Review article

Work Life Balance and Work from Home Culture in India due to the Pandemic Covid-19 in Indian Setting

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Abstract - Due to the deadly virus the work culture has seen an upheaval in lifestyle of people and their work ethics. Work from home culture has been adopted by many organizations because of the pandemic at the threshold of all the nations. The work from home culture is demanding employees to be flexible and responsive to change and cope up with the new normal. The status quo needs employers and employees to be supple and be innovative so that the employees are productive and systematic in their daily chores. This study is conducted to know how work from home culture and work life balance is adapted by employees in India during the pandemic. The research was conducted for individuals working in different sectors who worked from home and adapted the new culture during the pandemic. The interlocutor stated their level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction regarding their task, assurance of their jobs and organizations decision. While working from home employees are facing major barriers like internet connectivity, fraternize with co-workers and apprehension due to pandemic. Unequivocally employees have every aid from their team while working from home and telecommunicating helps them to increase their potency and thereby feel motivated. Change can be beautiful when we are courageous to evolve with it. Austerity and confrontation are part and parcel of every individual's life and they enhance qualities, teach us important lessons and give us unique experiences. This research report will help us to understand how employees of different sectors are coping up with the new normal and work from home culture during the current pandemic situation.

Keywords - Work from Home Culture, Covid-19.

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Since 2020, the work from home culture adapted by many organizations, because ofthe pandemic is at the threshold of every nation. The organizations demographic and social cultures have resulted into a lot of changes and expectations fromits employees. The technological advancements have made work from home culture easier for employees and work demands to cope up as the "New normal". As the organizations are developing and moving towards global competition resulting more pressure on individuals and teams and requires them to be more flexible and responsive to the change. Over the last year due to the change in working culture employees are attributed to a lot of increased workloads, job insecurity, long working hours and high level of work stress.

In this current scenario, it is very important that employers and employees find out flexible solutions that are innovative so that the employees' productivity is maximized without hampering the employee's health and work life balance (personal life, family relations, etc). This research aims to make contribution about work life balance and work from home culture with special reference to India during the pandemic.

II. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY LIFE

Due to the demanding work culture and targets it is becoming very difficult for employees to maintain a relationship between their work and family life. Every individual play different role throughout their life apart from just an employee and a family member. Individuals have different roles like social life, leisure life, religious life and many more. Hence work life balance is a term where there is balance between all these roles.

Sometimes work life impact the family life of the employees likewise family life conflicts also impact the work of individuals. Due to this it has been observed by change in employees work performance, lack of interest, absenteeism, reduced satisfaction, depression and health issues etc. Work pressure and stress not only is associated to an individual employee but may also affect family members

III. A GLIMPSE OF WORK FROM HOME CULTURE IN INDIA DURING THE PANDEMIC

Before witnessing the pandemic and the lockdown, work from home culture was not so popular in India and was not considered suitable in many organizations. But the prolonged lockdown has revolutionized the working culture and many companies have worked well and adapted with the same. Work from Home culture was often

considered as an ad-hoc measure and has now given rise to the new working culture. Initially many organizations in India did not have such policies. The evolving circumstances led the revision of new policies and new working culture. To ensure the productivity and effectiveness, organizations have deployed the best-in-class security system to ensure data confidentiality, enhanced bandwidth and other facilities for employees and even compensating employees for work from home set up. Companies also feel that productivity has also improved. Though the work from home culture is ensuring business as usual, industry leaders are grappling with many challenges to make sure that performance, productivity and effectiveness are not compromise and there is a need for clear demarcation of professional and personal life.

Few organizations are constantly inventing and implementing new solutions to boost employee's productivity and in the case of any mishap, organizations are making sure that the employees get the necessary support and financial aid. Though maintaining work life balance can be challenging many employees feel work from home is associated with better productivity and can be embraced as a long-term method of operation. Employees also believe that long waiting hours in traffic, pollution is reduced and as a result their work performance is enhanced.

IV. RETHINKING WORK FROM HOME IN INDIA – A SOCIO-CULTURAL TAKE

Covid-19 has brought the entire world under partial or complete lockdown. Due to this the Work from Home culture has emerged and has been the talk of discussion these days. Although work from home is not a new concept. With the emerging trends and technological advancement organizations have adopted this culture during the pandemic. Earlier work from home was purely a choice, incentive and convenience based on individuals and particular organizations. But due to the current situation of Covid–19, work from home has been a suitable option for many organizations.

Work from home if planned in a proper manner has many benefits, including protecting health, economy and the environment. But while designing work from home there should be proper infrastructure for virtual work like tools for digital collaboration, data security and connectivity. Experts claim that doing something repeatedly for sometime becomes a habit. Influencing the attitude and behaviour of people plays a significant role in work from home. People these days are voluntarily adapting work from home culture due to the current situation irrespective of their opinions. Organization had to change their policies and practices so that employees could adapt to the work from home culture.

A. What happens at home due to work from home?
Everything in this world has some merits and demerits of its own which might change as situation changes and so is work from home, in a country like India where we still believe in joint family and living under one roof makes working from home a little difficult. Home routines are being affected as work schedules are taking more importance. Family members have to keep quiet as there should be no talking, no walking around, etc. during the virtual meetings. People would be working across different time zones hence children and elderly parents have to adapt to these changes. Kids having parents accessible at home become too demanding and troublesome. Sometimes he/she needs to cater to family's expectations of quality time. Due to work from home, work and family commitment gets compromised and sometimes it can affect the family or vice versa. India being a country where values and cultures are valued the most sometimes due to work orientation and pressure can create uncomfortable situations.

For women professional, work from home can be complicated as they have to balance between personal and professional life as most of the time women are the care takers at home and are burdened with their home responsibilities. In India we see patriarchal culture and due to this we see gender-based hierarchies and allocation of responsibilities are not fair and can impact on health and work output.

B. What happens at work during work from home?
Office is not just a place for work but for many it is a getaway from the pressures at home. These days work place is not like the traditional work anymore were employees were just concerned with their work and no social life but now they have metamorphose into a comfortable, fun, and delightful work spaces. Organizations are taking initiatives like employee engagement to understand the relationship between employees and the organization. With the increased amount of time spent at work, organizations have encouraged employees to socialize beyond their work by providing additional recreational facilities like gym, yoga, cafeteria etc. but the new trend of work from home culture has restricted socialization.

C. Work from home - A new perspective
There should be flexibility allowed to employees working from home as work timing and hours of work may be looked at differently. Some employees may start their work early in the morning or few may start their work at night depending on their schedule for the day and employee's productivity at the end of the day should be considered immaterial whether he works in the morning or night shouldn't hamper his performance.
Trust is another important parameter in work from home culture. Trust between employees, employers, colleagues, and customer's plays a prominent role in developing a good relationship. Socializing and networking also plays an important role in developing interpersonal relationships. Work from home culture can be a happy place for many employees post covid situation.

V. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study is conducted to know how work from home culture and work life balance is adapted by employees in India during the pandemic.

VI. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the profile of employees working from home during the pandemic
- To understand how employees have adapted to the new culture of work from home
- To find out the consequences faced by employees during work from home and work life balance
- To understand the challenges faced by employees while adapting the new work culture
- To identify the gap between employee's performance and organizations expectations
- To study the level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among employees of different sectors

A. Scope

- This study focuses on employees working from home during the current pandemic
- To analyze the factors influencing work from home culture
- To study the satisfaction level of employees
- To find out the expectations and experience of employees

VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Population of the study
Workforce employed in India during the Covid-19 pandemic

B. Sampling frame
Employees working from home during the pandemic

C. Sampling unit
Individuals

D. Sample size
100 employees working from home during the Covid – 19 pandemic in different industries

E. Sampling technique
Non probability sampling

F. Sampling method
Convenient sampling

G. Data collection method:

- **Primary Data**
  Primary data is collected through:
  - Questionnaire

- **Secondary Data**
  Secondary data is collected through:
  - Research paper
  - Internet

H. Limitations

- This study is restricted to employees working from home in India

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

A questionnaire containing 24 questions were randomly distributed to 100 individuals working for different industries who have work from home culture during the current pandemic, it was observed that 37% were from IT sector, 23% from education sector, 15% were from finance sector and 26% were from various different sectors. Out of which it was found that 70% of the employees are willing to work from home and nearly 69% of the respondents have quiet, distraction free area at home that allows them to work efficiently. Around 31% of the respondents would like to work from home as they can spend time with their family, 30% of the respondents would prefer to work from home due to unavoidable circumstances, whereas, 25% would prefer to avoid commute.

Respondents stated their satisfaction level on the scale of highly satisfied to highly dissatisfied. Where, 61% of respondents are satisfied and have clarity of their task and their schedule and 17% are unsatisfied. 42% of respondents are satisfied about the management's transparency and decisions and 27% are unsatisfied about the same. 52% of the respondents are satisfied regarding assurance of their job whereas 18% are unsatisfied. 52% of the respondents are satisfied with the organizations decision to tide over the crises and 21% are unsatisfied.

During the current pandemic situation and work from home culture it has been observed that 48% of the respondents work for 40-60 hours and 7% of the respondents work for more than 60 hours in a week. Whereas, before the pandemic while employees worked from office their weekly working hours was 40-45 hours a week.

It has been observed that respondents are worried to resume work in office regarding corona virus exposure, commuting to work and managing childcare and family. 56% of the respondents say they like to go to office rather than work from home as 60 % respondents rate themselves highest in work life balance while 7% respondents rate themselves lowest in work life balance during the current situation and work pressure of working more than 60 hours a week.

The top challenges faced by respondents while work from home are internet connectivity issue, collaboration with coworkers, not enough productivity and anxiety due to the pandemic. 59% of the respondents have a productive day while working from home while 7% have no productive day as 40% respondents say covid related news affect their productivity.

While working from home 71% of the respondents say they have a team that supports them while working from home, 13% say they do not have a team that supports them while working from home while 16% work independently. 77% of respondents feel comfortable while communicating with their team online. 51% of the respondents connect with their team for non work related matters also and 83% of the respondents have all the

support from their employer to work from home. 34% of the respondents connect with their team once in a day, 22 % of the respondents connect with their team twice in a day and 62% respondents think telecommuting will increase their productivity. 82% respondents feel self motivated, 67% respondents feel self disciplined, 89% respondents are confident to work without supervision while working from home

Respondent's level of agreement regarding various aspects is that 72% respondents agree with the time they spend with family, 14% disagree as they are not able to spend time with their family and do not have proper work life balance. 55% of the respondents prioritize their work over their personal and family life; whereas 38% of the respondents agree to sacrifice their sleep and 35% disagree to sacrifice their sleep over their work pressure and achievement of targets. 55% of the respondents agree to complete their additional work beyond their work hours and 44% respondents say that they work on weekends and irregular work hours to accomplish their goals and targets.

IX. SUGGESTIONS

Organizations and individuals didn't have proper time to prepare for remote work or think about the best work policies, processes and culture but had to mandatorily adapt remote work. Individuals are working from home because of the current pandemic situation but to overcome the challenges and issues faced by them they should find different ways to be more productive in work-life balance.

Few suggestions are as follows:

1) Maintain regular hours and set a schedule and stick on to it. They should have clear guidelines when to work and when to call it a day. This would help them to maintain work-life balance.

2) Creating a routine can be more powerful as you would start each day accordingly and it would help you to tackle your to do list.

3) Setting of rules with who share your work space and family members when you work would help you to negotiate quite times, meeting time, or share equipments like desk etc would not hamper your productivity.

4) Take scheduled breaks especially meal breaks like you have according to the policy while you worked in the organization. This would help you to take a break from the computer screen and mobile phones.

5) Keep a dedicated office space and some peripherals that will be used only for work.

6) Socialize with colleagues, friends and family this would help individuals to overcome loneliness.

7) Be positive during these difficult times as this would help you to overcome unwanted feeling andshort temper.

8) Take advantage of working remotely as it comes with unique perks. Spend quality time to develop your passion as you are at home and you deserve to it.

9) Do not be too hard on yourself or others as you need to have a proper balance between your work productivity and self care. At the same time, you need to be kind and helpful to your co-workers, clients and colleagues as due to the current pandemic situation they may be under tremendous anxiety which you may not know.

10) Sign-off your day with some productive workouts so that it would become a routine and create a habit that would consistently mark end of the day. You might need some inspiration and support from different people as it would boost your energy.

X. CONCLUSION

This research report will help us to understand how employees of different sectors are coping up with the new normal and work from home culture during the current pandemic situation. Employees are willing to continue to work from home due to various underlying issues and concerns like corona virus exposure, exposure during commuting to work, managing family and childcare. Employees working from home have clarity of their task, schedule, ability to work without supervision, support from management and receive feedback from their managers which is helping them to be more self disciplined and balance their work and family life. Employee's productivity has not been hampered although they are working distinctly from their home as they are productive and they have a team that supports them while working from home and they are able to meet their targets and goals as they are comfortable to connect with their team online. Employees are even going beyond their comfort zone by prioritizing their work over their family and personal life, sacrificing sleep for work, working on weekends and irregular timings as they have to complete their additional work beyond their work hours during the pandemic. Employees are also facing certain challenges while working distinctly like majorly internet connectivity issue, collaboration with co-workers and anxiety due to the pandemic. Certain employees say that the current pandemic news would affect their productivity but they have a team that motivates and even support them even if they connect for non-work-related matters. Employers are also supporting and safe guarding the interests of employees working in their organization as they are taking proper decisions to tide over the crises during these tough times.

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