



Critical Analysis of Positive and Negative Impact of Work from Home on working professionals

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the way people work, with many companies allowing their employees to work from home. There is an on going debate about whether working from home or working in an office is more effective and productive. This article provides an overview of the existing literature on this topic and compares the strengths and weaknesses of individual work arrangements. It also reflects India's perspective on WFH. Research suggests that working from home can improve employee satisfaction, work-life balance and productivity while reducing costs and commute times. But it can also lead to isolation, reduced collaboration, and difficulty managing work-life boundaries. On the other hand, office work can improve collaboration, communication, and team cohesion, it may also lead to longer commutes and lower job satisfaction. Part of the means of addressing the challenges of working from home. WFH is now pervasive in all the sectors of industry comprising IT, Insurance, Banking, Education, etc.,

KEYWORDS: Working From Home, Remote Working, Covid-19 Pandemic, Mental Health, Productivity.

INTRODUCTION

For two years, the world has witnessed one of the deadliest diseases, COVID 19, but the whole pandemic scenario has been changed by the outbreak. So many people are affected, so many people die every day, and every country faces the same situation. India is one of the countries facing the worst pandemic. During the pandemic, the entire business community is not only suffering from the disease, but is also facing challenges. IT, education, tourism, banking and insurance are some of the key sectors that will be heavily impacted. Businesses face many challenges of being unable to turn a profit and facing a continued slowdown in growth rates. From the perspective of the education sector, schools and colleges are still closed. The tourism sector has been hit hard and the government is trying to get back on track. Banks and many other insurance companies are also facing declining profits. These are affected, but many people are still working. However, many people lost their jobs. People working from home were not allowed to go to the office for security reasons. All meetings and conferences are now online.

OBJECTIVE

1. The present overall experience the employees had while working from home
2. To analyse positive impacts that remote work brought in their life
3. To suggest remedies to deal with challenges of WFH

1. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- The industries and occupations analyzed here are among those most likely to be suitable for working from home. Employees are highly skilled professionals in IT companies who have always done advanced computer work. At the same time, they are among the most difficult to analyze. Work includes critical cognitive work, team collaboration, client engagement, and innovation. Productivity in such jobs is difficult to measure. (Michael, Friederike, Mengel)

- **Bellmann and Hübler (2020)** found that telecommuting had no long-term impact on work-life balance and that transitioning to telecommuting only temporarily increased job satisfaction.
 - **Valero et al. (2021) in their research article** provided evidence from a wave of large groups of US employees working from home. Respondents report benefits such as shorter commute times and more flexible working hours Productivity.
 - **Dr. R. Sridevi (2021)** were of opinion that, advantages and limitations are two sides of the same coin. It turns out that the concept of working from home improves productivity. However, performing this method consistently over an extended period of time can have a negative impact on your employees. Factors that support productivity and willingness to work from home outweigh barriers and challenges. Therefore, the concept of working from home may become even more prevalent in the future.
 - **Srini BR, Karthik. (2021)**, in their research study demonstrated an important relationship between structural and relational factors of telecommuting experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have also found strong positive correlations between these factors and the quality of the work-from-home experience during the pandemic, indicating that employees are likely to be more productive.
 - Telecommuting has been found to have a very positive impact on workloads. Employees are more likely to be involved in working from home than working in an office. It also showed that the more often employees were allowed to work from home, the more work they did. **(Kira Rupietta et al., 2016)**.
 - **Dutcher (2012)** used experimental methods to investigate how telecommuting affects personal productivity, showing that telecommuting helps individuals create independently without interference from their surroundings. It has been discovered that performing choreographic tasks increases personal productivity. Halpern (2005) used data from the US National Survey of the Changing Workforce (NSCW) to investigate how telecommuters can improve their health while reducing costs. As a result, telecommuting employees have proven to save more money compared to physical jobs because they can reduce transportation and food costs.
 - According to a recent survey by CIEL HR, up to 3 out of 4 IT workers do not want to work in the office once a week. This is despite the fact that after two years of the pandemic, IT companies have been forced to bring employees back to work and offer them home office options. In addition, many of these companies face Hobson's choice as the added pressure on employees to return to work increases their turnover. Overall, the CIEL survey covers his 40 companies across India, including his top 10 IT companies, which employ nearly one million people. Indeed, the industry has explored innovative options to ensure employee satisfaction. In fact, the company is reportedly gearing up for a hiring review.
- The CIEL survey also found that his 30% of employees are still in work-from-home mode, while the rest are expected to return to work soon. And a significant percentage of them aren't enthusiastic about change. Statistical surprise 40% of IT organizations continue to operate in hybrid mode with the option to come in twice or up to three times a week, but enterprise has been slow to transition into this phase, with only about a quarter of its employees showing up. to the office at work.
- Smaller IT companies are insisting on full return to work, which accounts for 30% of his CIEL respondents. Different companies seem to deal with these issues in different ways. Wipro and Tech Mahindra offer greater flexibility to their employees and say hybrids are here to stay, but TCS seems to be headed where the talent is.
 - According to an Economic Times report, TCS is now opening offices in cities such as Goa, Nagpur and Guwahati, allowing employees to stay closer to home or even stay home for a while. Every organization's employees can choose which days of the week they want to work in the office. According to this study, developers are provided with maximum flexibility, with support functions, infrastructure management, architects, and senior management coming into the office almost every day. (<https://www.cxotoday.com/news-analysis/indian-it-companies-face-work-from-home-aftermath/>)
 - **(Pamela S. Tolbert, Tal Simons)** While asserting in their research article titled "Impact of telecommuting on professional employee career outcomes" emphasized that, telecommuting has a negative impact on employee career development. Managers judge their employees negatively, but these claims are based on research from the manager's perspective. Therefore, the study above observes the impact of working from home on career outcomes. Surveys are conducted by specialist staff. To know this, different benefits are differentiated between professionals who work from home and other comparable workers who do not work from home. And what I realized was that there are no career costs to working from home.
 - In a research study which was conducted in his 2007 titled "Satisfaction and productivity when professionals work from home" **(Ellen Baker, Gayle C. Avery, JD Crawford)** concluded that WFH had a positive impact on the attitude of the employees. The survey, was conducted with professionals from 20 Australian organizations.
 - **(Akansha Jaiswal, C Joe Arun)** attempted to study Number of organizational, personal and work-related factors were assessed through questionnaires. Finally, their research revealed that organizational and work-related factors likely influence well-being and productivity. "Removal of COVID-19 lockdown: Working from home and its impact on employees
 - We all know that COVID-19 has changed our lives. The above studies are studies on the impact of working from home on different workers. Lockdowns have forced employees to work from home. Researchers were able to learn the nature and quality of people's work during the crisis. For this study, they conducted in-depth interviews with managers working in manufacturing and

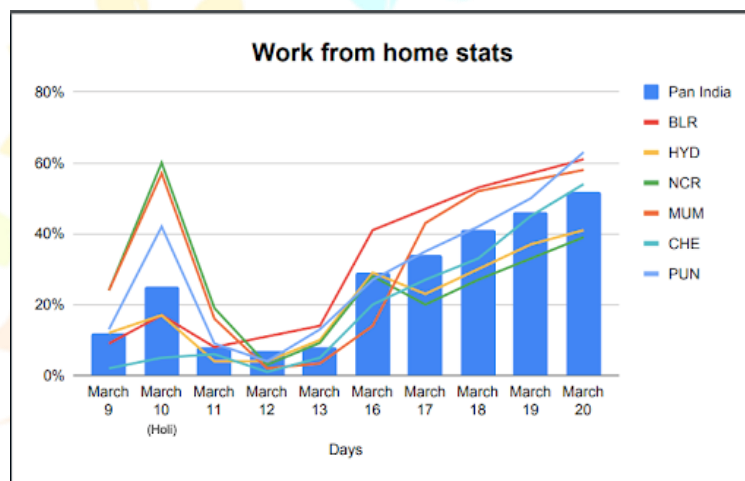
service industries in India. They found that these workers were less productive, their roles changed, and their stress levels rose significantly, also revealed.

- Working from home exacerbates communication gaps between her boss and subordinates, as well as other colleagues, and online interaction facilitates communication with her team. Since they do not feel the physical sensation of communication, the degree of effective communication is affected (Go, 2016).

INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

- According to a survey conducted by CBRE South Asia Pvt Ltd, 73% of companies in India are considering a combined working arrangement after the Covid-19 pandemic as it seems to be an emerging trend with more and more companies entering the workforce. The company mainly chooses the flexible working method. working models. The survey highlighted that the flexible working approach is a combination of four arrangements. These work models would include teleworking under specific circumstances, 3 or more work days per week, a uniform mix of in-office and teleworking, and working remotely. remote work 3 or more days per week.

Fig 1.1
Trends of WFH in major cities of India



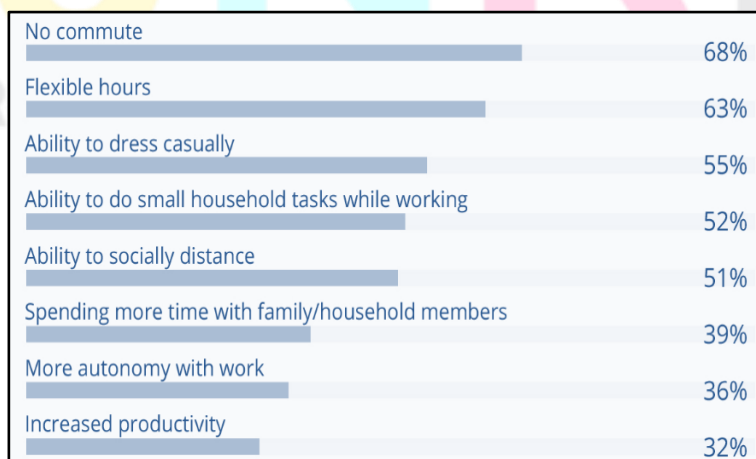
Source: moveinsync.com

- Pune & Bangalore get first in line to follow the guidelines with more than 63% of employees
- Mumbai & Chennai follow suit with 58% “and” 54% of the workforce working from home
- Hyderabad & NCR are catching up with 41% and 39% respectively

2. POSITIVE IMPACTS THAT REMOTE WORK BROUGHT IN THEIR LIFE

- A survey of 538 Americans conducted in 2021 who were working from home revealed some of the benefits of WFH as follows

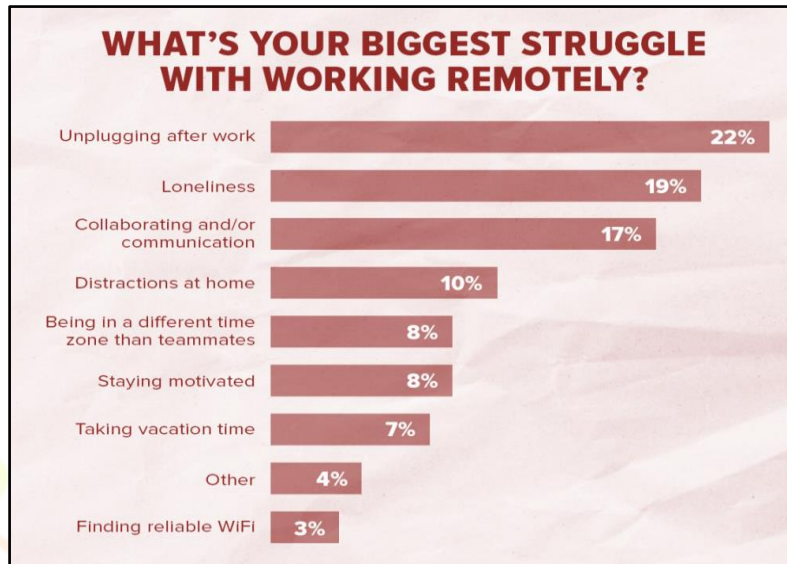
Fig 1.2
Benefits of Work from home



Source: (https://today.yougov.com/ -2021)

- In FlexJobs' 2022 Career Ambition Survey, it is revealed that the work environment has a direct impact on mental and emotional health. 84% of respondents said remote or hybrid work would make them happier. And for those with mental health issues, 77% said a remote or hybrid work arrangement would help them better manage their mental health. Additionally, in a survey conducted with Mental Health America, it was found that respondents with flexible work options (including remote working) reported better mental health. In fact, employees who do not have access to flexible working are nearly twice as likely to have poor or very poor mental health. Among those with flexible work options, 48% said their work-life balance was excellent or very good, and 54% had emotional support at work, compared with 36 % and 45% respectively for respondents without flexible work. (<https://www.flexjobs.com/>)

Fig 1.3
Issues and Concerns of Work from home



Source: State of Remote Report: Buffer.com (2019)

3. APPROACHES TO DEAL WITH NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF WFH

1. Mental Health Issues

Working remotely can mean working in isolation, which is completely different from the typical busy office environment. This can frustrate employees, especially extroverts, who are parasitic and need others around them to be more productive. In addition, tasks are often performed alone and may be more work than usual. Finally, endless virtual meetings without the usual human connection can add to the pile. All of these can lead to mental health issues for remote workers.

Probable remedy: Organizing fun, relaxing and rejuvenating virtual meetings and activities. Consider investing in video tools that allow employees to see themselves on their screens (still being able to maintain privacy with the right tools). Finally, encourage people to connect and talk about their problems. If an employee develops serious problems, help them seek medical attention.

2. Distractions

Working from home will keep employees from being distracted, right? As you certainly know, the opposite seems to be the case. More employees working from home say they're more distracted than ever. They spend time on activities like playing video games, listening to music and shopping online. In addition, people who live with family members or friends find that they often come to bother them at the most inopportune times.

Probable remedy: Motivating the employees to be creative and stick to a strict schedule of tasks, which will help keep them on track. Do a daily productivity check in the middle of the day. This will help monitor troubled or distracted employees. Help employees create a quiet WFH office where they can hardly be distracted. Some investments in home office supplies may be required.

3. Communication & Collaboration

While there are ways to stay connected with remote workers and facilitate collaboration between them, many employees may find they lack the human element. For instance, it can be difficult to understand the general feelings, moods, or energies of people on the internet. When you meet new people, it can be difficult to grasp their personalities, which makes it hard to break the ice. Constantly working on large projects and coordinating multiple teams can be an uphill battle.

Probable remedy: There must be emphasis on clarity when communicating online. Using too many words is often better than too few. Set organization-wide communication standards, such as communicating about important tasks or events within a workgroup, and encouraging everyone to follow them. Train employees to communicate effectively by phone or email. Not all employees are email savvy .

4. Technical Challenges

When employees work in the office, they usually don't have to worry about technical equipment, namely computers, Internet connection, software and other related accessories. Everything is usually managed by the company. At home, the opposite can happen. This can lead to many typos, interruptions and in extreme cases a security breach. Non-tech-savvy employees may have a harder time.

Probable remedy: Have your engineering team work with each employee and test their setup in person, if possible. If that's not possible, a video call will work. Advise employees on what internet connections they should have. Collect and maintain software tool inventory for employees. Finally, create security protocols for remote workers to follow to prevent data breaches.

5. Work-Life Unbalance

Typically, employees who work from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. can log out for the evening and go home to relax. Commuting allows them to break out of the work mentality. When you work from home, this routine is interrupted. The line between work and family is often very blurred, which can keep employees in their thoughts about work indefinitely. Many employees are self-employed, which can cause their productivity to decline over time. Moreover, it can harm their relationships beyond their professional and social lives, leading to a lot of unhappiness all around.

Probable remedy: Support your employees in finding work-life balance with fair and balanced work-from-home policies. For example, encourage them to take regular breaks and help them create a fixed work schedule that they can stick to without being overworked. Ask them to turn off the device after hours. Teach them to draw and enforce boundaries.

CONCLUSION:

Most of the companies are now leveraging WFH (Work from home) as one of the talent attracting intervention as post covid employees have begun to realize essence of family. They are seeking right balance between personal and professional life. WFH or remote working jobs in another sense are a virtual work space of organization, if the company find their employees being able to successfully perform in their work while working from home, the global trends may show exponential growth in WFH. Therefore companies need to have a documented policy considering all pros and cons of the WFH. The companies can also facilitate this by allowing your employee to work from home on certain days of the week or by allowing the employee to work from home on her chosen day or two. For example, when their kids are home during school holidays, or when they aren't feeling well enough to come to the office but not sick enough to justify a vacation. Ultimately, a good home office policy will help the companies and their employees to perform with required commitment even they away from the office. One caution companies needs to take that, it should not take employees for granted for their availability post and pre working hours. Also in order to build up cohesive bond with the colleagues and the company should organise official visit of all remote working employees (department/ project wise) or informal get together over a dinner at least once in two months.

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