

Impact of Covid19 on Activity Pattern and Work

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ABSTRACT

The current pandemic due to novel coronavirus disease COVID19 forced all the governments to impose lockdown in their countries. This has in turn brought a transitional change in the daily routine of citizens. Work culture has been shuffled and this has influenced jobs and activity of people all around the world. To assess the effect of COVID19 on the activity pattern, a survey form was sent via various social media platforms to respondents who belonged to varied age groups. The change was observed in all sorts of activities *viz.*, exercise pattern, time spent in yoga/meditation, household activities, on-screen time, hobbies and job. Work-from-home culture flourished during pandemic.

Key Words : COVID19, Pandemic, Activity pattern, Work

INTRODUCTION

The world is facing a big challenge. The coronavirus pandemic has changed the way we were living and behaving. It has put a great impact on our lives, our health, our thought process, our daily activities, our interactions with other people, our economy, our diet and everything that we can think about. Along with all these, the threat of contracting this deadly virus is imposing on us an unknown fear leading to anxiety and stress.

METHODOLOGY

To study the impact of COVID19 on activity pattern and economic condition of people, the present survey was conducted during the first wave of pandemic (April to June, 2020) when the lockdown was in effect throughout the country. The questionnaire was prepared on Google Form and shared online in English across various social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General information:

Study sample comprised of 183 males and 100

females, while two respondents opted not to disclose their sex. People from varied age groups formed the study sample. Out of these, 79 were below 25 years of age, 100 from 25-44 years, 87 were 45-60 years old and the rest 19 were more than 60 years old. All the subjects were literate. More than three-fifth respondents were employed (government/private/self), one out of four were students, 5.26% were retired and 6.67% were unemployed.

Impact on exercise:

Before pandemic, nearly two out of five (38.60%) of the respondents (Fig. 1) did exercise up to 3 hours per week, 16.84% 3-6 hours per week and 13.33% more than 6 hours per week. Rest (89) didn't exercise at all.

The pandemic time brought a wide change in the exercising pattern with a few more shifting toward no exercise (92), 44.91% in upto 3 hours category, 15.44% 3-6 hours per week and 7.37% more than 6 hours per week.

The change was visible in both the sexes. Amongst females the percentage of respondents doing exercise increased from 61% to 69%. Previously 39% had the

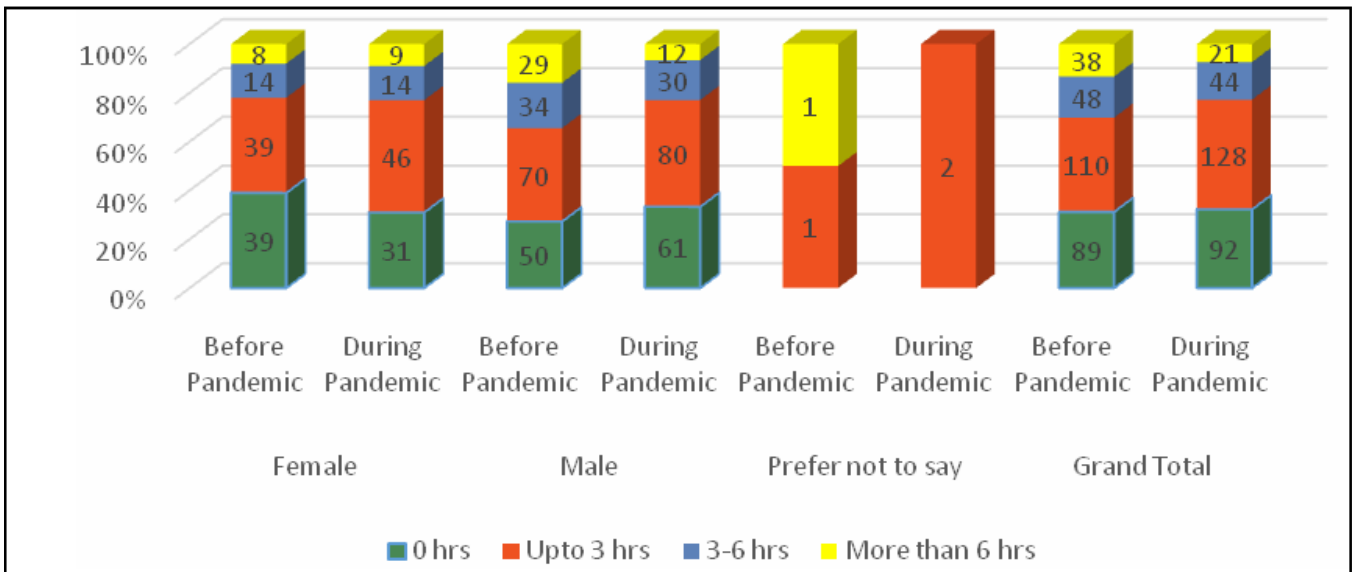


Fig. 1 : Weekly exercise pattern (Before/during pandemic)

schedule of exercising upto 3 hours per week which increased to 46% during the pandemic period, while the number remained almost the same in other categories. Lessened burden of early morning household chores like sending children to school, preparing lunch-box etc. might have left females with more spare time to devote towards exercising.

As far as the males are concerned a different trend was observed. Previously 27.32% males did no exercise which increased to 33.33%. Similarly the number of males doing exercise for 3-6 hours per week and more than six hours per week also reduced from 18.58% and 15.85%,

respectively before pandemic to 16.39% and 6.56% respectively during the lockdown period. However, the percentage of males exercising upto 3 hours per week increased from 38.25% to 43.72%. The shift towards fewer hours of exercise may be due to closure of gyms during lockdown, lack of gym facilities at home, increase in household activities and increase in work from home hours.

Impact on Yoga/Meditation:

A significant rise in the number of respondents doing yoga/meditation (Fig. 2) was noticed. The pre-pandemic

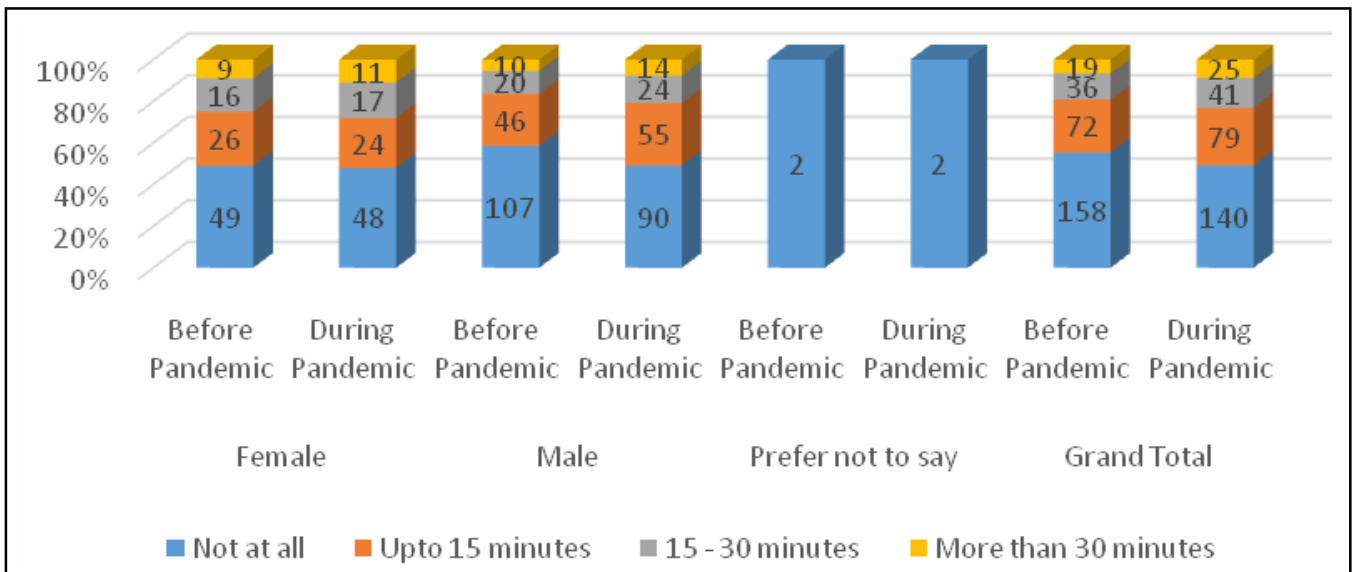


Fig. 2 : Daily Yoga/Meditation pattern (Before/during pandemic)

figure of respondents doing yoga/meditation (44.56%) rose to 50.88% during the lockdown period. This change was more visible in males as compared to the females. More of the males now started doing yoga/meditation and a rise of 9.29% was seen.

Impact on household activities:

Approximately 72% respondents (Fig. 3) reported that the time spent in household activities has increased now. This change was more prominent in females (81%) as compared to the males (67.76%). Four percent females and 6.56% males reported a decrease while for the rest the time and effort spent in household activities remained the same as before.

Impact on use of TV/Smartphone/Computer:

Similarly 75% reported (Fig. 3) an increase in time spent on TV/Smartphone/Computer. This increase in time was higher for males (79.24%) as compared to the females (67%). Nearly six percent of the total respondents (3.83% males and 11% females) reported a decrease in on-screen time. The reason for this may be an increase in work-from-home or availability of more time as all social activities had stopped or may be for watching updates on pandemic.

Impact on time spent on hobbies:

One-third respondents said that they are spending the same time on fulfilling their hobbies as before. One-

fifth of the sample (Fig. 3) reported a decrease while 46.67% reported an increase in time spent in such activities. The increase was reported more by females (54%) as compared to the males (42.08%). An increase could be due to availability of more time as many of them were doing work from home. Also, engaging children to channelize their energy could have increased the hobby hours. For students, as there were no formal regular study hours, this may have spared more time to fulfill their hobbies.

Impact on work:

COVID19 pandemic had a great impact on the work of respondents. Nearly 45.26% reported (Fig. 4) that they have started work from home, 17.54% had a decrease in working hours and 6.32% had an increase in working hours. Ten respondents (3.53%) lost their jobs/business out of which eight were males. Seven of the respondents who lost their jobs were up to 24 years of age. Although people reporting loss of job/work were quite a few (only 10), the large representation of the younger age group suggests a higher vulnerability for new recruits in the current scenario. No impact on work/job was reported by 35% females and 22.95% males.

When compared with similar studies, a reduction in physical activity coupled with an increase in daily screen time was found especially among men and in upper-socio-economic strata. In addition to this, the daily sitting time increased for 33.07% participants. Besides, the time spent

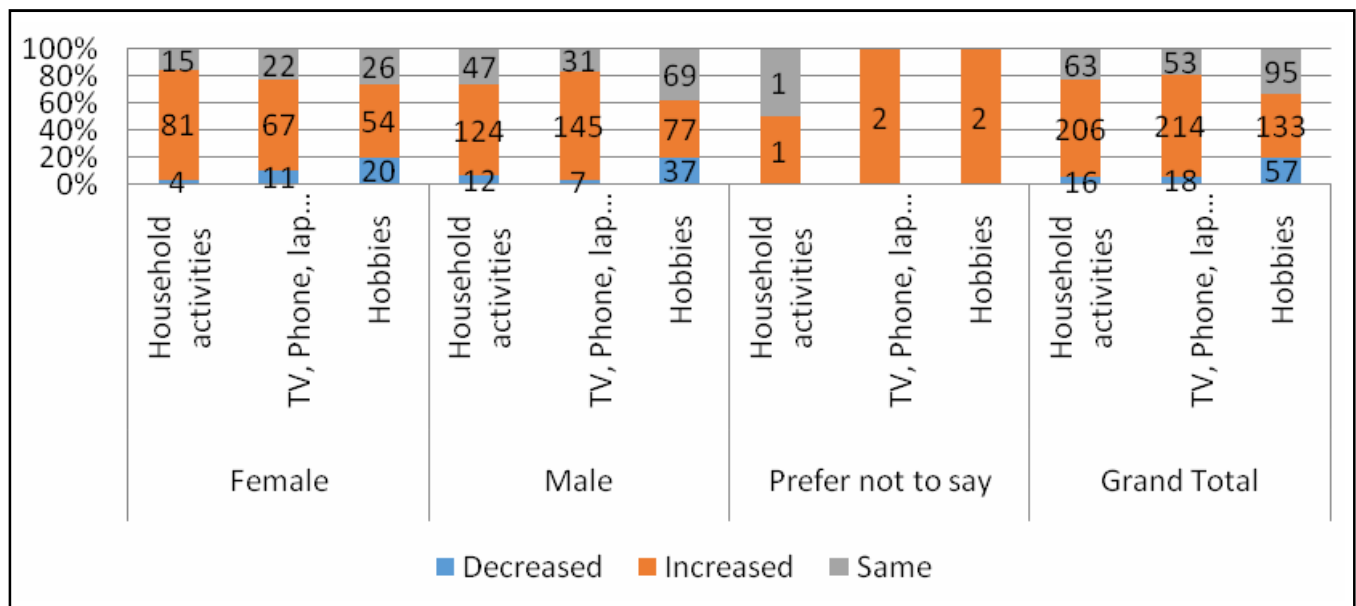


Fig. 3 : Impact on household activities, screen-time, hobbies

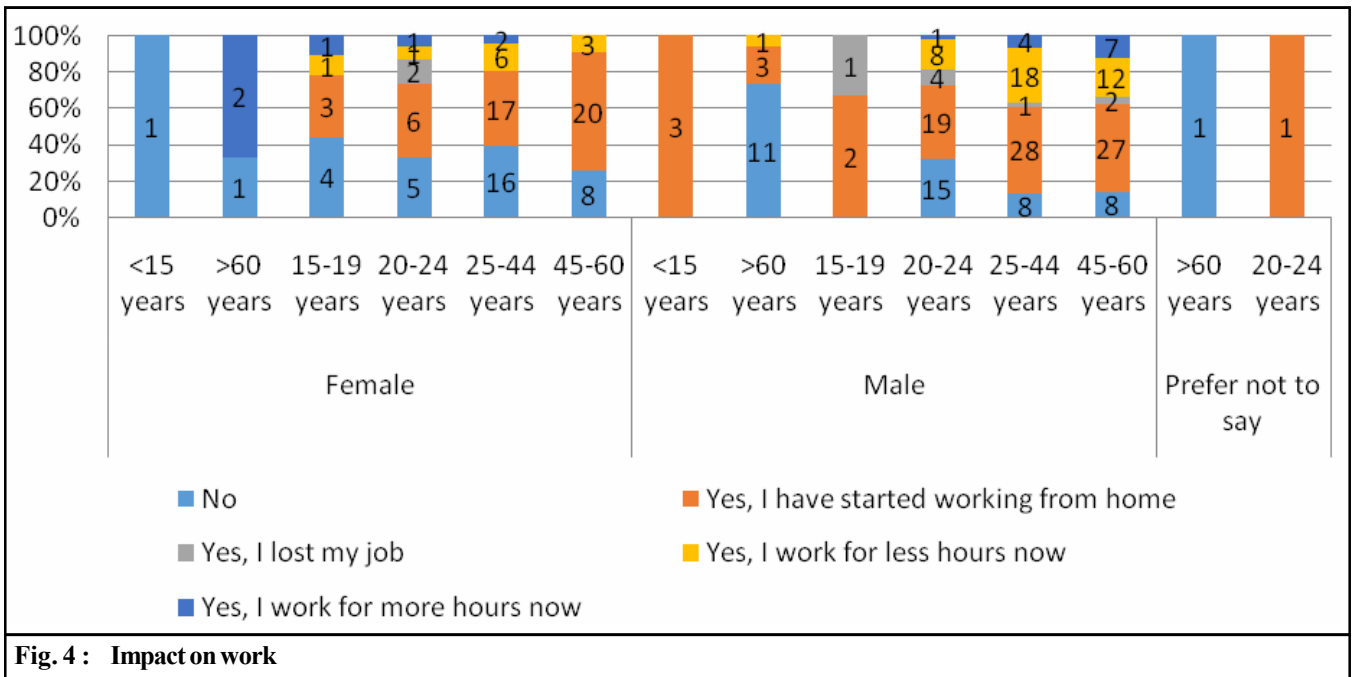


Fig. 4 : Impact on work

daily on screen time increased by one unit in one-third (30.65%) of the sample (Chopra *et al.*, 2020). Diniz *et al.* (2020) reported that approximately 56.2% of participants had an impact on physical activity. Children and youth had lower physical activity levels, less outside time, higher sedentary behaviour (including leisure screen time), and more sleep during the outbreak (Moore *et al.*, 2020). A Consumer Sentiment Survey Snapshot #4 by BCG (2020) reported investing extra time in hobbies, exercising, or spending time (virtually or in person) with family and friends.

Conclusion:

The objective of the study was to analyse the impact of current pandemic on the activity pattern. Vast changes in the activity were reported as due to mandatory lockdown, majority of the people were cocooned to their homes. A positive impact was witnessed in increased time spent on fulfillment of hobbies, which might have helped the respondents to cope up with these times of crisis. With a nearly full stop on production and economic growth, some lost their jobs and switched to work from home. Not a single person remained unaffected. Lack of surety and changing nature of this virus are still the areas of concern. Modifications in our life style and work conditions is the need of the hour.

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