

Multi-tasking of Women During Covid 19

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Abstract

Covid 19 is a curse in all fields and all walks of life. It is a threat to life, economy, society and humankind. Everyday day turns out to be standing on an iceberg or in tight corners for each individual. The situation is just like a storm in a teacup, unbearable. Every moment is passing with unexpected turns and curves which are never bent down. The loss of the kith and kin made our heart and mind with certain numbness and uncertain future as if humanness is at its extinct.

The sight is moving that the mother lost her child is left alone with no comforter to comfort her. Husband lost his wife's untold by, left baffled and unnoticed and alone. Brothers and sisters are searching for their loved one's arrival from the hospital look desperate, unknown to the fact that they are never to be returned or resurrected. The demise of friends and relatives derive only empathy as a spectator in a crowd of afflicted. How cheap mankind became in the hands of Covid, an Asuran arrived to thwart all of us irrespective of good and evil, rich and poor, young and old, men and women. What a sarcasm that Covid treats everyone equally without any disparity which protesters fight for age past. The sight of massacre seems to be a holocaust of bio-war someone stated and started. Everyone is awaiting the presence and the protection of the Saviour, Redeemer, Samaritan and the Panacea to be saved from death amidst of social and economic crisis. This paper intends to expose the troubles faced by Moms in the work place and at home and their faith in life, strength to encounter whatever comes on their way. It propagates that Moms are super women always.

Key Words: Pandemic, Single Mother, Women, Hardship, Faith in Life, Women in Rural, urban, and global.

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It is a battlefield where warriors are without weapons/arms, they only know when it was started but none knows when it will be over. It is unnatural and unusual that no one came to the rescue of the diseased and the bereaved. If you volunteer, you will be the victim and the captive without ransom. Are you scared? Your brother is on the other side. Your wife is on the other shore expecting your presence that is her panacea. Your dad/ appa is deserted without hope of recovery. The babies are left at home without care as everybody is in the frontline warriors. The war proclaims tauntingly 'today is mine, tomorrow is yours'. In the war field, the Warriors hold their breath to meet their loved ones, not aware that the field is their last and the least meeting place. To protect your life, wear a mask, often wash your hands, use sanitiser, not to roam around, not to engage friends or relatives, but to stay at home. How is it possible to stay at peace when my blood and my heir suffered a loss? May God blind my eyes and minds? May God put an end to the enemy Goliath Covid through sending Davids abundantly to wage a war against the pandemic murderer? However, Doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers and policemen are fighting 24x7 in the battle, leaving their family and friends without rest.

Covid-19 pandemic has affected women more profoundly than men in several areas, both at workplace (especially in the health and social sector), and at home with an increased workload due to lockdown and quarantine measures. Worldwide, 70 percent of the health workforce is made up of women who are often frontline health workers (nurses, midwives and community health workers)

Women are at the heart of care and response as front-line responders, health professionals, community volunteers, transport and logistics managers, scientists and more, women are making critical contributions to address the outbreak every day. When women are placed under the increased strains that come from security, health and money worries, and cramped and confined living conditions, levels of domestic violence spike. The majority of caregivers, at home and in our communities, are also women. Additionally, they are at increased risk of infection and loss of livelihood.

Everyone is locked up under their roofs, it is impossible to meet our loved ones. The Digital world and virtual contacts have changed our inaction during these critical times. The loss and challenges of the pandemic have been felt by everyone, it is clear that the effect of Covid-19 and the resulting lockdowns have been particularly impactful on working parents.

It changed the course of our routine lifestyle and has left us to hope and pray for a better future. The working moms who are lucky enough to have avoided the virus, with juggling jobs and

child care that has never happened. Children are given homeschooling while their parents are working at home. They prepare lunches while working. They mind their kids' screen time while working and regret the waves of guilt, stress or resignation that come with not doing anything perfectly.

Many parents who relied on childcare were forced to isolate their kids, unable to expose their children or their families to another person. Televisions, Mobiles and iPads became the forced babysitters as parents just tried to get through the workday. As the schools are closed, the role of parent and breadwinner, quickly had to become homeschool teachers as well.

Data indicates that things are difficult particularly for working women and mothers, who have been affected by their increased responsibilities, loss of jobs, loss of kith and kin, loss of money, and adverse mental health effects. Eventually while parenting was a challenge, especially for mothers.

Covid-19 brought such drastic changes in all of our lives. The task of balancing parenting and working was usually a difficult one.

The coronavirus pandemic has been an extremely tough time for people across the world, but somehow working mothers seem to have been hit the hardest. But women, especially working mothers are the ones who carry the heaviest burdens.

The struggle for a working mama doesn't simply end after balancing the responsibilities of homeschooling and professional work, for there are meals to be cooked, clothes to be washed and dishes to be cleaned. It takes a tremendous amount of effort to focus on your work and get the kids through online schooling at the same time.

The anxious thoughts of your loved ones getting sick are also troubling you as you go through your daily work. It is simply because your brain is trying to function in an extremely difficult situation, even if you forget the intensity sometimes. You might be at home, but your responsibilities and chores have multiplied manifold.

The sudden transition to remote learning has been a challenge, for students, school administrators, teachers and support staff and all involved. Many teachers were particularly concerned about how remote learning was serving students. 56% of teachers are stating that they could cover only half or less than half of the material compared to a prior year. Not only mothers felt a great burden, but women, in general, have faced greater difficulties in the job world throughout Covid-19.

Besides, incidences and reports of violence against women within the household have also considerably increased. This is an effect of male psychological distress due to short-term loss of work and earnings, during the lockdown. As a result, in the long-run women's psychological well-being might be affected to a greater extent, even more adversely than men's from financial and emotional stress, combined with physical violence.

In rural areas, women's involvement in farms may go up in regions where there is shortage of labour due to a decrease in the number of labourers. It resulted in higher agricultural wages for women in the short-run. Therefore, there is a hike in the demand for women's time both within and outside the household in rural India.

In urban localities, due to the greater number of nuclear families, women are required to support the family by being at home to take care of the sick and/or due to loss of jobs/earnings in the immediate

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future. In the long-run, working from home becomes usual, the work opportunities become available to women who prefer home-based work.

Globally, women make up 70 percent of the health workforce and they are more likely to be front-line workers, especially nurses, midwives and community health workers. Majority of women worked in the health service-sector – such as cleaners, laundry, and catering. They are more likely to be exposed to the virus. In addition to that, women have less access to personal protective equipment and the correct size equipment. Despite these numbers, women are often not reflected in national or global decision-making on the response to COVID-19.

Homeschooling was another responsibility for women related to the closure of schools during the pandemic, and this extra parental task was predominantly undertaken by women. The majority of women (64%) reported that they mostly performed homeschooling or helping children with homework.

Most of the older members of our family are in great danger. It's going out to buy groceries or medical supplies or meeting our loved ones, older people cannot risk engaging in such activities. The younger generation can do our part and lend helping hands to the senior citizen during these hard times.

Communication is the key- surviving factor in this pandemic period. While the younger generation is familiar and functional with the knowledge of technology and can make new friends, older people do not have that facility. Therefore, it is better to reach out to your grandparents and communicate with them daily. It may not flatten the risk of the virus but it'll surely give them the willingness, confidence, and hope to live through it. Listen to them and their problems and make them feel wanted. Render them the support they required. It is an additional task to take care of the elders at home with the limited resources in terms of money, healthcare and healthy food during these jobless lockdown times. Yet, let us reach out to bear the yoke of the elders who were once our makers and protectors.

Our culture has propagated the idea of a mother who sacrifices her needs for everyone in the family. It has embedded in our subconscious minds. As a parent, it is our responsibility to cater to the needs of our children. At the same time, mothers used to put them last and ignore their own needs and wellbeing.

You can cross and overcome the barriers by reading your favourite book, watching your favourite movies and songs, taking out some time for yourself. Every single day is essential for our mental peace. So, take each day as it comes and instead of exhausting yourself with the idea of perfection, pat yourself on the back for trying to manage everything! Do not waste your time and energy trying to perfect everything around you, you may spread yourself too thin.

Women engaged in tasks just like Alamu who said that during COVID-19 her earnings from making masks during the lockdown was higher than when she would stitch blouses and other clothes.

In another instance, Ganga Devi, a working mom had to suffer a lot of leaving her kids to the care of her husband and started to find a place in the hospital alone, stood in a queue for the whole day in the scorching sun as she was the victim of the Covid19. The agony she went through was unbearable where she could not have the choice of life or death. The ever ending trauma is shadow, threatened her frequently. The sight of the Covid patients lying wherever the space for medication, the scattered, undelivered dead body of the patients in the neighbouring beds foretells that “ Today it

is mine, and tomorrow it is yours". Lips and tongue always utter prayers and chants mantras for the unpredictable recovery. We should admit that we became more spiritual than ever.

It is time that one can not visit others, attend weddings and even partake in the funerals to pay final salutation to the bereaved one. It is time when help arrived people from good Samaritans to attend and serve the Covid Patients who were deserted by their families and friends by the threat of catching Covid- the nameless murderer. This is a critical time for action, from prioritizing essential services like shelter and support for women survivors, to providing the economic support and stimulus packages needed for broader recovery.

During the lockdown, single parents who are doing twice the work with half the assistance collapsed.

In Tamil Nadu, Lalitha had to leave her five-year-old daughter at home when she went to the grocery store. Six months later, the child is used to managing herself in the playroom till she finishes outdoor errands, with a sense of independence. On odd days, when Lalitha did take her for a walk, she was questioned by neighbours. Loneliness has hit single parents terrifically. She is in solitary confinement with a kid. She hasn't interacted with another adult for so long, there are no breaks and escape from being a parent 24/7. She admitted that for single parents, both the left and right sides of the brain are constantly engaged, leaving them physically and mentally exhausted.

In addition to their own health issues, young mothers missed the trem of the regular vaccinations of their babies owing to country-wide lockdown. Despite the immunization program has gradually began, the fear factor remains in the minds of mothers and they are reluctant to go to vaccination centres. Mothers have also complained about the unavailability of the pediatricians during the lockdown period and in certain cases, it is hard to get an appointment of the child specialists.

Single parents, widows, divorcees, separated or single by choice face huge problems regularly. Preethi, a post office employee, lost her husband in May. The mother of two school-going kids battles the constant terror of being infected. COVID-19 patients overcome severe exhaustion only by family support. The rigid family structures have put single parents in a social blindspot. The payment of rent, groceries, electricity bills, EMI, tuition fees, and essential health needs are inevitable. It is a Himalayan task for a single mom to handle such a situation during a pandemic without proper regular income.

The roadside vegetable and flower vendors, daily wagers, housekeeping workers in hotels and restaurants, Petti shops underwent chaotic and pathetic situations to lead a life. Families are strangled and stranded between meeting the ends. Only through strong determination and hope in life one can move further leaving behind the loss, and the pain of our dear and near one. Let us have faith in life that the day will come when we will reach out to everyone and our children will go to school, we will have gaiety in wedding and no more Pandemic and Good Bye Pandemic!

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