physiological Effect

The work life balance has been tremendously impacted due to work from home during COVID times. Studies have revealed that there has been negative consequences of such working arrangements (Bellmann, Hiler, 2020; Palumbo,2020) Due to continuous working throughout the day it was difficult for them to switch off and rest at home and in the long run it will impact their physical and mental health (Henseke, 2017). The actual time spend by the workers in front of the screen was much more as compared to office working which will have a negative impact on the eyesight, body posture, neck pain, physical and mental stress and constraint on the body. Due to multiple work and usually long working hours of women there is work life balance conflict (Uddin et al, 2020).

If the income is low, women frequently reduces their working hours and concentrate informally on childcare provisions which means the worklife is hampered (Adisa et al., 2016). In order to remove the physical pressure on

the working women the organization provides various provisions like paid maternity leave, job sharing, more annual leaves than male, family friendly policies, alternative choices to cope with family responsibilities, crèche facilities at workplace (Rafindottir, Heijstra, 2013).

2.4 Psychological Effect

Though men fatality rate is higher than women but due to COVID -19 pandemic and work from home scenario the women are more affected. Various studies conducted during this period suggested that the mental health and violence between men and women during pandemic has manifold due to lock down (Florence Thibaut, 2020). Many problems arise due to increased domestic violence like cardiovascular disease, chronic pain, gastrointestinal, sleep disorders and traumatic brain injury. Psychological impact in the form of aggression, anger, alcohol consumption, physical violence etc hampers the work life balance (Taylor NM, 2006).

3 CONCLUSION:

To conclude, the exact literature reveals that traditional perspective of work life balance concept has got a new meaning in the pandemic times. The flexibility at home has its own pros and cons, with proper spouse support, motivation from organization, good socio-cultural traditions all the stereotyping of management of family and work life and the pressure on women can be broken. Co-parenting- Involvement of both the parents to handle the children can be one of the solutions for creating the right balance at both fronts. Adapt to the attitude- There is a need to lower your expectations in order to be more productive. While, working, women have to acknowledge different sphere of life due to Indian culture, prioritizing roles, managing time, getting a proper support from husband and family will result into sustainable management and balance in personal and professional life.

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