



COVID -19 WORK FROM HOME(WFH): AN OCCUPATIONAL LIFESTYLE PRACTICES AMONG INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) PROFESSIONALS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

In the recent scenario, information and technology is the medium of fastest communication system to fill up the bridge between the people and machine. Everybody get themselves acquainted with the communication system to exchange their ideas. IT sector is the fastest growing market in the world. In the changing scenario a lifestyle of IT professional also changes according to the time and they are facing different lifestyle problems associated with their job. This is an attempt to assess the changes facing with their profession. The nature of work has gone through drastic changes over the last century as it is still changing at whirlwind speed. The aim of the present research was to study "COVID -19 work from home (WFH): an occupational lifestyle practices among information technology (IT) professionals in India". Four metro cities of India were selected for this study. Those were Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Bhubaneswar. These metro cities are known to be software hub of India. Total 100 samples were selected from these cities. Multistage random sampling method was used. The data were collected in the form of questionnaire through e-mail and video conferencing. With focus on four objectives socio-demographic profile of the software engineers, working hour on job stress and difficulty in work life balance among the software engineers, dietary habits of the software professional, the prevalence of lifestyle diseases among the software engineers and discuss the concept COVID -19 work from home (WFH).

Key words: -socio demographic, job stress, work-life balance, dietary habits, life style disorder, work from home (WFH)

INTRODUCTION: -

Covid-19 or corona virus has created a state of alarm all over the world. Firstly, Covid has given a huge lift to online learning both in the metros and non-metros. Secondly, we have become more hygiene conscious and Work from Home (WFH) is the third major change that has become a part of our lives. Many IT companies in the West and even in India has been practicing it with perfection. Covid-19 has taken it to another level with almost all companies asking its employees to WFH (P. Das,2020). IT sector make a revolution in the world to solving the problems associated with finance, engineering and more over the mechanical problem. Due to this reason IT sector is the hub for new employment in the field of science and technology. IT has become the career option of choice for many young educated Indian, for whom it offers good salaries as well as an opportunity to live and work abroad. A demographic and socioeconomic change influences the living and working habits of population. Economic growth, modernization, urbanization and socialization have changed the lifestyle of Indian families. The transition from a traditional to modern lifestyle. With a shift in eating habits & the adoption of a sedentary life style has led to the increasing prevalence of lifestyle diseases



like Obesity, Diabetes, Hypertension, Coronary heart disease, Metabolic syndrome and Cancer, all across India in the last few decades. A report, jointly prepared by the World Health Organization and the World Economic Forum, says India will incur an accumulated loss of \$236.6 billion by 2015 on account of unhealthy lifestyles and faulty diet. Poor life-style includes, poor diet, lack of exercise, smoking, excess alcohol, poor sleep, stress due to heavy workload. (A. Pandey, 2014). So, this study is stated as “**COVID -19 WORK FROM HOME (WFH): AN OCCUPATIONAL LIFESTYLE PRACTICES AMONG INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) PROFESSIONALS IN INDIA**” has been carried out with the following objectives: -

1. To study the socio-demographic profile of the software engineers.
2. To study the work condition and task pressure, working hour on job stress and difficulty in work life balance among the software engineers.
3. To study the dietary habits of the software professional.
4. To study the prevalence of lifestyle diseases among the software engineers.
5. To discuss the concept COVID -19 work from home (WFH).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:-

Four metro cities of India are selected for this study. These are Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Bhubaneswar. These metro cities are known to be software hub of India. Total 100 samples were collected from these cities. Multistage random sampling method is used. The data were collected in the form of questionnaire through e-mail and video conferencing. Then Data were arranged in the tabular form as per the objective of the study. The tabular data were analysis using statistical tool like percentage and graphic methods.

Review of literature: -

When software industry first started gaining momentum in India starting from 1995- 2000, everyone thought that IT industry is the best career option for engineers. Unfortunately, everyone started jumping in the IT band way. Most IT companies on the other hand now a days try to extract maximum “Juice” from their workers. Even though the official working hours are 8-9hrs per day, it is usually much more because of unrealistic deadlines set by managers (AJMR, 2012). IT-related occupations can be said to constitute a new kind of workforce: they are highly educated, well paid, mobile, and closely link into the global service economy, whether working in India or abroad. But on the other hand, the nature of job in the IT industry has a negative impact on the employee’s physical and mental health. These include changes in lifestyles, forms of society, family structure, and self-identity, which are link to the rapid upward socio-economic development. (Mahespriya, 2012). unhealthy lifestyles and faulty diet, poor sleep, stress due to heavy workload leads to obesity. People working in night shifts witness a disturbed biological clock leading to insomnia, indigestion, acidity, loss of appetite, headache, irritability, hypertension, mood fluctuations and body pain. Poor life-style includes, poor diet, lack of exercise, smoking, excess alcohol, poor sleep, stress due heavy workload leads to high level of stress (P.Khanna, 2012). According to ASSOCHAM survey (2013), report that 71% of employees under stress related to work place. Associated Chambers of Commerce And industry (ASSOCHAM) 2012, studied that around 55 percent of young workforce engaged in India’s IT and ITES sector are stricken with lifestyle disorders due to factors like hectic work schedules, irregular and associated stress. According to Zaki Rashidi (2009) found a higher degree of stress in unmarried people as compared to married people on the average. The average, the



age group 25–28 years is reporting the highest stress. Penny Kane (2012) reported that due to long hour working in the work place and less of break time they are facing sleeplessness, irritation and anxiety and high level of stress. Vimala B. et.al (2009) studied that years of experience had an influence on task pressure of the software professionals and more year of work experience leads to more job stress. Kerala state women’s commission, (2010) found that long working hours at the desk and job-related pressure creates a lot of physical discomfort and mental tension. ASSOCHAM survey (2013), records that 78% of corporate employees suffer from sleeping disorders leading to impact of insomnia on health & productivity and unmarried had better quality of life than the married respondents. The constant use of computers affects the users in terms of fatigue, eye strain, arm and shoulder pain, and backache and leads to stress. (Maheshpriya et.al ,2013).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE SOFTWARE ENGINEERS.

a) General information of the respondents;

Table-1 General information of the respondents: -

Variables	Particulars	frequency	Percentage (%)
Age in years	22-24	19	19
	25-27	64	64
	28-30	17	17
Gender	Male	45	45
	Female	55	55
Work experience	1-2 yrs.	21	21
	2-3 yrs.	62	62
	3-4 yrs.	9	9
	Above 4 yrs.	8	8
Monthly income	20,000-30,000	20	20
	30,000-40,000	40	40
	40,000-50,000	15	15
	50000-60,000	10	10
	60,000-70,000	10	10
	70,000-80,000	5	5
Marital status	Married	48	48
	Unmarried	52	52

From the above table it is revealed that the majority of the respondents (64%) were in the age group of (25-27) year. Dominance of female respondents (55%) was found in IT sector. Majority (62%) of the respondents had 2-3 years of work experience. Majority of the respondents had monthly income in between Rs 30000-40000/- and most (52%) of them were unmarried. These findings are supported by Maheshpriya et al (2012) who also found his study that age, gender and marital status influence the quality of the life of the software employees and unmarried had better quality of life than the married respondents.



b) Table -2: Work condition and task of IT professionals

Variables	particulars	frequency	Percentage (%)
working period	Regular	47	47
	irregular	53	53
Working hour per day	8-9hours	18	18
	9-10hours	76	76
	10-11 hours	6	6
Take/lunch break time every day	15 minutes	9	9
	30 minutes	79	79
	1 hours	12	12
Sleeping time per day	8 hours	9	9
	<8 hours	91	91
Good Job security	Yes	20	20
	no	80	80
Isolated from other in work place	Yes	15	15
	No	85	85

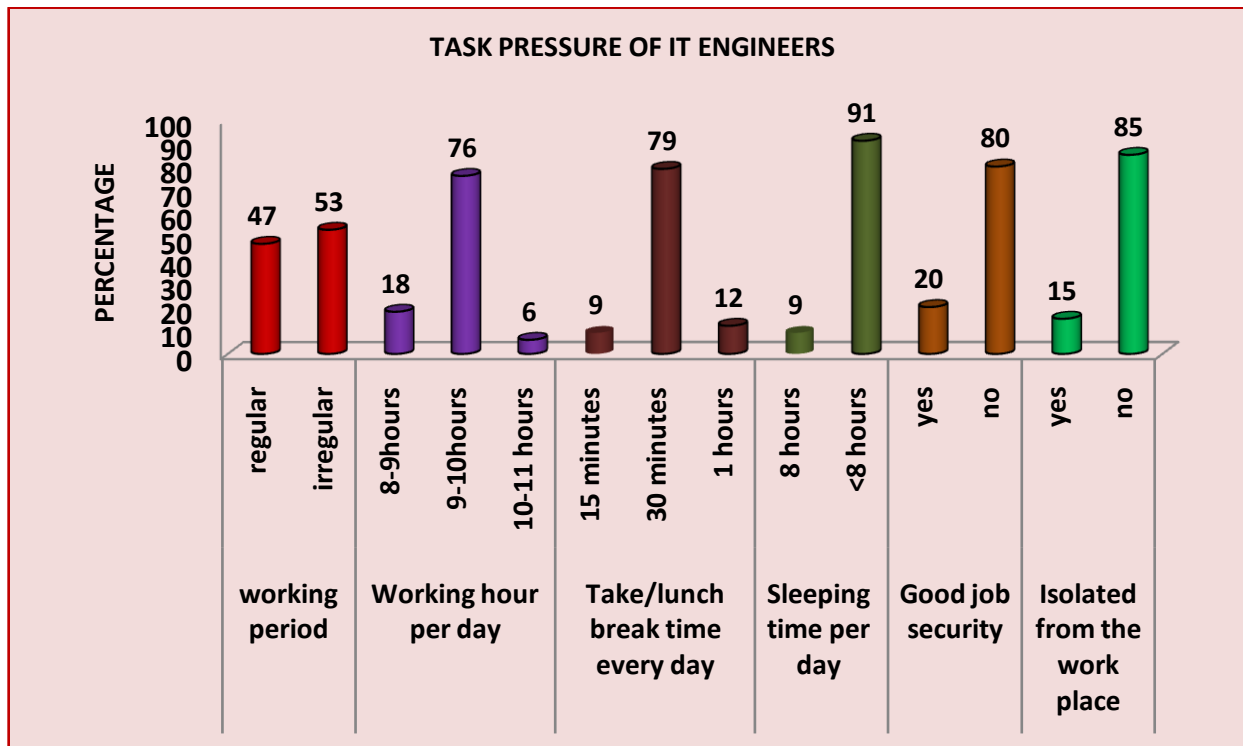


Fig-1 Work condition and task of IT professionals

Table no-2 and Fig-1 shows that the majority (53%) have irregular working period. that most (76%) respondents were working for 9-10 hours per day and 79% were taking only 30 minutes lunch break. It was interesting to note that majority of the respondents had sleeping time less than 8 hours i.e.91% because of work pressure. From this study it was also revealed that most of the respondents (80%) have less job security and 85% isolated from them are not isolated from the work place supported by own opinion of the respondents. The results of the present study also supported by the reports of Kerala state women's commission (2010) that is long working hours at the desk and job-related pressure created a lot of physical discomfort and mental tension. This finding is also supported by Vimala B. (2009) who found that year of experience had an influence on task pressure of the software professionals and more year of work experience leads to more job stress.

C) Table-3 working hours on job stress of the IT respondents: -

variables	particular	frequency	Percentage (%)
Job stress	high	72	72
	Moderate	25	25
	low	3	3
Working hours per day	8 -9 hours	18	18
	9-10 hours	76	76
	10-11 hours	6	6

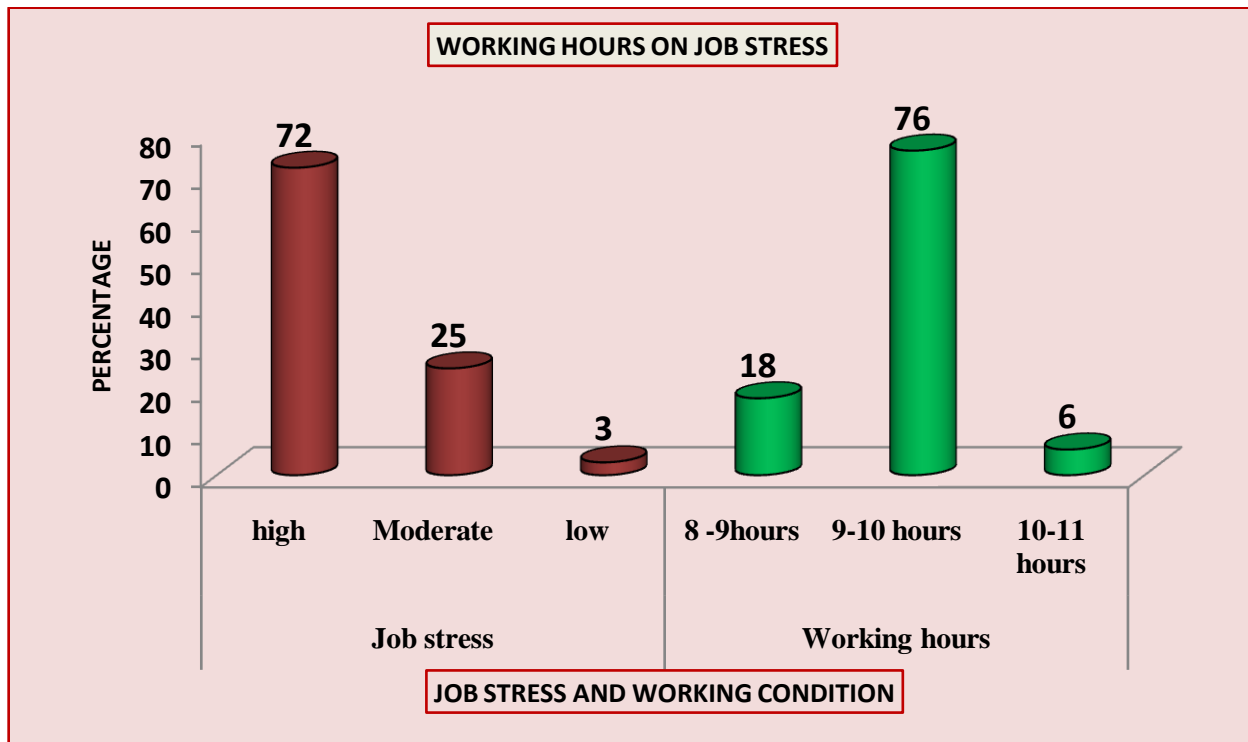


Fig-2 working hours on job stress of the IT respondents

Table- 3 and fig- (2) shows that working hours on job stress of the IT respondents. Majority of the respondents 72% had a high level of job stress and minimum (25%) of the respondents had moderate level of job stress. Maximum working hours the of respondents (76%) were 9-10 hours and minimum (6%) of the respondents were working 10-11 hours per day. Hour of work influence the level of job stress. This finding is supported by Kerala state women’s commission, (2010) studied that long working hours at the desk and job-related pressure creates a lot of physical discomfort and mental tension. From this present study it was also revealed that the respondents who are working 9-10 hours per day have high level of job stress and higher the hour of work higher is the job stress. Long working hour may cause physical strain and mental strain, which may influence the job stress

c) Table: -4 Work-family life balance of the respondents

Sl.no	Variables	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Difficulty in balancing work and family	Yes	89	89
		No	11	11
2	Relationship with family	Good	31	31
		Moderate	67	67
		Fair	2	2
3	Relation with partner	Good	56	56
		Moderate	32	32
		Fair	12	12
4	Time spend outside the home with	Friends	88	88
		Parents	12	12
5	Share feelings/ problems with	Friends	59	59



		Parents	17	17
		Over phone	24	24
6	Join family function	Yes	57	57
		No	43	43
7	Reason for not joining family function.	Lack of time	32	32
		Have no interest	7	7
		Too tired	4	4

(*multiple Answer of the respondents)

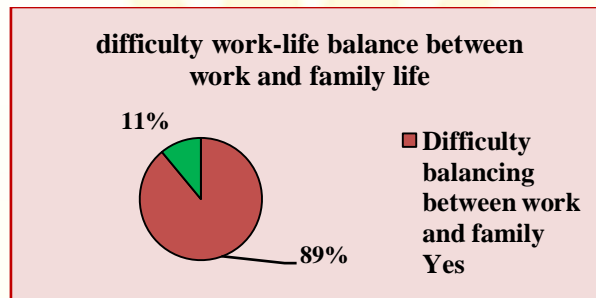


Fig-3 Difficulty in balancing work and family

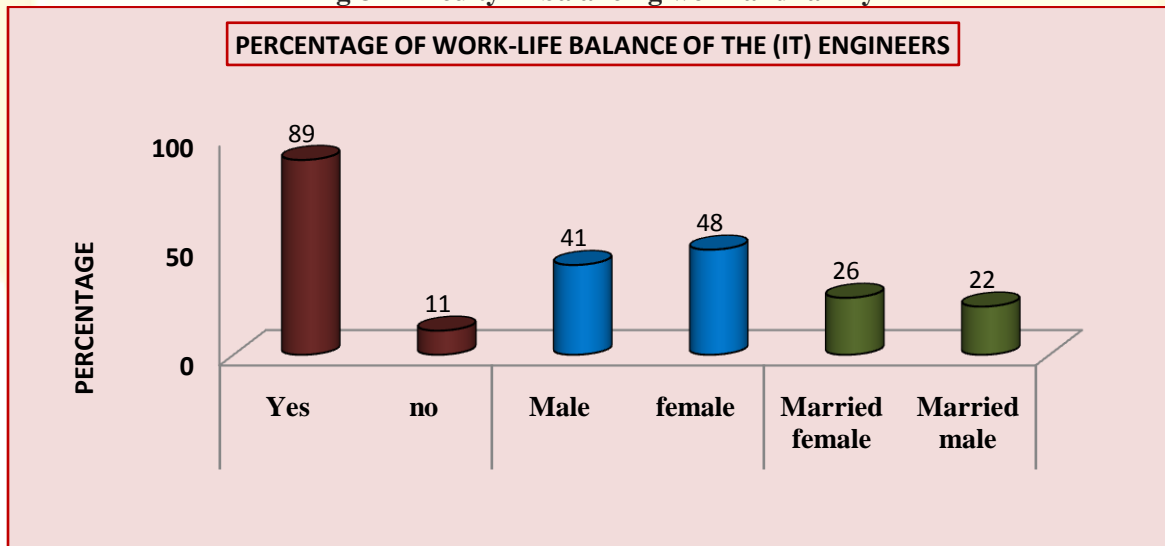


Fig no: 4 Difficulty in maintaining balance between work and family life

Table-4&Fig-(3,4) shows the Work-family life balance of the respondents. Work-life balance is about the interaction between paid work and other activities, including unpaid work in families and the community, leisure, and personal development. In working place job stress affects both men and women. So, it is difficult to balance between the work place and family. In this study it was also revealed that majority of the respondents (89%) were facing difficulty to maintain balance between work and family.67% respondents had moderate relationship with their family, 56% respondents had good relationship with their partners, 88%



respondents spent time with their friends outside the home, 59% respondents shared their feelings with their friends whereas only 17% share their feelings with parents . It was surprising to observe that 43% respondents did not like to join the family function due to lack of time to join the family function and tiredness. This finding is supported by Maheshpriya et al (2012) who also found in his study deep isolation of late hour, no of social life, no hobbies, few and brief vacation influence the quality of life which leads to difficulty in work life balance .Zakirasidi et.al(2012) has also similar findings in their study.

DIETARY HABITS OF THE IT ENGINEERS

Table: -5 Dietary habits of the IT engineers

variables	particulars	frequency	percentage
Aware about food habits	Yes	90	90
	No	10	10
Skip meal	Yes	92	92
	No	8	8
Use food for released stress	Yes		-
	No	100	100
Taking late night dinner	Yes	83	83
	No	17	20
Take large portion of food at a time	Yes	87	87
	No	13	13
Taking food on running way	Yes	81	81
	No	19	19

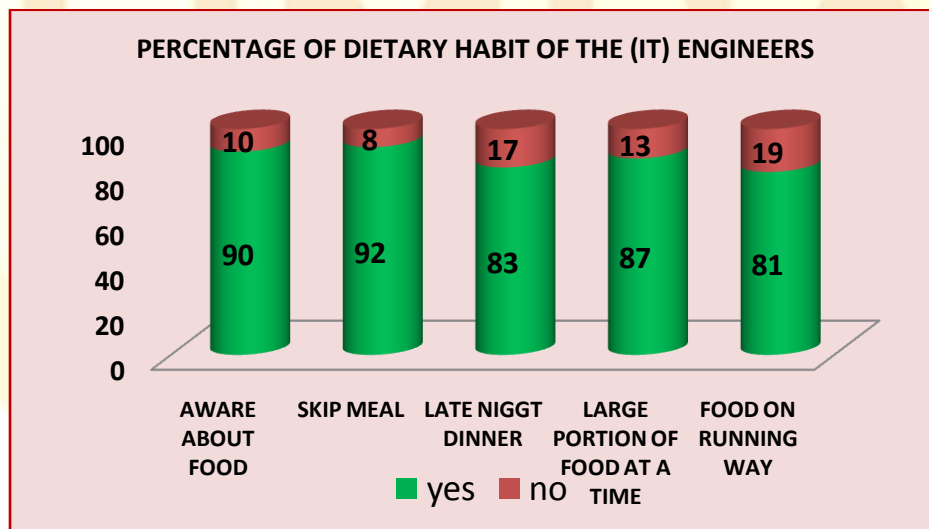


Fig: -5percentage of dietary habit of the (IT) engineers

Table: - 5 and Fig. (5) shows that the Majority of the respondents (90%) were aware about food and minimum (10%) of the respondents were not aware about the food. Most of the respondents (92%) were skip meals and minimum (8%) of the respondent were not skip meals. All the respondents (100%) were not use food for released stress. Around (83%) of respondents were taking late night dinner and minimum 17%) of the respondents were not taking late night dinner. (87%) of the maximum respondents were take large portion



of food at a time and minimum (13%) of the respondents were not take large portion of food at a time .Most of the respondents (81%) were taking food on the running way and minimum (19%) of the respondents were not taking food on running way. This finding is supported by a report, jointly prepared by the World Health Organization and the World Economic Forum, says that India will incur an accumulated *loss* of \$236.6 billion by 2015 on account of unhealthy lifestyles and faulty diet.

PREVALENCE OF LIFESTYLE DISEASES OF THE IT ENGINEERS

Table: -6 prevalence of lifestyle diseases of the it engineers: -

Variable (diseases)	particulars	frequency	Percentage (%)
Facing life style diseases	Yes	91	89
	No	9	11
Suffer from back pain	Yes	89	89
	no	11	11
Suffer eye problems	Yes	79	79
	No	21	21
headache	Yes	72	72
	No	28	28
Suffer from obesity	Yes	67	67
	No	33	33
Suffer from obesity	Yes	67	67
	No	33	33
Blood pressure	Yes	52	52
	No	48	48
Hyper tension	Yes	68	68
	No	32	32
depression	Yes	93	93
	No	7	7

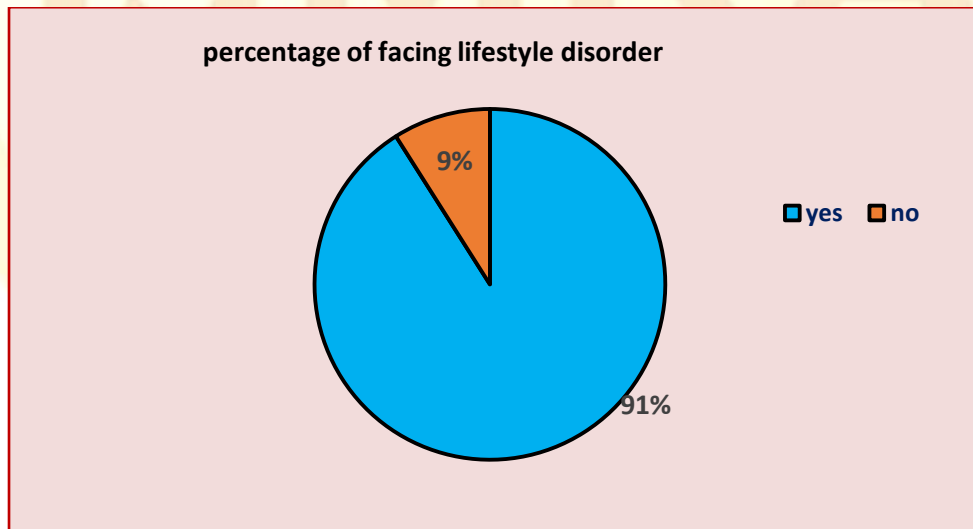


Fig: -6 percentage of facing lifestyle disorder

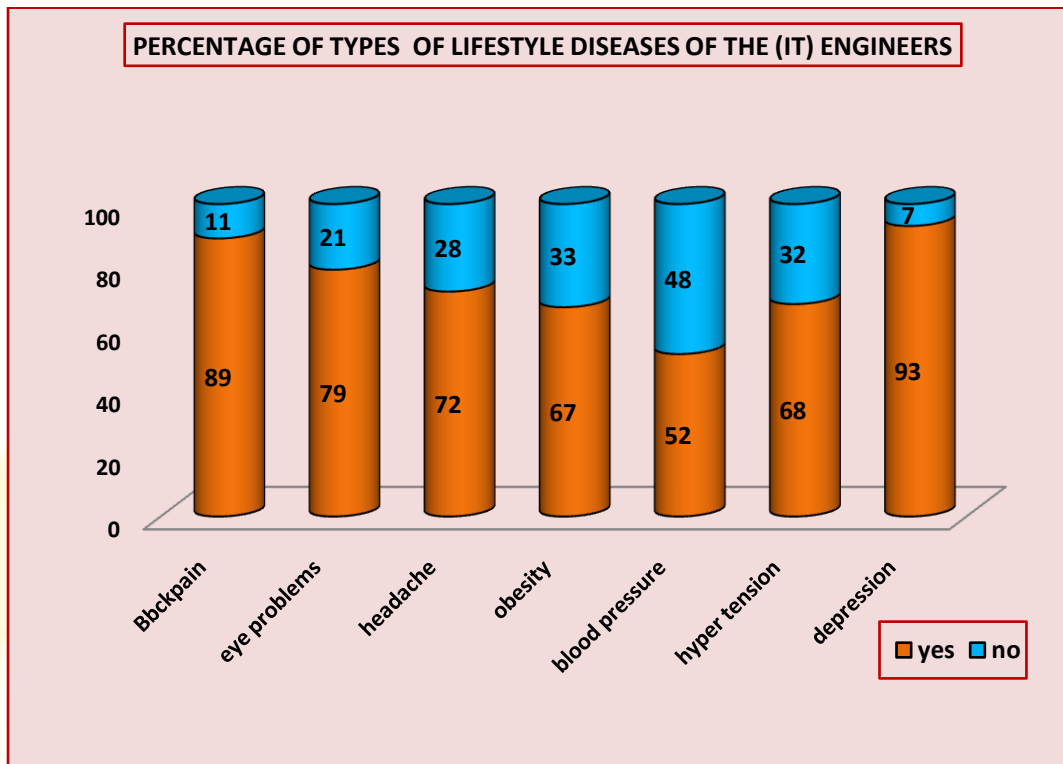


Fig: -7 percentage of types of lifestyle diseases of the (IT) engineers

Table -6, fig (6,7) shows that out of the 100 respondents the Majority of the respondents (91%) were suffering from lifestyle diseases out of them 89% respondents were suffering from back pain, 79% have eye problem, 72% have headache, 67% have obesity, 52% have blood pressure, 93% have depression, and 68% have hyper tension. Most of the respondents are suffering from the prevalence of lifestyle diseases due to poor food habit, disturbed biological clock which promote the different types of lifestyle diseases found among IT professionals.

HEALTH CONCERN OF SOFTWARE PROFESSIONALS PROBLEMS

Comparative study among software engineers of India and USA has been carried out International Journal of management research and business strate.

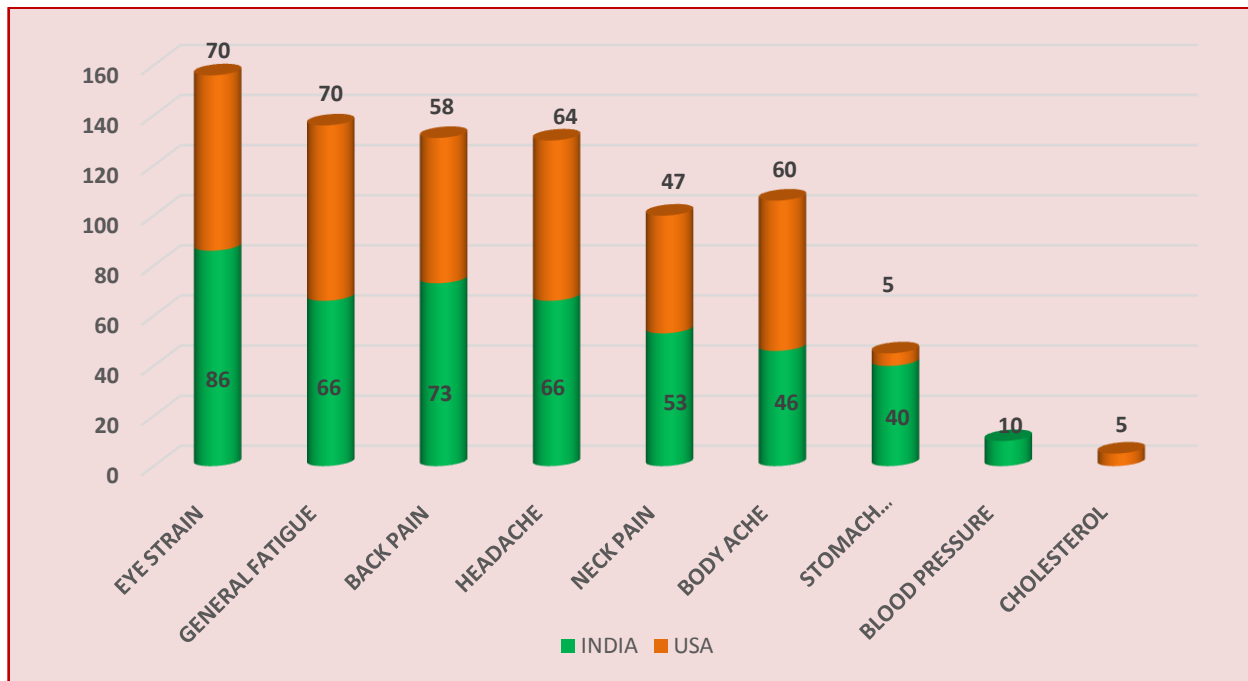


Fig: -8 Comparative study among software engineers of India and USA

(Source: -International Journal of management research and business strategy 2010)

Fig:-8has been showing that like India, USA also facing lifestyle disorder. Lifestyle diseases are our own creation the main factors contributing to the lifestyle diseases include bad food habits, physical inactivity, wrong body posture, and disturbed biological clock.

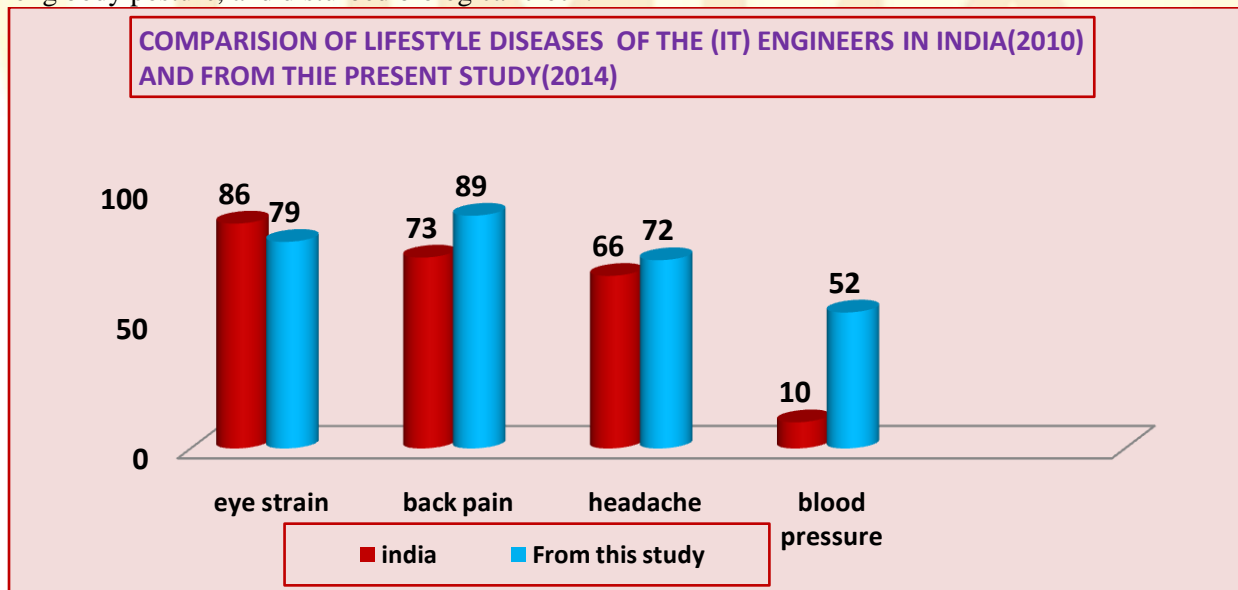


Fig: -9 comparison of lifestyle diseases of the (IT) engineers in India (2010) and from the present study (2014)

It was also revealed from the above figure (9) indicated that that the lifestyle diseases are increases from

2010-2014 in India due to poor lifestyle practices among the software engineers.

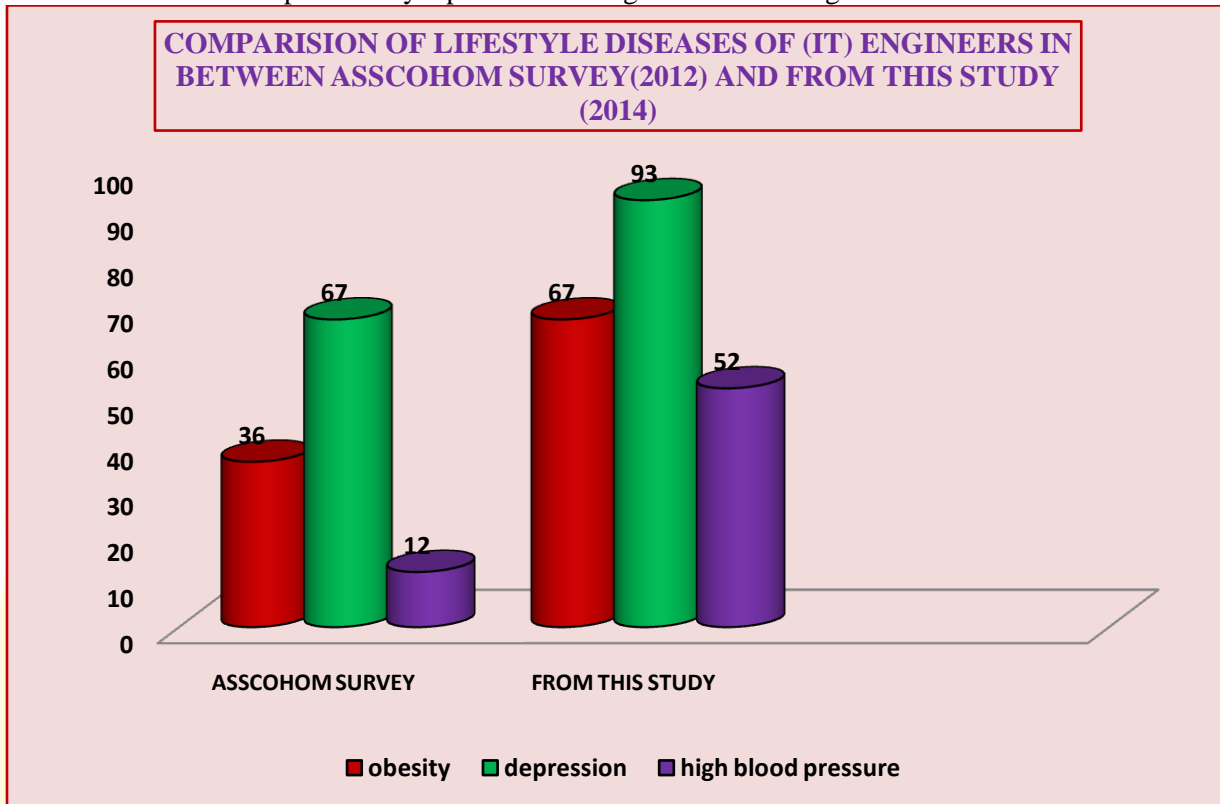


Fig: -10 comparison of lifestyle diseases of (IT) engineers in between ASSOCHOM survey (2012) and from this study (2014)

The above fig -10 shows that the comparison of lifestyle diseases between the ASSOCHOM'S survey (2012) and from this study (2014). It was also revealed from the above figure indicated that that the lifestyle diseases are increases due to the lifestyle changes such as food habits, high job stress and sedentary life style supported by ASSOCHAM's cooperate employees survey (2012) result 36% of the sample population are also suffering from obesity, almost 21% of the sample cooperate employees suffer from another serious lifestyle diseases called depression. High blood pressure and diabetes with a share of 12% and 8% respectively as suffered among the cooperate employees.

Interlink between the case study done by A. Pandey and the present status of lifestyle practices among software professional (IT) after introducing the concept developed in Covid-19 work from home 2020

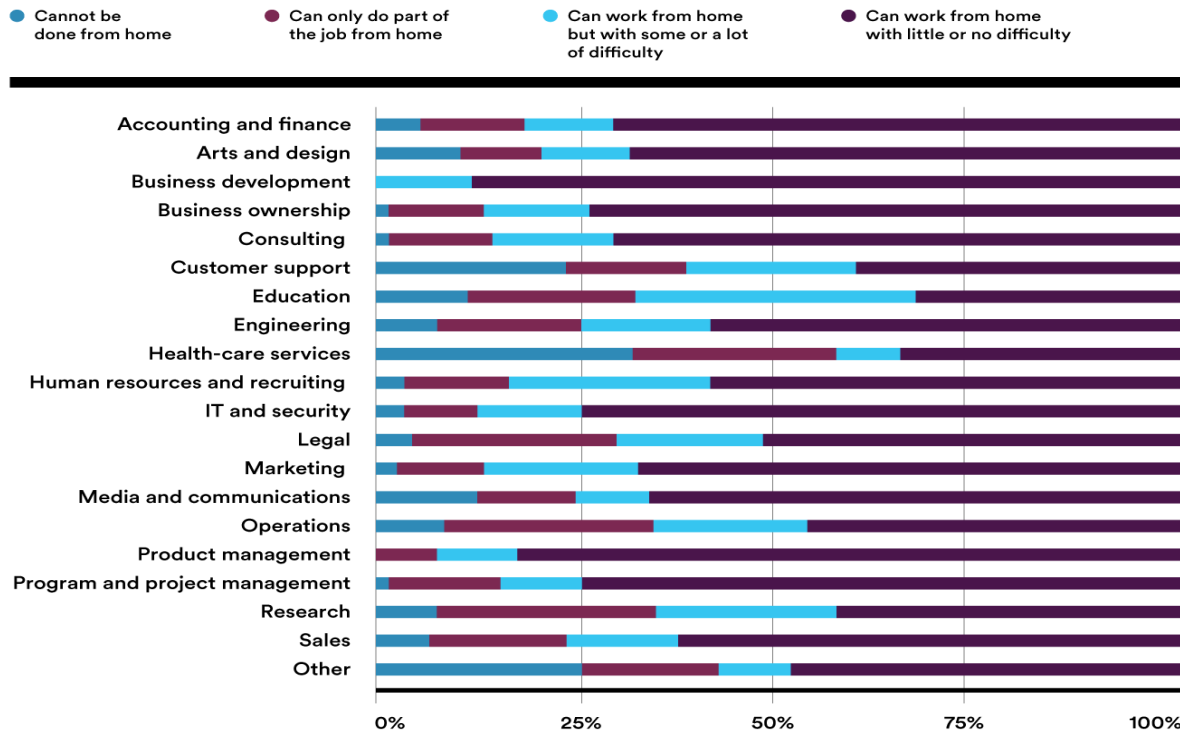
COVID -19 WORK FROM HOME(WRH)

During the lockdown, Indian IT industry made employees "work from home" (WHF) as per Government mandate. As a result, about 90% of employees worked from home with 65% of them from homes in metros & rest 35% from homes in small towns.

(Fig: - 12) shows that those who are in business development, product or program management and IT find it much easier to do so. Several large IT companies, according to estimates, has 90-95% of its employees working from home. (Uzmi Athar 2020)



Suitability of job for remote work by industry



Source: Slack survey of knowledge workers, conducted March 23-27 (n=2,872)

Fig: -12 Different sector working from home including IT professionals with little or no difficulties

Different research has been done to study the impact of Covid -19 working from home (WFH) on work life balance. But the domestic space now also functioning as a workplace, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain a work-life balance and health problem.

- Experts have described this phenomena as “role blurring”, which is “the experience of confusion or difficulty in distinguishing one’s work from one’s family roles in a given setting in which these roles are seen as highly integrated, such as doing paid work at home”.
- Researchers Paul Glavin and Scott Schieman studied workers in the US and found that higher levels of “role-blurring” was associated with more work-life conflicts, especially among those with high job pressure. This claim is difficult to dispute.
- Working from home (WHF) in a constantly demanding job, I’ve had a difficult time completing tasks outside of my work since I have to remain available all the time. This has also led to higher anxiety and more sleepless nights. (A respondent’s opinion)



- Researchers Heejung Chung and Tanja van der Lippe in their study on Flexible Working, Work–Life Balance, and Gender Equality' show that at-home women workers are expected to take up more domestic work than men. In a rigidly patriarchal society like India, this could have a drastically regressive effect on gender roles and lesser women would then perform well or even continue working. (Angana Chakrabart.2020)
- Work from home (WFH) is making 67% Indians suffer from sleep deprivation, Back pain, Neck pain, obesity, hypertension, anxiety, depression etc.

Impact of working from home on the work-life balance of marketers during the coronavirus pandemic in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2020

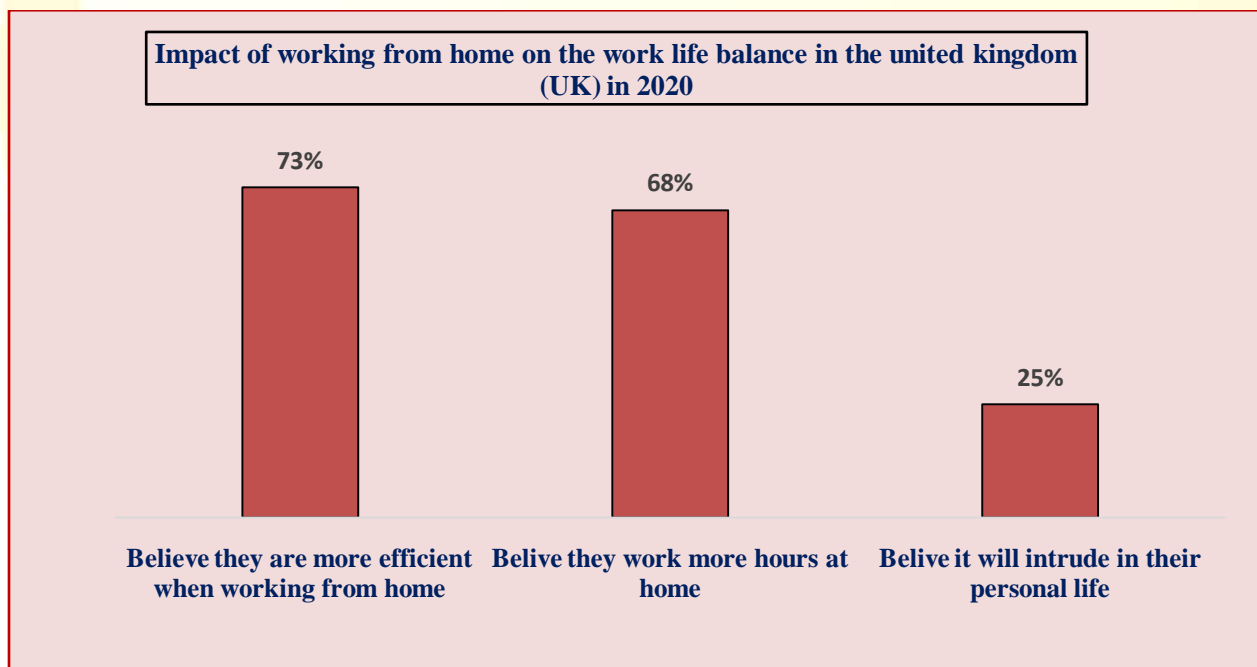


Fig: -13 Impact of working from home on the work life balance in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2020

Not only India but also in United Kingdome (UK) working from home impact on the work-life balance in different ways opinion taken by the research.



Key to Overcome From difficulty in work-life balance from COVID -19 work from home(WRH).Just because under lockdown does not mean a breakdown of normalcy in life. Some tips to keep sanity while adapting to the new normal.

- **a fixed routineworks**
- **a structured life tends to increase productivity and improve mental health.**
- **adequate sleep**
- **designated time slot for working from home**
- **divide the household chores**
- make it a routine to cook and eat meals together as a family
- **set aside time to play games or watch movies together**
- **workout (yoga, exercise, walking)**
- Listen to music or read a book
- find time in our packed schedule to **catch up with family and friends.** (phone calls, video-calling, virtual meets and the social media)
- Improve the posture
- Improve the eating habits

HOURS	ACTIVITY
6-8	Sleep
8-10	Work, occupation, study,
1	Exercise
1	3 big & 2 small meals, quality family time
6	Relation, personal hygiene, social time and others
24	Total time in a day

(A.pandey, 2014)

Conclusion, suggestion and Recommendation: -

Work from home in lockdown is an opportunity for all of us to recalibrate our lives with healthier and far more positive routines, which can eventually lead to vastly-improved mental health. A healthy lifestyle must be adopted to combat these diseases with a proper balanced diet, physical activity and by giving due respect to biological clock. It was revealed from the study (A.pandey 2014) that a significant proportion of the computer professionals were having health problems like eye strain, headache, body ache, general fatigue etc. Long working hours and constant use of visual display units are the major causes of such problems. Software industry needs to take steps to balance work and family. If not, this will affect growth of industry as well as nation economy in the long run. Social and emotional support should be available to employees. They should be allowed to maintain close interpersonal relationship with peers, subordinates and family which could help them to effectively cope with stress which helps to improve their quality of life.



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