



THE IMPACT OF HYBRID WORK MODEL ON WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN IT SECTOR

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Abstract

The Covid - 19 pandemic has brought in focus hybrid working model that offer flexible working options, particularly for women employees in the IT sector. Meanwhile hybrid work has several perceived benefits such as better work life compatibility, cost reduction, higher productivity and high employee morale and key challenges such as absence of infrastructure in remote work, gap in technological skills and many more. This study delves into the ubiquitous hybrid work model, which has gained serious attention in the IT sector. Focusing on women employees, it strives for dissecting their opportunities and challenges in the hybrid working model. As the hybrid work phenomenon continues, the IT sectors and the government should focus on the areas of improving the hybrid work model and in the due course to improve women's workforce participation and retention.

Keywords: Hybrid work model, opportunities and challenges, IT sector, women employees participation and retention.

Introduction

As businesses go back to work after the epidemic, a hybrid work style is essential, not only a perk of the job. Employees are able to work flexibly while still being available and collaborating in person in the workplace. As a result, the hybrid work paradigm has become the preferred choice of both companies and workers globally.

Millennials and Generation Z in India favor this kind of work arrangement because it allows them to improve their work-life balance. A recent study by the Boston Consulting Group indicated that 80% of IT companies and Global Capability Centers (GCCs) in the country are likely to implement a hybrid work model. To make this function more efficiently, a hybrid work paradigm is required to control when, where, and how workers get their jobs done.

Definition to Hybrid work model

An adaptable work paradigm that accommodates a mix of in-office, remote, and mobile personnel is known as a hybrid work model. Whenever, it gives workers the freedom to do their best job whenever and whenever they choose. Another way of putting it is that a hybrid work paradigm is a timetable that allows employees to work both in the office and remotely. Workers are given some leeway to decide when they can come into the office and when they may work from home. An effective hybrid work system encourages:

Types of Hybrid working model

There are various types of Hybrid work model, companies worldwide have developed several models to fit into the needs of their requirement. Some of the popular hybrid work models are as follows

1. **The flexible or 'at will' model:** Workers in this paradigm have the freedom to choose their own schedules and work from anywhere. Members of the team or its leaders will choose the optimal time and place to get work done. The main advantage of this strategy is that it gives workers more freedom to decide when and how they come into the workplace.
2. **The remote first hybrid work model:** Employees still do the majority of their work remotely because to this work model's emphasis on remote work. Companies may save money on electricity expenses with this strategy, and workers can have a healthy work-life balance.
3. **The office first hybrid work model:** Workers in this model are primarily responsible for their time spent on the job on-site. For instance, Google and Tesla mandates workers to come at least three days a week and it depends on the nature of work.

In 2024, the majority of Indian enterprises will stick with the hybrid work paradigm. It's good for business, productivity, and work-life balance for everyone involved. The majority of businesses have realized that employees' tastes in the office have changed dramatically throughout the previous three years.

In an interview with Economic Times, Flipkart's chief people officer Krishna Raghavan said that the firm has been running in a hybrid mode for the last few months. Raghavan elaborated by saying that the business plans to be adaptable and make model adjustments in response to internal and external circumstances.

While most industrial workers have returned to the office, white-collar workers are still able to take advantage of the flexible work paradigm that was put in place during the epidemic. While white-collar workers at Tata Steel have more leeway in their schedules, blue-collar workers adhere to a strict schedule of frequent office visits. A representative from Tata Steel said that, in comparison to the period before the epidemic, the proportion of workers who are able to do their jobs remotely has increased.

Objectives of the study

1. To understand the context of the Hybrid work model.
2. To identify the impact of hybrid work model on women employees in the IT sector.
3. To discuss the suggestions to improve the compatibility and wellbeing of women employees in the IT sector.

Research Methodology

The primary goal of this research is to understand how the hybrid work paradigm affects female IT workers. Research papers, websites, textbooks, and electronic books constitute the bulk of the secondary sources used in this investigation.

Review of Literature

1. **Aishwarya Joshi(2023)** : Working women are not a homogenous monolith--age, seniority, nature of sector, and location may influence women's choice and adoption of hybrid work, and in the findings reflect the variance in their experiences, perceptions and choices with respect to hybrid work.
2. **T Saritha(2023)**: Hybrid work models are now gaining traction in the post-pandemic workplace, as she mentions in her piece. Nevertheless, businesses are not yet required to adhere to this model due to the lack of an operational framework. More scheduling and location-specific agreements are necessary for a hybrid work culture to thrive. Hybrid work arrangements allow us to unite individuals, which is crucial. Businesses need to have faith in, and pay attention to, its remote and in-person workers equally. When it comes to the future of employment, the next year should be fascinating.
3. **Preethi Sharma (2022)** : It is examined that working from home leads to personal costs for many. Hybrid Working is not that challenging, if it is out of choice and if it is on normal days. During lockdown due to pandemic novels, the majority of the day's work from home becomes hardest. Balancing office work & household work all together is becoming challenging for workingWomen.
4. **Michal Beno (2021)** : Maintaining a feeling of mixed work styles despite workplace changes is made easier with the hybrid work model, which adds cheerfulness, efficiency, and variety to the job. There is an urgent need for a mixed work environment as more and more companies hastily implement various work-from-home rules. The benefits of the hybrid e-work paradigm may not only be felt outside of the workplace, according to this study's results. The onus is on businesses to figure out how to effectively combine remote and on-site workers in a way that fosters happiness, productivity, and adaptability.
5. **Dr. Reena (Mahapatra) Lenka (2021)** : Everyone and every organization is feeling the effects of the epidemic, according to the report. Even if you get an increase, most companies are in such a bad position that they can't pay their workers. Workers have no guarantee of continued employment. There has been a significant impact on production, and business has almost stalled. Everywhere, economies were beginning to show signs of life. If we were to adopt a work paradigm like the Unique Hybrid Work model—where people may work remotely most of the time and then come into the office as needed—we could avoid the worst of the COVID and post-COVID situations. In addition to reducing the likelihood of the virus spreading, this setup will facilitate efficient operations, higher levels of performance, enhanced motivation, more staff involvement, and effective teamwork. Several prestigious companies have recognized the value of the Unique Hybrid work model and are implementing it successfully. Some examples of these companies are Microsoft, Ford Motor Company, Citigroup, Google, and Infosys. Following this debate, it is reasonable to assume that all companies throughout the globe would benefit from using a Unique Hybrid Work model during and after the pandemic.

Findings and Analysis

Hybrid wok can offer women employees several opportunities, including:

1. **Improved work life compatibility**: Hybrid work model can give women employees the flexibility to manage their work schedules without sacrificing their personal lives.

2. **Access to remote learning:** Hybrid believe that hybrid work can help women pursue advanced degrees or upskill while continuing their careers.
3. **Reduced Bias:** Women believe that hybrid work can help reduce biases in the workplace based on gender, race, region and other factors.
4. **Flexibility to draw boundaries:** Hybrid work can allow women to set boundaries and avoid having to choose between a successful career and being with family.
5. **Better physical health:** Due to the sedentary nature of office jobs, hybrid work arrangements might lessen the likelihood of physical health issues. Women who put in long hours at the office are more likely to suffer from cardiovascular disease and other health issues, according to the American Heart Association.
6. **Greater work autonomy:** According to a study by the Boston Consulting Group, hybrid work can provide greater work autonomy for women, allowing them to work in a way that best suits their needs and preferences.
7. **Improved career advancement opportunities:** Hybrid work can break down barriers to career advancement for women by providing greater flexibility and access to professional development. According to a report by the Center for American Professions, women are less likely than men to hold managerial positions.

Women who work in a hybrid model face challenges on both the personal and professional fronts which includes -

1. Invisible Workers: Women challenge hybrid worker preconceptions by doubling down on tasks and engaging in (virtual) presenteeism. However, women's efforts may go unrecognized and unappreciated when they operate behind a digital barrier.

2. Difficulty in balancing work-life: A study that focuses on the impact on work-life balance of women during the post pandemic in the southern regions of India found out that most working women could not balance their work and personal life due to many factors such as job performance, family ties, work stress and more in IT sector, irrespective of their age group they belong to, the number of children they had, income and position they held.

3. Shielded from Office Politics: Politics keeps women at arm's length. This could make women feel excluded and prevent them from building the networks they need to advance in their careers.

4. Increased stress and burnout: Indian women face more challenges than their global counterparts as part of the hybrid workforce. Nearly half of all women report feeling burnt out, and 56% say their stress levels are greater now than a year ago. According to Deloitte's study on 'Women@Work' (2022).

5. Missing Meaningfulness: Women yearn for the companionship of their coworkers. As a result of rising feelings of alienation and video fatigue, many actors felt their parts were devoid of pleasure and struggled to give their jobs purpose.

6. The Hybrid Career Ceiling: Women face a triple threat to their professional advancement: the inflexibility of senior positions, the lack of training options, and the hazards of hybrid work arrangements.

7. Obstructive employer-employee relation: The majority of respondents (73%), when asked whether they think employers or leaders favor employees who work more from the office, said yes. Research indicated that

women are likely to take up more remote work in the future, as a result, their professional relationships run the risk of being harmed according to the recent study by LinkedIn with a geographical focus on India.

Suggestions

The best collaboration solution for hybrid work-

One of the most crucial choices you'll have to make when implementing a hybrid work style is selecting the appropriate solution for collaboration. Many companies had to make hasty choices in the aftermath of the epidemic on the technologies they would use to facilitate a remote workforce. The greatest choices aren't always the ones that are made quickly.

Working in a hybrid model reimagines teamwork and communication in today's geographically dispersed yet globally interconnected economy. Women in the workforce need to be able to be productive and interact seamlessly no matter where they are, thus this change forces us to reconsider their experiences.

Before settling on a hybrid work solution, it's important to consider the background and requirements of each employee. Have a look at the following questions as a starting point:-

1. Can the female workers successfully do remote work?
2. Is it reasonable to expect female workers to have the same level of support and cooperation whether they are at home or in the office?
3. Is it possible for the solution to make it easier for female IT workers to scale, oversee, and control their experience both in and out of the office?
4. How do female workers feel about being a part of team meetings?
5. Five, are there simple methods they may participate and have their voices heard?
6. Is the answer for cooperation safe for women in the workforce?
7. When developing the hybrid work paradigm, get feedback from female employees.
8. When it comes to balancing work and personal life, set a good example.
9. The ninth point is to have the IT and HR departments working together.
10. Ensure greater flexibility and care support to women workforce

Conclusion

Hybrid work can be a friend or a foe, depending on the workplace culture and environment. However, hybrid at-choice is the best friend for women, providing greater flexibility and control over their work-life balance. Who cares whether you work from home, the office, or neither? What matters is that you find what works for you and that you reward yourself for the effort you put in. Hybrid work shouldn't result in any form of disadvantage, especially for women in the workplace who are feeling the effect of both gender bias and proximity bias. By proactively working

to prevent proximity bias in their workplace, organisations can effectively support and empower women, leading to a more inclusive and fair environment for all.

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