

ISSN 2319 - 359X
AN INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY
HALF YEARLY RESEARCH JOURNAL

IDEAL

Volume - XI

Issue - I

September - February - 2022-23

ENGLISH / MARATHI / HINDI PART - I

Peer Reviewed Refereed and
UGC Listed Journal No. 47026



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

IMPACT FACTOR / INDEXING
2020 - 6.008
www.sjifactor.com

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INTERNET CENTRAL MAILING JOURNAL
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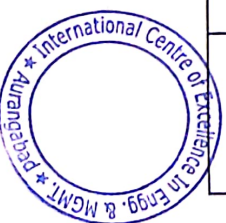


CONTENTS OF ENGLISH PART - I

S. No.	Title & Author	Page No.
1	Cultural Inferiority by the Non-natives in <i>The River Between</i> Dr. Shamrao J. Waghmare	1-7
2	Theme: A Study at Customer Satisfaction in Safe Wheels Tours and Travels Shwetha B. Anuradha M.	8-15
3	Application of Geographical Information System in Geological Surface: A Study of Latur District S. B. Ashure	16-20
4	An Analytical Study to: Panchayati Raj System Regarding Association and Working of Block Panchayats and Village Panchayats in Jhunjhunu District Jagdish Prasad Dr. Anil Kumar	21-26
5	A Study on Cloud Computing Environment in Forensic Evidence Pankaj Dixit Dr. Ajit Kumar	27-34
6	A Study on the Internet Addition in Relation to Scholastic Achievement of Higher Secondary School Students Ms. Sheetal S. Meshram Dr. R. L. Nikose	35-40
7	Environmental Economics: Nature and Scope Dr. Premchand Bhimrao Sirsat	41-46
8	Development and Nutritional Evaluation of Soya Cookies Dr. Varsha Gopal Dodiya	47-50
9	Psychological Wellbeing of Employees during Remote Work Dr. Deepnala Biradar (Hallale)	51-56
10	The Green Hydrogen Policy of India Mr. Beg Waseem Ahamad	57-62

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I



9. Psychological Wellbeing of Employees during Remote Work

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Abstract

It is known to the world how COVID-19 pandemic affected the life of all. It has not affected only life of human beings, but also businesses and working pattern. Lockdown for so much time, work from home and use of technology (otherwise unaware about it), restricted home arrest and missing social contact physically, fear of death and financial burden lead to multiple disorders in human psychology. The paper tried to throw light on the psychological wellbeing of an individual during remote work. The paper projected both positive and negative sides of the episode with challenges. The paper is organized with effects of remote work on both the genders giving positive sides and challenges before recommending and concluding it.

Keywords: Remote, Wellbeing, Stress, Autonomy, Employee.

Introduction

Many were working online for the first time, isolated from co-workers, friends and family. Daily living routines were disrupted causing added anxiety, stress and strain physically, mentally, and financially [1]. The International Labor Organization Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work adopted in June 2019 declared that "safe and healthy working conditions are fundamental to decent work" [2]. This research aims to provide organizations with valuable information and insights on understanding the benefits and challenges that remote workers face during the COVID-19 pandemic [3] to enhance remote working practices' effectiveness [16].

People working from home are exposed to specific psychosocial risks, such as isolation [7], blurred boundaries between work and family, increased risk of domestic violence, among others. The fear of loosing the job [14], pay cuts, lay-offs and reduced benefits make many workers question their future [15]. Job insecurity, economic loss and unemployment can have a severe impact on mental health [2]. With the greater use of online surveillance systems and further integration of AI, the autonomy of employees may be compromised and work anxiety may escalate. Moreover, privacy concerns will become more prevalent as workers' rights may be disregarded in the AI algorithm [10].

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Effects of Remote Working on Employees Psychology

Disconnectivity from coworkers and rest of the world generates a feeling of loneliness. Loneliness is associated with depression, anxiety, and somatic symptoms like random pain. Anxiety arose by working from home takes on many forms [7]. Feeling of pressure can be one sign. There are other symptoms like feeling angry outbursts, irritability, or frustration. Loss of interest or happiness in activities of life [14]. Sleep disturbances, including insomnia and sleeping too much, tiredness and lack of energy [15]. trouble thinking, concentrating, making decisions, and remembering things, unexplained physical problems, such as back pain or headaches [8].

Employers need to create a balance between sustaining normal operations as usual while ensuring high productivity and healthy psychological wellbeing [12]. Human resource practitioners / managers with line managers was required to play a significant role in providing advice, guidance, and sufficient support to the team members working remotely, through communicating regularly, not only on work matters but also on psychological issues that are related to how they manage work remotely [9], work over-load, their level of stress, home boundaries, and finally evaluating their ability and productivity while working from home in addition to providing the appropriate training that facilitates their work, so based on the research findings, a set of recommendations can be applied to offset the challenges of working remotely

Gender Analysis

From a study conducted by Jodi Oakman et. al [4], Males had higher levels of work exhaustion following the commencement of online work. It was also found that work from home increased the negative effect of interactions external to the business on work exhaustion. Females working from home reported higher levels of work exhaustion compared to their colleagues who remained at the office [16]. The role of mediators on the relationship between work from home and mental health and gender differences among surveyed public servants, found increased time work from home improved quality of life through increased autonomy [8]. A large portion of workers don't want to lose this autonomy, companies know, so doubling down on remote work may be a tactic to fight attrition and boost worker engagement [11]. However, in a separate gender analysis the relationship was only significant for males. An increase in job stress for employees working from home full-time has been observed [14]. Males who were working from home regularly had lower levels of fatigue and stress compared to those who did not. For women, work from home was associated with lower stress levels but higher levels of fatigue. **Women work from home was associated with lower stress levels but higher levels of fatigue** **Inferred to those not working from home** **Excellence in Centre of MGMT. Aurangabad**

respondents reported having one or more new physical health issues, and nearly three-fourths of respondents experienced at least one new mental health issue. Female respondents and respondents with annual income of less than 180K reported health issues compared to male respondents and respondents with higher incomes [6]. Women workers were also under stress due to work pressure and childcare [13]. Remote working can help especially women to cope with work and family life and reduce stress, with a mechanism similar to the one in place for maternity leave [18].

Positive Side

A shift to remote work also vastly expands talent pools. Workers are no longer limited to searching specific metropolitan areas with proximity to an office, and recruiters can go after talent from around the country, if not the globe [8]. If not all, but for companies with the flexibility to take such a dramatic decision, the option is becoming increasingly appealing. Research sheds light on the so-called "autonomy paradox" phenomenon, which illustrates the double-edged sword of digitalisation. On the one hand, workers are allowed greater levels of temporal flexibility and independence. On the other hand, negative effects such as working longer hours and "technostress" also emerged [10]. Working from home has created new mental health challenges for employees, but with the right leadership they can be overcome [15]. The benefits of remote work remain controversial. Remote work enables a better balance of home and work life, increased flexibility and autonomy, reduction in commuting time, increased productivity, and higher morale and job satisfaction. A meta-analysis found that there is a small positive association between remote work and organizational outcomes, such as increased productivity, employee retention, and organizational commitment [17].

Challenges during Remote Work

Employers was needed to find ways to maintain acceptable social support situations for their workers who work from home by using technological operations similar as Zoom, Microsoft brigades, google purple or JoinMe, [1] for regular check- sways and connect face-to-face(live) with remote workers.

- Employers do not watch about workers' cerebral health [12]. It's recommended that employers use data analytics to drive an accurate good strategy to measure what matters for any association during the epidemic and highlight different areas that workers need support in [7].
- Employers should take way to insure that their pool has the remotest technology and software that encourages a more effective remote work life. [2] they're trained on using simple technology and have the demanded specialized support.

- A hand cannot switch off from work during epidemic and within a home workspace workers should take the action in maintaining their own good [11].
- To maintain workers' morale during times of change, associations should give further transparent information to produce further confidence and provocation among workers and share news in an honest manner among workers where challenges can be bandied openly [8].
- It's recommended that each employer creates a law of conduct on how business should be regulated during working from home with a clear guideline about what workers are anticipated to deliver, setting a protocol for running virtual meetings [16], giving emotional support, being compassionate [9], give fiscal prices if applicable, showing respect to the trouble wielded, covering the remote working charges, setting realistic working objects, [3] esteeming normal working hours and acclimate workload consequently to reduce stress and acclimatize snappily to the new work settings [15].
- Domestic and family arrangements may also have played a part a blurred working terrain may complicate pressures in combining work with family chores; limited physical space or an inadequate number of PCs and bias may be a problem in a family were both parents worked ever and children followed distance training; being forced to spend utmost (if not each) the time with other family members may be worrisome particularly if there are pre-existing pressures within the ménage [18].

Recommendations

Keep a regular schedule, Stay connected, Keep your vulnerable system strong. Prioritize particular hygiene & limit contact with others, Exercise & stay active, Get fresh air, Stay informed, Limit media consumption, Set boundaries on work schedule, Distract & deflect and Get creative [14]. Still, care needs to be taken to insure mitigation of any implicit goods on internal health, performing from stress, collapse and insulation [13]. Also, vulnerable groups, similar as platform workers and the low professed need to be supported [10]. Expanding childcare installations work design enabling increased situations of autonomy, and egalitarian approaches to participate the burdens in the ménage similar that working women's mates support them to further extents [13].

Conclusion

The epidemic has forced a change in the way work is done. Numerous workers, especially those doing office work, were forced to stay at home and change to styles of telecommuting. Some people whose tasks needed them to be present at the place were directed

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mongrel work, allowing them to be present on the company's demesne only during designated times. The epidemic has had an impact on changing people's quality of life in general, with particular goods in the environment of work. It has forced opinions regarding the establishment of remote work and the operation of workers in new conditions without access to data assessing their impact due to the former low fashion ability of this type of work. Remote working is associated with a set of benefits similar as the inflexibility offered while working ever that can help in achieving the right integration between particular and work life to reach the right balance between both disciplines, better protection for individual health but these benefits arise at the expenditure of work intensification, longer working hours, feeling of job instability, incapability to stay motivated, difficulty in connecting with platoon members. On the other side, the results revealed that hand's cerebral good is enhanced while working from home, thanks to the vacancy of technology and further free communication tools that can alleviate the effect of feeling lonely and insulated from others.

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