

Research Article

Repercussion of COVID-19 on equipoising work and life among women frontline healthcare workers

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ABSTRACT

This pandemic will remain as a major social issue for the unforeseeable future. It has changed each part of our lives, counting the manner in which we work. Specifically, it has an adverse influence on frontline healthcare workers. Furthermore, this healthcare worker population is predominantly women. Our society is entangled in the preconceived idea of gender bias in taking care of the kinfolk. On the other hand, their workload has been increased due to the increasing cases of covid-19. During a pandemic, the obligation of care is properly moved from the individual patient to shield the soundness of the enormous local area. They were liable for long work-hours, floods of patients, severe Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), the approaching danger of low supplies, including PPE; and the emotional misery from potentially getting the sickness or sending it to friends and family. Thus, women struggle to balance their career and personal lives, leading to stress and burnouts. In other sectors, high levels of stress and burnouts will affect employees' contribution and productivity in an organisation. In the case of the health sectors, it is a matter of life and death. The healthcare worker disengagement will affect their performance, which in turn would lead to poor medical treatment and healthcare services. Great psychological wellness is totally needed for general wellbeing and prosperity. Supporting a sound balance between work and personal activities isn't just significant for a healthy wellbeing and a legitimate relationship, but it can also upgrade workers' productivity and performance. This emotional stress seems to have gone unaddressed in this pandemic and needs someone to intervene in the situation and bring the balance. Thus, this paper explores a conceptual framework towards the impact of the pandemic on the women frontline healthcare workers.

Key words: Pandemic, Women Frontline Healthcare Workers, Emotional Stress, Gender Bias, Work Life Balance

INTRODUCTION

Frontline healthcare workers are those who directly provide healthcare amenities where they are generally required. Frontline healthcare workers include doctors, nurses, community healthcare workers, pharmacists and more, who give direct care to the community. These workers are the foundation for a successful health framework and serve a large number of families. According to "The Female Frontline (2022)" generated by UNICEF, nearly 70% of the global healthcare workforce comprises of women. During a pandemic, the obligation of care is properly moved from the individual patient to protect the soundness of the enormous local area.

The covid-19 will stay as a significant public health problem for a long time to come and likely have enduring consequences for medical care frameworks across the globe. The pandemic has changed each part of our lives, including the manner in which we work. Frontline healthcare workers have been working indefatigably to battle this pandemic. Some are working constantly to really focus on patients, while others are concentrating on expanding local area trust in antibodies by sharing current realities. There are those dealing with the strategies to disseminate antibodies all over the world. They were liable to long work-hours, floods of patients, severe

personal protective equipment (PPE), the approaching danger of low supplies, including PPE; and the emotional misery from potentially getting the sickness or sending it to friends and family (Razu *et al.*, 2021).

This Covid pandemic has expanded the pressure among women, with added daily duties and has thrown new difficulties to their work/life plans. Verifiably, ladies have consistently been answerable for most of their work at home. According to the NSS report, 2019 unpaid domestic and caregiving time is eight times greater for Indian women than it is for men in India. They take the bigger portion of the tasks including their own work, just as working with learning for kids and claiming family liabilities. The best test for ladies is the manner in which they adjust to their day to day life and their work. This paper will explore the ramifications of the pandemic on the daily life of women frontline healthcare workers in balancing their work and life and the crucial steps to be taken at this point of time.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced outrageous difficulties for frontline healthcare workers. They are exposed to higher risk, due to greater exposure to the patient at the time of the pandemic. Specifically, women healthcare workers

face extra difficulties due to hidden primary inequalities based on gender. During this pandemic, female forefront workers have confronted monstrous psychosocial pressure, going from unsupportive family standards to an unpleasant work space. When this mental pressure is not addressed on time, it may adversely affect workers engagement, which consequently affects medical health services rendered by them, which is correlated to the matter of life and death. This study will address the confrontations faced by women frontline workers and its influence on their personal lives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper focuses on the following objectives.

1. To understand the challenges faced by Women frontline healthcare workers.
2. To explore the impact of Covid pandemic on equipoising work and life among women frontline healthcare workers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In recent times balancing profession and personal life has become the question of the day which needs to be addressed. Liu *et al.* (2021) revealed that women's socio demographic attributes, work-life balance, and organizational engagement are strongly interconnected.

Ghasemi (2021) revealed that women likewise make up 33% of most cutting edge medical care experts all throughout the planet, making them fundamental to handle this general wellbeing emergency. Despite that, they are underrepresented in dynamic and authority in the medical care area.

Halley *et al.* (2021) explored that this pandemic has hosted outrageous difficulties for medical care labourers. This investigation looked into the difficulties undergone by Physician mothers, analyses the difficulties by home and work attributes, and inspires explicit requirements and expected arrangements. It concluded that medical care and government pioneers needed to comprehend these different difficulties to meet professional needs and family needs in the midst of the pandemic. Al-Humadi *et al.* (2021) studied that frontline healthcare workers have been exposed to unexpected stressors while fighting this covid situation. Specifically, female physicians have reported less work-life balance and more burnout. It stressed upon the requirement for further understanding of the psychological health of those workers by providing early screening and treatment. Shahbaz *et al.* (2021) revealed that in this course of the COVID-19 pandemic, female forefront healthcare workers have confronted monstrous psychosocial pressure, going from unsupportive family standards to an unpleasant workplace and inconsiderate medical clinic organizations. It advised legislators to take appropriate measures all over the country to support women healthcare personnel to overcome challenges in their working environment. Sharma (2020) states that pandemics and sensations of being insufficiently upheld may

all add to the psychological weight of Nurses. It suggested that nurses and organizations should cooperate to adjust work and life and henceforth safeguard the emotional wellness of these front line workers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a conceptual framework that tries to understand the challenges faced by women frontline workers during pandemics and its impact on their work-life balance. The information work has been explored through sites, overview reports, books, news, articles and individual perceptions. This exploration is planned in such a way that it identifies the major objective of how Coronavirus impacts the psychological well-being of women frontline healthcare workers.

WOMEN- A HEART OF A FAMILY

A woman as a spouse, is expected to remain close to her better half as a darling wife and closest companion to build cooperation in creating an adoring family. As a chief, she is relied upon to make home a comfortable place for all individuals in the family. As a mother, she is relied upon to be an instructor and the boss of the young to equip them spiritually and healthily to face the battle in their life and to make them fit for the country. Hence, women are rightly considered as a heart of the family.

CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN FRONTLINE HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN EQUILIBRATING WORK AND LIFE AFTER PANDEMIC

Women frontline healthcare workers face no. of challenges in their work.

- The number of covid cases is expanding day by day enlarging the medical requirements of the population, leading to proliferating the task of healthcare workers. A Shortage of healthcare workers has been the top problem in healthcare sectors which has increased the burden of healthcare workers. This in turn causes the emotional stress in them.
- Services of frontline workers are dynamic, as medical requirements are rapidly changing day by day due to covid. Quickly adjusting to the rearrangement of operational Units and in this way to speedily changing their commitments, working close with unknown doctors or specialists according to a functional perspective, supporting a lot heavier work rates may lead to psychological stress among the workers.
- Global surveys find that almost 7 out of 10 ladies experienced negative changes in their daily practice because of Coronavirus pandemic.
- As per the survey of Mckinsey women's work is 1.8 times more vulnerable in the Coronavirus emergency than a man's work.

- On the other hand, there is a preconceived opinion in the society that women are accountable for most of the work at home. Disruption of day care centres and schools due to the pandemic has left the children at home, which in turn increased their workload.
- Another stressor is that there is an enlarged risk of transmission of the virus to their families as they are directly exposed to the covid patients.

Incredulous sequel of unaddressed work-life imbalance

A stress caused due to imbalance of work and balance can influence healthcare professionals' physical and emotional well-being by curbing their efficiency and having a negative impact on their overall quality of life. Working closely and personally with individuals who are isolated and transmitting the infection can raise genuine concerns like fear of death among healthcare workers, sensations of depression and outrage might create, and these feelings might prompt pressure in the experts. In spite of the fact that pressure, weariness, and expanded responsibility can have different results like musculoskeletal issues, quite possibly the most probable adverse results of these conditions are expanded burnout in medical services. It is realized that the danger of getting the infection, which spreads bit by bit during the pandemic, builds the uneasiness of becoming ill both for themselves and their family members and can prompt burnout in completing undertakings that require perseverance.

Utmost need of the day

1. At this crucial point of time, it is very important for a government and the management to intervene this situation by coming up with policies to regulate the working environment of the frontline workers keeping their mental health in mind.
2. The workers should be provided with the sufficient lifesaving equipment to make them feel secure.
3. Providing proper recognition and societal status can heal them.
4. To secure self and deal with self is recommended to all the women healthcare workers.
5. Recommending team of psychological experts to deal with the psychology of the workers.
6. Arrangements can be done to take care of the children of the women frontline workers by the management, so that they will be able to provide the service without any second thought.
7. Meditation and sleep apps like "Headspace" can be used which cause a positive impact on the mentality of the workers.

CONCLUSION

Good mental health is absolutely required for the overall health and well-being. Sustaining a healthy work-life balance is not only important for a good health and a proper relationship, but it can also improve the workers' productivity and performance. Getting the right mix of the components is basic for accomplishing a successful work-life balance.

The word of recognition in the work as well as from a family will take the women healthcare workers a long way. If we care them mentally and emotionally they will care the people physically. Let us remind the women frontline workers that they are the real hero of the society and their families and they are doing a great job.

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