

**An Inclusive Analysis on Work from Home Culture for Citizens of Navi
Mumbai amid COVID-19 Pandemic**

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Abstract

There has been a complete paradigm shift in Indian working culture as the series of lockdowns were enforced to protect lives from deadly corona crisis. Only the essential service workers were allowed to attain offices and all other were requested to follow work from home. Thus, this seems to be new for many of the professions and all became possible due to digital platforms. There have been both positive and negative impacts drawn from the new culture of work from home. Though it is a common practice in many multinational companies and the percentage is still lower as compared seen increasing during the pandemic outburst. Homeworking is one initiative that has been promoted as a way of improving the work–life balance. But then there exists lot many challenges on technological, social and infrastructural fronts. If work life ends up looking similar to pre-COVID times, with some number of workers still regularly going to an office and others going in sometimes or not at all, promotions may hinge on what’s normal for each employee’s work unit. Work-from-anywhere arrangements could be even better for productivity than working from home, depending on the type of work. This study is based on primary data collected via random sampling method from 550 respondents across Navi Mumbai. The literature reviews help to understand that there have been studies in past but not much on the current crisis of pandemic. Thus, such a study would help to understand the paradigm shift in working culture in Indian scenario from setback to comeback. This explores the question of whether working (or not) from home improves people’s capacity to balance their work and life commitments. This study is explorative in nature, which outcomes demonstrating challenges and probable solutions to the adoption of work from home culture and increasing dependencies on digital platforms.

Keywords: Virtual collaboration, remote working, working from home, digitalization, COVID-19.

Objective

To understand the feasibility of Remote work/ Work from home from employee's perspective and the effect on employee's mental health, and domestic violence, especially after the Corona-19 Pandemic. The focus is on the Indian context. Remote working/ Work from home has seen a boom since the pandemic. The term feasibility of this study is not restricted to Financial feasibility but imbibes technological and infrastructural too. Acceptability, availability and adoption are the major aspects to be dealt with while looking for paradigm shift.

Introduction

(Covid-19 and Work from Home in India) Remote working/ (Singh, Myadam, & Varghese, 2017) Telecommuting, has been around for some time more dominantly in the Developed countries followed by the developing countries and Virtual collaboration is a naturally arising requirement of this phenomenon. Numerous reasons exist behind it including but not limited to Digitization, Internet and Technical challenges, etc. (Singh, Myadam, & Varghese, 2017) Work from home has both positive and negatives effects on Employer's and employee's perspective. Yahoo and IBM are two contracts, Yahoo had banned Work from home and IBM has found it beneficial having seen an increase of productive work hours to 57 from 38 hours. (Government of India Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (Department of Personnel and Training), 2020)(IANS, 2020)(Coronavirus: The world in lockdown in maps and charts, n.d.) With the Covoid-19 Pandemic around and the lockdown being put in place, Work from home and Digitization are being encouraged by governments and have become the limelight today across the globe. (Kemp, 2020)(Perez, 2020) Use of Social media has increased during the lockdown which is a credible source of distraction if not utilized effectively and in a regulated manner during Remote working/ Work from home. (Chandler, 2020)(Impact of COVID-19 on the Video Conferencing Market, 2020 - ResearchAndMarkets.com, 2020) Use of Fintech and Video conferencing applications has increased during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Collaboration and Teamwork can be done through (Covid-19 and Work from Home in India). Data security plays a deeper role in Remote working/ work from home concept due to organizational threats along with Data Redundancy due to the higher cost of Information Technology maintenance requirements. Modification of Labour Laws and Statutory acts along with adequate technological advancements may support the work from home culture. Feasibility of work from home concept basis multiple factors including Lifestyle, Culture, Socio-economic needs, Demographic factors, Objectives, Family background, Industry, Nature of work, etc. Many employers in India do not pay for the costs incurred for remote working like Internet bills, (Reimagine productivity with Microsoft Teams & Microsoft 365, n.d.) collaboration software, etc to date. (Mirji & Gupta, 2011) Another challenge in the Indian context in Work from home is the average size of Indian homes and the number of

family members staying in the house. (Human Resources Office, University of California) The procedure for assessing the feasibility of Remote work starts with Evaluating the organizational and departmental requirements followed by assessing the eligibility of employees under consideration and evaluating job activities to be completed. (Jena & Mohanty, 2016) Role Overload, Role Interface, Work to Family Interface, Work interface, Work-life conflict, Work-spillover, are crucial terms that can be the basis of mental health while working remotely. In India, women have always faced a higher work-life conflict due to the role they play in typical Indian families. Recognizing and accepting their role as not only caretakers of the family but also Co-providers financially can help reduce domestic violence on remotely working women. Supportive partners and families can play a crucial role in ensuring remotely working women's mental health. In India, often things are better when grandparents help out with managing children. Organizations know that their employee's mental health affects them and thus offer various alternative work arrangement, sports/recreation, family-care, and money-based benefits. (Mirji & Gupta, 2011) Having a positive work-life balance is very important in the long run to avoid any health issues like cardiovascular disease, sexual health problems, weaker immune system, frequent headache, backache, insecurity, etc. Abnormal eating, drinking, and smoking habits are also an impact of unwell mental health. (Essential guide to working from home) Certain resources and tips can help organize employees organize their remote workplaces for higher efficiency and effectiveness.

Since traditionally, (Mirji & Gupta, 2011) Yoga and meditation, have been believed to be highly effective in helping establish a higher degree of concentration, they can be very useful in remote/ work from home scenarios. (Ghani, 2018) Home-based workers from the informal sector in Pakistan and other countries are unprotected and are exposed to economic and social abuse from family and middlemen. (Choudhary, 2020) Gender bias exists in India work from home – work stations. Most men have a dedicated workspace and women do not. Incidents of Digital sexual harassment – sharing inappropriate: voice and text messages, personal pictures, clothing or no clothing during video calls, etc, have cropped up during Work from home at its peak in India. With peaking Remote/ Work from home, the need for the regular POSH act (Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace–Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) sessions, has increased. (Smith & Johnson, 2020) Remotely working women can be saved from organizational abuse by their male counterparts in senior positions by repeatedly vouching for them reminding the organization of their importance, by ensuring their voices are heard in meetings, and they do not feel dominate, and left out, ensuring transparency regarding important information that affect their jobs, and equally distributing virtual office household work. All the above points have been developed keeping in mind the cultural, social, and behavioural factors of both the genders in mind along with the additional challenge of working remotely.

Communication Channels & their Capability for Remote working		
Sr	Communication Channel	Best Utility

No		
1	Voice/ Video Call	Relationship building Discussing sensitive & difficult topics
2	Video Conferencing	Problem-solving Co-creation using shared screen/ whiteboard
3	Chat	Process syndication Updates
4	Video & Voice notes	Explaining work Guidance for the team in limited time from manager After meeting debriefs
5	E-mail	Updates at Departmental/ Organization level groups Formal records

Table 1: (Bick, Chang, Wang, & Yu, 2020) Communication Channels & their Capability for Remote working

Digitization - High Efficiency & Effectiveness			
Sr No	Work Category	Utility	Examples
1	Content creation	Document creation & editing in teams Central repository	G suite Confluence Miro
2	Video conferencing	Problem solving & discussions Planning & reviews Workshops & training	Webex Microsoft Teams Google meets Skype
3	Document sharing	Sharing files & documents Central repository Version control	Dropbox Business Baidu Cloud Disk Sharepoint
4	Channel-based communication	Process syndication Relationship building Stream-based repository	WeChat Business Basecamp Google Hangouts
5	Task Management	Tracking & Assigning Backlog prioritization Performance management	Smartsheet Microsoft Planner Basecamp
6	Polling	Interactive presentations Retrospectives Engagements	Kahoot Slido Mentimeter

Table 2: (Bick, Chang, Wang, & Yu, 2020) Digitization helping High Efficiency & Effectiveness

Literature review

(Covid-19 and Work from Home in India) Highlights the different challenges of Work from home culture including Lack of training of Managerial staff to control and monitor remote

teams, increase in complexity of wage computation due to minimum wage laws, record maintenance of overtime hours, higher compliance costs, Lack of adequate recognition by Indian Labour laws, and Statutory acts, etc. (Singh, Myadam, & Varghese, 2017) Shared both the positive and negative aspects of Work from home from the Employer's and employee's perspective based on demographic factors like age, income, etc, work-life balance, freedom, professionalism, supervision, monitoring, traveling time, deadlines, procrastination, isolation, communication gap, flexible working ways, creativity, day to day activities, body language, working etiquette, credibility technology, culture, distractions, and infrastructure. (Human Resources Office, University of California) Provides a structure for assessing the feasibility of Remote Work during the Novel Coronavirus 2019 pandemic and provides short guidelines. (Jena & Mohanty, 2016) Talks about how increasing demands leading to increasing stress levels and increasing family levels, have made it difficult to cope with work and family lives. Concludes by stating that present-day organizations must create a flexible environment to help employees cope with work and family together and witness a reducing Attrition rate. (Government of India Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (Department of Personnel and Training), 2020)(IANS, 2020)(Coronavirus: The world in lockdown in maps and charts, n.d.) Elaborate on how Governments across the globe are encouraging Work from home and Digitization post the Corona 2019 Pandemic.

(Kemp, 2020)(Perez, 2020)(Chandler, 2020)(Impact of COVID-19 on the Video Conferencing Market, 2020 - ResearchAndMarkets.com, 2020) Talk about the usage of Social media, Fintech, and Video calling applications during the Corona-19 Pandemic. (Reimagine productivity with Microsoft Teams & Microsoft 365, n.d.) Costing of Microsoft Office 365 Office pack – common collaboration software. (Mirji & Gupta, 2011) Talks about. (Essential guide to working from home) Mentions remote workplace tips. (Bick, Chang, Wang, & Yu, 2020) Mentions different Communication channels and Utility resources. (Ghani, 2018) Talks about the domestic violence home-based working women face. (Choudhary, 2020) Talks about Gender biases and an increase in incidents of Digital Sexual harassment in India during peak Work from home times. (Smith & Johnson, 2020) Talks about men can support their female colleagues working remotely.

Gaps identified:

1. Gender
2. Age (Years)
3. Occupation
4. What media are you using to get an update of Corona?
5. This Lockdown has brought a big change in the daily routine.
6. Managing work from home and household responsibility is making life miserable.
7. Working from home is difficult during this phase of lockdown.
8. A lot of communication and collaboration gaps during work are being faced.
9. Quality and Quantity of work is affected.

10. Face a lot of distractions during work at home.
11. Getting internet access is also a big challenge during this lockdown phase.
12. Working efficiently at home along with household work is difficult.
13. Team working is impossible due to a lack of control over the team.
14. Creating a work environment at home is impossible.
15. Task completion and deadlines of work are affected.

Research methodology

This is explorative research. Mentioning the major aims, this study used both qualitative and quantitative methods that are a mixed-method having an amalgamation of primary and secondary sources. The qualitative data chains the quantitative data analysis and results. We have collected data through a survey via random sampling method from 550 respondents within the geographical location of Navi Mumbai. Subsequently, the survey fashioned valuable data which was indispensable to reach the study objectives. The result gained is triangulated since the academician used the qualitative and quantitative data types in the data analysis. The learning entails a sequence of well-structured questionnaires from respondents who are working from home due to series of pandemic lockdowns. This data analysis on SPSS 22.0 emphasizes on numerical/quantitative data analysis and completed using cross-tabulation/chi-square and correlation. Thus, this design proposes a profile of designated relevant aspects of the phenomena of interest from a student, academicians, employees working from home and academic establishments who adopted to online modes looking into the security aspects. Therefore, this study design assisted in pleat data from a mixed range of respondents present on virtual working culture podia. Work form home is a naïve concept for most of the Indian. The consistency of interrelationship between variables is tested via Cranach's alpha as shown in table 1. The reliability of internal variables is measured based on Cronbach's alpha value. The reliability coefficient of 0.75 is well-thought-out "acceptable" in most research conditions.

Data analysis and findings

Table 1. Reliability Test

		N	%
Cases	Valid	549	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	549	100.0

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.750	15

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Hypothesis:

- H₀:** There exists a statistical correlation between Remote working/ Work from home in terms of feasible.
- H₁:** There exists no statistical correlation between Remote working/ Work from home in terms of feasible.

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Lockdown has brought a big change in the daily routine * Working from home is difficult during this phase of lockdown	549	100.0%	0	0.0%	549	100.0%

Crosstabulation

Count					Total
	1	2	3	4	
1	141	25	44	0	210
2	166	78	63	6	313
3	7	0	0	0	7
4	6	0	6	7	19
Total	320	103	113	13	549

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	128.560 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	70.047	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	21.412	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	549		

a. 8 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .17.

As the Pearson Chi-Square significant level is $0.00 < 0.05$ from the results driven thus null hypothesis H₀ is accepted and alternate hypothesis H₁ is rejected showing average fit. Thus, we conclude that there exists There exists a statistical correlation between Remote working/ Work from home in terms of feasible. Lockdown has brought a big change in the daily routinelif e andthus working from home is difficult during this phase of lockdown. There are good number of challenges in such adoption and both the facilitator and learner have to bear highest degree of engagement cum retention rate while working from home.

2. **H₀**: There exists a statistical correlation between difficulties in working from home during lockdowns and creationof work environment at home at times.
H₁: There exists no statistical correlation between difficulties in working from home during lockdowns and creationof work environment at home at times.

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Difficulties in working from home during lockdowns * Creation of work environment at home at times	549	100.0%	0	0.0%	549	100.0%

Crosstabulation

Count					Total
	1	2	3	4	
1	232	27	61	0	320
2	54	36	13	0	103
3	64	6	37	6	113
4	0	0	0	13	13
Total	350	69	111	19	549

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	447.257 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	174.006	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	55.851	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	549		

a. 5 cells (31.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .45.

As the Pearson Chi-Square significant level is $0.00 < 0.05$ from the results driven thus null hypothesis H_0 is accepted and alternate hypothesis H_1 is rejected showing average fit. Thus, we conclude that there exists a statistical correlation between difficulties in working from home during lockdowns and creation of work environment at home at times. Lockdown has brought a big change in the daily routine life and thus working from home is difficult during this phase of lockdown at times. At times there exist lack of preparation / availability of proper infra at home to support work from home and thus proves difficult at times.

Conclusion

Indeed, we trust that work from home have been a saviour during the series of lockdowns amid pandemic disruption of COVID-19 worldwide. Our nation also practiced the same and to the best level only excluding the essential services where physically one has to be present. This is a new work cultural change and thus imbibes some of the difficulties at times. Somehow, we tried to overcome the same and survive the critical lapse. Work form home is a common practice in some of the companies in India but during these time line of lockdown many adopted to this mode due to lack of any other option. There exist technological, infrastructural and acceptance challenges. Connectivity followed by productivity is another challenge that have huge impact on the businesses. Some how we say that in new normal this may be a common practice. However, many other benefits yet to be identified with time to come in near future.

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