

WORK LIFE BALANCE OF INDIAN WOMEN ON THE NEW NORMAL POST COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

This paper involves consideration of a collection of published work on how the new normal would look like post Covid-19 pandemic. It tries to put the standpoints of erudite and experts in configuration to the work life balance of Indian women. The main objective of the paper is contributing basic knowledge on the term 'new normal' as the way of balance of work life post Covid-19 to align to the new normal and get organized for the same. 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. Some little eyes will be look for your concern, some elderly hands will be hovering for your help irrespective of you are a male or a female along with it to focus on work has become a big challenge during this time of indecision when the question of job security and job stability robotically such an unthinkable status quo which was never ever assumed.

Content analysis is used as the methodology of the paper.

Key words: Work life balance, women, new normal, pandemic, Covid 19

INTRODUCTION

A **new normal** is a state to which an economy, society, etc. settles following a crisis, when this differs from the situation that prevailed prior to the start of the crisis started with World War – 1, attack of September 2001(11/09/2011) @ USA, financial crux of 2007-08, the reverberation of 2008-2012 global collapse, the up-to-the-minute Covid 19 pandemic.

The corona virus pandemic has hindered labour markets, triggering ponderous and instant series of experimentations with pliable work arrangements, and new relationships to centralized working environments. These approaches have laid the basis for the "new normal", likely extending into the organisation of work in the post-pandemic era. These new arrangements, especially flexible work arrangements, have impugned traditional relationships with employees and employers, work time and working hours, the work–life balance (WLB), and the state of being related or connected to individuals to work.

The new concept of new interesting hybrid work model of WFH or work from home is most accepted by well-paid and well educated workforce and the potency of espouse, adsorption and absorption on whether a job or its task parts has requirement of in absentia

or physical presence of employees onsite and not all jobs must be achieved by this way of modus operandi.

People oriented services like hospitality, tourism and health services cannot come into perfect existence without a combo of cobot , chaparral man with machine.

Last but not least, its more to be humane than a human being, under such a status of pandemic where the total globe is stunned of what next in all the spheres personal and professional ,a pace up or momentum surging up is very vital of work life balance (WLB).

As the paper is written with the help of content analysis as a tool, the emphasis on the review of literature is not relevant. But, the contents of the given research and scholarly works are the crux of the paper.

DEFINITION: Work life balance

Work–life balance not only means an even distribution of time between work and private life, but rather flexibility in being able to work in the professional field, while maintaining the time and energy to spend on personal life.

SIGNIFICANCE OF WORK LIFE BALANCE is due to

- Increase in the number of women workforce ,inflation and cost of living indices rose, sharing of responsibilities and equal participation by both the partners,
- Increased and shifting migrant population and better quality of education,
- Awareness and need for self-dependence and self-respect,
- Advancement IT and ITeS,collapse and more effective utilization of time,
- More demanding employer-employee expectations
- It has moved to the extent of a generation called as “DINKS in India -Double Income No Kids”

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

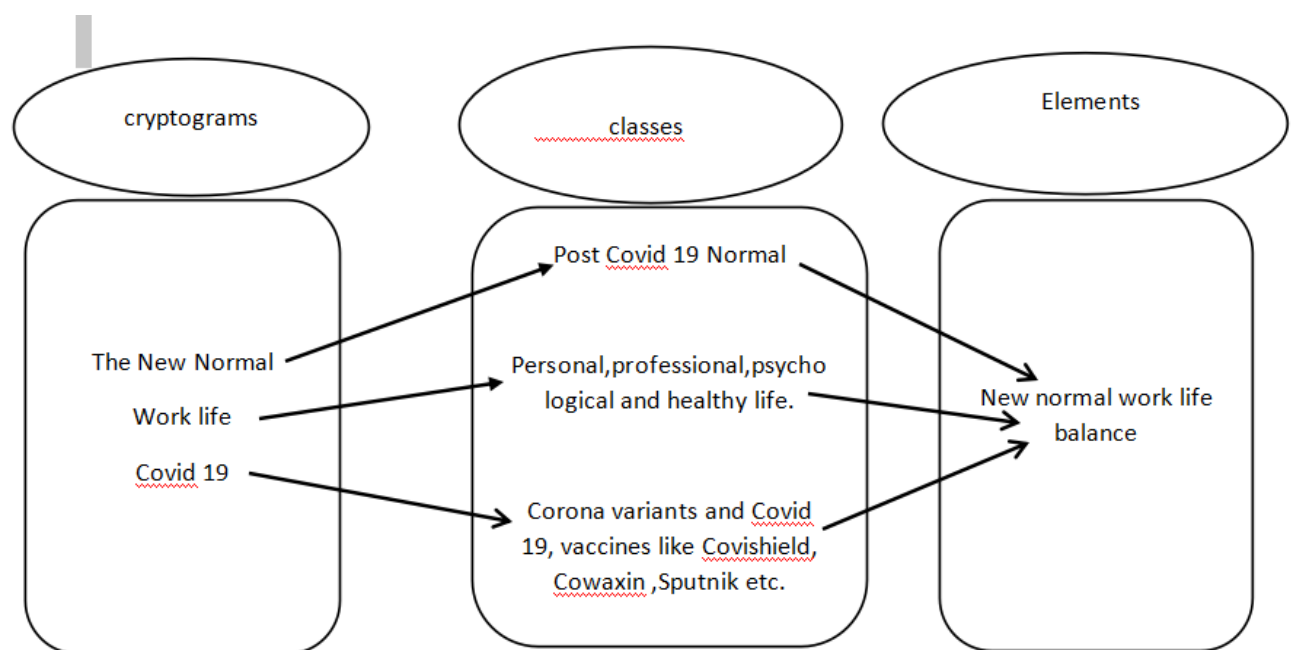
The Covid-19 pandemic is forcing an unprecedented social, psychological, economic and work life response. Normality, i.e., the ‘new normal’ should return, but how? What would it look like? It has been expressed as perspectives (EY, 2020) in certain primary areas such as management, business, technology and innovation, globalization and trade, social perspectives, psychological and behavioral shifts. Employers should take an employee customized strategy and approach to help them take a throne that would authorize and teach of how to be an adept in this unpredictable pandemic era.

Home caring responsibilities and career enhancement being two sides of the same coin, the demand for adjustment is the need and call of the hour. It is a feel of unmixed blessing whether a boon or bane the Work from Home tableau. It should not end up with caliber women chipping up their careers, loss for self and many portrayed corporate houses, to hold them back in force.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using secondary data on the term ‘new normal work life balance’ sourced from around 10 scholarly articles such as research articles, newspaper articles, expert opinions and corporate preparatory notes. The sources of the contents were chosen using the selective reduction rule with which the cryptograms, classes and elements of the contents were defined.

Research Model



Research Questions

1. What would be the ‘new normal’ worklife in terms of personal and professional life’?
2. What would be the ‘new normal psychological and healthy work life and its after wrath in the long run?

Objectives of the study

1. To understand the perspectives of ‘new normal’ worklife in terms of personal and professional life’
2. To understand the perspectives new normal psychological and healthy work life and its after wrath in the long run

Data Analysis

Content analysis is used in this study as a tool for analysing and synthesising the contents of the study. This study brings in more light on the conceptual analysis than the thematic analysis (Palmquist, Carley and Dale (1997) and Smith (1992) on the term 'new normal'. Cryptograms, classes and elements were done on the basis of selective reduction rule and the procedure is well explained as follows:

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The amassed and condensed contents and linked information are listed as findings and discussions

- new normal' work life in terms of personal and professional life'
- new normal psychological and healthy work life and its after wrath in the long run

PERSPECTIVES -PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

1. 38.5% of working women surveyed said they were adversely affected by the burden of added housework, childcare and eldercare while 43.7% said that work-life balance has become worse
2. Pandemic has had a perceptible impact on women in various stages of their lives, across different industry sectors, occupational status, work experience, and life stages taking a heavy toll on the daily lives of women.
3. Seven out of 10 women who experienced negative shifts in their routine as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic believe their career progression will slow down.
4. Various factors -lack of WLB, micro aggression ,non inclusiveness in meetings, necessity to be onsite or in office in advance are to be answered unambiguously for career enhancement and growth.
5. No childcare facilities, all shut because of this pandemic, the role of supportive bread earner is lost for many and no immediate family support has caused many women to rethink their career .
6. Flexible corporate houses will have low attrition rates and high employee retention and can attract a talent pool of employees.
7. Service and people oriented sectors should build in women friendly, innovative and diverse models for women to pursue their careers.
8. As per ILO report, women globally make up over 70 per cent of workers in health, including those working in care institutions. They are on the front line of the fight against COVID-19. As a result of the pandemic they are facing a double burden: longer shifts at work and additional care work at home.

9. Women have become more exhaustive, worried and emotionally strained and drained, the prominence of unpaid and paid work be cognizant of.
10. Compounded economic impacts are felt especially by women and girls who are generally earning less, saving less, and holding insecure jobs or living close to poverty.
11. Sectors where women are a large proportion of workers, and where supply chains have been disrupted, should have adequate access to credit, loans, and grants so they can retain the female workforce. Disbursement procedures need to take into account women and girls' care obligations and possible informal status in their employment to make benefits accessible to them.

PERSPECTIVES-PSYCHOLOGICAL AND HEALTHY WORK LIFE

1. Two unsaid important and uncompromised spheres of an Indian woman are her family and her work, whether in organised or unorganised sector.
2. 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.
3. With no end to the pandemic currently in sight, it is vital for organisations to step up to meet this moment and its specific challenges, or we risk facing a major setback in our pursuit of reaching gender parity across the global workforce.
4. Nearly 400 working women across nine countries, at a variety of career levels of seniority and spanning various industries, reveals the pandemic is affecting their daily routines, physical and mental health, and careers, taking a heavy toll on the daily lives of women.
5. Undeterred by the ultimatum posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, women remain optimistic and well confident about their potential to headway in their careers, bearing barriers enduring their thriving and flourishing.
6. Many women determined that ,would not join companies which do not understand their needs and wants ,even demand for flexible working hours were not reviewed and weighed.
7. The ESG (environmental, social and governance) model will help companies in long relay if they are more gender inclusive and have a hybrid women friendly working model.
8. "Flexibility" should be a part of the corporate culture and system, and rewards and resurrection should be designed so as.
9. In normal circumstances, women perform a daily average of 4 hours and 25 minutes of unpaid care work against 1 hour and 23 minutes for men. The pandemic, along with its associated closure of schools, childcare and other care facilities have heavily increased the daily time spent in unpaid care work.

10. As women take on greater care demands at home, their jobs will also be disproportionately affected by cuts and lay-offs. Such impacts risk rolling back the already fragile gains made in female labor force participation, limiting women's ability to support themselves and their families, especially for female-headed households.

11. In many countries, the first round of layoffs has been particularly acute in the services sector, including retail, hospitality and tourism, where women are overrepresented

12. In India, which has one of the lowest female workforce participation rates in the world, of which only 20.4 per cent are urban women this has been aggravated by pre-existing inequalities in gender roles, the sudden absence of networks that facilitate their participation in the workforce, loss of jobs, salary cuts and the guilt of not doing enough. (Source: 2018 Periodic Labour Force Survey, released by the NSSO)

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- the study is limited to the context of Covid-19 pandemic resulting in a new normal effect of work life balance of Indian women. Hence, it would have reductive error as it focuses on words and phrases in connection to Covid-19 pandemic.
- as the methodology of the study is content analysis; it would be subjugated to some level of biased elucidations and judgments.
- the time and duration of the study is limited to March 2020 to August 2021 focusing the Indian market

CONCLUSION

Like any other crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic, as a once-in-a-generation global turning point also would bring the rationality back with a slightly immutable change in the way of daily routine in all the major walks of life in management of the work life balance on economic and social life and our psychological thoughts of women. Though it is going to be a little resilient for the more conventional organizations, it is going to be the only way ahead with new opportune times and ambition opened as we navigate further. Organizations need to recognize and realize the role of women as strong life partners, financially and emotionally to reinforce them.

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