

## **A Qualitative Study on COVID – 19 and its Impact on Private Sector Employees in India**

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### **Abstract**

From the start of the pandemic, COVID-19 had a huge impact on private sector employees. Many people lost their jobs and many people had to suffer from reduction of salary. Some companies provide facilities to the employees while others had to cut off employees. The companies also suffered a lot from the pandemic. Many companies had to shut down because of earning less revenue. The objectives of the present study are to find out the impact of COVID-19 on private sector employees and to find out the present situation of the corporate employees.

The qualitative analysis in our research and thus tested the Inter Reliability Rate through Kohen's Kappa testing. A total of 20 participants participated in the interview where the participants are/were working in a private sector company during COVID-19. After the interview process an independent coder was chosen who has sufficient experience in his field. After the interviews were coded by us and the same was also done by the independent coder. The results of the study shows that work load, nature of work, job security, health facilities, psychological effect, alternative source of income are the major factors which are having the great impact on private sector employees in India.

Keywords: COVID-19, Private Sector, Corporate employee

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## **Introduction**

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, which has quickly developed into a global humanitarian crisis and economic calamity, has raised the stakes enormously and introduced a new layer of complexity. While governments around the world have implemented quantitative easing initiatives to help markets function, these measures are likely to be ineffective and will not cure what ails many distressed companies, particularly private enterprises. As a result, private company finance professionals should be ready for a harder credit environment, and should be proactively re-evaluating their capital needs to detect potential liquidity mismatches and strive to bridge the gaps, regardless of where their company is on the credit spectrum. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a level of uncertainty which few private companies have ever had to face. Some companies in India are temporarily halting business or offering unusual assistance to employees as a devastating wave of the coronavirus sickens and kills hundreds of thousands. In order to prevent the human to human transmission of the novel coronavirus, the government has imposed a nationwide lockdown leading to the shutdown of industries and public transports. Due to the shutdown of factories and workplaces, local labourers, and migrant workers had to deal with the loss of income, food shortages, and uncertainty about their future. Thousands of migrant daily workers began walking back to their native places, with no means of transport due to the lockdown. In response to this, the Central and State Governments took various measures to help them and also arranged transport facilities for the workers. Many migrant workers also died due to starvation, suicides, police brutality, exhaustion, road and rail accidents, and denial of timely medical care. There are about 139 million daily labourers in the country approximately, according to the World Economic Forum. The International Labour Organization has said that due to the pandemic and the lockdown, about 400 million workers have been poverty-stricken (Titus Lalith Antony P., Leslie Rani, Brundha M. P., Jothi Priya, 2020). COVID-19 has affected people in some way or another, some people got advantage of that but most people were at a disadvantage especially the ones that work for private sector. Many companies thus far shut down because they were unable to generate enough revenue.

Not only that, paying the employees and staff got impossible. The main objectives of our study is to find out the impact of COVID–19 on private sector employees and also to find out present situation of the corporate employees.

In line with our objectives of the project we can discuss that we have positive and negative impacts of COVID–19 on private sector employees as literature review.

### **Literature Review**

Talking about the positive impacts on private sector company, it is considered that it's long-term impact on the economy has yet to be revealed and unfortunately, some businesses have collapsed due to the unexpected pressures endured. However, amongst the catastrophe and devastation that the global economy faced, grew a surge of creativity, innovation and adaptability by many businesses in a variety of sectors. Also, it provided companies with the perfect opportunity to innovate. Many businesses are now updating their training packages to reflect the needs of today's business operations in order to protect the growth of the company, alongside the wellbeing of staff (Hopkins.J., 2020). A rise in productivity levels was evidenced by it. Although faced with challenges, working from home, and communicating digitally have produced better productivity results than anyone could have expected, the employers get vast time utilizes their efficacy and designing new products. Not only so, it also allowed business to save money and let new job comers (Mizumoto.K., 2020). Also, due to the unprecedented nature of the pandemic and the lingering uncertainty around the lasting effects, leaders and leadership teams took a hard look at their books, revaluated spending and made adjustments to their cash flows, in order to prepare for any potential financial impacts from COVID 19 (Natania, 2020). When a private sector company use save money, they started hiring new employees as their efficiency as company needs. It encouraged a stronger sense of community. Many employees feel their work-life balance is healthier and their general well-being has noticeably improved. Being more present at home has encouraged people to establish or enhance relationships with neighbours and others within the local vicinity. As company encouraging a stronger sense of community to all employees to get positive vibes to work free without risk.

Moreover, Private sector companies have said it will reimburse affected employees and family members if their treatment costs exceed the insurance coverage. Employees who have contracted or recovering from Covid-19 are given 21 days of additional paid leave by the company. Some companies in India are temporarily halting business or offering unusual assistance to employees as a devastating wave of the coronavirus sickens and kills hundreds of thousands. In order to prevent the human to human transmission of the novel coronavirus, the government has imposed a nationwide lockdown leading to the shutdown of industries and public transports (Titus Lalith Antony P., Leslie Rani, Brundha M. P., Jothi Priya, 2020).

“We have an ageing population. If we have shrinking employment in urban places, if the better educated graduates or postgraduates are the ones who are losing jobs, how can we recover the economy from the downslide that we have gone through?” says Mahesh Vyas, the managing director of the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE).

Nine months after the COVID-19 lockdown, India still has 15 million missing jobs when compared to the pre-COVID 19 period, data from CMIE show, with more young people and women losing jobs than older people and men, respectively. Women, for instance, are 11% of the employed workforce but they made up 52% of the jobs lost.

As the economy opened up, these people started getting their jobs again, it looked like a fantastic recovery as well. But gradually we saw losses in the more permanent jobs, salaried jobs, losses in that category increased and then sustained. And that was worrisome. Although the jobs came back, the quality of jobs that came back was not as good.

We see that job losses, no matter which way you cut it, is of a distressing kind. Like it is the urbanites who are losing jobs more than rural jobs, women who are losing jobs more than men losing jobs. It is graduates and post graduates who are losing jobs more than others who are losing jobs. Youngsters losing jobs and not the older people. The composition of this loss of jobs is worrisome. If we have an ageing population, if we have shrinking employment in urban places, if the better educated graduates or postgraduates are the ones who are losing jobs (Govindraj Ethiraj, 2021).

## Research Methodology

### *Participants for Qualitative method*

Research is an endeavour to discover answers to intellectual and practical problems through the application of scientific method, It is the systematic process of collecting and analysing information or data in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon about which we are interested or concerned, so for our project work on the topic. The impact of Covid – 19 in private sector employees we collected the data from all over the Nation for better and accurate results. We look upon the several factors for collection of data to provide a depth of understanding of raw data, as we are concerned about the qualitative method involve the collection of data, analysis and management of data. Choosing participants is the most important part for the research as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Distribution of Sample**

State/ District	No. of company	Age	Male	Female
North 24 Parganas	7	>20	5	2
Maharashtra	4	>30	4	0
Tamil Nadu	1	>40	1	0
South Kolkata	7	>50	6	1
Telangana	1	>60	1	0

*Source:* Authors own study

### *Survey Instrument*

The initial instrument was created based on information found in the literature. This instrument had 8 items to follow up the effect of COVID-19 on private sector employees. We conducted a focus group interview with 20 respondents.

**Table 2: Description of questions**

Scale Item	Coding
What was the effect of COVID-19 in your work environment?	Effect
Do you prefer to work from home or work from office?	Work from
Did you lose your job? Did you suffer any reduction of salary?	Lose/Reduction
Did your office/company provide you with any facilities during lockdown?	Facilities provided
Did you face any transportation issue while going to work?	Transportation issue
Were you afraid that you might lose your job and what other problems you faced?	Loss/Problems
Did your colleagues lose job or had any reduction in salary and any other problems they faced?	Situation of colleague
What was the effect of COVID-19 in your work environment?	Effect

*Source:* Authors own study

***Coding Manual***

We have chosen an independent coder who has sufficient experience in his field and is suitable and eligible enough for coding. Each and every question is recorded through mobile phone and after that coded carefully. Similar process is also done by the independent coder with efficiency. It took 1 week to complete the whole process of recording and coding. After 10 days the same process of coding is again done by another coder to find out more precise data.

The coding process started with recording the calls. After that each group members took to their responsibility to listen to the interviews and write down the keywords (important words) one by

one. The independent coder also followed the same process. Then both of the keywords i.e, the keywords of the group members and the independent coder is compared. In this comparison, it is checked whether both of them have written the same or similar keywords. Here the answers come in:

- Yes-Yes (Both the group members and the independent coder written the same keywords)
- Yes-No (A keyword written by the group members and not by the independent coder)
- No-Yes (A keyword written by the independent coder and not by the group members)

After this is completed the coding part is left for 10 days. After 10 days another coder again code the same data and here this is checked:

- No-No (A keyword neither written by the group members nor the independent coder)

After this is complete certain numbers are aligned to Yes and No i.e., for Yes= 1 and for No=0 and then this is recorded in MS Excel which is then sent to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to test the Inter Rater Reliability.

### ***Kappa***

To measure reliability is to measure the percentage of agreement between raters. It involves simply adding up the number of cases that were coded the same way by the two raters and dividing the total number of cases. But raters are expected to agree with each other a certain percentage of the time simply based on chance (Cohen, 1960). Reliability can be calculated using Cohen's Kappa, which approaches '1' as the coding is perfectly reliable and '0' if no agreement is expected by chance.

Kappa is calculated as:

$$K = (PA - PC) / (1 - PC)$$

where the PA= proportion of units in which raters agree.

PC= proportion of units for which agreement is expected by chance.

The percentage of agreement calculation is derived by summing the values found in the diagonals (i.e., the proportion of the time the two raters agreed). This is the proportion of agreement over and above chance agreement.

**Table 3: Kappa Statistics**

<b>Kappa Statistics</b>	<b>Strength of Agreement</b>
<0.00	Poor
0.00-0.20	Slight
0.21-0.40	Fair
0.41-0.60	Moderate
0.61-0.80	Substantial
0.81-1.00	Almost Perfect

*Source:* Authors own study

**Results and Discussions**

We took the Demographic Information from the respondents during the interview and with that information the Table 4 is created. The information include respondent’s name, Age, Gender, Company Name, Company Location, Designation. From the Table 4 we came to know that there are different age groups of different gender (approximately 85% male and 15% female) is working in different companies which is shown clearly in Figure 1.

**Table 4: Demographic Information**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Company Location</b>	<b>Designation</b>
Respondent 1	23	Male	TCS	Rajarhat	Process Associate
Respondent 2	25	Male	Infosys	Pune	Software Developer

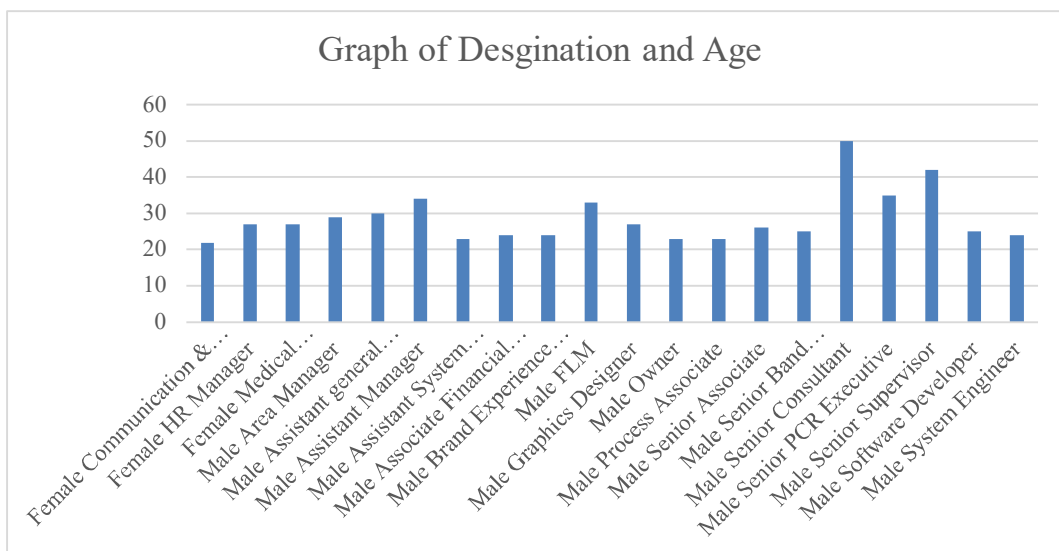


Respondent 3	23	Male	TCS Ecospace	Rajarhat	Assistant System Engineer
Respondent 4	24	Male	TCS	Delta Park Lords	System Engineer
Respondent 5	42	Male	Asian Paints	Jodhpur Park	Senior Supervisor
Respondent 6	26	Male	TWC	Salt Lake Sector V	Senior Associate
Respondent 7	23	Male	Biyot Ronix	Kasba, Kolkata	Owner
Respondent 8	33	Male	Sun Pharma	Mumbai	FLM
Respondent 9	27	Female	Tata Medical Hospital	Rajarhat	Medical Officer (Emergency Medicine)
Respondent 10	50	Male	Deloitte	Mumbai	Senior Consultant
Respondent 11	24	Male	TCS	Gitanjali Park	Associate Financial Analyst
Respondent 12	35	Male	TV-18 Broadcast Limited	Salt Lake Sector V	Senior PCR Executive
Respondent 13	30	Male	Highlight Event Management Consultancy Pvt Ltd	Park Street	Assistant general manager
Respondent 14	34	Male	The Hindu Group	Chennai	Assistant Manager
Respondent 15	27	Male	Grape Vines Media	Minto Park	Graphics Designer
Respondent 16	24	Male	Clay, Strategy and Design	Mumbai	Brand Experience Manager

Respondent 17	27	Female	True Height Interface Information Pvt Ltd	Salt Lake Sector V	HR Manager
Respondent 18	22	Female	Tomorrow's Foundation	Hossainpur, Ruby	Communication & P.D. Trainer
Respondent 19	25	Male	Amazon	Hyderabad	Senior Band Management Assistant
Respondent 20	29	Male	Havells India Ltd	Dalhousie	Area Manager

Source: Authors own study

Fig 1: Designation and Age of the respondents



From the answers of the interviewers the Inter Reliability Rate is tested through Kohen Kappa testing. The symmetric measure is given below. The kappa value came 0.651 which shows that the strength of agreement is substantial.

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error <sup>a</sup>	Approximate T <sup>b</sup>	Approximate Significance
Measure of Agreement	Kap pa	.651	.047	10.458	<.001
N of Valid Cases		258			
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.					
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.					

After Data Analysis, Themes and Sub-themes are categorised as below:

**Table 5: Categorization of Theme and Sub-theme**

Serial No.	Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
1.	Work load	Working Environment	1. Work hour extended. 2. No physical environment. 3. Transition from offline to online. 4. Frontline worker. 5. Disrupted.
2.	Nature of work	Home / Office	1. From Home. 2. From Office.
3.	Job security	Salary	1. Increased. 2. Reduced salary. 3. Didn't get salary.
4.	Health facility	Health	1. Internet Connectivity. 2. Covid test. 3. Vaccination.

5.	Irregularity in transportation	Transportation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sometimes provided.</li> <li>2. Sometimes not provided.</li> </ol>
6.	Uncertainty	Uncertainty in the work place	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No.</li> <li>2. Huge down cut of resource.</li> <li>3. Yes, lost job in 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown.</li> </ol>
7.	Psychological effect	Mental depression	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Neighbours have lost jobs.</li> <li>2. Friends have lost job.</li> <li>3. Depression.</li> </ol>
8.	Alternative source of income	Income	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No other source available</li> <li>2. Yes, dual source of income was available.</li> </ol>

Source: Authors own study

From Table 5 the results of the study are found which shows that work load, nature of work, job security, health facilities, psychological effect, alternative source of income are the major factors which are having the great impact on private sector employees in India. During COVID-19, the work load was extended, there was no physical environment to work with and the transition from offline to online affected many employees. The nature of work also changed. There was a whole transition from offline to online which affected many employees who are not virtually active. The work from home also started during this period. The private sector employees faced problems with their job security as many of their salaries were reduced and many employees lost jobs. Although suffering from this, many employees received some facilities like free vaccination and free internet from their companies. While other companies did not provide any facilities. Employees also faced transportation problems during this time as most of the transport system such as bus, auto, metro were closed. Not only that, there was also a reduction of online cabs. Employees were afraid that they might lose their jobs since most of the companies were not

earning enough revenues. Employees were psychologically affected. Many suffered from depression, anxiety. There were also some suicide cases involved. Throughout this pandemic, many people started depending on their second source of income which include freelance work, photography, etc. Therefore COVID-19 affected the private sector employees of India in some way or other.

### **Conclusion**

After conducting the survey, on how covid-19 has impacted the private sector corporate employees, we get to understand more about how covid-19 has affected as well as benefitted the corporate employees of the private sector. It is due to this survey, we got to know the different ways in which the private sector is working at the moment i.e. by preferring (work from home). Also, the work preference of different individuals in different fields, with different age groups have come in view to have distinct comfort zones when it comes to working. As we can see from the survey, how different individuals are preferring and supporting work from home by counting its benefits while others are still preferring to work from office as per their job demands.

However, the above provided data clearly shows the number of people whom we have interviewed regarding their work preferences and their required followings have been coded. Moreover, this project has helped us to also focus on the effects of covid-19 on the corporate employees so that it can be lessened down in the near future without being much bothersome to the private sector. Not only the project shows the positive sides of covid-19 such as avoiding wastage of time, travelling expenses and obviously, the benefits of working from home but also the negative effects such as shutdown of companies, salary or wage cut-offs, handling the business which requires its workplace, etc. The survey, interviews, data handling, methodology, etc., clearly shows and helps us to get a better understanding of this project by which we also calculated the inter-reliability rate. The inter-reliability rate was tested through Kappa testing, the result of which was 0.65, which shows that the strength of agreement is substantial. The results

of the study shows that work load, nature of work, job security, health facilities, psychological effect, alternative source of income are the major factors which are having the great impact on private sector employees in India.

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