

Impact of Work from Home on Work Life Balance during Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Every century has witnessed the pandemic and 21st Century has come across Corona virus disease which had broke in November 2019. Spread of this virus has shaken the entire world and has made an impact on every aspect of individual and business. This has forced governments to enforce lockdown and shut down the activities temporarily. It made a impact on every sector of the economy and some sectors like education, information technology, Medical, health, Consulting, Human resource management companies and many other who largely works with technology allowed their employees to work from home and every individual expected it to be a positive sign in their career but as the time passed it becomes difficult for every employee to create a proper balance between work and life as it was new to majority and took time to get along the same. Between family and working, the pandemic has significantly altered the way we live our lives and for millions this has meant a sudden shift to remote environment as authorities' emphasizes the importance of social distancing. This paper attempts to explore the work from home and describes its impact on work life balance during covid-19. The study is descriptive in nature and based on both primary data collected through structured questionnaire and secondary data obtained from news papers, journal and magazines. The main contribution of this work lies in assisting the employees in knowing the impact and understanding that with right priorities, proper transition, routine, effective communication, fair expectation a satisfactory work life balance can be enhanced.

KEYWORDS: *Pandemic, Lockdown, social distancing, work from home*

INTRODUCTION

Work and life are two important related aspects of human life and any impact on one aspect brings a direct impact on another and every human finds it very hard and challenging in making a proper work life balance. The ability of employees in finding successful combination of work, family responsibilities, religious and social commitment is crucial for both employees and employer. An effective work life balance is all about employees' balanced priorities on five important aspects of life such as career, family, friends, religion and personal which would bring desired results for employer and greater satisfaction to employees. The aim of work life balance is to bring a desired equilibrium which in turn improves career and self fulfilment.

At the beginning of year 2020 when New Year was celebrated around the globe, no human must have imagined that the year would end up as most challenging, difficult, impactful and memorable in all the ways as spread of a virus paved way for a global pandemic named as corona virus 2019. Covid-19 is the infectious disease caused by the recently discovered corona virus. This virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in November 2019 and it became a global pandemic affecting almost all the countries. The world economy has seen its greatest fall ever as pandemic had largely impacted the growth of almost every nation and like other countries; India is also impacted by covid-19. This pandemic forced the entire world to enforce

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lockdown and this has made a significant impact on every individual and business. During this pandemic one of the major outcomes is allowing employees of many sectors to work from home and this move has brought tremendous changes on both employer and employees. Study is an effort to understand how work life is impacted by work from home during Covid-19 pandemic.

Covid-19 is stressful pandemic which has substantially affected employees and recent research speaks that 35% of employee productivity has fallen down after Covid-19 pandemic (Van Hoof, 2020). Pandemics drain cognitive resources and drive emotional exhaustion which affects employee engagement and reduces their ability to be proactive and when people were asked to work remotely, in the initial stage the expectations of work from home were of positive sign but over the passage of time it proved to be more of negative factor as millions of employees experienced it to be stressful and emotionally drained and found it out difficult to divide work and home time which impacted the desired results both for themselves and employers.

Objectives

1. To overview the work from home and work life balances during Covid-19.
2. To describe the impact of work from home on work life balance during Covid-19.

Scope

The article covers only the aspects of understanding the impact of work from home on work life balance during covid-19 pandemic and scope is confined only to working employees of Bengaluru, Karnataka who had work from home during Covid-19 pandemic.

Methodology

The study is exploratory and descriptive in nature which tries to explore work life balance and describes the impact of Covid-19 on work life balance. It is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data has been collected through structured questionnaire using simple random technique and secondary data has been obtained from news papers, articles, and research papers.

Sample Size

The sample size chosen for the study is 150 employees largely of IT sector who had work from home during covid-19 pandemic and majority of respondents are from Bengaluru, Karnataka,

Impact of work from home

- Work from home requires greater connectivity, server and continues supply of electricity but when employees are working from home by staying in remote places irregular connectivity,

lack of continues supply of electricity and server issues becomes a big challenge.

- Work from home intersects both personal and professional life and completing the task efficiently with family disturbances becomes very difficult.
- There is always a scope for improvement irrespective of knowledge and experience. Working in team helps in learning from each other but work from home leads to lack of direct contact between employees and creates less opportunities of learning from colleagues and rectifying mistakes.
- Monetary benefits are always means of encouragement at work places but covid-19 has made a negative impact on sales and profits of major sectors which has led to pay cut and lack of performance appraisal, evaluation. Incentives and increments are not being made during this pandemic.
- Pre pandemic environment had created two different schedules in which one was for work and another for life but work from home merged these two schedules and many of the employees found it hard to manage the challenges arises out of it and this has impact on their health both mentally and physically.
- Performing two tasks at a time do not bring efficiency and work from home has forced employees to perform working tasks and life tasks together which have resulted in lack of concentration and focus on completing the tasks.
- Better management of stress always brings good results for employees and employer and that is the reason why many of the reputed companies emphasise on team outing, celebrating festivals, gymnastic and conducting indoor and outdoor sports activities but work from home during covid-19 has forced employees not to be a part of these conduct.
- Women constitute a good portion working in different sectors and their work life balance is quite challenging as they need to have a stronger balance between both work and life. The working women who use to drop their children to day care had hard time as these care places were shut down temporarily and mothers needed to look after children and this forced them to have incomplete focus on either work or life.
- Work from home has influenced working women to make changes in household like day routine, modifying work pattern, redistribution of

household responsibilities among the household members, involving assistance in housework and obtaining outsources services.

- Society is an integral part of every human and it is a major stakeholder of every company and contribution of every employer towards the society always enhances goodwill and better reputation in the market. Before pandemic many companies used to organise blood donation camps, health camps, go green initiatives, rural development programmes as a part of social responsibility but work from home has put a hold for all these social services and keeps employees away from society.
- Women who were working as households and helpers has more difficulty during pandemic as every home tried to ensure social distance and kept everyone away from home. This move has forced majority of household employees to lose their jobs and find it hard to fulfil their necessities.
- Covid-19 has influences on adopting advance technology and using newer application which many were unaware of in the past. But learning new technological innovations and application takes more time and any error made using these applications is very difficult to trace and rectify.
- Working from home requires updates and good working hardware and software. Many companies managed to provide electronic devices such as laptops, computers, tabs and subscription to Wi-Fi and internet connectivity but the start ups, small and medium industries did not afford to provide these kind benefits and large amount of employees found it hard to buy on their own.
- While performing important tasks and dealing with client requires highest amount of concentration but work from home involves external factors like family disturbance and it really made employee lose concentration and reduced focus on these important tasks which in turn reduced efficiency and performance.
- For many employees work needs to be completed on time but work from home has made a negative impact on completion of tasks on time due to the influence of external factors.
- Training and development of new employees are always pre-requisites for desired performance irrespective of quality of hard and soft skills candidate posses. But during pandemic as many were recruited through online interviews and effective on the job trainings were not provided

and this has made impact on confidence of employees which in turn reduces their performance.

- Communication is life line of any organisation and better communication leads to effective results both for employees and employers but work from home during pandemic has created a very big gap in communication between both superiors and subordinates which may not be a good sign for future prospects.
- Documentation is always a proper proof of completing the tasks that too if it is in hard copies but due to work from home during covid-19 pandemic has made a impact of proper documentation as employees always lack clarity about documentation process.

Conclusion

Pandemics tend to bring challenges and Covid-19 is the most challenging pandemic which century has witnessed till date and has made an impact on every aspect. Employees tend to face challenges in all aspects under normal situation and work from home is an additional challenge which seems to be a blessing in the beginning but turned other way. better work life balance is always an important requirement of every human as it connects both career and life but Covid-19 pandemic has influenced work life balance as many found it difficult to create a balance and prioritise the career and life and found confusing on giving importance on balance as everything was under complete uncertainty about future during pandemic. It has made a impact in the way that there are family disturbances, technical issues like internet, serves, connectivity issues, lack of communication with superiors and subordinates, lack of effective concentration on performing tasks, lack of performance appraisal and hike in monetary benefits and lot more. In spite of these negative sides of work from home, it was inevitable to avoid the spread of covid-19 as work from home ensures social distance and protects everyone to expose to covid-19. As many companies who are depending on usage of advance technology are looking at work from home as a permanent practice to ensure cost management and broadening their network which is more of a positive sign for employers but as far as the employees are concerned the adoptability is the need of pandemic as they need to make a greater adjustment to their work and life to experience the positive signs of work from home which is not far from and the coming years will prove work from home to be positive.

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