The Impact of Work from Home During Covid-19 On It Employees

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Abstract: The pandemic COVID-19 which has taken all over the world has changed many parameters in the globe. This has made very difficult for people to gather at a place, which has led to changes in the working style of employees. The large proportion of employees are not able to commute to their work stations and gather there for work. This situation has brought a new phase to Work from home. Most of the employees have and are experiencing this Work from home (WFH). This situation has given a great importance to working from home. Although it has eased the people, it has its own advantages and disadvantages. This is also referred to as tele-work, remote work and so on. This has changed the present structure of working hours, style of working, conducting meetings, productivity, efficiency and so on. The impact of WFH on IT employees, its pros and cons, can we have this in future or how to implement it is indicated in this study.

Keywords: **Work From home, COVID-19, stress, pandemic, IT employees.**

I. Introduction

Corona Virus one of the novel virus has strike the whole world with its effect. This all started in the early 2020's where the first person found infected during December 2019 in China. Then WHO identified this as a new type of Virus i.e., SARS-CoV-2. This virus is causing the disease called as COVID-19. By the time world started realizing its impact, it had spread all over the world. This virus causes infections in nose, upper throat, sinus, fever, breathing problems, reduced oxygen levels and also leading to death. Though there are some symptoms known, still it is difficult to find out is the person infected or not without the test.(Wu, Chen, & Chan, 2020)

Some are symptomatic showing symptoms and some are asymptomatic where in no symptoms are seen but they are infected which is dangerous. This virus is posing challenge to the society in a very huge way which people had never thought of. So, to cope up with this situation and to keep ourselves safe a lot of changes have taken place in the world in terms of employment, working style, business, economic, cultural, political, legal and so on. And one such beautiful idea is work from home. This is not a new idea but this was not given much of importance prior to pandemic. This idea is again having a lot of impact on the employees be it in any sector. Some sectors are making a very good use of the Work from home, but few sectors where in the personal contact is required like marketing is not very feasible. In this study I have given importance to the IT employees to see what is the impact the work from home is having on them.

This generation people do not want to hit their workplace every morning. Everyone is looking for making things easier. Earlier the WFH concept was very constricted and a fantasy. Now this is a good move taken by the Government to prevent Corona Virus and break the chain. The outbreak of this pandemic has given more prominence to home working which has made the employers flexible to continue with their business. IT employees used to take one or two days WFH due to many reasons like personal work, health issue, bored to go to office and so on. But now the concept of WFH has completely changed due to this pandemic which has put the employees to work from home for almost a year. This has made the work at ease. Can start the work anytime, can take breaks, rest in between, spend time with family, stay in the native even in the remote places, need not stay in hostels, PG's, have good and hot food on

time and so on. So, to summarize WFH has given flexibility to the IT employees. (Dr. Akanksha Jaiswal, 2020)

Work from home or telecommuting will be successful and efficient when the workspace is set up properly, pass proper guidelines to the employees as well as the employers. The organization have to check the requirements of their employees for the WFH and keep them motivated.

It is also seen to that the characteristics of employees differ from working in organizations and that of working from home. (**Kira Rupietta, Michael Beckmann**).

In this period of COVID-19 the world is going through the economic crisis due to the few lockdowns, shutdown of companies and factories. Most of them have even lost their jobs due to the problems faced by the employers. The small wage workers have all lost their bread for many days. Most of the organizations are unable to finish their projects due the unavailability of employees as many are scared to come, most of them stuck in the native, few are tested positive for COVID and the government rules alongside. In this view the companies started exploring this wonderful option of work from home. The WFH is having many effects which could be positive like more creativity in the employees, flexibility, bonding with the family and so on. Negative aspects like more stress, no proper working hours, increased working hours, less productivity, disturbance and so on. Though the employees are have got the flexibility, it is in their hands to take it positively or negatively and have a good work life balance. (Nakrošienė, 2019)

II. Review of literature:

1. According to Kira Rupietta, Michael Beckmann, very few employees were taking WFH prior to the lockdowns. So, it's very important for the employers to know the characteristics of employees during work from home. Most of the employees have got freedom while working from home, contrastingly there are challenges and potential problems as well. The employees are even saving lot of operating cost at the same time the employees are going through personal and professional isolation.

2. According to Dr. Akanksha Jaiswal, Dr. C. Joe Arun, they insist on the organizations getting adapted to the drastic changes in this situation. They have used organizational adaptation theory with respect to the work from home and post lockdown. They also emphasize on the increased creativity in the employees due to work from home as they are finding some time for their personal development. The psychological impact on this crisis on the attitude and well-being of employees should be characterized.

3. According to Jodi Oakman* , Natasha Kinsman, Rwth Stuckey, Melissa Graham and Victoria Weale , emphasis in the study is given on physical and mental health of employees who are working at home. There is an evidence that there is negative impact on the mental health of the employees who are working at home. Employees feeling isolated, operational cost, heating, cooling cost and the telecommuting cost involved.

4. According to Reshma, P. S. Aithal, Shailashree V. T. and P. Sridhar Acharya, just like the e-education, they are emphasizing on online office model its advantages to customers, employees and service providers.

5. According to A. M. Dockery and Sherry Bawa, work from is becoming a barrier between work and family, where the employees are not able to give in good time

to either work or family. Women employees are not able to balance between work and house work as working at home they are distracted by household chores and not able to finish both.

6. According to Elizabeth Hamilton, the employees feel that work from home is a privilege given by the organization to them. At the same time, they also feel that they owe more to the organization as they have been given flexibility in their work. Working from home is allowing employees feel the luxury and can help family with the work and deal with the emergencies at home. It is difficult for the managers to measure the productivity and efficiency of employees as they cannot watch is being done.

7. According to Nektarios Karanikas & John Paul Cauchi, the work from home can be successful only if it is mutually accepted by both employees and employers. The employees have to come up with the personal strategies to cope up with the difficulties in working from home. Telecommunication shouldn't be taken for granted and explicit guidelines have to be passed and there should be good management in place. Effective communication should be there between employee and employer.

8. According to Nakrošienė, A., Bučiūnienė, I., & Goštautaitė, B, Telecommuting is considered as alternative way of work, where different domain employees receive different kind of advantages and disadvantages. Women and old employees are not receiving much of advantage. Supervisors work is found to play an important role. This is a research telling that not all telecommuters are benefitted.

III.   Advantages:

Advantages of employees working from home

The impact of increasing number of days and the number of employees working from home as a preventive measure for COVID-19, these are some of the advantages that the employees are fetching out of the current situation.

- Flexibility: Working from home has given more flexibility to the employees where they can start and end their work as when possible but finish the deadlines accordingly. Can have breaks in between, dress however they want, work where ever they are. (nibusinessinfo.co.uk, n.d.)

- Reduced Commuting time: Work from home has certainly reduced the commuting time and cost from home to the work place. Nowadays the increasing traffic has made the minimum commuting time to 2 hours. When the commuting time is more, the efficiency and the productivity will come down. Due to the Work from home this time has gone down to zero, and this time can be used productively.

- Better employee retention: Retaining the employees has become better compared to the previous times, as more flexibility is given to the employees which can help them give time for family, reduced commuting time, childcare can be taken which is bringing good bonding with the family.

- Recruiting new talents: Most of the people who can work from home and are not able to hit the offices, can be attracted very easily and the new talents can be added to the company. This will add as a competitive advantage to the company as the company will be having talented employees.

- Increase in the productivity: it is been observed that the employees are working for longer hours than before which is in turn increasing the efficiency and productivity and leading to good results.

- .Increased staff motivation: The work from home has given a feeling of trust and loyalty in minds of employees. There is no one watching the employees out at home, which gives them a sense of positivity and freedom to work in ease.

- Increased employee health: the wellbeing and health of employees is increased as there is no stress of commuting which will in turn give some time for employees to exercise, keep them fit, free from pollution, have meals on time.

- Save cost: The employees are able to save the cost on commuting like petrol, diesel, bus or train charges. The employees are getting tax reliefs for WFH due to COVID-19 like utility bills, internet charges, rent, phone bills and so on.

- Increased Convenience: The employees are offered with more convenience by working from their places by saving time and costs. This is more of the case implied to the marketing sector where they need to visit the customers often. So, if they can work from home. they feel more motivated and convenient to work.

- Good Work life balance: Work from home is giving better work life balance to the employees by sharing work at home like washing the dishes during lunch or dinner break, helping in household chores and so on.

- .Reduced leaves: the employees have reduced taking leaves often. There are very less chances of negative impact on the health which has reduced the sick or medical leaves. The employees are able to do some of the personal work even without taking leaves with the help of WFH. (Jodi Oakman*, 2020)

- Easy to have meetings: The booming technology has made it easier for the employees to have meetings using many applications like Skype, Google meet, Microsoft teams, Zoom and likewise. Meetings can be held and attended any time and any place with convenience.

- More Creativity: Employees have got a lot of time for their pending work. They have also got time for their personal development and to showcase more creativity in their work. (nibusinessinfo.co.uk, n.d.)

IV.Disadvantages

1. Isolated: Employees are feeling more isolated and lonelier. Especially people who are not staying with their families were at least getting along with their colleagues. But now that is not being possible, employees are feeling low and isolated. (Nakrošienė, 2019)

2. Poor Network Connection: Most of the employees who have gone to the villages and remote places and even in the cities sometimes are facing lot of network issues due to which the productivity is going low. The employees are not bale to work when the connection is lost which doesn't occur at the work stations.

3. Work related stress: Though flexible timings is a boon on the other hand it's a bane. Some of the meetings are going to be conducted untimely which is disturbing the sleep pattern. Long working hours, skipping meals due to meetings is creating a lot of stress among the employees.

4. Perception matters: WFH is not acceptable by everyone. Some prefer to work at home and some at work stations. Employees who have children at home might not be able to work soundly due to lot disturbances. Most of the employees who

do not want to mix their work and personal life might not be very likely with the WFH.

5. Cost of working from home: There is internet cost, setting up the work space cost involved which could be difficult to bear at times.

6. Lack of motivation: Employees kind of feel demotivated working from home. Lack of proper work space, not able to finish work on time, distractions, cost, feeling isolated are making the employees feel demotivated to work from home.

7. Lot of Distraction: Employees get distracted at home due to kids, they have to be taken care if the other parent is also working. Disturbing TV sounds, people at home taking the employee's work for granted and don't support for the work. All these factors are creating distraction to the employees and not allowing to them to work efficiently.

8. No proper work space: Most of the employees are unable to set up the proper workspace as like in the offices. This is affecting their physical health like neck pain, spinal problems, eye stress and so on. There are lot of ergonomic issues the employees are facing. Cost of setting up the work space is also high like the tables, chair, ports and so on.

9. Lack of team spirit: the team spirit and working with groups is lacking as everyone has to meet virtually. The employees are not able to meet each other and discuss and work together. This is in turn reducing the staff morale. (Reshma, 2015)

V. Discussion:

COVID-19 a pandemic that is created in the world has given raise to many beginnings and has also given new phases to many existing. One such is Work from home a fancy and fantasy that all IT employees are going through. Till date it's been already a year that the IT employees are working from home. Some are enjoying and some of them are waiting for the companies to call them to the work stations. It all depends on the perception of the individual in taking WFH. There are both advantages and disadvantages in WFH. The one which is an advantage to an employee might be a disadvantage to the other. Like some may face network issue and some might not, few got a fabulous time to get bonded with their families and work efficiently now and few are getting disturbed by the family while working. So, it's merely what an individual is going through and cannot tell these are definitely the pros or cons. As discussed above are some of the pros and cons of Work from Home on IT employees. (Kannamani R2, 2018)

Its very important for the companies to do a proper survey on their employees, their willingness towards the WFH, difficulties that they are facing and so on. A proper periodical survey will help companies also to get to know about their employees and also the employees feel Companies have to come up with few virtual programs to keep the employees connected and motivated. Programs related to health like yoga, aerobics, exercise sessions then welfare programs. Some of the companies have sent the computer systems, chair, and other requirements to their employees. But some of the employees placed in their rural areas haven't received this service which is again a disadvantage. So the companies have to come up with alternatives to check the difficulties faced by employees.

Based on the advantages and disadvantages the employees are facing, some companies are doing well and some aren't doing well. This is again having an indirect impact on the job of the employees.

VI.Conclusion:

In a nutshell, this conceptual paper emphasizes on the impact of Work from home during Covid -19 on the IT employees. This pandemic by bringing new phases to many things has also brought many changes in the working style which has led to almost a year of work from home. The work from home is having both the positive and the negative sides and it all depends on the individuals and perception of the employees. This perception will lead to how employees are reacting towards it and this can be seen through their efficiency, productivity.

 Some of the advantages discussed are flexible working time, reduced commuting efforts, employee health, bonding with family members, time for personal development and so on.

Some of the disadvantages are employees feel isolated, less motivated, reduced team spirit, distraction, cost of working at home, work related stress and so on.

To cope up with this the companies have to come up with the strategies to turn the coin to their side and make things work effectively.
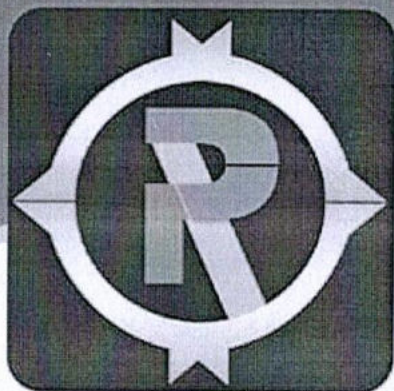
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