

CHANGES AND CHALLENGES OF WORK FROM HOME CONCEPT

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ABSTRACT

We have always believed in the teachings of our Dharma that there is a supreme power called God and the best part of our belief is that we also trust God for all his deeds and accept everything as they are somehow for the betterment of our life and humanity. The link to these lines for the present research article is regarding our experience of last 18 months especially where it again proved itself and taught us the value of time and life. Our technological development and growth of mankind in past few decades somewhere took us to wrong path of over exploitation of resources and our greed for acquiring more and more. The time that we spent during this pandemic called COVID 19 was horrible and it took a lot of struggle to survive with this spreading virus and the threat generated was even more threatening and it is still there as we could not bring an end to it. The challenges posed were not only in the form of medical treatment, it was also for economic needs as the financial activities could not stop even when we are not safe to go out. This challenge of working for earning became the major of all the problems as everyone needed money for their daily needs for the food, shelter, education, security and above all for availing medical facilities and other precautionary measures. During this tough time a remedy that existed even but was not commonly accepted became the solution. The concept of work for earning seating at home was named WORK FROM HOME (WFH). It was not so popular earlier and also it was not offered easily. The control of employer was not considered good if WFH was practiced in industries and other places. But as there was a force to shift to online mode for working it became the necessity and most of the enterprises adopted it and also achieved good results. The present paper is about studying this concept its implications and its impact in present scenario.

Keywords: COVID 19, WFH, Technological Development, Financial Services, Information Technology.

Introduction

The recent pandemic has totally changed the way we worked and have gifted us with a new way to virtual working or work from home further referred as WFH various organisations have moved to this form of service however some had no option thus they remained closed and suffered a loss in the form of money and human resources too. As far as our Indian society is considered we can divide it in two forms one is of the employers and other one is of the employees. for the purpose of this paper we have identified only these two categories and all kind of work and services are considered to be in this form only may it be of wages, commission, salaries, services, business etc. Everywhere the two parties are involved and eventually they are to deal with this WFH concept.

Various scholar studies have explained the meaning of WFH but the recent details are always connected with working with technological involvement and away from regular work place. The studies have found out changes and challenges based on the level of employment from lower to higher and also from skilled to unskilled workers. When an employer decides to allow his employees to work from home, he/she has to make necessary arrangements and control points for it. The basic requirement is of technical support at employee's home if he is equipped with latest equipments like laptops/desktop/tablets etc with a very good net connectivity speed. Also, individual autonomy needs to be defined in terms of job responsibilities. The major issue is found in case of family responsibilities and leisure as

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working from home is not as regulated as working in offices of work place. Here comes the role of individual discipline and commitment if the employee is happy with his work and or he is in need of the work the percentage of commitment would be high but in other cases where the work is not of choice and or the employee is in a position to easily acquire job anywhere the dedication and commitment is lower in terms of percentage. The main cause of WFH should be identified and clearly defined by employer to employees. Our law is not allowing the right of work from home to anyone anytime but the situation of pandemic has forced as to accept it as a compulsion. During this sudden shift we needed to understand various new ways and got to be technologically literate if we as an employee wanted to stay in line with our job.

We must fill the fact that as we broke the nature's law of sustainability, we are now in a condition to stay in our homes like animals and birds are kept. We are forced to accept the law of nature and change the way we travel, work, teach and all other activities. We believe that soon we would need to make amendments in our labour laws and other laws keeping in mind the scenario of work from home. The good sign is that not only in India instead world wide many organisations which didn't support WFH earlier, transitioned themselves to have many of their staff involve with WFH. The changes occurred does not seem to be short term the positive impact is going to continue this even when we overcome the present pandemic.

People never thought that a time will come when this type of working from home would take place for a long time as in a very short time most of the jobs have turned into the WFH strategy some of them which could not be possible were of mechanical, security etc. This shift of method of working divided the job into two categories one with the possibility of getting done from home the other without it. Various sectors could shift as they had educated and technically sound employees like in telecommunication, financial services, information technology at the same time manufacturing, wholesalers and traders, health, education, public administration, construction are the examples of areas with a very limited possibility of WFH. Those areas which are adaptive to WFM needs some extra care and steps from both the employee's and employer's side. As far as the employer is concerned data security is to be monitored on top priority because company's internal information is given to direct access thus the regulation for its safety must be cleared no outsider should be able to access this information. Another important point is of making sure about time invested by the employee as in normal office environment the employer can see the presence and involvement of the employee but in WFH it is totally different thus a need is to make teams and team work interactions frequently with a clear discussion about what the core working hours of the employee are to avoid any misunderstanding. The need is also for amending leave rules and type of leave. The overtime and half day working too need to be redefined so as to have a clarity of getting work done within the stipulated timeframe.

From the employee's side too, the WFH has posed many challenges some of them are like employees need to create a separate working environment at their houses. It is not as easy as people find it instead it is very difficult to practice, keeping oneself away from the leisure of home and other personal obstacles. Even if someone is very much disciplined as an everyday practice it needs the cooperation of all family members. Other one is of fixing a proper posture and a working time as long setting in front of the screen may create physical problems. People generally do not bother about proper chairs and table arrangement at home and it led to physical problems in the long run. Also we cannot ignore the psychological effect, when we go out to work we meet our colleagues and friends which makes us energetic and a healthy competition keeps us moving whereas at home most of the time people sit at one place only without moving, no proper setting arrangements for work is followed at home which leads to difficulties in performing the duties.

The above are just a few examples but as we know there is a solution for every problem some sincere efforts can help employees to overcome these problems like fixing a time for breakfast and lunch as at work place, try to work in a separate room and if room is not available at least create a separate area to avoid mixing of professional and personal work and time. Follow the daily hygiene routine without fail as brushing and taking bath which in most cases is ignored and affect the performance. Last but not the least employee should not forget to fix a break in during work. These individual rules would definitely help employees perform better and cope up with the challenges of WFH. Change is the phenomenon of life and we must accept this change positively.

There are various social issues involved with WFH too one important issue of them is related to child care. It seems that the influence of WFH is different in case of men and women employees. The men employees could gather advantages of WFH as they had someone at home to take care of their

child and they had no disturbance during their work whereas when the women had to opt for WFH it was just because they had no other option available to take care of their children parallelly. Schools and day care centres were closed due to COVID 19. The work done included playpens next to the work areas, interrupting work for car pools and lunchtime, and returning to work during children's naps. As women were not technologically sound at all levels of work it somewhere also initiated discrimination based on gender as female were not all in a position to be technologically literate and were also not at high levels of job they had to compromise with their wages and responsibilities. This has created a great stress on the mind of women specially they had to juggle a complex daily schedule of family and work responsibilities. This duplicity of work pressure at home was like a two tier stress and had such a bad impact on women health we can have the evidence in all families with before and after WFH initiation.

Thus, it can not be said that WFH is beneficial for employers and employees as there some social rules and that has posed different tasks for different people and members of the society. The importance of home and work place are kept at different places. The practice of nuclear family is also a reason for the challenges as we do not have members in the family who can help us during WFH. Some where it has again proved that the social system with a joint family and work at the place of living only was very right. People never suffered with such system of working. For males and females without primary child-care responsibilities, work at home can enhance the integration of work and family through increased control over time, decreased commuting, and availability during the day. For women with primary child care, work at home may require an additional set of responsibilities - work plus family. Further, the demands of family responsibilities may tie the female employee to the home setting physically and psychologically, isolating her from other organization members. The social isolation and decreased visibility may reduce the sharing of job knowledge, mutual support from colleagues, and, ultimately, opportunities for advancement in the organization. Overall, though, the technology that allows work at home tends to have a negative effect on women who lack unique skills and have primary child-care responsibilities.¹

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