

Work from Home

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ABSTRACT: Work from Home has increased manifold times due to COVID. The world will never be same as Work from Home becomes new normal even after COVID.

This is not just my experience, but almost everybody's experience during COVID times - basically this whole Work from Home thing. You know one wonders, why didn't we think of this before. Why did Work from Home come out of Compulsion and not Conviction. And now that Compulsion is over can Conviction make use continue with Work from Home?

For a middle class person staying in India can offer the same living standards as staying in any developed nation - Japan, USA, Britain.

However, one place where you feel the pinch of living in a poor developing country is traffic congestion - though traffic congestion can be pretty high in developed nations in cities like Tokyo, New York or London.

But what if a person does not have to suffer traffic congestion in India. Well then even in a poor nation like India for a middle class person quality of life is the same as that in a developed nation for education, health care, housing, entertainment and food.

This is why working from home seems such a blessing.

An Economic Times survey carried out in India points out the obvious that 80% of employees prefer working from home and 64% of employees feel that they are more productive and less stressed working from home. HR managers and companies seem to agree. Almost 67% of companies and 80% of HR managers admit that getting to hire employees to work in the office only condition is going to be difficult.

What is true in India is also true globally too. For instance, a global survey finds that 73% say that they are successfully operating globally. It was found that 97% of American employees worked from home during the pandemic whereas globally almost 88% of employees worked from home. 77% of employees feel that they are just as productive at home whereas globally 78% of employees feel that they need all resources to be successful at home.

Now there can be a strong theoretical discussion on work from home. But as they, say proof of the pudding is in eating. If almost 80% of employees prefer to work from home and 80% of employees feel that they are just as productive working from home then that is good enough reason to make Work from Home the new normal even after the end of the COVID pandemic.

There is one good theoretical reason for Work from Home. And that is transportation cost. Transportation can cost an American family as much as 10,000 dollars per year and if that is saved, then that money can help a family buy an additional house or fund children's education.

Plus there is the office cost. Now cost of maintaining an office for 100 employees plus energy and utilities can be as high as the following:

- New York - 4 million dollars
- London 3 million dollars

Just imagine this cost per employee amounts to almost 30,000 dollars to 40,000 dollars per annum. And that is a very high cost.

In fact, if that benefit is passed on to employees that can increase employee pay by almost 80%. Plus there is the advantage that employees don't have to stay in expensive cities such as London and New York and locate to smaller towns such as say Liverpool and Philadelphia where housing costs and other costs are less.

The revolution that Work from Home can bring is unimaginable.

Now consider India which has almost 4000 cities and towns. However, almost 70% of the urban population stays in 40 cities and towns. With work from home, many of these people can move to smaller towns and cities or even possibly to one of the 600,000 villages of India.

The decongestion and cost-cutting that work from home offers is unimaginable.

Global GDP has fallen by less than 10% during the peak of the pandemic. And that is a sacrifice worth making for the cost savings from work from home.

There are many books on work from home such as one by Karen Mangia.

However, every firm will have to devise its work from home policy.

Covid has been the greatest blessing to humanity after World War 2. It would be stupid to give up the learning of work from home and it is s must that businesses and houses derive maximum mileage from work from home experience.

In fact, surveys find that employees want this flexibility even after the end of the pandemic. Surveys show that more than 50% of employees will quit jobs if they are not offered flexibility after COVID. Only 20% of employees would prefer to work in office after the end of COVID. And almost 90% of employees want flexibility where they work. Finally no book or discussion can capture how employees feel about working from home.

Suffice it to say that almost all employees prefer working from home. Plus working from home offers significant cost cuttings to companies. And work from home gives enough cost savings to employees. All this with little or no loss in productivity. No doubt the internet has been the major enabler of Work from Home, but then it is Covid which has triggered a wave for work from home that is irreversible.