

# MAJOR PROJECT REPORT ON

## Work From Home: A Boon or Bane?

Session 2019-21



**UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF:**

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At

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# CERTIFICATE

This is to certify dissertation report titled “Work From Home: A Boon or A Bane” is a bonafide work carried out by **Nitasha Balani** of **EMBA 2019-21** and submitted to Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, Bawana Road, Delhi-42 in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Masters of Business Administration.

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# DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled “Work from Home: A Boon or Bane?” under the guidance of Mr. Saurabh Agrawal submitted in the fulfilment of degree of Executive Master of Business Administration from Delhi School of Management, DTU. This is my original work and this project work has not formed the basis for the award of any degree to the best of my knowledge.

The information and data given in the report is authentic to the best of my knowledge.

This report is not being submitted to any other University, for award of any other Degree, Diploma or Fellowship.

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# Abstract

Work from Home (WFH) has been a communal concept since a long time.

When the Internet flooded the entire telecommuting world , work from home took a different place in the giant way. It used to be considered as a convenient option where in families/individuals were able to combine their workspace and homework with the belief that they can maintain their personal and official needs simultaneously and efficiently.

In these precedented times, this convenient option has curved out as more of a compulsion or as an obligation.

COVID-19 epidemic has not only impacted the economic, social or health areas. It has also formed an unprecedented prospect : for running the entire workplace . This practice is yielding captivating visions that have noteworthy implications/ consequences for the mode we should organize our work.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to analyse that WFH (Work from home) which was used to be considered as a convenient option or as a privilege now how during the Covid-19 phase, it has made the lives more complex/complicated than making it a serenity. This project also tries to adjudge or analyse the problems or issues that are faced by different employees of different sectors like (IT/ITES Sector, Education Sector and Service Sector) while performing the work from home and how it is impacting the mental wellbeing of any individual.

In addition to that, this project also tries to analyse what would be the future model of working and how employers need to take care of the social connectivity and mental well-being.

## Approach

The methodology used for this project was through the survey, where the population range from 30yrs to 55 yrs of age.

The employees from different sectors were considered in the survey, the detailed explanation of the methodology is provided in the respective chapter of the Project.

## Findings

The project is divided into two sections, first in order to understand the satisfaction level of the employees in the different sector and we found several findings with respect to those employees:

- ❖ **IT sector:** Average satisfaction but with every new target, stress level increases
- ❖ **Educational Sector:** Higher dissatisfaction due to lack of f2f interactions between the educators/faculties and the students. In addition to the entire shift in the technology also led some kind of high stress levels among both the parties.
- ❖ **Service Sector:** As compared to the other sectors, in the service sector, the overall satisfaction level is high . However, the employees still feel some lack in time management which could lead to the increase in the stress levels.

Findings show that WFH (work from home) is a pragmatic choice for the future.

Also, we have identified that the future work model would be a **Hybrid model**. There won't be 100% remote working , and the employers have to maintain the solutions for the social connectivity and mental well- being too.

The detailed analysis is defined in the “Analysis” section of this project, where in the satisfaction analysis is defined for each respective sector . In addition to that, the solutions are also defined that may be placed in the

organisations to support the hybrid model and social & mental well-being of the employees.

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# Introduction

## Background

Knowledge workers were able to work at any time and from any location because to ICT.

Since the beginning of telecommunication technology, working from different locations other than the core physical offices has been possible . WFH (working from home or at customer's sites) was mostly prevalent among the management and technology consultants. Apart from those, other professions specially the educational sector have mainly worked from the physical offices only.

In order to reduce employees' risk from a COVID-19 virus, numerous organizations intreated their employees to WFH from last year March 2020. Indeed, for many of the employees, working from home increased professed stress due to distorting restrictions between work and personal life.

## Objective & Scope of Study:

COVID-19 has demonstrated the power of organisations. Many companies were able to get more than 90% of their employees to work remotely just days after the unique coronavirus infection was officially declared a pandemic. Jobs we never believed could be done from home, such as call centre operator, financial trader, and many others, were suddenly and successfully conducted from home.

The purpose of this project is to analyse that WFH (Work from home) which was used to be considered as a convenient option or as a privilege now how during the Covid-19 phase, it has made the lives more complex/complicated than making it a serenity. This project also tries to adjudge or analyse the problems or issues that are faced by different employees of different sectors like (IT/ITES Sector, Education Sector and Service Sector) while performing the work from home and how it is impacting the mental wellbeing of any individual.

In addition to that, this project also tries to analyse what would be the future model of working and how employers need to take care of the social connectivity and mental well-being.

The employees from different sectors were considered in the survey, the detailed explanation of the methodology is provided in the respective chapter of the Project.

## Literature Review:

Working from home has several advantages, including protection from Coronavirus outbreaks and the elimination of commute time. However, experts warn that unwittingly working longer hours might disrupt the work-life cycle and negatively influence employees' mental health.

Women begin working for a variety of reasons, one of which is to provide financial assistance for their families. As the world becomes more competitive, it is becoming increasingly important for women to work as well.

Job from home grew in popularity as the world got more resource-constrained, and employees all over the world made full use of the technology at their disposal to meet their work requirements.

In February 2013, Yahoo's CEO, Marisa Mayer, issued a directive prohibiting workers from working from home. Employees thought the prohibition was unjust. They, along with others, contended that working from home aided employees, particularly married employees with children, in balancing work and family life.

As per the saying goes, any technology if over used has its own consequences, likewise, there are personal and psychological consequences of home-based work (Ahrentzen;1992; Gurstein, 1991) which include personality as well as developed strategies for working from home (Anderson, 1998; Gurstein, 1991; Lamond, 2000). A study in one of the papers revealed that many people who took part in the research had developed numerous strategies for coping with motivation, isolation and stress. These included: developing support networks with colleagues, setting personal targets for the completion of work; making appointments to socialise with friends or relatives, taking part in regular social activities outside of the home and developing daily and/or weekly work timetables or schedules. Personal time became fragmented for some homeworkers.(work Life balance , crossbie : Moore).

Many multinational companies across the globe have repeatedly highlighted work from home as an employee benefit that they provide. Further, companies even

portray work from home as a privilege given to employees (Mescher et al 2010), even at a cost to the employer.

As per an article: From a News Paper from UAE suggests that some employees consider work from home as a boon even-though it has increased their work pressure exclusively by leaps and bounds. Current job is centred around less face to face meetings and more web meetings and the entire world is following that now. The employee thinks the cut in commute time, the sustainability of working from home and the reduction in stress, is a complete boon. Another employee interviewed from the same company said that “But there is also the issue of work-life balance as work has spilled much beyond nine hours and I find myself answering mails and conducting meetings way past my normal office timings. I think in terms of physical and mental health, we need to recalibrate and reallocate our time well so we truly enjoy the benefit of working from home” even though work from home seems good it does affect the work life balance in a large way .

In a magazine, A lecturer was interviewed regarding online classes and he believed remote learning is a challenge for senior teaching faculty who had to undergo intensive training for the transition. Moreover, the effect of face to face learning and teaching is better than the online platform. A recent research was done in the year 2018 In Baylor University on working from home as the opportunity to work stress-free and the research showed that “If something stressful happens at work, a person who is high on emotional stability would take it in stride, remain positive and figure out how to address it. A person low on emotional stability might get frustrated and discouraged, expending energy with those emotions instead of on the issue at hand,” The research further concluded that working from home seemed to suit those employees reporting high levels of autonomy and emotional stability the best, with employees reporting high levels of job autonomy with lower levels of emotional stability appearing to be more susceptible to strain. Apparently working from home isn't stress-free.

On further readings there are some articles which could see both the positive and negative side of work from home. The overall positive opinion shows that the Remote working can result in more productivity – Remote workers feel less stressed or less watched and hence able to work better. When people work from home, they are away from office distractions, such as noise and interruption from colleagues. This helps them to focus more and get their work done more efficiently. It is highly beneficial in saving a lot of travel expenses, could make time flexible and hope that the work life balance is made successful.

In general, the drawbacks outnumber the pros, such as loneliness and being cut off from typical face-to-face communication in teams, working more than the authorised hours, and the necessity to be on call and work 24/7.

Many individuals believe that working from home allows them to achieve a better work-life balance, but this is rarely the case. Irregular sleep patterns disrupt the biological cycle, increase stress and sadness, and reduce quality time spent with family.

Communication and collaboration stumbling blocks – When coworkers and colleagues work from their homes, effective communication, team building, and bonding can be difficult to achieve. Every move becomes planned and thought through, and the sense of spontaneity is lost. Building a company's culture can be difficult.

Learning and acquiring abilities from seniors is also difficult. Knowledge transmission and other induction-related content is treated as a segment rather than a practical experience gained via day-to-day interactions.

Another issue with working from home is that operational managers find it difficult to complete their jobs and duties. Network connectivity difficulties, internet speed, and other factors can all obstruct a process's seamless operation.

Work from home, which was primarily introduced with the goal of assisting working women, is now being observed that the work strain on working women, particularly mothers, is far greater than it needs to be. Women are still expected to satisfy the responsibilities and demands of each family member while still meeting formal employment goals.

So, from a woman's perspective, working from home has become even more difficult and more of a responsibility, at the expense of her mental and physical health, adding to her misery.

## Framework

The methodology used for this project was through the survey, where the population range from 30yrs to 55 yrs of age.

The employees from different sectors were considered in the survey, the detailed explanation of the methodology is provided in the respective chapter of the Project.

The questionnaires were self-designed & consisted various items which were mainly based on different criteria's (5). The considered criteria's can be described as follows:

- a) **Work Productivity/Working Efficiency** - This Criterion determines how efficient the employees feel when they are doing work from home. The higher they rate ; higher would be the satisfaction levels.
- b) **General pressure/stress level**- Stress is the body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response. The body reacts to these changes with physical, mental, and emotional responses. Stress is a normal part of life. You can experience stress from your environment, your body, and your thoughts. General Stress level tends to pull down the overall satisfaction of a candidate.
- c) **Personal Commitments**- In this criterion we are assessing how conveniently is the employee able to fulfil all his family responsibilities along with his office work culture. If the employee is showing higher discrepancy in work and family obligations, then he is not satisfied, as it adds to more pressure to his or her stress levels.
- d) **WLB i.e. Work - Life Balance** – It involves looking at how working people manage time spent at and outside of work. Time outside of work may include managing relationships, family responsibilities, and other outside interests and hobbies.
- e) **Good Time Management**- Time management is the process of organizing and planning how to divide your time between specific activities. Good time management enables you to work smarter – not harder – so that you get more done in less time, even when time is tight, and pressures are high. This criterion also helps us to understand whether the employee is able to reach his deadlines on time so that he doesn't have much of lagging work and can equally balance between office time, sleep timings and family time when he is working from home.

These criteria's help in deciding whether Working from Home is a Boon or a Bane.

## **Data Collection:**

The data was mainly collected from different working sectors. These are :

- ❖ IT/ITES Sector,
- ❖ Educational Sector,
- ❖ Service Sector.

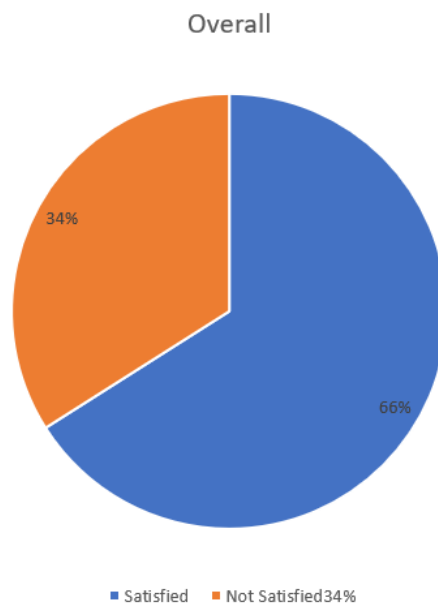
The data collected was based on the above criteria's which are mentioned in the above section. Quantitative analysis was done individually for every sector.

# Analysis and Interpretation

The Survey was conducted among employees belonging to different sectors: IT/ITES Corporate Sector, Educational Sector and Services Sector.

This poll was completed by both female and male employees. The analysis was carried out manually in Excel, with the overall Work from Home satisfaction and dissatisfaction percentages computed.

While looking at the holistic results we found the overall satisfaction percentage was 63 % and overall percentage of dissatisfaction was 37% respectively (Figure-1) when it comes for work from home.



*Figure 1: Overall Rate*

This indicates: that work from home has been more of a boon but when we individually look into the sectors, we find that the levels of satisfaction percentage vary. The discussion further would be on individual analysis of each sector based on the Work from Home (WfH) satisfaction levels as per the mentioned criteria.



## IT/ITES Sector:

Employees in this industry are generally satisfied, with a satisfaction rate of 66.72 percent. Personal commitments, which account for 76.86 percent of their happiness, are followed by job efficiency, which accounts for 69.53 percent, work-life balance, which accounts for 66.55 percent, and good time management, which accounts for 64.16 percent wherein general pressure/stress levels at 57.29% respectively.

When we dig deeper into this data, we discover that the distinction between general pressure/stress levels, time management, and work-life balance isn't as clear. If this tendency continues, the employee's general pressure/stress levels will rise, resulting in a decline in performance and a negative influence on his or her satisfaction levels.

Sector:	IT/ITES	
Criteria's	Satisfied %	Not Satisfied %
Working Efficiency	69.5%	30.5%
Personal Commitments	76.9%	23.1%
General Pressure/Stress levels	57.3%	42.7%
Work-life-balance	66.5%	33.5%
Time Management	64.1%	35.9%
Overall	66.7%	33.3%

*Figure 2: Levels of Satisfaction in IT/ITES Sector*



Figure 3: Satisfaction Graph Representation: IT/ITES Sector



Figure 4: Not Satisfied Graph Representation: IT/ITES Sector

## Educational Sector:

Faculties/Employees in this industry were the least satisfied overall, with a satisfaction percentage of only 51%. Employees have the highest level of general pressure/ stress, at 54 percent, when compared to other categories. The transition in teaching approach from in-person coaching to virtual training could be one of the contributing elements.

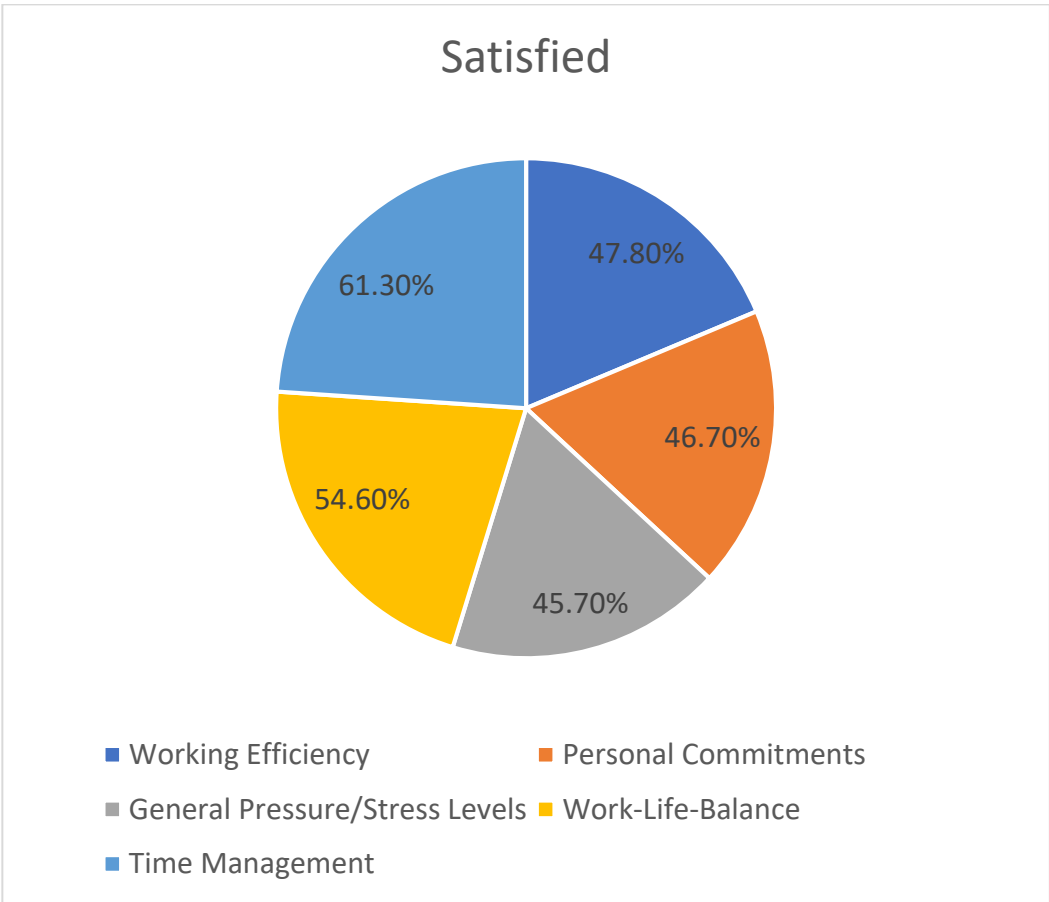
Where more emphasis is placed on educating educators about virtual training tools. This would imply that the Education sector requires time to adjust to new training mechanisms, despite the fact that they are able to manage time efficiently at 61.33 percent and maintain a satisfactory work-life balance at 54.55 percent.

It also indicated that work efficiency is least demonstrated with 47.78 percent satisfaction, indicating that applicants are less confident that their instruction reaches all students or, in other words, that their instruction reaches all students. This may concern the candidates because they believe that not all of the students were physically or psychologically paying attention during the lecture.

This causes the candidate to put in more effort in order to catch the attention of the class, putting their devotion to their family at jeopardy, with 53 percent unsatisfied.

<b>Sector:</b>	<b>Educational</b>	
<b>Criteria's</b>	<b>Satisfied %</b>	<b>Not Satisfied %</b>
Working Efficiency	47.8%	52.2%
Personal Commitments	46.7%	53.3%
General Pressure/Stress levels	45.7%	54.3%
Work-life-balance	54.6%	45.4%
Time Management	61.3%	38.7%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>51.8%</b>	<b>48.2%</b>

*Table 1: Levels of Satisfaction in Educational Sector*



*Figure 5: Satisfaction Graph Representation: Educational Sector*



*Figure 6: Not Satisfied Graph Representation: Educational Sector*

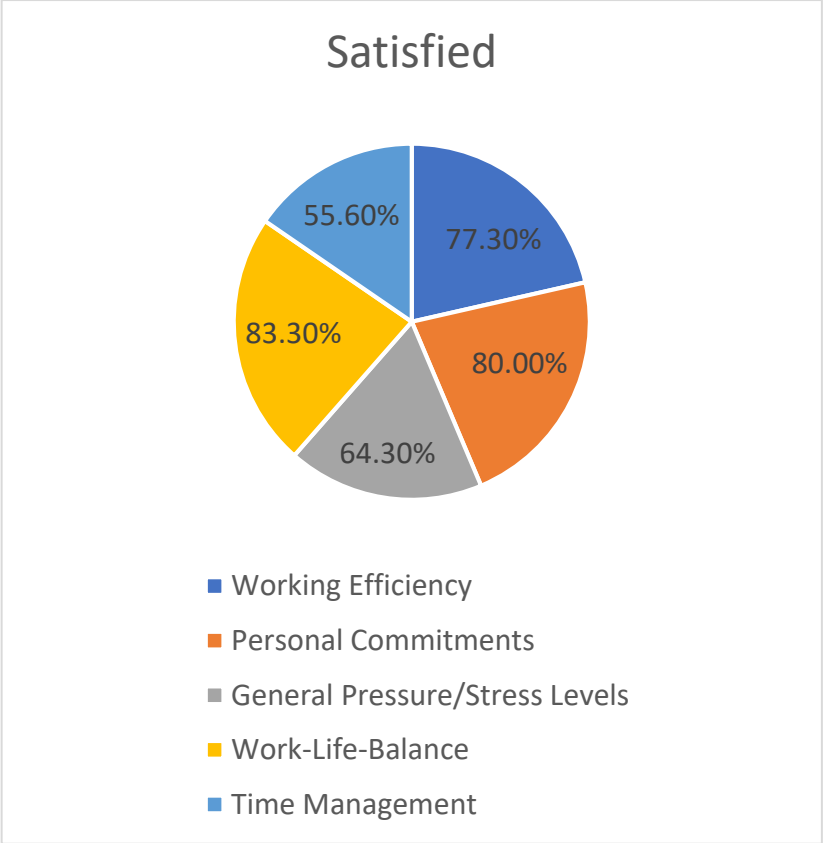
## Services Sector:

Employees in the service industry appear to be reaping the greatest benefits from Work from Home. Employees in this industry are 70.97 percent satisfied with their jobs. Work-life balance, which accounts for 83.33 percent of satisfaction, is followed by family dedication and work efficiency, which account for 80 percent and 77.27 percent of satisfaction, respectively.

When it comes to general stress, 64.29 percent of people are satisfied, while 55.25 percent are satisfied with time management. Despite their high level of happiness, people find it challenging to manage time, according to their responses. If there is a gap in time management, it will inevitably lead to increased stress levels, which will have an influence on Work from Home satisfaction rates.

Sector:	Services	
Criteria's	Satisfied %	Not Satisfied %
Working Efficiency	77.3%	22.7%
Personal Commitments	80.00%	20.00%
General Pressure/Stress levels	64.3%	35.7%
Work-life-balance	83.3%	16.7%
Time Management	55.6%	44.4%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>29%</b>

*Figure 7: Satisfaction levels: Service Sector*



*Figure 8: Satisfaction Graph Representation: Service Sector*

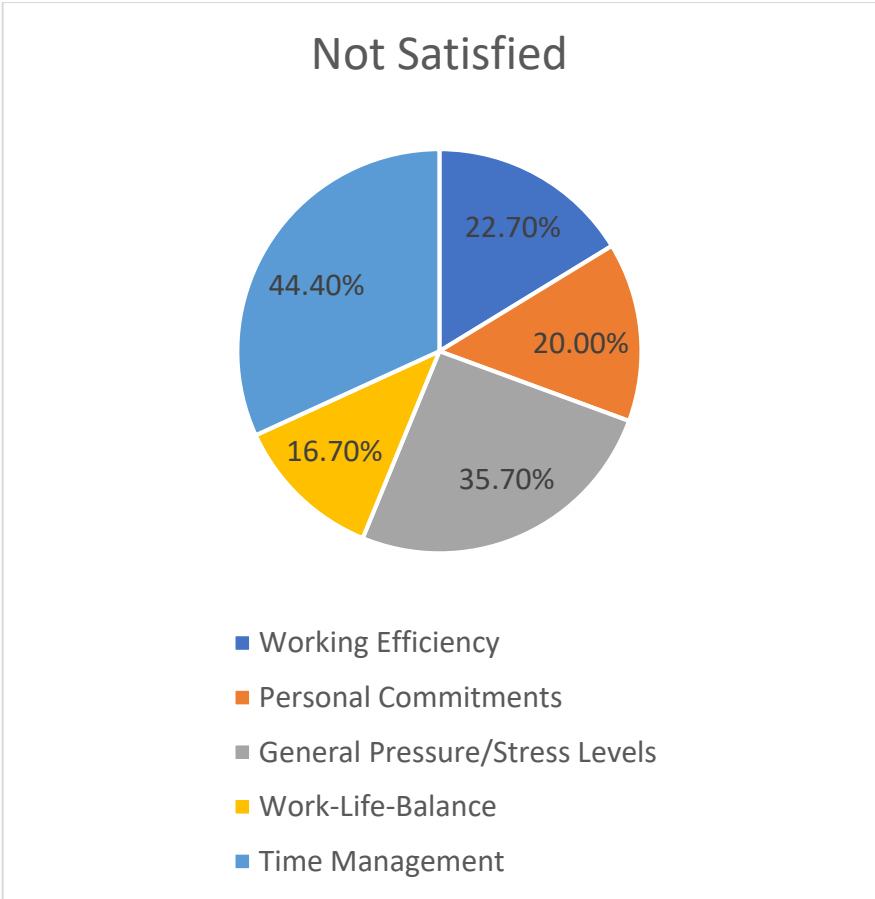


Figure 9: Not Satisfied Graph Representation: Service Sector

In addition to understand about the Satisfaction and Not Satisfaction levels, our objective was to understand what would be the future model of working would be and what employers should do to maintain social connectivity and mental well being of an employee.



We realised the following benefits of the Remote working:



Figure 10: Remote working Benefits: BCG analysis

From the BCG analysis, it has been seen that six domains can ensure the effectiveness of remote working:







	From remote by necessity...	... to remote by choice
 <b>Routines, tools, &amp; capability building</b>	Introduced collaboration tools and remote engagement routines, and capabilities	Find remote teams that thrive and scale their models; understand the best tools and routines
 <b>Cyber &amp; internal data security</b>	Implemented infrastructure to enable secure work from home	Shift focus to risks that arise when individuals and teams operate over varied infrastructure and devices
 <b>Coaching &amp; development</b>	Committed to delivering frequent coaching/feedback	Ensure equal development of all employees irrespective of working models
 <b>Productivity &amp; performance management</b>	Enhanced productivity metrics with objective outcomes	Review performance management to ensure comparability; foster continuous innovation
 <b>Senior leadership &amp; culture</b>	Committed to vision, culture, affiliation, and day-to-day remote management	Commit to leveling the playing field between remote and in-person employees
 <b>Recruiting &amp; onboarding</b>	Used tech for recruiting and onboarding	Accelerate tech-enabled recruiting and onboarding

Figure 11: Remote Working Planning: BCG Analysis

# Recommendations

We can realise, a hybrid model work for sure in the near future.

Also, **re-forming social- connectivity** in remote and mix(hybrid) situations is hard but vital. This would be even of much importance as organizations would flinch to hire the employees who have not made any social investment from pre Covid times.

Some key points for the employers that were considered :

How do you :

- ❖ foster a culture in which leaders see it as their responsibility to design and execute social-connectivity strategies and practices for their teams?
- ❖ build social investment with new employees who are fully remote?
- ❖ create deep social connectivity in a distanced world where everyone wears a mask, which hides many telling facial expressions?

Solution that we proposed are:

As the organizations recognising the vital power of the social connectivity at workplace, now they are planning how to imitate some casual connections that used to happened in offline modes. We realised there are number of organizations/companies are approaching innovative and creative concepts.

Example : Few companies are encouraging their employees to keep some free hours per week for virtual team breaks or informal sessions like “Fika sessions” and all.

Arbitrary room concept is also in trend where in anyone can come and join, imitating the unplanned interactions that were used to happened nearby cafeteria.

In addition to the above, companies have to focus on the mental well being of their employees as well.

While companies are increasingly recognizing the importance of this issue, managing employee mental-health challenges—both recognizing problems and addressing them—has never been easy for companies. And when employees are working remotely, it adds to the challenges.

Some key points for the employers that were considered :

- ❖ What steps should you take to help employees manage the burdens of working remotely, such as the blurring of work-life boundaries and the cognitive overload from being digitally engaged all day?
- ❖ What systems and benefits do you need to put in place in order to support employees who are experiencing mental-health difficulties?

Organizations need to support their employees' mental health in a different way in the new future working.

From free therapy sessions to educational efforts, companies are starting to develop solutions to this challenge.

Employers can also make a Personal Support service available for confidential appointments. For eg: Starbucks announced that it would provide all its US-based employees and eligible family members with 20 free therapy sessions a year, according to the Wall Street Journal.

# Limitations

In some situations, the cited concept may be more applicable than other situations, however this should not be regarded as the fact before more research is done. In addition to that, few limitations could be avoided that came across during this research:

- ❖ More time could be provided
- ❖ Sample size may get increase to hear from more employees of different sectors.
- ❖ Future studies should examine additional variables, such as ergonomic factors, relationships to members of the household, and the distribution of domestic tasks

## Conclusion



From the above analysis and details received in the survey we can make the following conclusions:

- ❖ IT Sector: However the data shows overall average satisfaction in this sector, we found that the general pressure or stress levels of the employees gets high or usually increases with the every new target .
- ❖ Educational Sector: The Work from Home option is more of an obligation in the Educational Sector where there is an entire shift in technology, lack of face to face interaction leading to the dissatisfaction rates high between the faculty and students increasing the general stress levels .
- ❖ Service Sector: The satisfaction rate overall in this sector is high but time management shows a dip where there is every possibility to build up the general stress levels of the employees. General stress level seems is the key factor impacting the overall satisfaction levels of an employee.

In a longer run, when employees continue to work from home, it will only increase the General Stress levels and contribute to universal dissatisfaction where the very objective of work from home would be defeated making the process more of a binding rather than a privilege.

From the survey, we have identified that the future work model would be a **Hybrid model**. There won't be 100% remote working , and the employers have to maintain the solutions for the social connectivity and mental well- being too.

For social connectivity employers have to encourage their employees to keep some free hours per week for virtual team breaks or informal sessions like “Fika sessions” and all.

For mental well-being, personal support services can be arranged for the employees including free therapy sessions ,education support etc .

By following the above measures, working from home can be proven to be a boon for the new normal.

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