

Transition to a Superwoman During Pandemic; A Need for Restructuring Gender Roles

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ABSTRACT

As Covid 19 affected the whole world in an un expectable manner, each and every person from toddler to elder has got affected by the pandemic in different dimensions. The pandemic changed the working arrangements of different employees in different ways. The impact of this sudden shift has affected many especially the working lady teachers. The lockdown and the sudden change from traditional educational system to the technology-based education affected the lady teachers very badly, as the rapid change in managing household chores along with managing the online classes and the lack of time and imbalance between both personal life and professional life created major psycho social problems in the life of this young working mothers, which was left unseen by the society. This study tries to understand the work life balance and job satisfaction of lady teachers during the time of pandemic. The study was done using descriptive research design by using purposive sampling technique of non-probability sampling method. Researcher collected data from 100 lady teachers. Correlation between work life balance and psychological problems were measured using Pearson's correlation test and it shows a high positive correlation between work life balance and psychological problems. A well-planned SOP is needed to manage the stress faced by teachers, as well as the working mothers to regulate the psycho social problems they are facing due to the online educational and work from home system.

Keywords: Working Women, College Teachers, Work Life- Personal Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Psychological Problem

As COVID 19 had forced all of us to stay indoors, the pandemic has made women to realize some harsh realities of life. The lock down affected the working women, especially lady teachers very hard, as they were forced to work with extra hands and legs, to handle multiple works at a time without proper support from family and from educational institutions. Working from home, helping online learning of children, looking after the elderly parents, and doing household chores become the duty of the women as it is the conventional norm of taking care of the family members lies with women in spite of the fact that they are also working. As teachers they have to do the works of taking classes, the discipline of the class, assignments, conduct of exams, evaluation, assessment and other

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tasks, there are pressure from students, parents and management personnel that give the women a lot of stress, and anxiety. In addition to that absence of technical know-how regarding the online platform adds pressure to the existing problems.

The concept of work-life balance not only includes the family-friendly perspectives, but is also much wider in the sense that it seeks to help all employed people, irrespective of their gender, so that they can experience a better fit between their professional and private lives (White et al., 2003). Current pandemic situation for the teachers, the sudden change from working women to a multitasking working mother creates work life imbalance, this creates problems in both personal life and professional life. It also affects their job satisfaction and cause stress, anxiety and fear among teachers. It leads to poor quality of classes, problems in family life and satisfaction in jobs. This study deals with the problems faced by lady teachers in self-financing colleges while managing their professional and personal life during the pandemic.

Work life balance and job satisfaction of teachers

Both work life balance and job satisfaction depend on daily achievement and enjoyment received from the respective work (Bird, 2003). One of the major reasons for the increasing concern of work-life balance is due to technological advancement which changed the work and personal lives of working professionals into a single whole. The term work-life balance includes a number of aspects such as (1) how long people work; (2) when people work; and (3) where people work (Glynn et al., 2002). Work life balance is very important for all teachers, as it affects the productivity and both physical and psychological health of the teachers. Work-life balance is a self-defined, self-determined state of wellbeing that a person can reach, or can set as a goal, that allows them to manage effectively multiple responsibilities at work, at home, and in their community; it supports physical, emotional, family, and community health. As many individuals juggle several significant life roles (e.g., parent, spouse, child, worker, student, community member), role conflict has contributed to work-life imbalance. (Kaur, 2017). Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) defined work-life balance as the "accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his/her role-related partners in the work and family domains". Work life balance is individual's perceptions of how expectations are met with the particular roles they play in their personal life and professional life.

Locke defines Job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Edwin Locke, 1976). Chen says, Job satisfaction has a greater impact on workers' productivity and it is directly related to the life satisfaction of workers. Job satisfaction is an employs attitude, behaviour and feelings towards their job. When an employee is unclear about their work and not put enough input they will be dissatisfied in their job (Chen, 2008). Spector says, job satisfaction as the extent to which workers like or dislike their jobs (Spector, 1994).

For teachers, the satisfaction in their work can only be received by the response of their students by the give and take process of knowledge sharing, but as pandemic paved a new method of teaching both teachers and students are separated by the walls of electronic devices, the teachers, who are also working mothers find it hard to manage both household works and their teaching, which result in a complete dissatisfaction for the teachers in their profession and personal life.

Psychological problems

Mental health is a positive sense of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own abilities to cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. It is influenced by individuals experience and genetic inheritance.” (World Health Organization, 2014). Poor work-life balance affects negatively on an individual’s mental health also hinder the prevention and management of mental illness. Psychological problems are the result of problems in state of balance between an individual and his surrounding world (Ansuman, 2014). The imbalance between, work life and family life lead to psychological issues among women. Increased work load, changing working conditions, salary cut and extra responsibilities add more anxiety and stress to women (The New York Times, 2020). The overtime work, overload of work and irresponsible behaviour of students are creating mental trauma for teachers during the online classes. Irregularity in attending classes, disturbances from the students and parents during the class time increases the discomfort for the teachers in handling the classes. Poor technical knowledge, and using devices and its various options give tension to the teachers which in turn results in stress, anxiety and depression (Avasti, 2020).

Stress

APA defines Stress as the degree to which one feel overwhelmed or unable to cope as a result of pressure that are unimaginable. The major signs of stress are emotional change, behavioural change, bodily changes etc. (American Psychological Association, 2008). Teaching as a profession, is recognised as demanding and stressful. A study conducted by Chaplin says that, teachers experience stress when the demands of the situation exceed their ability to cope with these demands (Chaplain, 2008). Pandemic has caused stress among teachers due to overload and overtime work, and balancing professional life and personal life (Avasti,2020).

Anxiety

American Psychological association defines Anxiety as, an emotion characterised by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes. Symptoms like sweating, trembling, dizziness and rapid heartbeat are all part of anxiety (APA). Women are more likely to experience symptoms of depression and anxiety than man (ABC News, 2020). Teachers are refusing to conduct online classes as they are being ‘bullied’ by the parents. Teachers say they are already under a lot of pressure and are overwhelmed by the digital experience. Complaints regarding poor quality of teaching, wrong pronunciations and spellings, harsh tone and lack of warmth towards their wards also cause anxiety among teachers. Absence of quality time to spend with family members especially with husband and children give them anxiety as they feel their inability to do their responsibility towards family (Education world, 2020).

Depression

Depression is a common and serious medical illness, that negatively affects, how a person feels, think and act. Depression causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease your ability to function at work and at home (APA, 2012). For teachers, the over load and the inability to manage this cause depression in them and it indirectly affects their everyday activities.

Emotional wellbeing

Emotional wellbeing is the emotional quality an individual experiences and is influenced by variety of demographic economic and situational factors. It is identified that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, emotional wellbeing of women is declined by 74% (Yang,2020). The pandemic is bringing out several inequalities, especially gender inequality, and it is affecting women's health, rights and freedom. High level of emotional wellbeing is characterised by the satisfaction of balancing personal life and professional life but the teachers are unable to find the so-called balance in their professional and personal life and shatters both.

METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study was to understand the issues faced by the lady teachers during the pandemic as the result of multitasking, inability to have work life balance, job dissatisfaction, and stress associated with this. The study was conducted on 100 lady teachers, as well as working mothers employed in the self-financing colleges across Kerala. Researcher used descriptive research design in the study and the samples were collected using purposive sampling technique of Non-probability Sampling Method. The data was collected using a questionnaire (Google Form) consisting of 30 questions, and the collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 11.5 Inc.). Correlation between the identified variables were done using Carl Pearson's correlation test. The study strictly adhered to appropriate ethical considerations. Written informed consent was obtained from every participant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Basic Profile of the Respondents (n=100)

The respondents were assistant professors, as well as working mothers, who are scumbled between work life and personal life as the result of work from home. 90(%) of the respondents belonged to the age group of 30 – 40, in which 75(%) of their children are of age group 5 – 15, mostly studying in private schools, where the online classes for them were conducted through different mobile applications. Looking after the children, managing their online classes were the duty of these women which in fact created a chaos in balancing the professional life and personal life. 50(%) of the family contains 4 members and it is the sole responsibility of the respondents to look after the whole family.

Time Management of Respondents

48(%) of the respondents were engaging PG students and the remaining are taking classes for degree final year students. 61(%) of them had to spend around 1 – 3 hours for taking classes and 30(%) of teachers have to spend 3 – 5 hours. 55(%) of them had to spend 3 hours for their own children's classes. Preparation for online classes, learning online platform nuances, engaging classes, spending time for children's education, and household chores were extremely difficult for the women to handle without pressure.

Work life balance of Respondents

The work life balance of the respondents are calculated through different questions relating to variables like, interest in work, time balancing in work, ability to handle both family life and professional life. It is observed that, 29(%) of the respondents not at all able to keep proper work life balance, 41(%) of respondents are partially able to keep work life balance, 21(%) are somewhat able to maintain work life balance. 9% of the respondents have no issues, as they are able to maintain work life balance. Maintain proper work life balance affects the whole performance of teachers. Lack of proper work life balance affects them in all dimensions.

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Job Satisfaction

25(%) of the respondents were highly dissatisfied with their job presently and 44(%) of them were partially dissatisfied. Only 23(%) of them are satisfied with the job during this pandemic. Lack of classroom environment, lack of time for preparation for online classes, lack of proper responses from the students, overload of works are the major contributing factors of job dissatisfaction of the respondents. It affected the quality of teaching of the respondents and were psychologically disturbed.

Disturbed family relations

78(%) of the respondents opined that the professional and personal life imbalance had disturbed the family relations considerably. Only 22(%) of them could handle family life and work life simultaneously. Most of the respondents had to face problems from husbands, in-laws, and children for not spending quality time with them and not performing adequately on time.

Psychological problems

Stress

As per the study 44(%) of the respondents had high level of stress, 30(%) of them had moderate level of stress and 26(%) had low level of stress. Variables used to measure stress were, the sleeping pattern, tiredness, over reaction, behavioral changes and bodily changes. Managing the household works and teaching duties are creating stress in teachers. Stress is the result of unimaginable pressure that one can hold. Due to the lockdown, the teachers are managing the classes online, and they are forced to work like machine to manage their personal and professional life.

Anxiety

Anxieties of the respondents were measured using the variables like excessive worrying, bodily changes, physical difficulties and change in their behavioral patterns. 27(%) of the respondents had very high level of anxiety by managing their personal life and professional life, 35 (%) of them had high level of anxiety, 38(%) of them had moderate anxiety. It was evident from the data that all respondents had undergone different levels of anxiety as pandemic caused total breakdown of the existing system.

Depression

22(%) of the respondents had shown the symptoms of severe depression, 28(%) of them had moderate depression, 35(%) of them had mild depression and 15(%) of the respondents had no symptoms of depression. They had shown the symptoms of getting angry without reasons, emotional imbalances, suicidal tendencies, violent reactions, destruction of objects, and mood swings. The pandemic had caused severe psychological problems that disturbed the family life and professional life of the respondents.

Table 1 Relation between Work life balance and job satisfaction of teachers during the pandemic and online classes

Correlation	Work Life Balance	Job Satisfaction
Work Life Balance	1	0.628
Job Satisfaction	0.628	1

$p = 0.00 (< 0.05)$

The variables were analysed with the help of Carl Pearson's correlation test. There is a significant positive relationship between Work life balance and Job satisfaction of lady

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teachers during Pandemic, ($P = 0.628$) at the significance level (p) of 0.0000. Conducting the correlation test followed by the regression test, it is obtained that, $r(98) = 0.628$, $P < 0.01$. The positive correlation between work-life balance and job satisfaction shows that the disequilibrium in work-life balance tends to reduce both work productivity and job satisfaction. Respondents who showed low job satisfaction level had poor work-life balance and at the same time, a proper work life balance enhanced job satisfaction.

Table 2 Relation between work life balance and stress

Correlation	Work Life Balance	Stress
Work Life Balance	1	0.606
Stress	0.606	1

$p = 0.00 (< 0.05)$

Work life balance and stress faced by the lady teachers during this time of pandemic are positively related ($P = 0.606$), at the significance level (p) of 0.0000. $r(98) = 0.606$, $P < 0.01$. The p value for the test is 0.01 which is less than 0.05. The positive correlation between work life balance and stress shows that, the problems in managing personal life and professional life creates stress for the teachers and it affects their mental health, family life and even their day to day life.

Recommendations

1. Quality enhancement programs for teachers and training in online platforms can ease the teaching learning process and can lead to better satisfaction.
2. Systematic planning, and implementation of the plan can decrease the workload and it will decrease level of stress and anxiety among teachers.
3. Providing counselling services to the teachers can be a source of stress relief for them.
4. Creating an ambience of work culture among the students and making the classes more participative and interesting to the students can ease the teaching learning process.
5. Preparing children to help in household chores can decrease the workload of the teachers.
6. Overwhelming with work, many at times, lady teachers find it very difficult to manage both work and personal life. Thus, proper planning of classes, household chores and finding leisure time for rejuvenation is required for them to come out of the psychological problems they have.

CONCLUSION

The Covid 19 Pandemic has created a chaotic situation especially for working women. The lady teachers who work in self-financing colleges in Kerala were struggling for balancing professional life and personal life. Many of these ladies had to undergo tremendous pressure from family and college authorities as they could not find sufficient time to spend for family and work. It affected the family relationship which in fact created psychological problems like stress, anxiety and depression at the same time, lack of training in online platforms, inability to perform well in the classrooms, lack of preparation for the classes and overload of work created job dissatisfaction among the teachers. Thus the existing online platforms should be transformed into a teacher friendly and student friendly mode. Proper training in these platforms can ease the teaching learning process and thus the quality of education improves. Managing personal life and professional life simultaneously is a herculean task but proper planning and execution of the plan can create better world around them.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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