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## **Working from Home is A Curse or Boon...**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

In this study, we are going to have a look on how the pandemic affected those people who were working in the corners of the world or their own home city or town. People like working in corporates, working in management, working in any institution or providing any service to the customers etc., have faced a lot because of Covid 19. Ventilating one's mental health is requisite in the present day since people have almost no physical contact among themselves, and this is creating an emotional vacuum in people's life. In this study, we have made an attempt to decipher the comprehensive opinion submitted by respondents and aimed at manifesting a value judgment. Our study is based on a primary survey done on people of West Bengal who have been working from home for the last 13-14 months or so. Based on the responses collected using google forms, we have performed a SWOT analysis on the advantages and disadvantages of both work from home (WFH) and work from office (WFO); further, we have opted for Sentiment Analysis to analyze the overall opinion of respondents. The information collected as advantages and disadvantages of WFH and WFO are heterogeneous to age.

**Keywords:** - Covid 19, work from home (WFH), work from office (WFO), mental health

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

On March 4 2020, the number of cases reached 28, and by March 22, the number of cases reported was 360. That is the day when India observed 14 hours of voluntary public curfew from 7 am to 9 pm. On March 24, the Prime Minister proclaimed a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, and on April 14, the lockdown was extended to May 3, which continued till May 17 2020. With this declaration, almost everything shifted to online mode, from educational institutions to Multinational companies. This worldwide pandemic has introduced a lot of new terms and changes to our daily lives. While some are being wholeheartedly accepted and others we are compelled to. The idea of WFH is one of the many such changes. WFH seemed to be a fantasy to many people before the pandemic and was considered infeasible, as working from home requires peaceful and dedicated space to perform professional obligations, which can be a real challenge for those living in small apartments. Although, at present WFH is considered the most persuasive alternative to minimize the risk of Covid-19 infections. In this study, we are going to have a look on how the pandemic affected those people who were working in the corners of the world or their own home city or town. People like working in corporates, working in management, working in any institution or providing any service to the customers had a extremely worst experience because of restrictions and other protocols to fight with covid 19. From an economic standpoint, the pandemic has impacted countries bringing economic sectors to a standstill. Although better-paid workers are insulated from the shock, a small share of workers, including young, poorly educated workers and those on temporary contracts, are least likely to work from home and more vulnerable to the shocks from Covid-19.

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### **Literature Review:**

*Telecommuting across the Globe:* The concept of working remotely from home is something that has been embraced by different cultures. Developed countries such as the US have around 3.7 million employees who telecommute half of the time or more, which equates to 2.5 % of their workforce. It is mostly prevalent among managers and administrative workers operating in the professional services and finance industry. The variety and scale of telecommuting vary across countries. However, mass-scale telecommunication is still an emerging concept and has recently been adopted due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, as mentioned earlier.

*Driving Remote Work Internet Applications:* The internet is the driving force behind the concept of working from home. Numerous online applications allow teleworkers to collaborate remotely. Picu and Dinu (2016) have researched telecommuting patterns in the European Union and the United States. They have identified from secondary sources that many online platforms facilitate tele working. Skype, Google Talk, and Gizmo have been popularly used for communication. Online presentations have been done on WebEx, go to Meeting, and LiveMeeting. For project management, Basecamp, Active Collab, and Quick Base have been used. Finally, Google and Yahoo Calendars have been used as time management applications to assign remote teams activities. It remains to be seen whether the target group of this study conforms to these platforms or not. Newer online applications are expected to be utilized.

*Job Satisfaction OF Telecommuters:* Moving on, the study has examined the signaling theory, which is closely associated with job satisfaction among telecommuting employees. The signaling approach is often used to clarify how telecommuting availability is related to employee attitudes within companies or organizations (Masuda et al., 2012). Regarding the signaling theory developed by Michael Spence, teleworking availability is an observable action of the company or organization, which indicates that they care for their employees' well-being. The body of employees interprets Telework as a resource that benefits their work and develops a tendency to reciprocate it with positive attitudes such as job satisfaction. Allen et al. (2013) have explained that employees appreciate having adaptability accessible as a resource and react with more favorable job attitudes toward the organizations. They have proved that perks like telecommuting promoted job satisfaction and turnover intentions. In this study, aspects of telecommuting that promote job satisfaction have been uncovered.

*Challenges of Working from Home:* The boundary theory can help understand the challenges associated with working from home (WFH) absent in traditional work environments. According to the boundary theory, individuals make and keep up boundaries to simplify and order the environment. As people crossover from one sphere of life to another (e.g., from work to home), they cross multiple physical, temporal, and psychological boundaries (Clark, 2000). However, telecommuting changes the traditional boundaries between work and non-work. With the absence of such limitations, the chances for work and non-work roles to conflict are relatively high, which results in undesirable consequences (Raghuram and Wiesenfeld, 2004). The altered physical, temporal, and psychological boundaries essential to remote working pose challenges to traditional jobs. While telecommuting, the physical boundaries between home and work are often non-existent as homes are the most common off-site work location.

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## COVID 19?

COVID-19 is a highly infectious respiratory disease caused by a new coronavirus. The disease was discovered in China in December 2019 and then spread around the world, causing an unprecedented public health crisis.

For health, safety, and medical emergencies or updates on the novel coronavirus pandemic, please visit the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and WHO (World Health Organization). COVID-19 is the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that emerged in December 2019.

COVID-19 can be severe, and has caused millions of deaths around the world as well as lasting health problems in some who have survived the illness. The coronavirus can be spread from person to person. It is diagnosed with a test. The best way to protect yourself is to get vaccinated and boosted when you are eligible, follow testing guidelines, wear a mask, wash your hands and practice physical distancing.

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## EFFECT OF COVID 19 on PROFESSIONALS

The world of work has been profoundly affected by the global virus pandemic. In addition to the threat to public health, the economic and social disruption threatens the long-term livelihoods and wellbeing of millions.

The COVID-19 crisis has radically changed the way people live and work. While most studies have focused on prevailing negative consequences, potential positive shifts in everyday life have received less attention. Thus, we examined the actual and perceived overall impact of the COVID-19 crisis on work and private life, and the consequences for mental well-being (MWB), and self-rated health (SRH) in German and Swiss employees.

### *Were the people happy according to the situation of working from home during Pandemic?*

About 30% of employees reported that their work and private life had worsened, whereas about 10% reported improvements in work and 13% in private life. Mandatory short-time work was strongly associated with perceived negative impact on work life, while work from home, particularly if experienced for the first time, was strongly associated with a perceived positive impact on work life. Concerning private life, younger age, living alone, reduction in leisure time, and changes in quantity of caring duties were strongly associated with perceived negative impact. In contrast, living with a partner or family, short-time work, and increases in leisure time and caring duties were associated with perceived positive impact on private life. Perceived negative impact of the crisis on work and private life and mandatory short-time work were associated with lower MWB and SRH. Moreover, perceived positive impact on private life and an increase in leisure time were associated with higher MWB.

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## Conclusion :

The question of whether working from home is a boon or a curse is a complex and multifaceted one. While there are many advantages to working from home, such as increased flexibility and autonomy, there are also some drawbacks that can make it difficult for some people. These difficulties include isolation, a lack of social interaction, and difficulty distinguishing between work and personal life. Some people thrive in a work-from-home environment, whereas others struggle.

Overall, it is critical to recognise that working from home has both positive and negative aspects, and that the best approach will vary depending on individual needs and circumstances. Individuals and organisations can maximise the benefits of remote work while minimising its drawbacks by being aware of these factors and taking steps to address any challenges that arise. Working from home can be a blessing or a curse, depending on an array of factors, including individual circumstances and preferences. While working from home has many advantages, such as increased flexibility and reduced commuting time and expenses, it can also have drawbacks, particularly for married people who may struggle to balance work and family responsibilities.

Working from home can blur the lines between work and personal life for some people, making it difficult to disconnect from work and fully engage in family and household duties. This can be especially difficult for married people who have children or other family members to care for. The added stress of juggling work and family responsibilities can lead to burnout or strain on relationships in some cases.

On the other hand, it can provide opportunities for greater work-life balance. Working from home, for example, may allow parents to be more present for their children during the day, or provide more flexibility in caring for elderly or ill family members. Working from home together may also allow some couples to spend more time together and strengthen their relationship.

Work from home can be a blessing or a curse depending on your personal circumstances and preferences. While balancing work and family responsibilities can be difficult, there are potential benefits to be gained from the increased flexibility and control over one's schedule that working from home can provide.

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### **Links:**

<https://iitb-wustl.org/work-from-home-wfh-a-boon-or-a-bane/>

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