

**WOMEN EMPLOYMENT AND
WORK-LIFE BALANCE DURING
COVID PANDEMIC**

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By

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**WOMEN EMPLOYMENT AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE DURING COVID
PANDEMIC**

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(Autonomous)
Ernakulam**

***A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
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RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND INTERIOR DESIGNING***

2022

Certified as a Bonafide Research Work

**Signature of the
Guide**

**Signature of the
Head of the Department**

DECLARATION

*I hereby declare that the research work entitled “**WOMEN EMPLOYMENT AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE DURING COVID PANDEMIC**” is a bonafide record of research work done by me, during the course of study under the supervision and guidance of Smt. Teresa Kuncheria, Associate professor, Department of Home Science, St. Teresa’s College, Ernakulam.*

Ernakulam

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Date

CERTIFICATE

*I hereby certify that the dissertation entitled “**Women Employment and Work-life Balance During Covid Pandemic**” prepared and submitted by Mrs. Mary Dhanya Leons, is her original investigation, which she carried out under my guidance and supervision.*

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WOMEN EMPLOYMENT AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE DURING COVID PANDEMIC

ABSTRACT

Women employment is any work for pay or profit in which women are engaged. Women taking part in economic life ensures participation of them in the workforce at the ideal level and increases employment which is one of the main requirements of sustainable growth and development. It has benefits and challenges that affect the economic, socio-cultural, environmental resources of nations. The impactful wave of Covid -19 Pandemic has struck human life in many ways. It has also created various fluctuations in the employment sector. The study on “Women Employment and Work-life Balance during Covid Pandemic” aims at ascertaining the hardships faced by women, especially working mothers in finding a balance between work-life and family-life. Thirty working mothers were purposively selected from Ernakulam District. The information for survey was collected online through internet platform called google forms. The association between various factors such as education, number of children, number of family members etc. with work-life balance was studied. The results revealed that they all were statistically significant. Women who were employed full-time and with less job insecurity attained more Work life balance.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Employment is the state of having a paid work. It is actually a relationship between two parties regulating the provision of paid services and is usually based on a contract. The employer might be a corporation, or any other entity that pays the employee for carrying out the assigned work. Employee work in return for wages, which can be paid on the basis of an hourly rate, by piecework or an annual salary, depending upon the type of work an employee does, the existing conditions of the sector and the bargaining power between the parties.

For most of written history, agriculture was the chief human occupation, and heavy physical labour was not confined to men. Women performed physically demanding chores such as grinding grain by hand in a stone quern, drawing and carrying water, gathering wood, and churning milk to make butter. The Industrial Revolution changed the work situation for both men and women. While the hearth and home had been the centre of production and family life, industrialization changed the locus of work from home to factory.

The role of women in the family workforce did not change overnight, however, for at first many families worked together in factories as teams. Not until the mid-19th century did the role of the male as the “good provider” emerge, with women taking over most household and domestic tasks. This transition may have stemmed from a growing humanitarian protest against the harsh treatment of women and children in the early factory system. Legislation—most notably in Britain—raised the minimum age for child labour in factories, set limits on the working hours of women and children, and barred them from certain dangerous and heavy occupations.

Thus, women engaged primarily in domestic tasks such as child care while the men went out to work. Being the sole wage earner in the family reinforced the man’s traditional position as the head of the family. The traditional role of the housewife persisted throughout the 19th century and well into the 20th. The advent of electric power near the close of the 19th century brought labour-saving devices such as washing machines and vacuum cleaners into the home.

Although they freed the housewife from some drudgery, these innovations did little to lessen the amount of time she spent on household duties. This inequality in men's and women's pay scales, even for equal work, still exists.

Social and economic developments were the critical agents that changed the nature of women's work. The growth of public education increased the demand for more teachers, and growing industrial and commercial enterprises required more office workers and salespeople. While men had previously performed teaching and clerical tasks, employers found they could hire women for these occupations—at lower salaries. Differences in pay between the sexes were based largely on the assumption that men had to be paid enough to support a family.

During the First World War, women were recruited into either voluntary or paid work in order to release men to be conscripted into the armed forces. The war effort also created new jobs for women such as in munitions factories, indeed such factories became the largest employer of women by 1918. Recruitment drives and campaigns also led to women being employed in roles that had been uniformly male, becoming bus conductors and bank clerks, window cleaners and gas fitters, and joining the police and fire services. In all, the employment rates of women in work increased during the First World War from 23.6% of the working age population in 1914 to between 37.7% and 46.7% in 1918.

As time progressed, attitudes about women working and their employment prospects changed. As women gained experience in the labor force, they increasingly saw that they could balance work and family. A new model of the two-income family emerged. Some women began to attend college and graduate school with the expectation of working, whether or not they planned to marry and have families.

By the 1970s, a dramatic change in women's work lives was under way. In the period after World War II, many women had not expected that they would spend as much of their adult lives working as turned out to be the case. By contrast, in the 1970s young women more commonly expected that they would spend a substantial portion of their lives in the labor force, and they prepared for it, increasing their educational attainment and taking courses and college majors that better equipped them for careers as opposed to just jobs.

These changes in attitudes and expectations were supported by other changes under way in society. Workplace protections were enhanced through the passage of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act and the recognition of sexual harassment in the workplace.

The advantages of having women as a part of the workforce are manifold. On a micro level, working women become financially independent and will have greater control over their own lives. This encourages women to stand against physical and emotional abuse, enabling them to handle social issues and pressures on their own. The families of working women are also able to enjoy a higher quality of living due to additional income. At the macro level, greater participation of women in the workforce is good for the overall economy.

The participation of women in the labour force varies considerably across developing countries and emerging economies, far more than in the case of men. In the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, less than one-third of women of working-age participate, while the proportion reaches around two-thirds in East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. This variation is driven by a wide variety of economic and social factors including economic growth, increasing educational attainment, falling fertility rates and social norms.

The ministry of labor and employment has published few facts regarding growth trends in women employment. Women form an integral part of the Indian workforce. According to the information provided by the office of Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India, As per Census 2011, the total number of female workers in India is 149.8 million and female workers in rural and urban areas are 121.8 and 28.0 million respectively. Out of total 149.8 million female workers, 35.9 million females are working as cultivators and another 61.5 million are agricultural laborers. Of the remaining females workers, 8.5 million are in household Industry and 43.7 million are classified as other workers.(Raj, n.d.)

Over time, the share of the self-employed has been rising among women. Large sections of women are self-employed in both rural and urban areas, with their share being higher in the villages (close to 64 per cent of women workers). Women are more inclined towards achieving economic independence and as there is limited number of opportunities in the male dominated society, they look for small business organizations.(Raj, n.d.)

The gift of this knowledge era for women is occupational opportunity and mobility. But this gift has become a great challenge for the working women of today as they are not only exposed to the same working environment as men but in turn are also exposed to the pressures created by the multiple role demands and conflicting expectations. By fulfilling their economic needs, employment has no doubt made women independent with an identifiable social status but it has also made them to juggle into two main domains of lifework and family. (Delina & Raya, 2013)

There exists empirical data that suggests that most of the women who dropped out are unable to get back to their careers due to impediments of societal norms and other problems such as career breaks and jobs with changing schedule that do not allow us to maintain work-life balance. So, they end up taking prolonged breaks. These type of career breaks also put the brakes on the lives and wealth of women which in turn affect their independence and societal role.

But despite all this, women have come to the fore front in all sectors of life including the employment sector and it continues to progress more as women are more motivated by the families and the society to take up a major role in earning income for the family. But the current Pandemic scenario has put women in an unforeseeable condition.

As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2020 the United States and other countries entered the sharpest contraction in economic activity since the Great Depression. While this contraction displays some of the regularities of other economic downturns, in other ways it is unlike any other in recent history. Understanding the differences between regular and pandemic recessions is a key challenge for research, both to further our understanding of what the recovery from the current downturn will look like, and to inform policy responses to possible pandemic recessions in the future. (Tertilt et al., n.d.)

With the closure of schools and colleges, the online learning format engaged all the students and even the mothers of younger children. In most cases, mothers and in few, fathers accompany and have to sit with their children especially with the younger ones for the online classes and train them in this newly emerged model of schooling. This has been seen as an extra component in the already overflowing basket of women's domestic responsibilities. (Jasrotia & Meena, 2021)

The aim of this study is to understand the challenges faced by employed women during the Covid pandemic.

- To understand the nature of employment of working women
- To ascertain the changes in employment during the Covid pandemic
- To study the extent of help received by working women to balance work and home
- To assess the Work life balance of employed women
- To ascertain association between Work life balance and type/nature of employment
- To ascertain association between Work life Balance and family/family support system

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The literature pertaining to the study on 'Women Employment and Work-Life Balance during Pandemic' is reviewed under the following heads

2.1 Covid Pandemic

2.2 Women Employment and Work Life balance

2.3 Problems Faced by Women in Employment

2.4 Ways to enhance Work life Balance of women in Employment

2.1 Covid Pandemic

COVID-19, caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2), was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11th March 2020, leading to some form of lockdown across almost all countries of the world. The extent of the global pandemic due to COVID-19 has a significant impact on our lives. The COVID-19 global lockdown was initiated to stem the spread of the virus and 'flatten the curve' of the pandemic. However, the impact of the lockdown has had far-reaching effects in different strata of life, including changes in the accessibility and structure of education delivery to students, food insecurity as a result of unavailability and fluctuation in prices, the depression of the global economy, increase in mental health challenges, wellbeing and quality of life others (Onyeaka et al., 2021).

The coronavirus outbreak raises unique ethical dilemmas because it makes demands on society from all sectors of life, nationally and across the globe. Health professionals must deal with decisions about the allocation of scarce resources that can eventually cause moral distress and may affect one's mental health. Everybody must deal with restrictions on freedom of movement that have shut down whole economies in an attempt to flatten the epidemic curve (Khoo & Lantos, 2020).

Amid the corona virus pandemic, several countries across the world resorted to lockdowns to “flatten the curve” of the infection that meant confining millions of citizens to their homes, shutting down businesses and ceasing almost all economic activity. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the global economy is expected to shrink by over 3 per cent in 2020 – the steepest slowdown since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The pandemic has pushed the global economy into a recession (Khari et al., n.d.).

The global lockdown initiated by various countries of the world starting from March 2020 after the declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic by the WHO, is the first in this century. At least five pandemics have occurred in the current century, including; H1N1 in 2009, polio in 2014, Ebola (2014), Zika (2016) and Ebola (the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2019). However, none of these has warranted a global lockdown although the number of cases and deaths in the current pandemic is lower than that recorded for previous pandemics.

The economic consequences of the global lockdown are far-reaching and sparked fears of a possible financial crisis and recession.²⁹ Thus, several countries delayed lockdowns because of economic rather than health considerations, inherently reducing the higher costs and GDP losses associated with an earlier lockdown, resulting in more COVID-19 cases (Onyeaka et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 has multifaceted impact on lives of people. The corona outbreak in India was reported on January 30, 2020, in Kerala's Thrissur district. It gradually spread to almost all the states of India by April 2020 and claimed more than 600 lives. The government's imposition of lockdown made people, mostly men to stay at homes. The prolonged lockdown has resulted in resource depletion without resource generation. This has led the people to undergo anxiety, depression, stress, lack of confidence, and state of confusion during this period. The pandemic represents an unprecedented disruption to the global economy as production and consumption are scaled back. The developing countries like India are not immune to such external shocks and are likely to witness slowdown in economic growth. As such the Indian economy was going through a sluggish phase since implementation of the demonetization and goods and services tax (GST), and government was identifying ways to bring the economy back on track (Kapur, 2020). However, the COVID-19 has put paid to all hopes of revival of the economy in the near term (Debata et al., 2020).

COVID-19 is a major health emergency worldwide. More than seven million people have been diagnosed worldwide, since January 2020, and several countries and regions are affected by the pandemic. Countries are forced to adopt quarantine measures because of the highly infectiousness nature of COVID-19. These measures have a great negative impact on aggregate demand, especially on consumption and exports. (Shen et al., 2020).

Often development focus has been on measuring and analysing poverty in order to reduce poverty. While the poor face future prospects of being perpetually trapped in poverty, the nonpoor also are vulnerable to poverty. Vulnerability has been particularly recognized in the wake of the impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) that is likely to yield declines in incomes because of reduced economic activities (Albert et al., n.d.).

The dramatic changes in people's lifestyles and social systems associated with the pandemic have led to an unprecedented alteration of the dynamics of human–nature interactions worldwide. Although it is uncertain how long this situation will continue, the impacts of the pandemic on human–nature interactions seem to be likely to last for years, including after it has ended. Indeed, the pandemic has brought about changes in the lifestyle, norms and attitudes of people in many ways, some of which will remain over the longer term (e.g. the adoption of remote working practices, the establishment of regular exercise habits in urban parks, increased awareness of the importance of nature experiences). Likewise, the feedback loops within our framework suggest that the pandemic could have time-lagged or cumulative effects on human–nature interactions (Soga et al., 2021).

The corona virus disease (COVID-19), which has been characterized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), is attacking societies at their core. The outbreak affects all segments of the population and is particularly detrimental to members of those social groups in the most vulnerable situations, continues to affect populations, including people living in poverty situations, older persons, persons with disabilities, youth, and indigenous peoples. If not properly addressed through policy the social crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic may also increase inequality, exclusion, discrimination and global unemployment in the medium and long term. Comprehensive, universal social protection systems, when in place, play a much durable role in protecting workers and in reducing the prevalence of poverty, since they act as automatic stabilizers. That is, they provide basic income security at all times, thereby enhancing people's capacity to manage and overcome shocks (Khari et al.,

n.d.).

The COVID-19 pandemic may impact the mental health of people. It will increase fear and insecurity due to the probable loss of livelihood (Debata et al., 2020). As per global estimates, the worst affected sectors of global economic distress and COVID-19 impacts would include food and accommodation (144 million workers), retail and wholesale (482 million); business services and administration (157 million) and manufacturing (463 million) together adding up to 37.5% of global employment and this is where the sharp end of the impact of the pandemic is being felt now. India shows no difference and the scenario would far exceed the financial crisis and unemployment waves of 2008-2009. Workers and businesses alike would face urgent catastrophe in absence of any alternative economic package and oxygen from respective governments, already crumbling under the ongoing stress of COVID-19. However, frontline workers must be kept safe and protected with medical professionals, healthcare workers, supporting staffs and allied sectors combatting head on with COVID-19 crisis (Khoo & Lantos, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had widespread impacts on family functioning, well-being, and mental health problems such as depression and anxiety have increased. The day-to-day functioning of families and the systems that support them abruptly changed resulting in significant stress and distress in parents. Mothers experienced significantly higher levels of stress (including both emotional and economic stressors) during the pandemic. Single mothers, who typically have less social and economic capital to mobilize for recovery or to sustain themselves, were especially impacted and reported increased parenting burdens and loss of social networks during the pandemic. Single pandemic, decreasing from 76.1% employed in 2019 to 67.4% in 2020. (Taylor et al., 2021:1104).

The outbreak has a powerful impact on the household economy almost all over the world. The long-period lockdown can result in a lot of expected and unpredicted severe negative consequences over the health and economic wellbeing of the people (Dane, 2020).

2.2 Women Employment and Work Life Balance

The Indian culture with regard to career development of women is undergoing rapid changes due to the increased pace of urbanization and modernization. Indian women belonging to all classes have entered into paid occupations. At the present time, Indian women's exposure to educational opportunities is substantially higher than it was some decades ago, especially in the urban setting. This has opened new vistas, increased awareness and raised aspirations of personal growth. This, along with economic pressure, has been instrumental in influencing women's decision to enter the work force(Balaji, 2007).

The gift of this knowledge era for women is occupational opportunity and mobility. But this gift has become a great challenge for the working women of today as they are not only exposed to the same working environment as men but in turn are also exposed to the pressures created by the multiple role demands and conflicting expectations. By fulfilling their economic needs, employment has no doubt made women independent with an identifiable social status but it has also made them to juggle into two main domains of lifework and family(Delina & Raya, 2013).

The economic need is considered to be the first criteria for married women to go for work in India. Working women's employment outside the home generally has a positive rather than negative effect on marriage, the effects of family life on women's job performance and work attitudes(Balaji, 2007).

Financial independence gives women more respect in the society. For a woman, being financially independent is very essential. It enhances one's reputation and begets more freedom and independence in the society. Women feel self-empowered and better and it helps them in their economic and social status also (Mohanty, n.d.).

While a majority of the women still face discrimination and gender bias, in the last few decades, the number of women successful in politics, technology and business etc. is definitely on the rise. Society has started seeing women in a different perspective. They work as lawyers, nurses, doctors, social workers, teachers, secretaries, managers and officers etc.

There is no profession today where women are not employed. However, it is true that working women have to face problems by virtue of their sex. For centuries women have been subjected to exploitation and torture, physically, sexually and mentally. There are innumerable challenge and problems faced by them both at home and workplace (Mohanty, n.d.).

Give one definition of Work Life balance here -Work-life balance is a key issue in all types of employment as dual-career families have become common and high work demands with long working hours have become the norm. The importance of helping employees achieve a balance between the demands of their work and their home lives has been emphasized. Demographic changes as seen in the increasing number of women in the workplace and dual career families have generated an increasingly diverse workforce and a greater need of employees to balance their work and non-work lives (Delina & Raya, 2013).

As working women get married, they have additional responsibilities and when they become mothers, they have to manage the primary care of children and extended family and are thus, under greater pressure to continue on a career path. Working mothers of today fulfil family responsibilities and also try to remain fully involved in their careers coping up with the competing demands of their multiple roles. The caring responsibilities that working mothers have lays a heavy stress on them when it is combined with their professional duties. The attempt of working women to integrate, organize and balance the various problems and activities in their different roles simultaneously puts them under tremendous pressure. As a result, the family becomes an organizational stakeholder and this powerful social trend marked the beginning of the work/life balance paradigm shift (Mitnick, n.d.).

Societal role expectations which are prevalent in the minds of the people are responsible for producing a social consensus that requires females to be primarily responsible for both child-rearing and household chores. The proximal determinants of this are based on the stereotyped gender roles which are assigned in a patriarchal setup of the society. Gender roles and the expectations around them need to change according to the demands of the changing public and private spaces (Jasrotia & Meena, 2021).

One type of stereotyped thinking that still persists is whether women, who are crossing the four walls of their homes for jobs, are capable enough to compete with others, and at the

same time appropriately balance between family and professional life. So the question arises as to why only women have to balance both lives, and why women have all these burdens thrust on them (Mohanty, n.d.).

Stereotypes rule and strong beliefs persist about the negative effects of maternal employment on women, their marriages, and their children, despite systematic evidence to the contrary. It is also assumed that a mother's being at work leads to social ills like school dropouts, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, and divorce. The argument that working mothers have little time to spare for their family, does not take into account the hours of unpaid housework and domestic chores of a full-time housewife. Working mothers put aside quality time to spend with their family and can contribute to a more cheerful and positive family environment. By efficient and effective time management, a working mother is able to allocate time to her various roles as well as appreciate her own worth and importance (Poduval & Poduval, 2009).

A working mother can be defined as a woman with an ability to combine a career with added responsibility of raising a child. The problems might be different in mothers from low socio-economic status for whom, doing a job may be essential due to economic reasons. However, in women who are in professional field, balancing career and family life, even when they have a choice of selecting only one, might be facing emotional, psychological and physical burdens while effectively juggling between professional and child rearing responsibilities. Hence, it is important to understand the challenges that professional working mothers are facing in coping with the stress of handling multiple roles (Kadale et al., 2018).

The pandemic is such a challenge for women who take multiple roles in their lives, due to its global impact on all aspects of life is considerably challenging. The lockdown measures implemented in a pandemic recession have a large effect on high-contact sectors such as hotels and restaurants, which have large shares of female employment. Thus, unlike in a regular recession, more women than men are directly affected by layoffs. In addition, day care and school closures during the pandemic result in considerably higher childcare obligations. Women shoulder the majority of this additional responsibility, further decreasing their ability to work (Alon et al., 2020).

As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 the United States and other countries entered the sharpest contraction in economic activity since the Great Depression.

While this contraction displays some of the regularities of other economic downturns, in other ways it is unlike any other in recent history. Two main causes of the large impact of the current pandemic recession on women in the labour market has been identified. Both relate to the fact that the recession has in large part been triggered by the “lockdown,” i.e., the social distancing measures, business shutdowns, and stay-at-home orders implemented during the pandemic. The first cause relates to the impact of a lockdown recession on different sectors of the economy. Regular recessions lead to large employment losses in sectors with a high male employment share, such as construction and manufacturing. In contrast, the impact of the current recession has been greatest in high-contact service sectors such as restaurants, hospitality, and travel, which have been severely affected by social distancing. These are sectors where women represent a large share of the workforce, leading to high employment losses for this group during the crisis (Alon et al., 2020).

The Covid-19 recession reverses the usual pattern. This time, it is women, rather than men, who have experienced larger employment losses and higher unemployment. In the United States, women’s unemployment increased by 12.8 percentage points between February and April 2020, versus an increase of only 9.9 percentage points for men (Alon et al., 2020).

Changes in employment rates (which also accounts for transitions into and out of the labor force) display the same pattern, with a substantially larger decline in employment for women than for men during the crisis. Similar patterns have been observed in other countries affected by the pandemic. In other economic downturns preceding the current crisis, including the Great Recession of 2007–2009, the employment of male workers was usually affected more strongly than the employment of female workers (Alon et al., 2020).

Gender stereotypes is seen as relevant factors in discrimination against women, which then become invisible ceilings and cause the revealed glass ceiling effect. (Bonacini et al., n.d.) Women, and mothers in particular, have been especially affected during the early months of the pandemic unemployment rates were higher for women than men, and mothers have been more likely to reduce their work hours than fathers (Petts et al., 2021).

The pandemic recession has sizeable repercussions for gender inequality. In the short and medium term, a pandemic recession erodes women’s position in the labor market, first through

direct employment losses, and later through the loss in labor market experience brought about by low employment during the recession. These forces lead to a widening of the gender wage gap during a pandemic recession and in its immediate aftermath (Alon et al., 2020).

The current crisis further increased the workload of women, resulting from both their occupation and the housework. In contrast with men, there is no difference in the increase of housework between women who telecommute and those who do not work because of the emergency. Compared to their partners, working women bear the brunt of the increased time needed for household chores and childcare. Men are more likely to be spending more time with the children, hence in more gratifying family work rather than chores (Del Boca et al., 2020).

During this pandemic, women are disproportionately bearing the load of additional full-time caregiving and home-schooling responsibilities and those with very young children (ages 0–5) report significant decreases in hours worked and academic productivity. Decreased productivity among women is already evident, with overall manuscript submissions on a downward trend among women compared with men and women making up only 12% of the authors of COVID-19–related research. Meanwhile, those without children at home during stay-at-home orders report significantly increased measures of productivity. Thus, domestic burdens and childcare responsibilities are being amplified during COVID-19, and their combined impact on career productivity and funding acquisition will result in a triple threat to tenure and/or promotion for early career women (Cardel et al., 2020).

The economic impact of the pandemic was unequal initially, but as of November 2020, there remains little difference in its employment impact across demographic and socioeconomic groups. Women lost more jobs than men initially, but the differential effect has disappeared by November 2020 (Yoon, n.d.).

Large household expenses, such as electricity costs, internet quota for working from home and studying from home, and many private companies that cut off their employees' salaries and lay off their employees because the company suffered huge losses. Apart from that due to the Pandemic, everyone must be at home and adhere to health protocols. The stress of this uncertainty is causing women to work even harder to pay attention to the health and hygiene of family members amidst their worries. Many of the victims died due to Covid 19 which made

women feel fear, victims, and even depression (Marpaung et al., 2020).

2.3 Problems Faced by Women in Employment

Women have worked as long as men, as evidenced by cave drawings that show women toiling in fields and over fires. As well, the Old Testament describes stories of women collecting water at wells and tending flocks. In the modern era, the phenomenon of women in the workplace is closely tied to economic and social trends. When, for example, women were needed to support men in times of war, institutional childcare to support working mothers was created. Evidence of this type of institution exists from the Civil War, 1860, through World War II, 1945 (Mitnick, n.d.).

A woman's work is not merely confined to paid employment. She has to almost always shoulder the burden of household chores as well. A woman could still bear up with these problems if she had control over the money she earns. But in most families even now her salary is handed over to father, husband or in-laws. So the basic motive for seeking employment of getting independence is nullified in many women's case (Dashora, 2013).

Even in the 21st century in women's lives, the biggest and most important responsibility is still considered to be the prime caretaker of the home and children. Before the lockdown, when life was sailing on the normal boat, the schedule for everything was fixed and women were at least getting sometime for themselves when their children use to be busy in school and other outdoor activities (Jasrotia & Meena, 2021).

Workers who lose employment lose skills, which implies that the differential employment impact of a recession on women and men leads to changes in the gender wage gap. Given that regular recessions affect men comparatively more, they moderately reduce the gender wage gap. In contrast, a pandemic recession depreciates the skills of women who reduce their hours or drop out of the labour force all together, leading to a substantial widening of the wage gap that persists after the recession. (Tertilt et al., n.d.).

Working women are facing many challenges faced during lockdown due to novel coronavirus (Kaur & Sharma, 2020). Following are the challenges:

2.3.1 Lack of training and Set up

If worker is trained and having proper set up at home then it is not tough to work from home.. This problem is same for both women and men whereas it is more challenging for women, as extra time is required to handle newer challenges but to household responsibilities it might be bit difficult to cope up with these challenges.

2.3.2 Working around the clock

Working women are working around the clock as work from home is demanding much more time to get balance between house life and work life.

2.3.3 Burden of women increased manifold

Due to continuous nature, lockdown and social distancing is imposed in my countries, so now help workers are also not supposed to come to their workers. Help workers took additional work as well as of additional burden of respective families. But now burden of women increased manifold in order to meet deadlines(Kaur & Sharma, 2020).

Discrimination against women in the non-domestic sphere also facilitates their domestication. For instance, restriction in educational opportunities can be justified in cultures where girls are not expected to engage in paid work outside the home. In these contexts with regards to hiring, promotion and wages, it is argued that women need not be prioritized as they have their husbands to support them. This position particularly disadvantages mothers, widows and women who do not seek to marry. Men still maintain control over top positions in the socio-economic hierarchy and have a monopoly over important institutions such as political and legal systems, defence, police, commercial industries, education and media. Women face disproportionate job losses during economic recessions compared to men but even 'among women, there are disproportionate effects by race, ethnicity, age and marital status. The drudgery associated with confining women to housework has been addressed extensively in feminist literature. Feminist writers have also emphasized the need to view housework and family as analytical frames to understand discrimination against women(Borah Hazarika & Das, 2021).

Even in the 21st century in women's lives, the biggest and most important responsibility is still considered to be the prime caretaker of the home and children. Before the lockdown, when life was sailing on the normal boat, the schedule for everything was fixed and women

(Kaur & Sharma, 2020) and other outdoor activities.

Working mothers, particularly part-time workers, have been subjected to cuts in their hours as a result of the pandemic. Cultural pressures may play a role in the difference in time women spend working compared to men; employers do not expect women to work more or even the same amount than they were working pre-pandemic (Bauer et al., n.d.).

Working from home it seems to be pleasant but it's not that easy. Amid novel coronavirus almost all business houses, enterprises firms or institute switched from 'work at office' to 'work from home'. Lockdown provides most of working people get chance to work from home, in busy life get some time for family but it is not that easy especially for women. Most of working women especially married women took help of helper/ maids to get household chores but due to lockdown no one except health workers, police force & people providing essential services, go to their work so all work has to be get done by itself (Kaur & Sharma, 2020).

The proportion of parents who report sharing domestic chores equally has increased since before the pandemic. As a result, the fraction of families in which mothers are primarily responsible for household labor has decreased substantially. Nonetheless, more than one quarter of mothers also report doing substantially more in both childcare and housework as a result of the shelter-at home orders (King & Frederickson, 2021).

During lockdown due to pandemic novel coronavirus, every day work from home becomes hardest. Following are the cost incurred by the working women during novel coronavirus pandemic:

Economic cost: Due to contiguous nature of coronavirus, in many countries lockdown becomes the last resort in order to stop virus to spread. So definitely, many sectors come to halt, which hinders the economic condition of nation and even across world. Now for working married women having kids comes under pressure. Under this type of scenario it is difficult for them come up with new ideas, innovation and creativity as even it is difficult for them to get their task accomplished on time, therefore there is no question of innovation this year (Kaur & Sharma, 2020).

The strain on mothers of children school-aged and younger during the COVID-19 pandemic has spurred anxiety, depression, and the exacerbation of other mental health disorders [5–7]. Working mothers have faced unique challenges in simultaneously juggling employment and increased domestic responsibilities during the absence of stable childcare and schooling options. Mothers' stressors range from concerns over their children's well-being to potential financial challenges related to wide-spread employment instability during the pandemic (Kirwin & Ettinger, 2022).

Women academics with children at home report spending an average of half an hour less per day than men with children and an hour less per day than their men colleagues without children on research during the pandemic, along with increases in childcare and housework (King & Frederickson, 2021).

Personal cost Personal cost is another cost which may all women incurred during work from home. It may come up with explosion in mental issues. Reason being people are get isolated at their homes and social interaction barred and replaced by the social distancing, therefore these all things going to lead a woman into depression. As kids are supposed to at home, no additional hands for help and even struggling to keep pace at work place too, so in nutshell women are suffering and struggling between household responsibilities as well as office work at home. Not only mental health, physical health will also get hit very badly (Kaur & Sharma, 2020).

Negative aspects recorded by female respondents included stress and anxiety and restrictions on travelling and socialising. Some women also stated that the disruption of professional routines due to increased domestic commitments as a negative aspect of the lockdown (Meegaswatta, 2021).

Even in the 21st century in women's lives, the biggest and most important responsibility is still considered to be the prime caretaker of the home and children. Before the lockdown, when life was sailing on the normal boat, the schedule for everything was fixed and women were at least getting sometime for themselves when their children use to be busy in school and other outdoor activities. With the closure of schools and colleges, the online learning format engaged all the students and even the mothers of younger children. In most cases, mothers and in few, fathers accompany and have to sit with their children especially with the younger ones for the online

classes and train them in this newly emerged model of schooling. This has been seen as an extra component in the already overflowing basket of women's domestic responsibilities (Jasrotia & Meena, 2021).

The "ideal worker" expectation is particularly punitive for working mothers, who also typically put in more hours of caregiving work at home than their spouses. Furthermore, men are more likely to "fake it" and pass as ideal workers, while women make clear that they cannot meet these expectations, including by negotiating flexible-work arrangements. Many organizations are not amenable to adjustments, leading to the perception that women are opting out of the workforce — although research suggests women are actually "pushed out" (Thomason & Williams, n.d.).

Home schooling, intensified care needs of the elderly, completion of household chores like sweeping, cleaning utensils, washing clothes, etc. due to absence of hired help, together with psychological stress of salary cut, job insecurity, official deadlines, masking, social distancing and sanitization, exacerbated the work-life balancing problems of working women (Tayal & Mehta, 2022).

Though work from home enabled women to work safely and save commuting time, it posed several challenges to their efforts at striking a work-family balance. All working women were not fortunate enough to exercise the option of work from home. Jobs like those of healthcare workers, bankers, media, etc., cannot be performed remotely and require travel to the workplace. The same applies to women employed as daily wage earners or those in low-paying informal sector jobs. Thus, while juggling domestic responsibilities, they are forced to bear the mental stress of bringing home the increased risk of COVID-19 from interacting with varied sections of people at the workplace and while commuting (Tayal & Mehta, 2022).

Stress loads can be quite high amongst working mothers and these may often reflect in their relationships at home. She is stressed to reach work on time, to send her child to school and to reach all the children's deadlines on time including food and dress, and she is also pressed for time to look after her home simultaneously. Housework is still considered the woman's domain. Working women shoulder additional responsibility of the work place as well as at their domestic front. Unexpected sickness of children is a calamity that can be difficult to handle. There often is need to use and avail of unpaid leave and unexpected absences from

work. Few employers would consider the needs of sudden leave requirements in women with young children. Even in double-income families, it is still the woman who is expected to take care of a sick child (ibid) (Poduval & Poduval, 2009).

A working mother can be defined as a woman with an ability to combine a career with added responsibility of raising a child.³ The problems might be different in mothers from low socio-economic status for whom, doing a job may be essential due to economic reasons. However, in women who are in professional field, balancing career and family life, even when they have a choice of selecting only one, might be facing emotional, psychological and physical burdens while effectively juggling between professional and child rearing responsibilities. Hence, it is important to understand the challenges that professional working mothers are facing in coping with the stress of handling multiple roles (Kadale et al., 2018).

2.4 Ways to enhance Work life Balance of women in Employment

Work stress can be defined as the negative effects on the worker's physical and emotional health as a result of the mismatch between the worker's capabilities, resources or needs and the requirements of the job. The changing and modernization of the current working environment have had employees work longer hours, adapt effectively to change, task complexity and demands for greater technical skills (Snow et al., 2003).

Women in India and even other countries face gender biasness and at times working in government or private organizations lead to many types of exploitations like low wage rates as compared to their male counterparts, sexual harassment, family pressure etc. Self-employed women or upcoming female entrepreneurs are free from few of the above-mentioned problems. Gender budgeting at the government's end and family support on the personal front is a must for females in a patriarchal society like India (Raj, n.d.).

Creating inclusive economies also means protection from shocks for vulnerable groups while boosting productivity. This means cash transfer programmes, pensions, or social insurance that specifically target informal workers, migrant workers, women farmers, and female-headed households (Nazneen & Araujo, 2021).

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 states that it is necessary to balance the demands of the workplace with the needs of families, to promote the stability and economic security of families, and to promote national interests in preserving family integrity; to entitle employees to take reasonable leave for medical reasons, for the birth or adoption of a child, and for the care of a child, spouse, or parent who has a serious health condition, and to promote the goal of equal employment opportunity for women and men. Working mothers' needs are to be served in the interest of preserving the family unit as a healthy foundation for society. Caring for a child has the fundamental value of a serious health condition and has been valued as such, deserving that the parent be allowed to take time off for caring for the child. This means that caring for a child is an essential duty that the parent has to perform and that cannot be substituted for in any other way (Poduval & Poduval, 2009).

It is possible to be a woman, a mother, and an achiever. Many have done it with help from society, and others have battled endless odds to prove the same. In today's world it is both desirable and incumbent upon mothers to be working, like their spouses. In this developing world, and still in the throes of a culture and tradition of a male-oriented society, one should acknowledge that, contrary to traditional belief that a working mother is not a good mother, a working mother can, in fact, be a better mother (Poduval & Poduval, 2009).

The COVID-19 pandemic is creating a profound shock worldwide, with different implications for men and women. Women are serving on the frontlines against COVID-19, and the impact of the crisis on women is stark. Women face compounding burdens: they are over-represented working in health systems, continue to do the majority of unpaid care work in households, face high risks of economic insecurity and face increased risks of violence, exploitation, abuse or harassment during times of crisis and quarantine. Women are among those most heavily affected. Due to contiguous nature of coronavirus, in many countries' lockdown becomes the last resort in order to stop virus to spread. Many sectors come to a halt, which hinders the economic condition of nation and even across world. Working from home is not that challenging if it is out of choice and if it is in normal days. During lockdown due to pandemic novel coronavirus, every day work from home becomes hardest. Balancing office work and household work together is becoming challenging for working women.

Family-care resources while schools and childcare facilities remain closed and other caregiving resources are limited. Creating and identifying safe ways to obtain family care is essential; without it, sustained productivity is fundamentally impossible and equal opportunities to success become eliminated. Some academic institutions have begun to create internal marketplaces wherein those without current work at the institution can list themselves and their skills for jobs they would be willing to do. This infrastructure could be used, in part, for childcare or elder-care services and could provide a financial subsidy for those waiting to return to their prior jobs. All institutions should create a widespread infrastructure for this to occur.

Given the continued uncertainty of the pandemic, flexible and/or work-from-home arrangements are necessary. The facilitation of alternate working arrangements will allow faculty to achieve maximum productivity while still meeting family needs. Institutions should regularly monitor sex and racial/ ethnic breakdowns in tenure and promotion and work to correct these discrepancies. This can be accomplished by implementing an academic equity council that analyzes inequities of pay, time to tenure and promotion, and metrics of endowments. Although this is an essential policy at all times, it is particularly relevant in the decade to come after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Institutions should assess the effect of any implemented policies to ensure there are no unintended consequences resulting in the magnification of disparities, particularly among racial/ ethnic minorities and women, for whom many disparities already exist. Best practices should be disseminated widely and shared across institutions (Cardel et al., 2020).

According to Manolova et al., 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused the following three major challenges for women entrepreneurs: (1) the industries where most women operate are disproportionately affected by the recession; (2) women are more likely to run many of the youngest, smallest, most vulnerable businesses; and (3) with schools closed and elderly family members under threat, women are more likely to be juggling primary care-giving and homemaking, while they are scrambling to save their businesses. The prospects are daunting, and the options for women are limited. However, the solutions to these gender-linked challenges for women entrepreneurs may include both cost-cutting and pivoting to capture new business opportunities presented by the crisis.

Nazneen and Araujo, 2021 opine that building back better should be the priority. Sustaining the gains in women's empowerment, and creating gender-inclusive health, legal, governance, and economic systems – depends on how states and multilateral agencies respond to Covid-19 with respect to gender equality in the long run. This means responses by these actors need to address not just immediate survival requirements, but aim to change biased social norms, cultural practices, laws, and policies, through developing tailored and specific responses that consider context specificity and how gender intersects with other forms of inequalities.

The unprecedented crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic requires governments and development actors to develop innovative solutions and build new private–public partnerships to assist the most affected women and girls and build resilient systems (Nazneen & Araujo, 2021).

Gender inequality pertaining to the unequal division of tasks and/or resources between men and women is one of the most persistent social problems of the 21st century. This ongoing inequality particularly affects men and women's lives across the dimensions of paid work, the division of childcare and household work, and quality of life (including leisure time, work-life balance, and for those in a relationship, relationship dynamics).

Attention is needed to mitigate the adverse 'unintelligent' impact of lockdown measures on the health and wellbeing of parents, especially among mothers. For example, should schools need to be closed during future lockdowns, greater support for parents, and more independent assignments for (younger) children may help to mitigate the pressure parents feel when negotiating care tasks with their partner and combining home schooling with work responsibilities. While scientific and policy attention is logically focused on the health risks associated with the COVID-19 virus, the societal implications of attempts to stop its spread must not be forgotten (Yerkes et al., 2020).

Income support to vulnerable workers is expected to be more beneficial for women than for men, as women are more likely to be vulnerable, especially in times of losing jobs and low income. Programs of job retention to preserve jobs are also useful. Gender implications are expected to come also from policy measures which support family needs and their work–life balance, such as the additional time period of parental leave or in-kind benefits (such as baby-sitter vouchers) which have been introduced in several countries, in particular after the closure

of schools. In fact, the closure of schools and childcare facilities has caused serious problems for working parents, especially in presence of small children (Profeta, 2020).

Authorities should adopt strategies to reduce the burden of pandemic and the dramatic mental health consequences of this outbreak, enhancing the general population's resilience during the Covid-19 crisis. Given the possibility that the pandemic might continue to pose a threat globally for some considerable time, and most likely until an effective vaccine is available to the public, governments should be aware of these facts and decide their further Covid-19 pandemic policies in line with the relevant scientific findings (Demetris Hadjicharalambous et al., 2020).

Chapter-3

Methodology

Research methodology is a way of explaining how a researcher intends to carry out their research. It is a logical, systematic plan to resolve a research problem. It details a researcher's approach to the research to ensure reliable, valid results that address their aims and objectives. It encompasses what data that will be collected and where from, as well as how it is being collected and analysed. The methodology adopted for the current study entitled “Women employment and Work-Life Balance during Covid Pandemic” comprises of the following steps.

3.1 Selection of area

3.2 Selection of method

3.3 Selection of tool

3.4 Selection of sample

3.5 Collection of data

3.1 Selection of area

The area selected for study included various employed mothers in the Ernakulam District. The Metropolitan city, Ernakulam was selected as the area of study due to higher employment opportunities provided to woman.

3.2 Selection of method

The method selected for the study is survey method. A survey method is a process or technique

that is used to gather information in research by asking questions to a predefined group of people. Typically, it facilitates the exchange of information between the research participants and the person or organization carrying out the research.

3.3 Selection of tool

Online survey through the google platform was the tool selected for the survey. Two distinct questionnaires were created for the survey. One questionnaire was entitled as ‘Women Employment’ and the other questionnaire was entitled as ‘Work-life Balance.’

3.4 Selection of sample

The sampling technique used for survey was purposive sampling. A purposive sample is non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study (Crossman, 2020). For this study, working women with children were selected by purposive sampling technique.

3.5 Collection of data

The questionnaires prepared were administered by sending the two distinct questionnaires online through social media platform. The respondents were requested to answer all the questions and finally submit the responses digitally through the Google platform.

3.6 Analysis and Interpretation

After collecting the data, it was tabulated, analysed and discussed. Data was presented in a clear and concise form with the use of appropriate tables and figures for ease of interpretation. Statistical analysis was also done to understand the association of Work life balance with other variables under study. This is given in the Chapter 4- Results and Discussion.

Chapter 4

Results and Discussion

The results of the study on “Women Employment and Work-life Balance during Covid times” is given under the following heads.

4.1 Basic details of the respondents

- 4.1.1 Age of the respondents
- 4.1.2 Educational qualification of the respondents
- 4.1.3 Number of children
- 4.1.4 Number of family members

4.2 Employment details of the respondents

- 4.2.1 Nature of employment
- 4.2.2 Flexibility in hours of work
- 4.2.3 Number of leaves allotted in a year

4.3 Support from family members

- 4.3.1 Prime care-taker role in the family
- 4.3.2 Support received in fulfilling house-hold activities
- 4.3.3 Help in taking care of elderly
- 4.3.4 Help received in miscellaneous activities

4.4 Financial aspects of respondents

4.4.1 Range of salary received/month

4.4.2 Extent of control over money earned

4.4.3 Financial assistance received from employer during pandemic

4.4.4 Salary and perceived worth

4.5 Employment related changes during Pandemic

4.5.1 Job insecurity during pandemic

4.5.2 Facilities provided by the employer during pandemic

4.6 Family and Work life balance

4.6.1 Type of work preferred

4.6.2 Work demands with respect to planning and skill

4.6.3 Difficulty in fulfilling family related responsibilities

4.6.4 Career stress and family relationships

4.6.5 Balance attained over work-life and family-life

4.1 Basic details of the respondents

Employed women with children in Ernakulam were selected for the study and the basic details obtained from them are given below.

4.1.1 Age of the respondents

Most of the respondents were in the age group of 40-50yrs, followed by 13.3 % in the age group of 41- 60 years.

4.1.2 Educational qualification of the respondents

The respondents' level of qualification was studied, and it was seen that most of them (40%) had a Bachelor's degree, followed by 36.7% who had a Master's degree. This is given in figure 1.

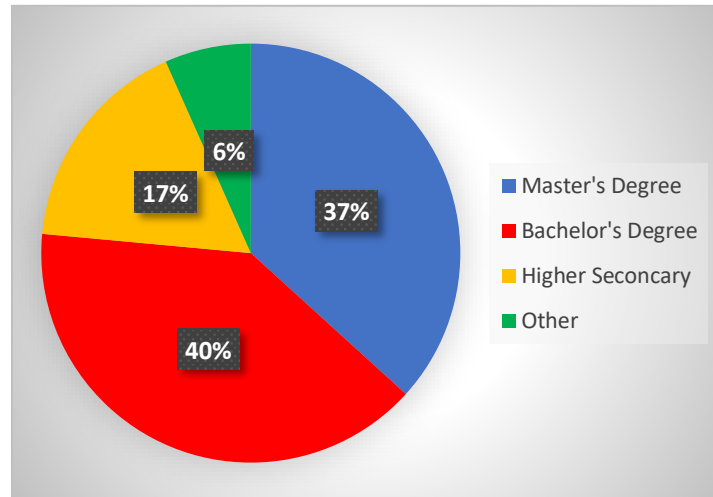


Figure 1
Educational qualification of the respondents

4.1.3 Number of Children

With regard to the number of children, it was seen that more than half the respondents (57%) had 2 children. It was seen that a few respondents (7%) had 3 or more children. This is shown in Figure 2.

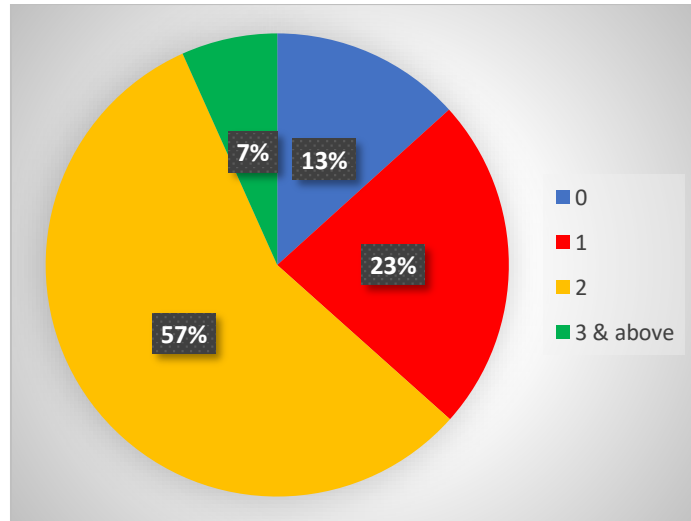


Figure 2
Number of children

4.1.4 Number of family members

Regarding the number of family members, it was seen that more than half the households had a greater number of people in the family, with 30 % with more than 5 members and above, and 57% families with 4 members. This is shown in figure 3.

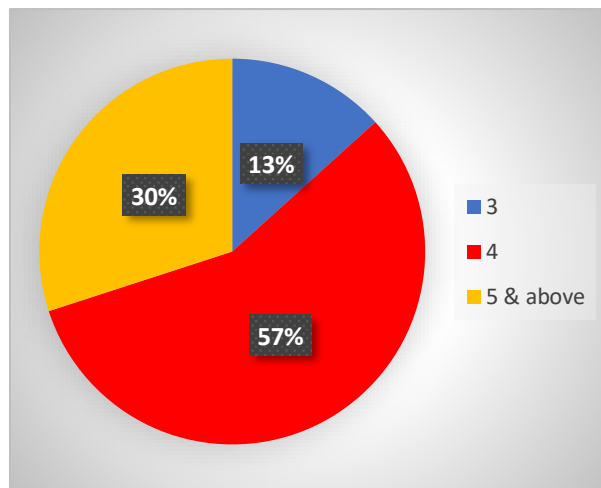


Figure 3
Number of family members

4.2 Employment details of the respondents

4.2.1 Nature of employment

With regard to the type of employment, more than half the respondents (63%) were employed in a private firm, 30% had Government jobs. A very high majority (94%) were employed in a full-time job, only a very few had part time job (3%) This is given in figures 4 and 5.

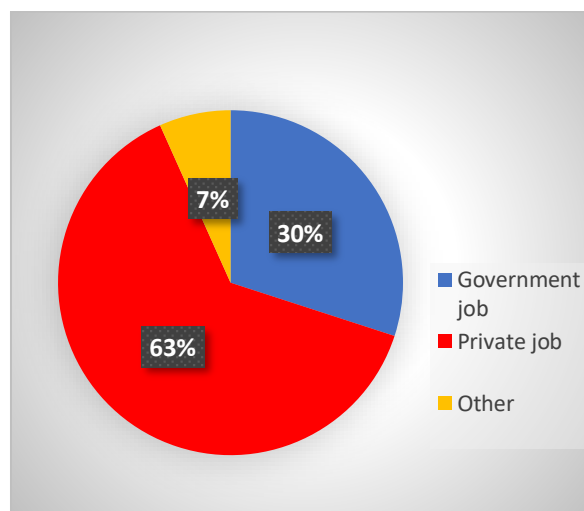


Figure 4
Nature of employment

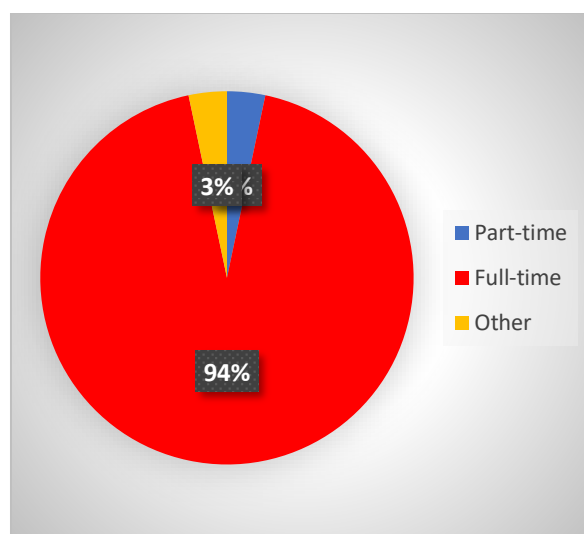


Figure 5
Timing of employment

4.2.2 Flexibility in hours of work

Many employers had given flexibility of work during the Covid Pandemic. The flexibility offered was studied, and it was seen that most of the respondents (47%) had no flexibility in their work schedule despite the pandemic. It is shown in the figure 6.

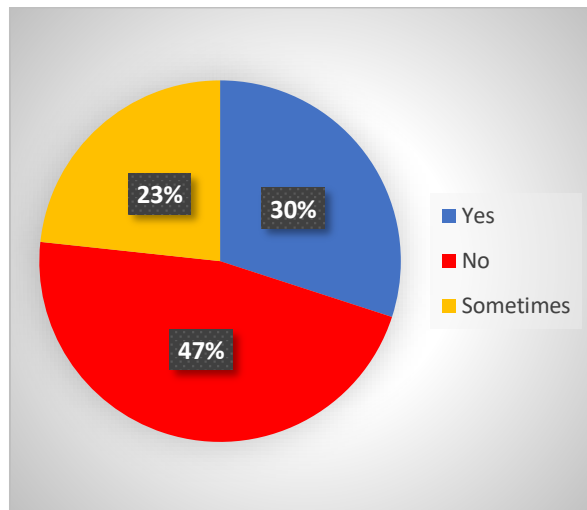


Figure 6
Flexibility in hours of work

4.2.3 Number of leaves allotted in a year

The Covid pandemic created various demands on the employed respondents, however, the number of leaves that they could avail were 11 – 15 days for 50% respondents. It is depicted in the figure 7.

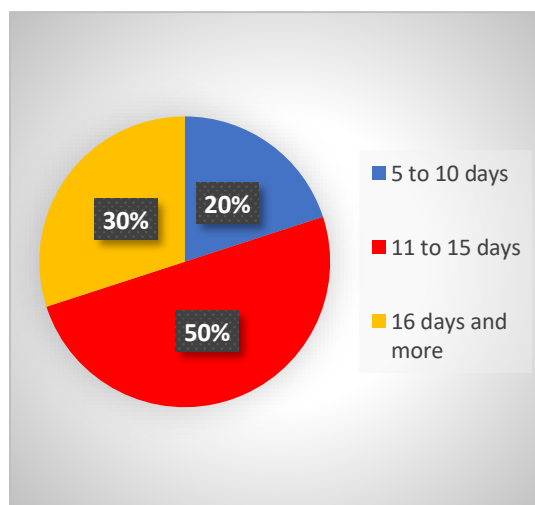


Figure 7
Number of leaves allotted in a year

4.3 Support from family/ Others

4.3.1 Prime care taker role in the family

It was noted that half of the respondents (50%) agreed that they had the responsibility of being the prime care-takers of their families. This is shown in figure 8.

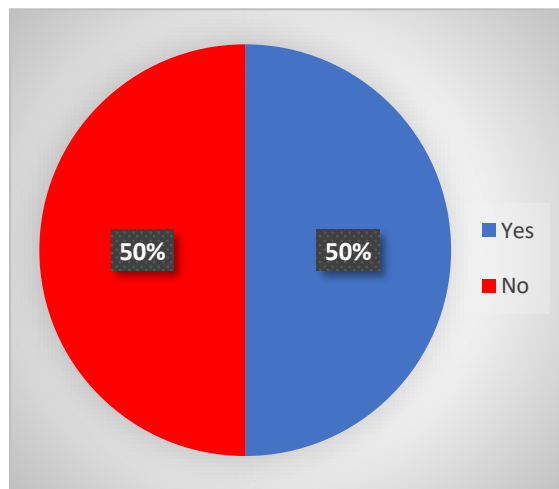


Figure 8
Prime care taker role in family

4.3.2 Support received in fulfilling house-hold activities

The support from family members were studied. It was seen that the spouses helped more with laundering, cleaning home and teaching children. However, the extent of help received from children and in-laws were low. This is depicted in figure 9.

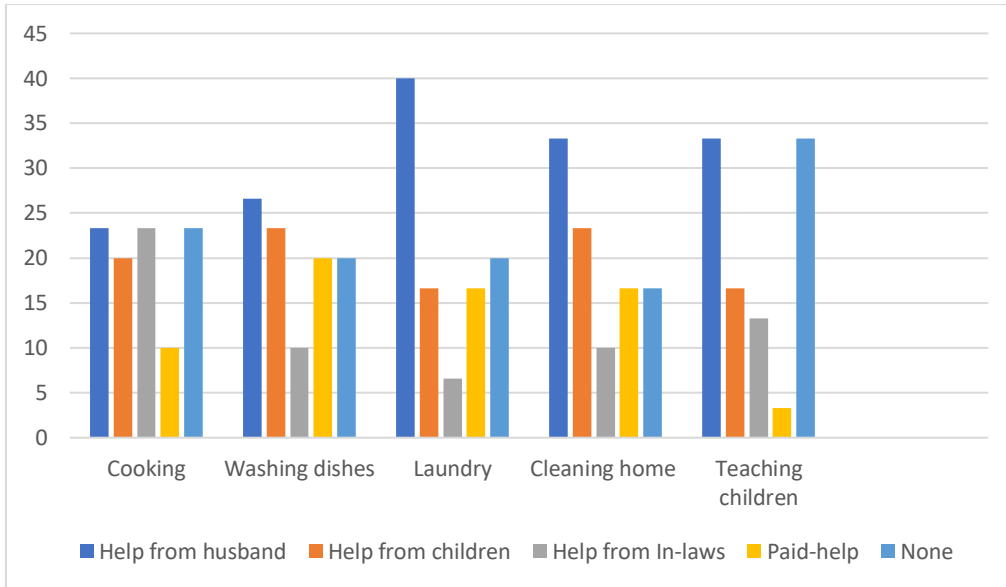


Figure 9
Support received in fulfilling house-hold activities

4.3.3 Help in taking care of elderly

The support from family members in taking care of the elderly was studied. It was seen that majority of the women (33.3%) were solely involved in taking care of the elderly. Support from the spouse in taking care of the elderly, i.e., 30% was also noted. There was only a small amount of help from children 13.3%. This is shown in the figure 10.

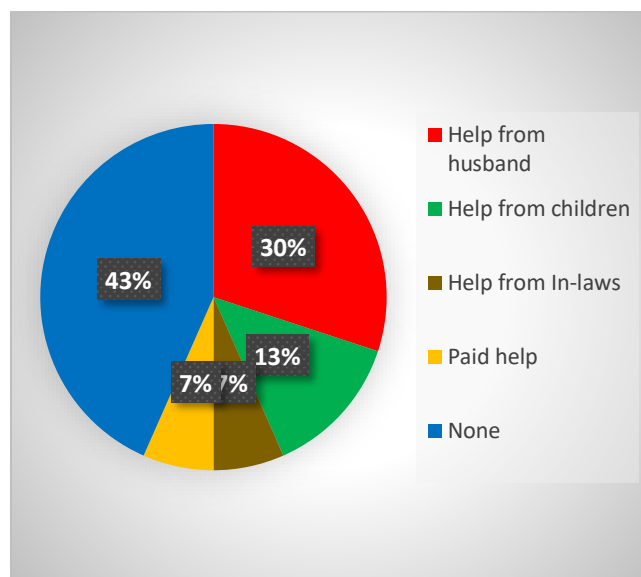


Figure 10
Help in taking care of elderly

4.3.4 Help received in miscellaneous activities

The study noted the help received from family members in carrying out miscellaneous activities, it was seen that majority of the women received help from their spouses (33.3%) in taking care of pets and garden, while almost an equal number declared that they received no help. This is depicted in figure 11.

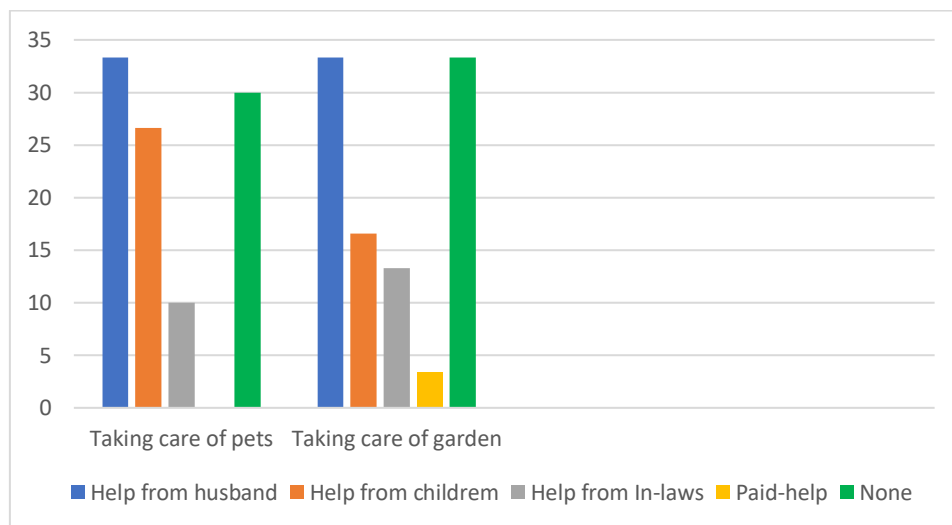


Figure 11
Help received in miscellaneous activities

4.4 Financial aspects of respondents

4.4.1 Range of salary received in a month

On the study of salary received in a month, majority of the respondents (40%), were having a pay scale of Rs 41,000 rupees and above. Only few respondents (3%) received salary that was below 10,000 rupees. This is shown in figure 12.

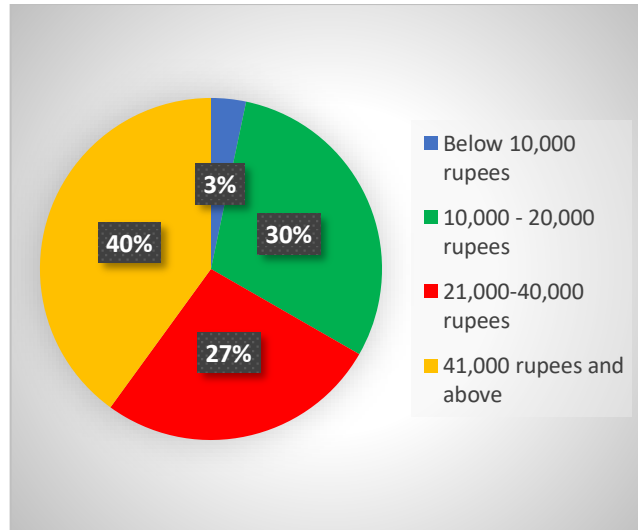


Figure 12
Range of salary received in a month

4.4.2 Extent of control over money

With regard to extent of control over money earned, it was noted that more than half of the respondents had only a slight control over the money they earned while 37% of the respondents stated that they have a high extent of control over the money they earned. This is shown in figure 13.

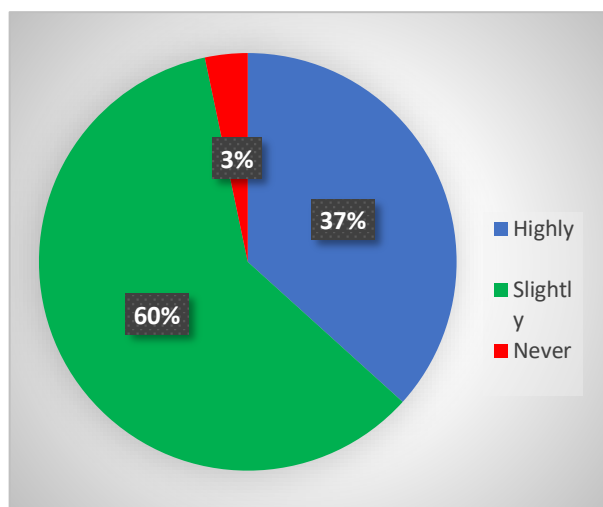


Figure 13
Extent of control over money earned

4.4.3 Financial assistance received from employer during pandemic

When studying the financial assistance received by the respondents from their employer, It was noted that 40% of the respondents received slight financial assistance from their firm,30% of the respondents received high financial assistance during the pandemic, whereas 30% respondents never received any financial assistance. This is shown in figure 14.

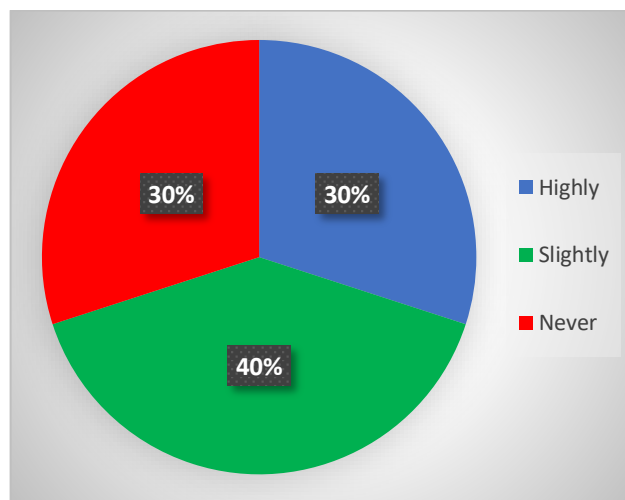


Figure 14

Financial assistance received from employer during Pandemic

4.4.4 Salary and perceived worth

While studying the level of satisfaction and worth that the respondents felt with regard to the work and the salary received, it was noted that more than half of the respondents were not satisfied with the remuneration received. This is shown in figure 15.

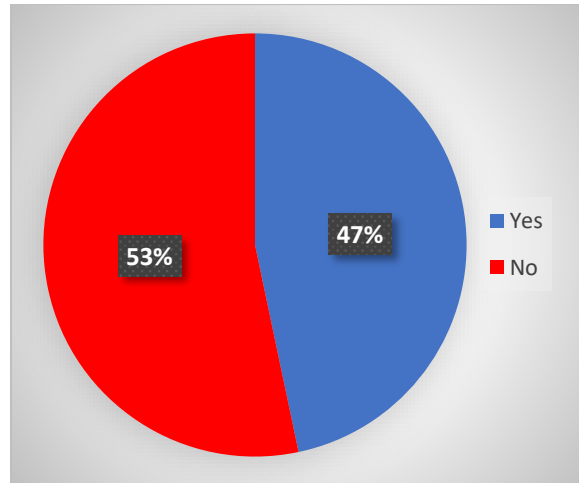


Figure 15
Salary and perceived worth

4.5 Employment related changes during Pandemic

4.5.1 Job insecurity during the Pandemic

With regard to the job security felt during the pandemic, it was noted that most of the respondents (47%) never felt job insecurity during the pandemic. However, 13% of the respondents felt high job-insecurity during the pandemic. This is shown in figure 16.

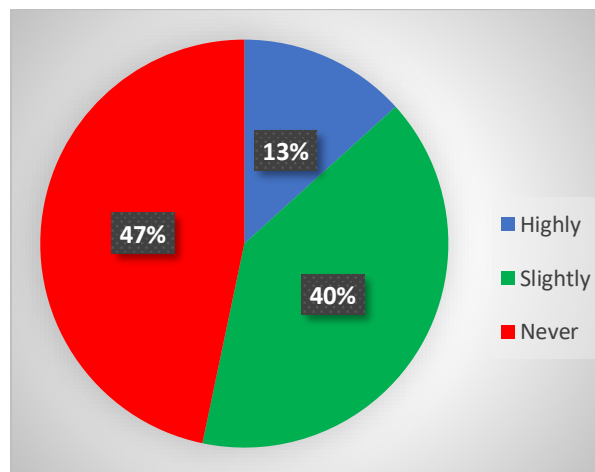


Figure 16
Job insecurity during the Pandemic

4.5.2 Facilities provided by the employer during Pandemic

In the study regarding the provision of gadgets and other facilities during the work-from home scenario, it was noted that more than half of the respondents (67%) did not receive any extra provision of gadgets and other facilities. This is shown in figure 17.

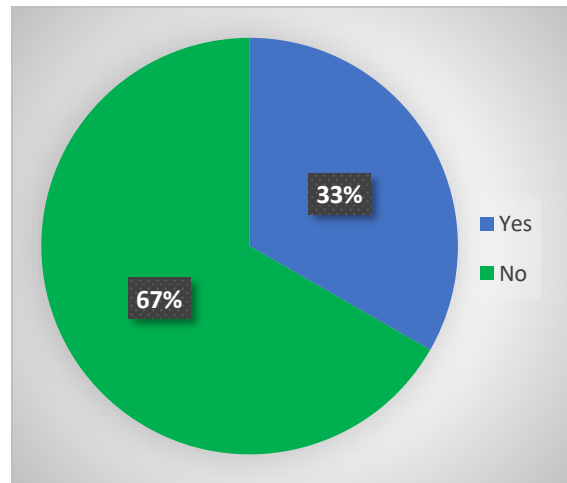


Figure 17

Facilities provided by the employer during Pandemic

4.6 Family and Work life balance

4.6.1 Type of work preferred

When studying the preferred type of work, it was noted that most of the respondents (77%) preferred to work in the work place, rather than working from home. This is shown in the figure 18.

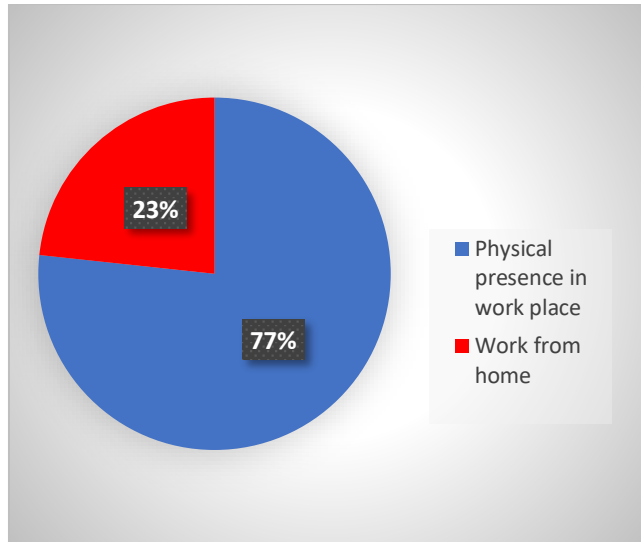


Figure 18
Type of work preferred

4.6.2 Work demands with respect to planning and skill

While studying the job demand with respect to planning and skill required to perform it, it was noted that many respondents (37%) agreed to the fact that their current job is highly demanding and requires planning and skill. This is shown in figure 19.

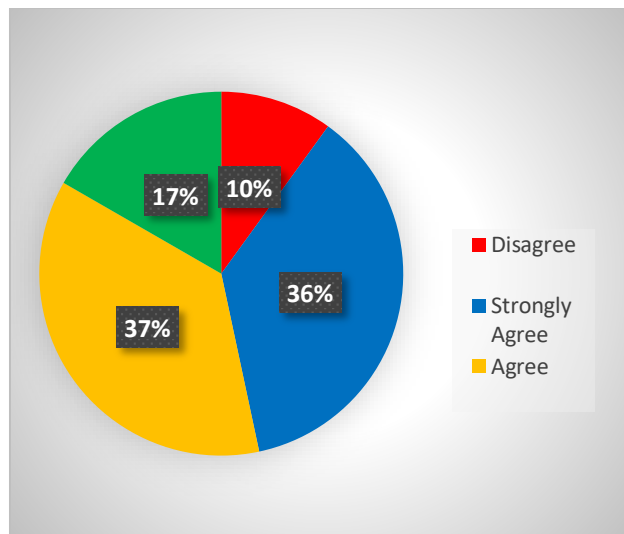


Figure 19
Work demands with respect to planning and skill

4.6.3 Difficulty in fulfilling family related responsibilities

Regarding the difficulty felt in fulfilling family responsibilities due to job related strain, it was noted that 26% and 23% of the respondents i.e., a total of 46% of the respondents felt varying degrees of difficulty in fulfilling family responsibilities due to job-related strain. This is shown in figure 20.

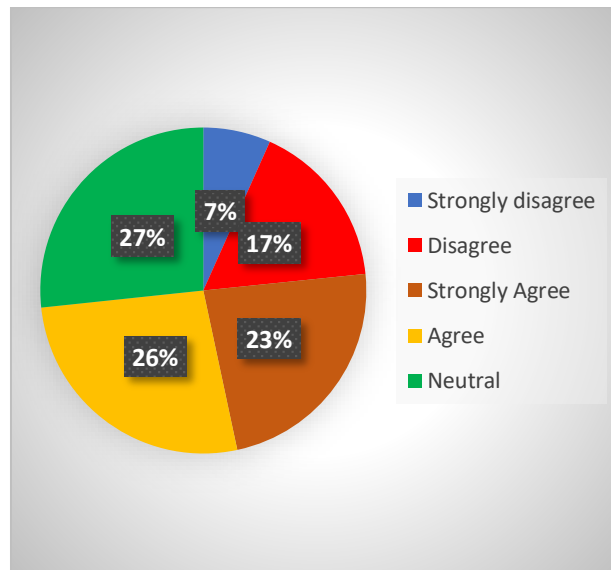


Figure 20
Difficulty in fulfilling family related responsibilities

4.6.4 Career stress and family relationships

While studying career stress and relationships, it was noted that 27% of respondents agreed to the fact that career stress affected the relationship with their spouse and children. This is shown in figure 21.

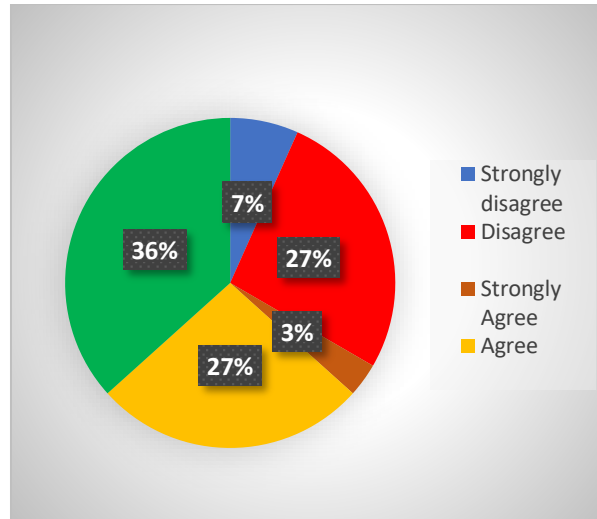


Figure 21
Career stress and family relationships

4.6.5 Balance attained over work-life and family-life

With regard to balance attained in work-life and family life, nearly one third of the respondents (36 %) felt they have attained a balance in work-life and family-life. Only a minority (7%) strongly agreed that they had attained Work life balance. This is shown in figure 22.

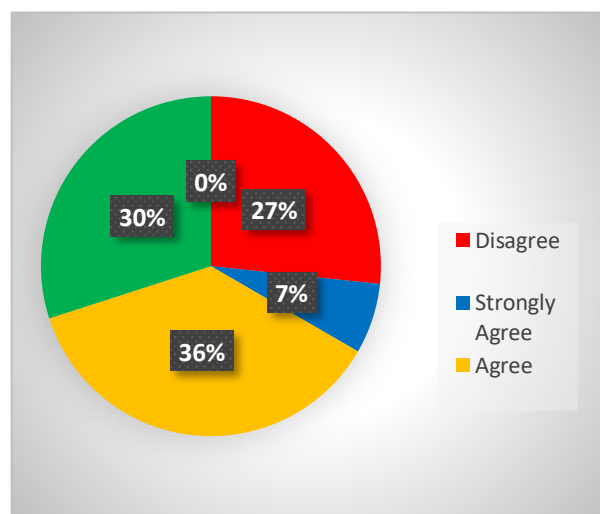


Figure 22
Balance attained over work-life and family-life

Table 1
Association between Work Life balance and variables pertaining to family and employment

Variable		Average WLB Index	Kruskal-Wallis H test value	P-Value	Result
Education	Bachelor's Degree	54.5675	8.520	0.014	Statistically significant difference
	Higher Secondary	72.312			
	Master's Degree	56.68			
	Other	52.09			
Number of children	0	53.65	7.821	0.000	Statistically significant difference
	1	60.32			
	2	57.25			
	3 & more	66.93			
Number of family members	3	68.14	16.562	0.031	Statistically significant difference
	4	54.53			
	5 & above	60.49			
Type of employment	Government job	58.32	11.347	0.006	Statistically significant difference
	Private Job	58.64			
	Other	52.44			
Timing of the employment	Full-time	58.91	32.121	0.000	Statistically significant difference
	Part-time	46.23			
	Other	48.3			
Flexibility in hours of work	Yes	57.88	17.400	0.000	Statistically significant difference
	No	61.83			
	Sometimes	51.06			

Educational Qualification- -A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the Work-life Balance index between the different educational qualifications, $\chi^2(2) = 8.520$, $p = 0.014$, with a mean score of Work-Life balance Index of 56.68 for Masters, , 54.56 for Bachelor's degree, 72.31 for Higher Secondary and 52.09 for

others.

Number of Children- The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the Work-life Balance index between the Number of children, $\chi^2(2) = 7.821$, $p = 0.000$.

Number of family members -The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the Work-life Balance index between the Number of family members, $\chi^2(2) = 16.562$, $p = 0.031$

Type of employment- The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the Work-life Balance index between the different types of employment, $\chi^2(2) = 11.347$, $p = 0.006$

Timing of employment - The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the Work-life Balance index between the different timing of employment, $\chi^2(2) = 32.121$, $p = 0.000$

Flexibility in hours of work-The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the Work-life Balance index between the Flexibility in hours of work, $\chi^2(2) = 17.400$, $p = 0.000$

4.8 Association between Work Life balance and variables pertaining to employment and support received

The association between nature of employment, extent of help received, job insecurity etc. were studied. This is given in Table 2

Table 2
Association between Work Life balance and variables pertaining to employment and support received

Variable		Average WLB Index	Kruskal-Wallis H test value	P-Value	Result
Extent of help received at home	Highly	54.70	12.911	0.000	Statistically significant difference
	Partially	60.02			
	Never	65.95			
Job insecurity felt during Pandemic	Highly	48.99	9.871	0.019	Statistically significant difference
	Slightly	65.13			
	Never	54.74			

Prime care-taker role	Yes	59.19	10.900	0.000	Statistically significant difference
	No	57.07			
Demanding job	Strongly Agree	50.29	8.651	0.000	Statistically significant difference
	Agree	64.85			
	Neutral	65.14			
	Disagree	50.6			

Extent of help received at home – The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the Work-life Balance index between the extent of help received at home, $\chi^2(2) = 12.911$, $p = 0.000$.

Job insecurity felt during Pandemic- The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the Work-life Balance index between the job-insecurity felt during the Pandemic, $\chi^2(2) = 9.871$, $p = 0.019$, with a mean score of Work Life balance as 65.13 for those who felt only slight job insecurity to a mean score of 48.99 for those who showed high job insecurity.

Prime care-taker role- The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the Work-life Balance index and between the caretaker roles of the family, $\chi^2(2) = 10.900$, $p = 0.000$, with a mean score value of 59.19 for those who were prime caretakers to a mean score value of 57.07 to those who were not.

Demanding job -The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the Work-life Balance index between levels of demanding job, $\chi^2(2) = 8.651$, $p = 0.000$

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study on Women Employment and Work- Life Balance during Pandemic was conducted to understand the nature of employment of working women, changes in employment during the Covid pandemic and to assess their Work life. The method selected for the study was survey which was conducted online through the google platform and the data was collected from 30 employed women selected purposively from Ernakulam District.

The results of the study can be summarized as follows.

- Most of the respondents were in the age group of 40-50yrs. Most of them (40%) had a Bachelor's degree, followed by 36.7% who had a Master's degree.
- With regard to the number of children, it was seen that more than half the respondents (57%) had 2 children and a few (7%) had 3 or more children.
- More than half the households had many members in the family; 30 % with more than 5 members and above, and 57% families with 4 members.
- More than half the respondents (63%) were employed in a private firm, 30 % had Government jobs. A very high majority (94%) were employed in a full-time job, only a very few had part time job (3%).
- Many employers had been given flexibility of work during the Covid Pandemic But 47% had none.
- Half the respondents had the responsibility of being the prime care-takers of their families.
- Support from family members with regard to household work was limited with spouses helping more with laundering, cleaning home and teaching children. The extent of help received from children and in-laws were low.
- One third of the women (33.3%) were solely involved in taking care of the elderly.
- With regard to extent of control over money earned, it was noted that more than half of the respondents had only a slight control over the money they earned ,

40% of the respondents received slight financial assistance from their employers during the pandemic. More than half of the respondents (67%) did not receive any extra provision of gadgets/other facilities in the work from home scenario.

- Many respondents (13%) of the respondents felt high job-insecurity during the pandemic.
- Nearly half(46%) of the respondents felt varying degrees of difficulty in fulfilling family responsibilities due to job-related stress and 27% of respondents agreed to the fact that work stress affected the relationship with their spouse and children.
- With regard to balance attained in work-life and family life, nearly one third of the respondents (36 %) felt they have attained a balance in work-life and family-life. Only a minority (7%) strongly agreed that they had attained work life balance.
- It was noted that there was a statistically significant difference of Work-life Balance index and between the number of children,number of family members,between the different type of employment, different timing of employment and flexibility in hours of work
- There was a statistically significant difference in the Work-life Balance index between the extent of help received at home and with varying demanding jobs.
- There was a statistically significant difference in the Work-life Balance index between the different timing of employment, with those employed full time having more work life balance.
- There was a statistically significant difference in the Work-life Balance index between the job-insecurity felt during the Pandemic, with a mean score of Work Life balance as 65.13 for those who felt only slight job insecurity to a mean score of 48.99 for those who had high job insecurity.
- There was a statistically significant difference in the Work-life Balance index between caretaker roles adopted, with a mean score value of 59.19 for those who were prime caretakers to a mean score value of 57.07 to those who were not.

Conclusion

Women employment is one of the progressive steps towards a better and brighter future. The

rise of Pandemic has brought about few considerable fluctuations in the work-life balance of women employees. From the study, it was noted that many working women were able to maintain work-life balance. Women who were employed full-time and with less job insecurity attained more Work life balance.

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