

Work from Home during Pandemic Covid-19 and its Impact on Work Life Balance of Employees

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Abstract

The boundary between work and personal life is progressively getting obscured. The continuous developments in the field of technology permits work to be done from anyplace, anywhere i.e. whenever and wherever. During the situation of pandemic when companies had to resort to the practice of adopting work from home practice for employees it has disturbed the balance between work and life. This paper inspects how much and to what extent this work from home culture has moved work, into the personal life of working employees and what impact it had on their work-life balance. This research tries to explore that whether these new advancements are a favor or curse in their work lives. Simultaneously it also depicts the disintegrating working conditions for employees whose work has keenly stretched out into their family life with longer working hours. This study uncovers the importance of creating boundaries and limits to isolate work and personal life and to create an equilibrium between work and life. Most felt that having e-advancements and work from home was helpful for their work however they came at a cost to their personal life—becoming both a favor and curse.

Keywords: Employees, E-technology, Work-life balance, Pandemic

Research Aims

This research would hope to gain awareness regarding the concept of work life balance in organizations and promote methods which can meet the future needs of the employees.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is to analyze the impact of Pandemic covid-19 on work life balance of employees. This would help organizations to develop policies for effective growth of employees in the present scenario, thus leading to retention of good employees, increasing job satisfaction and increasing the overall efficiency of the employees contributing to the overall growth of the organization. Hence, this research measured:

Ho1: The pandemic Covid-19 did not affected work life balance of employees.

Ha1: The pandemic Covid-19 had affected work life balance of employees.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Work and home used to have much clearer boundaries than we now have in this information age of 24/7 working. The pandemic covid-19 has intensely affected associations across the world in recent scenario. The overall move of individuals from working in the workplace arrangement has changed as individuals have been compelled to Work from Home (WFH). Work life balance is tied in with finding the correct harmony among work and life, and about correct inclination with both work and family responsibilities. Equilibrium between work and life stuff is basically the harmony between three parts, to be specific, paid work, unpaid work, and individual time. There is nobody acknowledged meaning of what establishes a WLB practice, the term typically alludes one of the accompanying variables: hierarchical help for subordinate consideration, adaptable work choices, and leave for family or personal work. Prior, going to work was intense and now with individuals being at home, there are a new set of stressors and challenges. In the present time, individuals were enduring on the record of absence of harmony between personal and professional time. Technological Innovation has made it feasible for individuals to work 24*7 at their ease on their homes. Because of COVID19 when individuals have been confined inside the bounds of their homes. However, spending time with one's family is yet an inaccessible reality. All types of organisation be it training, IT, aviation all resorted on giving their workforce WFH. With the advantages of being at home and the overall impression to the employer that since the representative is accessible at home, employers make their employees work for more extended length has increased the difficulty of the workers. WFH might be an ideal situation for some, however certain enterprises find it difficult as the apparatuses needed to complete the task are not generally accessible with the workers at home.

The research intently studies the issues looked by representatives while doing work from home and their expectations for achieving a reasonable balance between work and life. It likewise uncovered whether they are idealistic or skeptical towards this strategy of Working from Home during this worldwide pandemic, broadly known as COVID-19.

This paper is to analyze the impact of covid-19 on work life balance of employees and also to advance our understanding of the impact of work–life initiatives designed to foster workplace structures and cultures that are supportive of the interface between work, family, and personal life. Work–life initiatives ideally are based on rationales of jointly benefiting the well-being and effectiveness of employers, and employees on and off the job, including their families. We argue that despite increasing practitioner and scholarly attention, significant gaps remain between the promise of work–life initiatives and their reality. Much remains to be done to foster increased mainstreaming of work–life initiatives as ‘core’ human resource and management prerogatives.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Pradhan and Hati, (2017), study analyzed the effect of worker prosperity on wellbeing of the employees. Endeavors have been made to investigate the interceding role of happiness with relationship between empowerment and prosperity of workers. The ultimate result of the investigation divulged that representatives prosperity was positively connected with representatives well-being. Happiness was set up to be a significant arbiter between representative prosperity and empowerment.

he main objective of the present study was examining the mediating role of happiness between employee wellbeing and psychological empowerment in Indian IT industry. The study revealed that employee wellbeing positively influence psychological empowerment. It also reported that happiness acts as a significant mediator between employee wellbeing and psychological empowerment. These findings have numerous implications for employees and organisations in terms training, teaching and research.

Appropriate training modules could be designed by organisations to enhance the main objective of the present study was examining the mediating role of happiness between employee wellbeing and psychological empowerment in Indian IT industry. The study revealed that employee wellbeing positively influence psychological empowerment. It also reported that happiness acts as a significant mediator between employee wellbeing and psychological empowerment. These findings have numerous implications for employees and organisations in terms training, teaching and research.

Appropriate training modules could be designed by organisations to enhance the **Khaled Adnan Bataine (2019)**, research explored the relation between work life balance, feeling of joy and representative work execution. Accordingly, a survey was done on Pharmaceutical employees. The outcomes showed that harmony between work-life balance and happiness fundamentally influence representative work performance.

J.Tanya, D.Aruna(2020), study contemplates the work from home aspects looked by working individuals which has now entered into professional and personal spaces, in this period of pandemic. Indeed, even the individuals who were already distrustful about accomplishing productivity in dispersed groups are presently accepting it as another method of working. To remain associated utilizing computerized tools has become necessary. More mindfulness is needed about work styles, discover approaches to work more efficiently. Now with the change in scenario the articulation "work-life balance" is laid to rest, and, in its place, we use the term "work-life integration." People who make this change may find that their versatility is fortified in light of the fact that the attitude is tied in incorporating multiple demands upon our time and talents, abilities, between work, well-being, obligation and family.

Joshi Aditi ,Gour Shivani (2020), paper examines the administration and management practices w.r.t to WFH that have changed during COVID 19 and their effect on the working and mind of representatives. Given the state of social separating, the associations have come at junction between making the correct equilibrium for representatives telecommuting to guarantee their equilibrium between work and life is met. While the obstruction of work in the personal space and personal space with work has shown a negative effect, the research focuses around whether the representatives are happy with the current circumstance of working from home and further whether these have brought about their low commitment and satisfaction. With COVID-19 we need to perceive that the individual and work elements have changed and we need to relinquish the psychological model of thinking work time and home time being distinguishable.

Bhumika(2020), paper attempted to explore the extent of relationship between work–life balance and emotional exhaustion faced during the pandemic COVID-19 by the employed individuals while working from home

Work Life Balance

Work Life Balance is creating harmony between professional and personal work and is tied with focusing on "work" like professional growth, career advancement and "way of life" like well-being, companions, family, recreation, care giving, kids and household support etc.. As we began work from home during the situation of COVID-19, the issue of equilibrium between professional and personal work has arisen as a very challenging issue. The overall insight on working from home is that it is accepted to be flexible as it offers chances of working at one's ease, adaptability of working hours, vicinity to family, away from colleague's interferences, and avoids pressure of reaching office on time.

Work Life Balance and Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has made work-life balance even more challenging than ever before, as telecommuting eradicated the margins between the time that ought to be devoted to work and the time for oneself. But it uncovered a few unforeseen positives throughout these months: that numerous organizations really focus on their workers' prosperity and are prepared to follow up on that esteem. It likewise indicated that organizations are set up to coordinate their wellbeing and security measures with benefits that help representatives adapt better to the circumstance: from improved medical protection to extra leave to expand liberality around adaptable work plans.

Females consider the pandemic to have a negative effect on their careers. Many working women are worried about the effect the pandemic could have on their career growth both in the short and long period. Working women consider the effect of pandemic as a danger to their professions as they need to consistently be "on" for work fearing to choose between one their own obligations and career. Professionals have encountered unfriendly changes to their day by day schedules during the pandemic and these changes have stopped or will stop them from advancing in their career. As it identifies with the on-demand work, and non-fulfillment of this, may hinder their professional advancement.

During the lockdown, the situation at home was very different from the ordinary situation. Every family member was restricted within the boundaries of house, no outside mobility was there for social interaction and no help was accessible in family unit errands from the recruited workers for domestic workers. During such an uncertain situation, the vast majority of the employed people were required to fulfil the demands of their employers, along with satisfying their own personal needs. Foreseeing the prospects of financial slowdown, the dread of looming lay-off began permeating in the minds of majority of employed people. Such contemplations put forth people put additional attempts to give their best towards their professional obligations to limit the chance of being laid-off. During the lockdown, WFH was the only mode to get into work-life to satisfy proficient needs. It isn't like WFH doesn't have its own difficulties. For this people look to make and keep up certain limits to streamline the climate around them. Such mental, physical as well as actual limits assist people to limit impedance of work with day to day life and vice-versa. The changed situation at home during the lockdown made it trying for an employed individual to make such limits to limit the contention among work and everyday life. The clash among work and family while working from home during the lockdown arose as one of the reasons for distress among representatives.

Dread of approaching lay-off because of the lockdown incited financial slowdown has made the employees to focus more on the work-life in contrast with the non-work life. Because of such impact, an individual couldn't see work-life impedance with individual life, yet they could see individual life meddling with work. Such obstruction became a reason of efficiency depletion. In India, males generally don't take part in household work, so females need to assume the entire liability of the significant portion of all household tasks. In spite of the fact that working females like to take support of paid workers for household work, however during the lockdown, such benefit of paid workers was also not available. Due to the sheer heap of household tasks, females are left with less efficiency to complete professional demands. Working females are facing his challenge regarding how to have flawlessness among work and home and this is becoming a burden on them. During the telecommuting at the hour of lockdown, working females could feel more unbalance between work and life than men because of two reasons. Firstly as men, they too confronted the dread of lay-off because the lockdown prompted monetary stoppage. Second, in view of the ever demanding family obligations, they were battling to give their best during work from home.

Boundaries between 'Work' and 'Life' have become indistinct

Overviews from all around are surfacing a troubled pattern: even as individuals save time on their drive, they are putting it directly back into their work. Depending upon the location of employees, their working days may be anything from one to four hours longer as they invest extra energy in meetings and check-ins to demonstrate their efficiency, or just forget about time on the grounds that the working day no longer has clear limits.

Some business chiefs are getting effectively stressed over the effect on representatives. The situation revealed that a portion of workers have been working over ends of the week and late into the evening, and burnout is beginning to turn into a worry. HR leaders, on their part, have been strenuously trying to reverse the trend by encouraging employees to actually stop working when they need to.

Work life balance has become imperative to help our groups discover space, both physically and intellectually. Similarly with all variables contributing to organisation culture, the pioneers try for such methodology, wherein employees can reduce burnout and maintain equilibrium between work and life.

So it is essential, that employees should be provided with back end support and tools that can in some way help employees to reduce mental stress and other difficulties of working.

III. METHODOLOGY

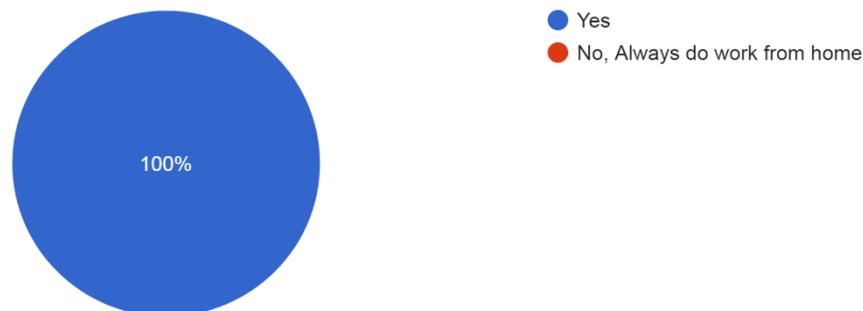
Questionnaire was used to study that whether the situation of pandemic and work from home has affected the work life balance of employees or not.

The respondents were asked to tick the appropriate choice. The data was collected from both male and female employees working in private sector. The sample size for present research is 100. Variables such as age, marital status, number of children, experience, nature of employment, working hours, workload, overtime working, facilities provided at home for official working, home responsibilities, and various other factors were considered in this research. To measure the work-life balance of employees, statistical tools were used.

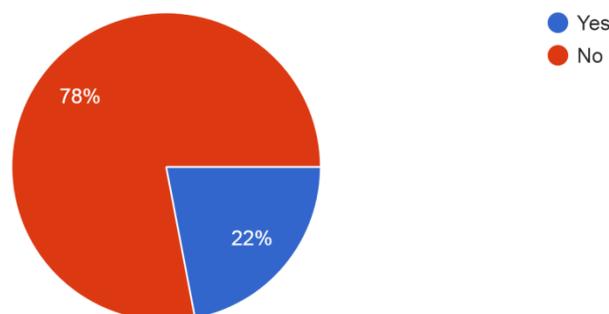
Analysis and Interpretation

a) Work from home is a new activity in your organization.

In this regard, 100% respondents comprising both male and female academicians express that work from home is a new activity in the organization. Previously this trend was not there in the organizations.

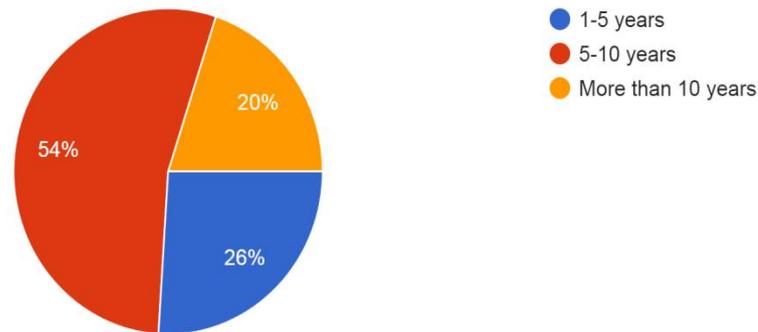


a) Did you get assistance / information / training from your employer about non-occupational risk factors, e.g. managing additional stressors related to the pandemic, distress related to personal or family illness, life disruption, grief related to loss of family, friends or co-workers, loss of routine support systems, and similar challenges?



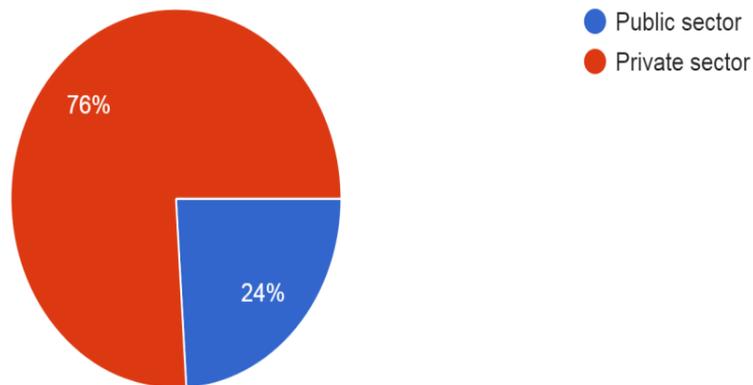
With regard to this, mixed responses have been obtained. A majority of the respondents (78%) say that they were not given any special assistance to manage stressors and challenges of doing work from home. Probing deep into it, data reveals that (22%) respondents are fine with their situation and had nothing to say.

C) How long have you been in professional life since your last degree?



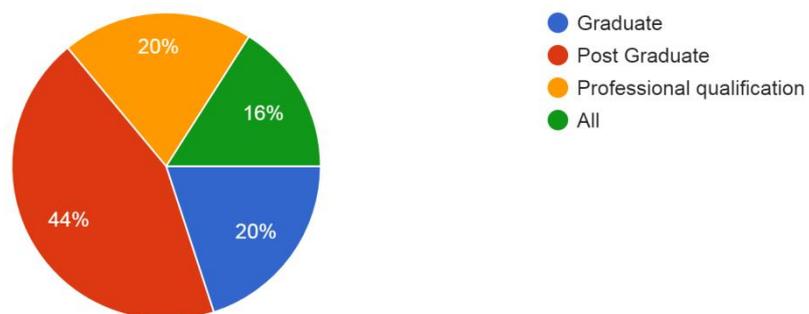
It was revealed that 54% of the respondents who are working since 5-10 years have never done work from home in their different professions before this pandemic situation.

D) Are you working in public / private sector?



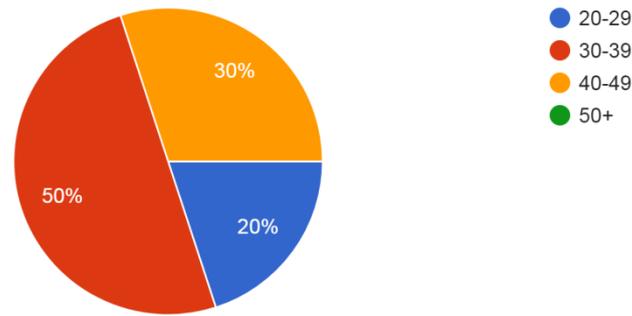
The research showed that 76% of the respondents doing work from home are from the private sector.

e) What is your educational background?



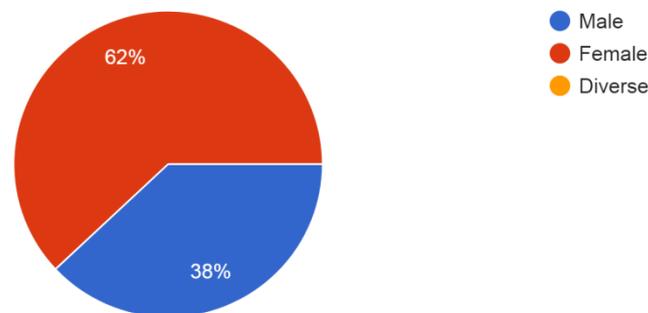
44% of the respondents were post graduates, 20% were graduates and professionally qualified and 16% belong to the category of all.

f) What is your age?

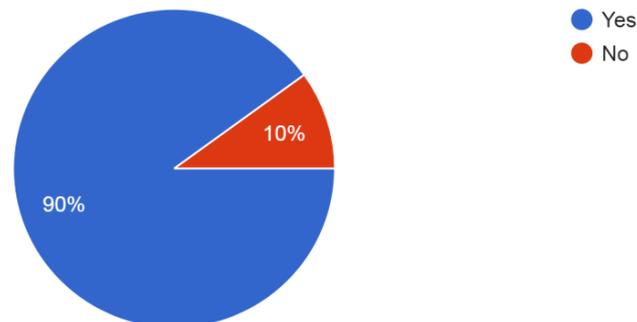


50% of the respondents belong to the age group of 30-39 years out of which 62% are females for whom it is more challenging to do work from home as they have small children and other household responsibilities.

g) What is your gender?

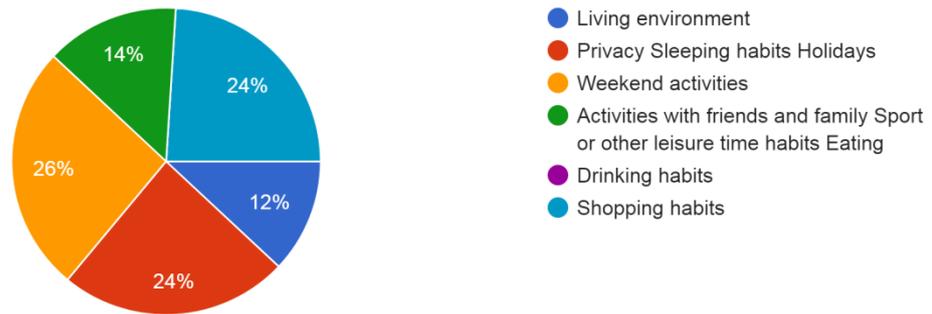


h) Is there a change in your personal life because of the pandemic?



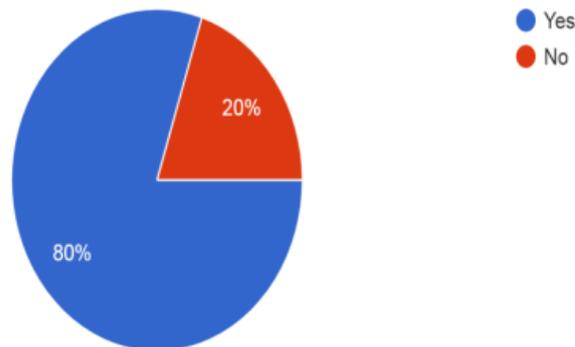
90% of the respondents felt that their came a change in their personal life and lifestyle due to the situation of pandemic covid-19. Only 10% of the respondents did not felt much change.

i) What has changed in your personal life?

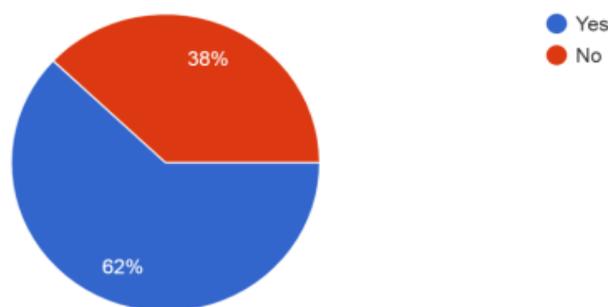


Due to work from home and other changes during the situation of pandemic covid-19, 26% of the respondents felt a change in their weekend activities and 24% of the respondents felt a change in their shopping and sleeping habits. As due to covid-19 and situation of lockdown people couldn't move out, so shopping and other social habits have almost changed.

J) In your regular workplace (other than home), have you had a relatively distraction-free workspace?

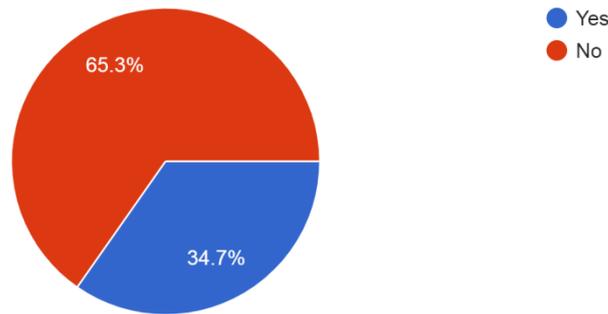


k) In the current situation of pandemic and WFH has reduced the efficiency of workers?

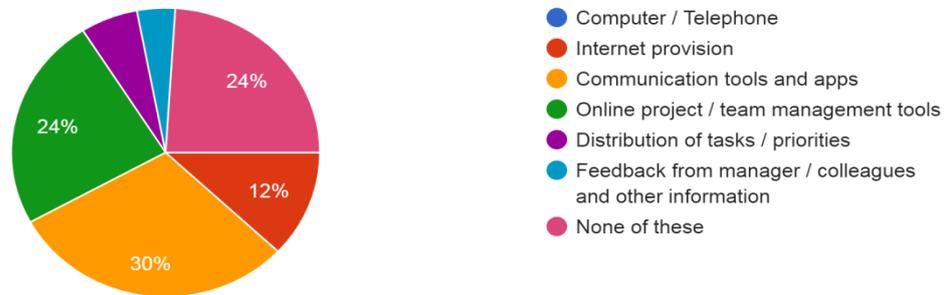


Work environment plays an important role in the working efficiency of the employees. 80% of the respondents felt that their regular workplace had a distraction free workspace and 62% of the respondents felt that the situation of pandemic and WFH has reduced their efficiency. A congenial work environment also increases work satisfaction and efficiency of employees.

l) Do you think your employer has provided you sufficient tools to enable remote working?

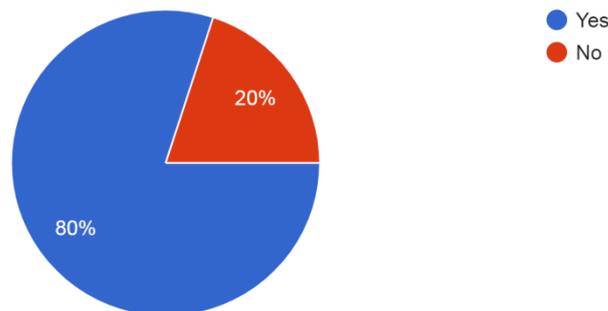


m) Which missing tool do you think is critical to accomplish your work?



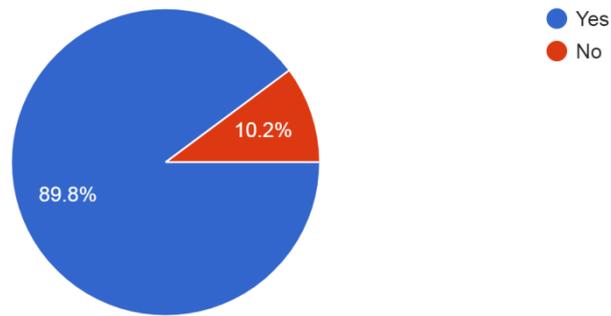
65% of the respondents felt that their employers didn't provide sufficient tools for remote working that also impacts the performance of employees and 30% of the respondents felt that communication tools and apps are critical to accomplish online work.

n) Is it essential to fix time limits while doing work from home in order to maintain work life balance?

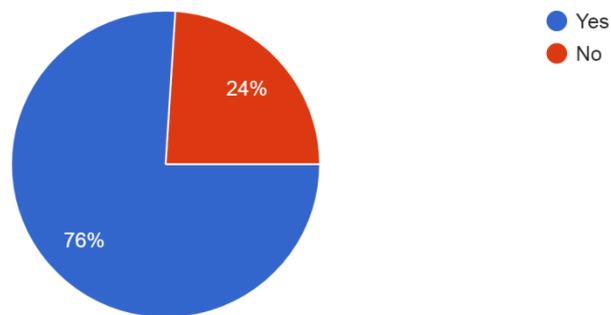


A majority of the respondents (80%) stated that they were not able to devote time for their family responsibilities along with their work-life so it is very essential to fix time limits while doing work from home. On the other hand, 20% of respondents express no difficulty dealing with both work and family responsibilities simultaneously.

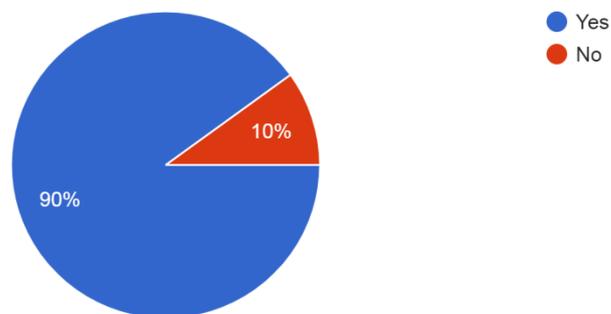
o) Do you work for more than 6 days a week while working from home?



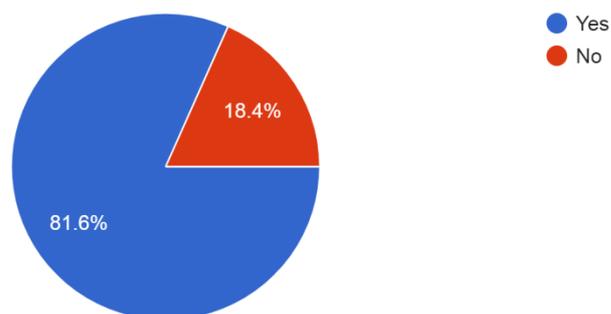
p) Do you work for more than 12 hours a day while working from home?



q) Do you feel you're not able to balance your work life while working from home?

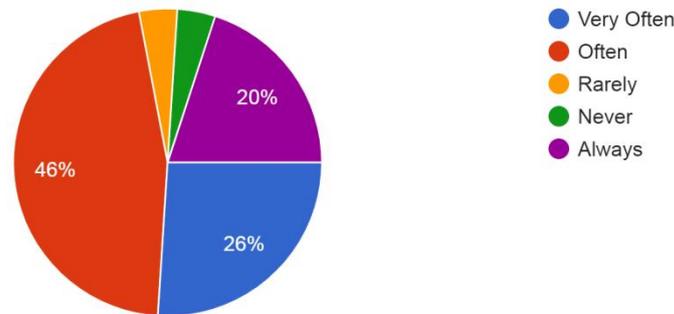


r) Do you find enough time to spend with your family when you WFH?



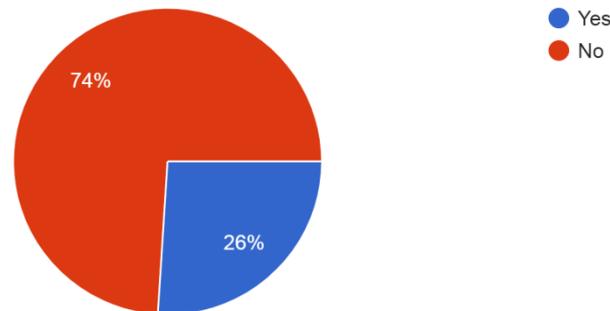
A majority of (89.8%) respondents felt that they worked for more than 6 days a week and 76% respondents felt that they worked for more than 12 hours a day, 81.6% of the respondents felt that they get no time to spend with their family and 90% of the respondents felt difficult to manage work- life balance, as work from home has blurred the boundaries between personal and professional life resulting into work-life imbalance.

s) How often do you think about work while doing other household chores?



Work from home proved to be more challenging for some working employees. In this regard 46% of the respondents felt that often household chores are mixed with professional work which reduces the efficiency of the employees, especially female employees.

t) Do you ever feel tired/ depressed because of work from home and not having any social life?



With respect to enjoying social life and fulfilling social obligations and responsibilities, 74% of the respondents stated that they are unable to meet them which has also resulted in depression and stress for them. On the other hand, respondents who state that they did not face any challenge or depression due to change in their social life were only (26%) of the total sample.

Ways to Improve Work life Balance

While doing work from home following suggestions can help in improving the work life balance of working professionals.

1. Offer Flexibility: Work Life Balance initiatives can assist employers and employees to be productive and gain a better equilibrium in their work and personal lives. Organizations can give employees greater flexibility in how they work. This will offer employers the competitive business edge in attracting and retaining good employees.

2. The long hours of working should be avoided

Organizations need to understand that long hours may lead to lower motivation, morale, reduced turnover and productivity of employees. It has been found that happy employees are motivated and more efficient.

3. Working from home with specific time schedules

Work from home facility should be provided to employees with fix time schedules, the organizations should not take undue importance of employees by making them work all the time.

4. Organize online workshops

Online workshops should be organized in order to make the employees learn how to deal with new ways of working and how to work on new software's that can help in reducing the stress level of employees and enable them to work at ease.

5. Develop positivity

Organizations should encourage a positive culture that will help the workers working stress free and this positivity helps in increasing the productivity and efficiency of workers.

6. Socialisation

Due to work from home social interactions have almost become negligible, making the employees feel aloof and lonely. This can be solved by speaking to the co-workers or subordinates and colleagues at some point Of the day to make oneself energetic.

7. Communicate

Communication is very helpful in removing the doubts and queries of employees and it also helps in enhancing the motivation and commitment level of workers. So, proper flow of information must be made between the superior and subordinates.

8. Workspace at home

A small space may be designed as workspace in the home to avoid distraction and disturbance while doing work from home because it is difficult to sit for such long hours of working, so it is imperative to create a workspace with good lightening and ventilation facilities.

IV. CONCLUSION

“No one can have everything and do everything at the same time”- Oprah Winfrey.

This study uncovered the issues and difficulties looked by professionals in this pandemic situation. No one knows when the things will turn out to be better and world will back to its original state. During beginning period of pandemic working professionals dealt with numerous issues in light of the fact that the circumstance is abrupt and unforeseen. So employees in diverse professions all over world confronted pressure, mental stress and emotional outbursts on account of over load in work and interruption of professional work into personal life. Day by day things are acclimated and people are adapting to the present day scenario. This study also suggested ways to maintain a good work life balance while doing work from home.

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