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Original Research Article

Ergonomic of Working from Home: A Case Study of Patna District

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a global economic crisis, resulting in a significant increase in the number of people who work from home. This study examined the variables impacting the conduct of 448 respondents who took part in a work-from-home survey designed specifically for ergonomics home office when working from home, two years after the COVID-19 virus. The survey was conducted in September 2023 and runs through November 2023. This study is unique since it looks at the ergonomic problems in Patna district connected to working from home. Respondents are invited to complete a questionnaire that will help identify ergonomic issues and potential solutions related to working from home. Video conference apps like Zoom become the main source to connect with teams. Most of the respondents feel that purchasing new technology, such as a laptop, smartphone, Wi-Fi, and other peripherals, has become first priority while working from home. During all home office setups, most of the respondents accepted moderately ergonomic, but some improvements were needed. At the starting stage of working from home most of the respondents do not have a designated room. Additionally, this research would offer corporate executives, legislators, practitioners, and HR specialists' ideas on the necessity of reviewing the current workplaces and ergonomics surrounding.

Keywords: Work From Home, Ergonomic, Home Office, Work-From -Home, Automation and AI in Workplace.

INTRODUCTION

According to the International Ergonomics Association (IEA), the word "ergonomics" refers to "the science of work" and "is derived from the Greek ergon (work) and nomos (laws)." The IEA goes on to explain that the terms "ergonomics" and "human factors" can be used interchangeably or combined—"(e.g., human factors and ergonomics, HFE or EHF)." (Leona, 2021) As such, HFE examines the "physical, cognitive, sociotechnical, organizational, environmental, and other relevant factors, as well as the complex interactions between humans and other humans, the environment, tools, products, equipment, and technology (Leona, 2021).

Physical Ergonomics

Physical ergonomics considers human anatomy, anthropometry, physiology, and biomechanics, with a strong emphasis on workplace ergonomics. It all comes down to creating better workplaces with positions that are tailored to each employee's strengths, which improves the working environment. It is a method or remedy for various musculoskeletal disorders associated with the workplace.

Cognitive Ergonomics

The study of cognitive ergonomics focuses on how human interactions are impacted by mental processes such as perception, memory, reasoning, and motor reaction. It is the area of research that focuses on how effectively a product's use corresponds with consumers' cognitive capacities.

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Organisational Ergonomics

The optimization of social technological systems, including their organizational structures, rules, and procedures, is known as organizational ergonomics. It covers timetables, work satisfaction, teamwork, job shifts, and ethics.

So, in this research paper, we study the organizational ergonomics related to working from home. Organizational ergonomics is the most crucial thing for both employers and employees to remember. While working from home, the workspace is completely equipped with all the comfortable furnishings and equipment necessary to comfortably do their task.

Ergonomics, also known as human factor engineering (HFE), is the application of psychological and physiological principles to the engineering and design of products, processes, and systems. The primary goals of human factors engineering are to reduce human error, increase productivity and system availability, and enhance safety, health, and comfort, with a specific focus on the interaction between humans and equipment (Ergonomics, n.d.). while conducting work from home. Workspace comfort is correlated with ergonomic processes, such as providing employees with a suitable desk, chair, and atmosphere. The COVID-19 virus has been declared the cause of a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO). As per that, the Indian government recommended workers across all industries to work remotely and to curtail unnecessary extracurricular activities. Ergonomics aims to change people's work to be within their capabilities to optimize the interactions between the worker, the job, and the environment cost-effectively.

Review of Literature:

Difficulties related to ergonomics include the usage of non-ergonomic chairs, wrong sitting postures, asymmetrical placement of important items, incorrect laptop, keyboard, and mouse reach lengths, poor desk designs, the absence of a footrest, distortion and noise, poor lighting, and inadequate conditions for working (Jian Ai Yeow, 2021). There was a noticeable difference in the infrastructure and disruption of working from home. The investigation yields seven criteria, which are titled "Comfort of working from home, Ambience of working from home, Infrastructure, Social Media Bonding, Workplace Connectivity, Disruptions, and Connectivity (Dr. Ranjita Banerjee, 2021). Although it could be challenging for businesses to fulfil this legal need for workplace risk assessments in the context of COVID-19 in workers' homes, companies are still accountable for the health and safety of home-based teleworkers under the law, just like they are for other employees (Huuhtanen, 2006)). The definition of the term "locality" has changed as a result of new technologies that have created worldwide opportunities (Schmidt, 2022). Organisations may use remote work as a strategic advantage by tackling difficulties and seizing opportunities, all the while making sure that their HR procedures reflect the demands of the modern workplace (Azeez Jason Kess-Momoh, 2024). Due to the pandemic, workplace expectations have changed quickly, and as work becomes more hybrid every day, physical workspaces and their requirements are also changing substantially in favour of an adaptable and agile work environment (Aschenbrenner, 2023). Employee performance was found to be best when given the option to work from home or the office: attrition was significantly decreased and performance was increased for all employees when this option was available (Singh A. K., Impact of COVID-19 on the Business Sector Market and Evolution of the Work from Home Concept, 2023).

Research Methodology

This study looked at the variables impacting the conduct of 448 respondents who took part in a survey designed specifically for home offices when working from home. The poll will be conducted in September 2023 and run through November 20, 2023, three months after two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. We collect data in Hindi and English, as both languages are easily understood by our respondents. A Likert scale with five points is used to collect data based on analysis done for work from home and their perspective for the future. Strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4, and strongly agree = 5.

Data Collection:

This study is unique since it looks at the ergonomic problems in the Patna district connected to working from home. Respondents are invited to complete a questionnaire that will help identify ergonomic issues and potential solutions related to working from home.

Research Objective:

- 1. To comprehend the current state of the home-based ergonometric working paradigm.
- 2. To study the home workspace and what employee experience during COVID-19.

Details of 448 Respondent	•	
Sex	Male	67.4 %
	Female	32.6 %

Table 1: Demographic details of Respondant

Details of 448 Respondent			
Education Qualification	12th	11.38 %	
	Graduation	53.13 %	
	Post Graduation	27.90 %	
	Higher than post-Graduation	7.59 %	
Which Side of Patna Do You live?	East	23 %	
	West	21.7 %	
	North	22.3 %	
	South	14.1 %	
	Middle	16.1 %	
	Near Patna city	2.8%	
Age	Below 20 Years	4%	
	21 to 30 Years	34.4%	
	31 to 40 Years	44.4%	
	41 to 50 Years	14%	
	Above 50 Years	3.1%	
Yearly Income	Up to 300000	20.8 %	
	300001 to 600000	22.3%	
	600001 to 900000	37.3%	
	900001 to 1200000	14.7%	
	1200001 to 1500000	3.1%	
	Above 1500001	1.8%	

As compared to male and female respondents, the number of male respondents is double as compared to female respondents in Patna. There is less response after the age group of 50 years because people for more than 50 years do not want to be used to new advanced technology updates.

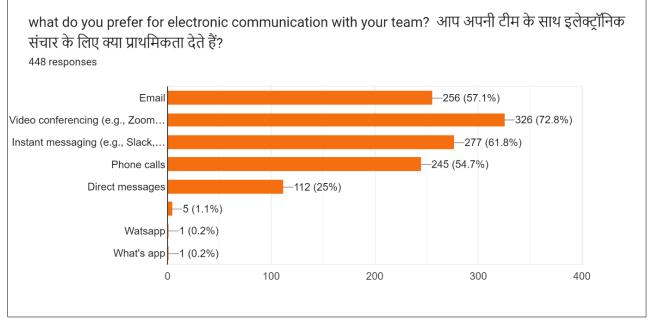


Figure 1: Preference for electronic communication with your team

Based on data analysis while working from home, 72.8% of respondents prefer video conferencing (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams), 61.8% prefer instant messaging (e.g., Slack, Microsoft Teams), 57.1% prefer email, 54.7% prefer phone calls, 25% prefer direct messages, and 1.1 other prefer electronic communication with teams. When it comes to tools utilized for communication when working remotely, emails came on top (Flores, 2019) in 2019 email come on top. After the acceptance of working from home, the demand for the meeting app increased.

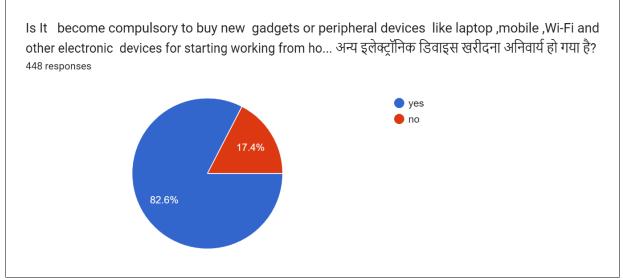


Figure 2 : Compulsory to buy new gadgets or peripheral devices

By data analysis, 82.6% of respondents feel that purchasing new technology, such as a laptop, smartphone, Wi-Fi, and other peripherals, is required to begin working from home, while 17.4% disagree.

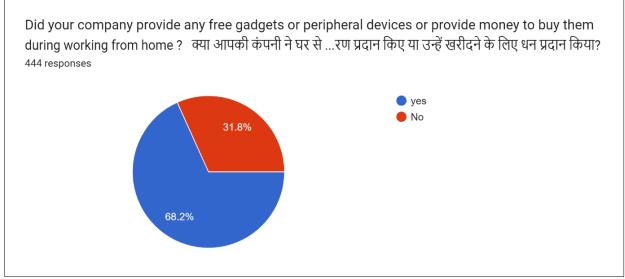


Figure 3: provide any free gadgets or peripheral devices

Following data analysis, when working from home, the employer offers free gadgets and peripherals or provides funding to purchase them. 68.2% accepted yes, and 31.8% accepted no. Working from home, taking into account government services, the Indian government offers its employees very little or no assistance in setting up a home office.

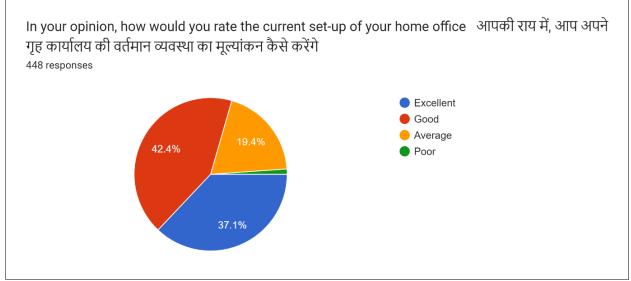


Figure 4: Present home office Rating

Based on data research, the existing configuration of your home office is scored as follows: 37.1% of respondents rate it as excellent, 42.4% as good, 19.4% as average, and 1.1% as poor.

Ergonomic: Relating to the design of furniture or equipment that makes it comfortable and effective for people who use it.

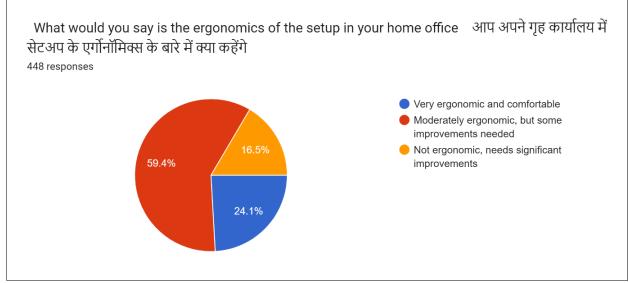


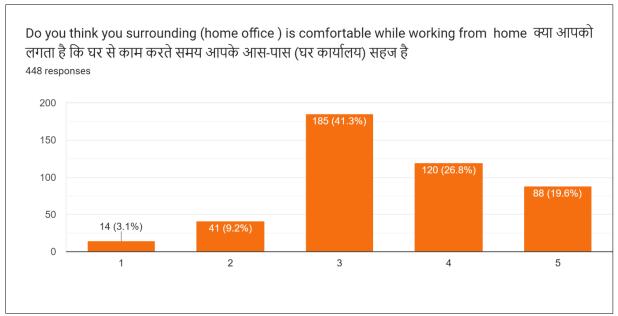
Figure 5: Home office's ergonomic configuration

Following data analysis, 59.4% of respondents accepted Moderately ergonomic, but some improvements are needed; 24.1% are very ergonomic and comfortable; and 16.5% are not ergonomic and need significant improvements in the ergonomic setup of your home office while working from home. Just 24.1% of respondents in Patna who work from home had suitable ergonomic settings. The remaining respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their home offices' ergonomic setup. So, their home environment has to undergo considerable alterations.



Figure 6: Home office's furnishings and equipment

88.2% accepted that they have a computer or laptop while working from home; the other 12% have to use the internet. About 50% of them have basic facilities like a desk, ergonomic chair, monitor, keyboard, mouse, etc. The remaining 50 percent do not have that basic facility. Only 27.7% have a printer and scanner available at home. Only 16.5% have good office supplies, 19.4% have good lighting, and 5.1% have none. While setting up a home office, only one basic requirement, like a laptop and computer, is available to the respondent at home. About 50% of them have no basic facilities available at home other than a home computer. More than 5 percent accepted that they have other problems, like a good room temperature, being more focused on work, and noise-proof furnishing. During a lockdown, people do not have a limited number of laptops and smartphones at their residences. Everyone has to make the connection between their location of employment and education. Some people's internet connectivity is inadequate to enable them to stay connected to their workplaces and educational institutions (Singh A. k., Present scenario of work from home, 2023). Having a designated workspace, an ergonomic workstation, the ability to modify a workstation, and greater satisfaction with the indoor environment factors (microclimate, lighting, etc.) in the workspaces are linked to a lower risk of developing new health problems, such as a lower incidence of musculoskeletal disorders (Xiao, Becerik-Gerber, Lucas, & Roll, 2021) (Walker, 2004).





Based on the study of the data, 19.6% of respondents strongly agree, 26.8% agree, 41.3% are neutral, 9.2% disagree, and 3.1% greatly disagree that working from home in a comfortable environment is a good idea. Therefore, the majority of respondents state that they are unsure about whether their home office is a suitable place to work from home or not. So, from the data analysis, we can say that the office environment is neither comfortable nor fully accepted.

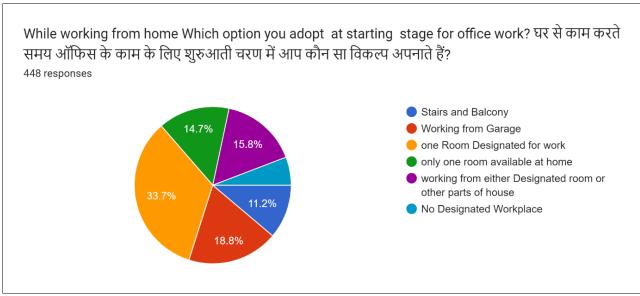
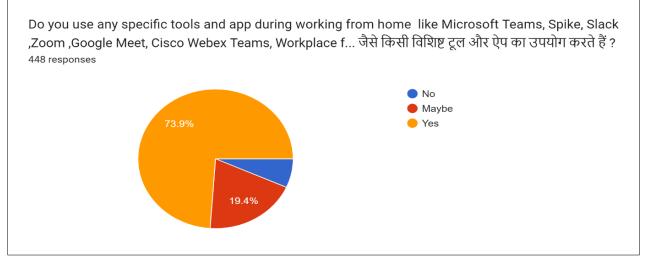


Figure 8: Option by employee odopted starting stage of work from home

From the data analysis While working from home starting stage for office work 33.7 percent have one room designated for work, 18.8% work from a garage, 15.8% work from either a designated room or other parts of the house, 14.7% have only one room available at home, 15.8% have stairs and balconies, and 5.8% have no designated workplace. So, from the pie chart, we can conclude that 66.3% of respondents do not have a specific place to set up their home office. However, the ability to work from home and the amount of personal space in the house both influence this practice (Baruch Y., 2000). Because of the limited space in their houses, some employees are unable to have a separate workspace; as a result, they must share these workstations with their wives, who are also teleworking during the epidemic, or their children, who must attend school remotely (Xiao, Becerik-Gerber, Lucas, & Roll, 2021). Finding a workspace away from your bedroom is crucial, and a second monitor would eliminate the need to print papers. A comfortable chair, enough lighting, ventilation, and attachments (such as a functional internet connection, microphone, and camera) should all be included in your workspace (Sandra Lopez-Leon, 2020). It appears that having a separate workspace at home aids in drawing boundaries between business and personal life. It should be highlighted, though, that not every respondent had a home office. Due to the greater blurring of work and personal life, those who did not report were typically less happy with their work-life balance (Samantha Metselaar, 2023).





From Fig. 9, about 73.9% of respondents said yes, 19.4% may be, and 6.7% said no, using specific tools and apps while working from home, like Microsoft Teams, Spike, Slack, Zoom, Google Meet, Cisco Webex Teams, Workplace from Facebook, Matter most, etc. So, we accepted that 73.9% means most respondents started using specific tools and demanded specific tools to connect with their coworkers after accepting work from home. The COVID-19 epidemic has effectively shifted our focus from in-person events such as long-distance business visits, formal meetings, and recruiting drives to virtual interactions via platforms such as Skype, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Google Meet (Narang, 2022).

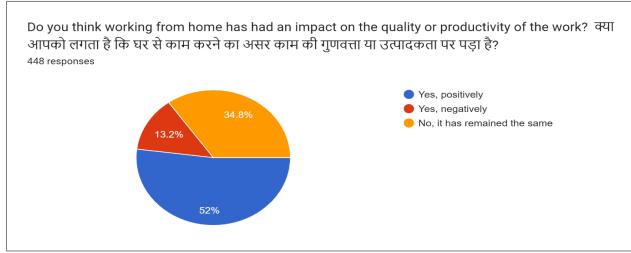


Figure 10: Impact on quality and Productivity of work

From Fig. 10, after data analysis, 52% of respondents accepted yes positively, 34.8% said no, it remained the same, and 13.2 % had a negative impact on the quality or productivity of the work while working from home. So, it is accepted that the quality of work is positively accepted.

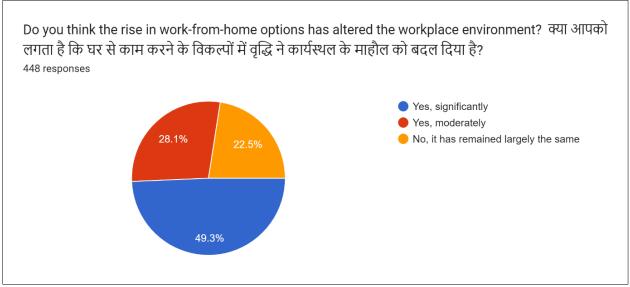


Figure 11: Workplace Environment

On analysis of the data, work-from-home options have altered the workplace environment: 49.3% accepted yes significantly, 28.1% said yes moderately, and 22.5% said no; it remained largely the same. So, it is accepted that working from home alters the workplace environment. There was a decrease in the reliance of individuals on designated workstations and an increase in adaptable work environments under Work from Home policies (Narang, 2022).

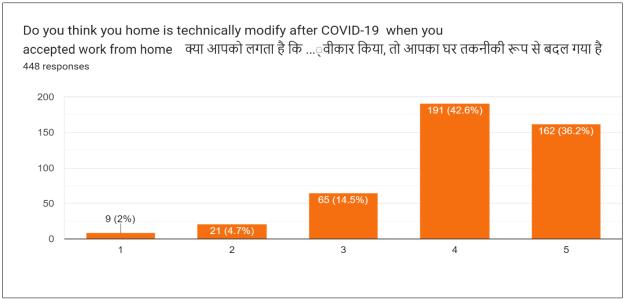


Figure 12: Status of Technical modification

From Fig. 12 Based on the study of the data, 36.2% of respondents strongly agree, 42.6% agree, 14.5% are neutral, 4.7% disagree, and 2% greatly disagree that home is technically modified after COVID-19 when you accept work from home. So, most respondents accepted that they strongly agreed and agreed with the technical modification. On the other hand, strict IT security laws are required by some regulated enterprises. Since more people are using the cloud, there is a greater chance of viruses, hackers, data loss, and other security risks. Businesses have also boosted their investment in IT infrastructure, allowing employees to work from anywhere (Singh A. K., Work From Home is becoming the new standard of employment., 2024). Feelings of loneliness, juggling work and personal obligations, and elevated stress from technological problems are frequent problems for remote workers (Podile, 2019).

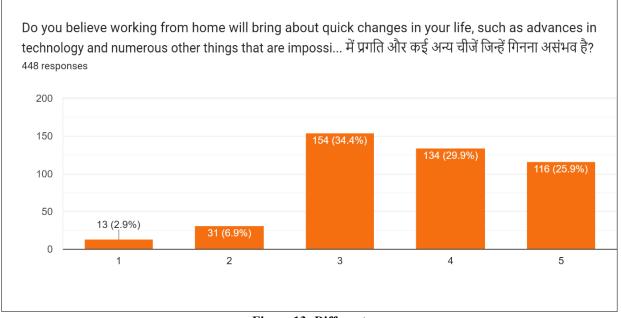


Figure 13: Different

From Fig. 13, based on the study of the data, 25.9 % of respondents strongly agree, 29.9% agree, 34.4% are neutral, 6.9% disagree, and 2.9% greatly disagree that working from home will bring about quick changes in your life, such as advances in technology and numerous other things that are impossible to count. According to the data analysis, the majority of replies are neutral, but when we include the proportion of strongly agree and agree, we can conclude that many changes occur in the workplace as a result of the adoption of the work-from-home option. Comparison research indicates that between 2020 and 2023, demand for e-files will rise dramatically. Therefore, we conclude that working from home is

causing a dramatic increase in file demand in the government sector (Singh A. K., Work From Home is becoming the new standard of employment., 2024)

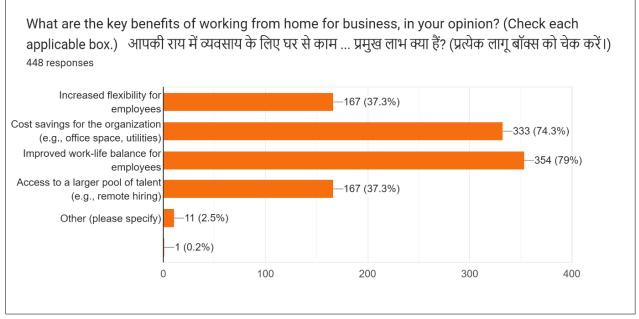


Figure 14: Benefits of work from home

From the data analysis, 79% of respondents accepted improved work-life balance for employees, 74.3% cost savings for the organisation (e.g., office space, utilities), 37.3% increased flexibility for employees, 37.3% access to a larger pool of talent (e.g., remote hiring), and another 2.5% were the key benefits of working from home for business. It is conceivable to go from a predetermined workplace layout to a fresh model and usefulness. The layout of the premises can be changed to accommodate different departments within the company or separated into smaller areas (Schmidt, 2022).

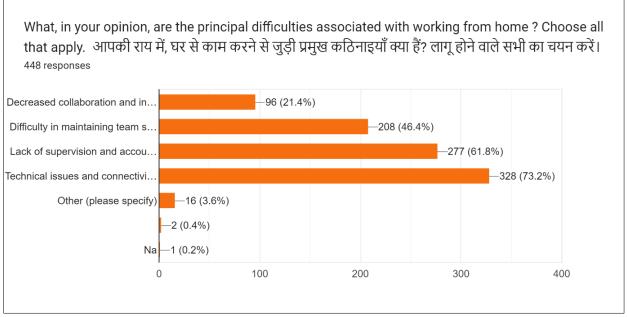


Figure 15: Difficulties of work from home

From the data analysis, the principal difficulties associated with working from home are 73.2% technical issues and connectivity problems, and 61.8% lack of supervision and accountability. 46.4% difficulty in maintaining team spirit and company culture; 21.4% decreased collaboration and innovation; and 3.6%. We can say that technical issues and connectivity problems are the main problems when working from home. putting strong cybersecurity measures in place to safeguard private information and safeguard sensitive data in remote work environments. To successfully reduce cyber

dangers, HR managers must work with IT teams to develop secure remote access methods, regularly train staff on cybersecurity, and enforce stringent data protection standards (Singh A. k., THE SHIFT TO REMOTE WORK: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR HR MANAGERS, 2024)

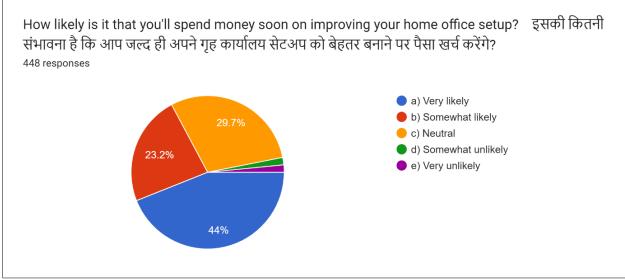


Figure 16: Status of improving your home office setup

From Fig. 16, based on the study of the data, 44% of respondents very likely agree, 23.3% are somewhat likely, 29.7% are neutral, 1.6% are somewhat unlikely, and 1.6% are very unlikely to spend money soon on improving their home office setup.

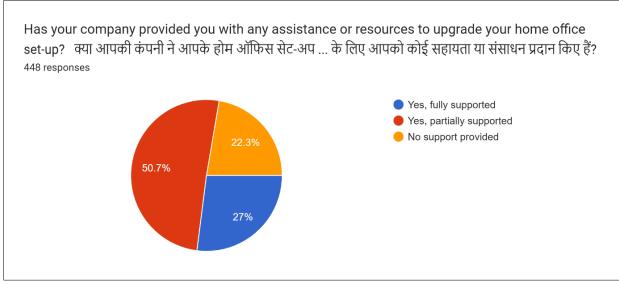


Figure 17: Assistance in Upgrade your home office

On data analysis of whether the company provided you with any assistance or resources to upgrade your home office set-up, 50.7% said yes, partially supported; 27% said yes, fully supported; and 22.3% said no support was provided. So, it is clear that most of the companies provided partial support. Merely 27% of workers acknowledged receiving complete assistance in establishing their home office. According to survey analysis, the majority of respondents—22.3%—are government employees, and they acknowledge that no assistance is given in setting up a home residence. Thus, it concluded that the low percentage of government employees relative to the private sector might be attributed to the inadequate assistance provided to them.

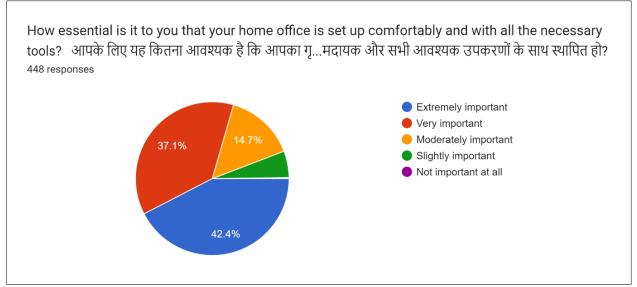


Figure 18: Comfortabity with tools available at home

From Fig. 18, based on the study of the data, 42.4% of respondents accepted it as extremely important, 37.1% as very important, 14.7% as moderately important, and 5.8% as slightly important that the home office is set up comfortably and with all the necessary tools.

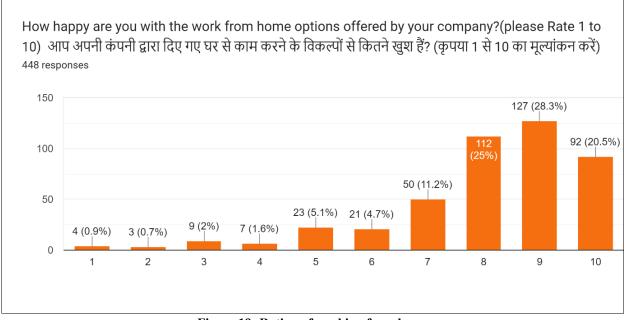


Figure 19: Rating of working from home

Ranking from 1 to 10 the majority of employees give their company's work-from-home choices a satisfaction rating of between 7 and 10. We may thus conclude that the employee's average happiness rating is. About 26.2% of respondents gave either a 7 or less than 7 rating on satisfaction with working from home. Only 20.5% of respondents are fully happy with the working-from-home rating.

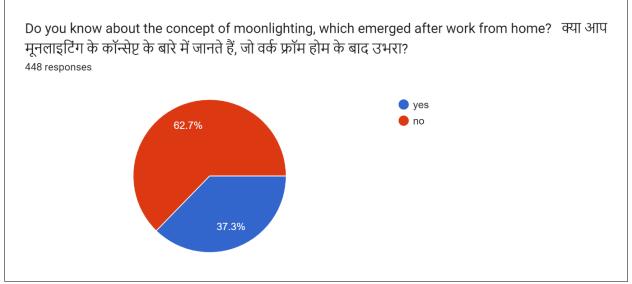


Figure 20: Concept of moonlighting

The notion of moonlighting originated after working from home, and according to Fig. 20, around 37.3% of respondents indicated they knew what it was, and 62.7% said they didn't. So, we can say that most of the respondents are not aware of moonlighting.

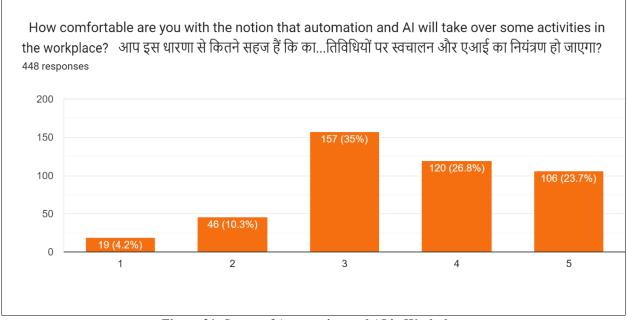


Figure 21: Status of Automation and AI in Workplace

From Fig. 21, based on the study of the data, 23.7% of respondents strongly agree, 26.8% agree, 35% are neutral, 10.3% disagree, and 4.2% greatly disagree with the notion that automation and AI will take over some activities in the workplace. So, most respondents accepted that they strongly agreed and agreed that AI would take over some activities in the workplace. However, when we analysed the individual category, most of the respondents accepted neutral. So, we can say that there is a mixed reaction.

RESULT AND CONCLUSION

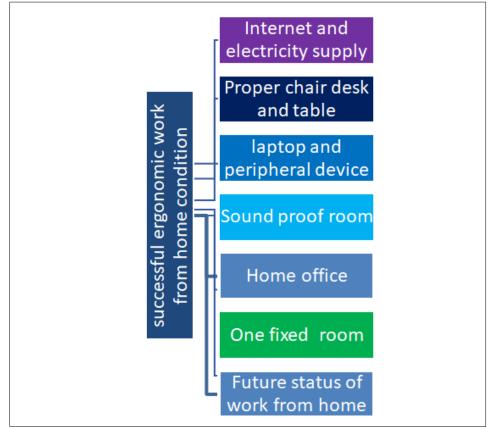


Table 2 :- Successful ergonomic work from home condition

Source: *Author personal contribution*

While working from home, 72.8% of participants said they would rather communicate with coworkers in the office using video conferencing (such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams). In an ergonomic situation, then, a power source and internet connection are crucial. The internet provider sometimes sends out messages stating that Wi-Fi is unavailable or is under maintenance. An additional backup should be accessible in the home office in case the employee needs to attend a crucial meeting or complete some critical tasks. Technical and connection problems are acknowledged by 73.2% of respondents as the main concern. Regarding the acceptance of technology modifications for working from home, 78.8% of respondents said they agreed. Except for a personal computer, around 50% of them do not have access to any essential amenities. Over 5% admitted to having additional issues with things like having a comfortable room temperature, being more concentrated at work, and having furniture that blocks out noise. According to 82.6% of respondents, buying new technology or accessories gives you the money to do so and makes it necessary for you to start working from home. When working from home, 68.2% of companies give out free gadgets or other accessories or give money to buy them. When work from home was approved, 73.9% of respondents said they would use a certain tool more frequently and that they would require a certain tool to interact with their coworkers. It is quite probable that 44% of respondents will soon spend money on upgrading their home office setup. The respondents' opinions on the workplace environment are divided; neither they acknowledged nor denied that the environment is comfortable.59.4% of respondents accepted moderate ergonomics, but some improvements are needed. While working from home, most of the ratings are good for the home environment, and fewer of them are excellent.68.2% accepted yes, when they work from home, the employer offers free gadgets and peripherals or provides funding to purchase them. When beginning their work-from-home journey, 33.7% of respondents have a designated room for work, and 66.3% do not have a specified location for their home office. The largest issue with working from home in an ergonomic environment is having only one fixed room. For this reason, employees must have a single fixed room with complete furnishings or choose from new apartments like 1.5, 2.5, or 3.5 BHK. 5 refers to the area where a home office can be set up (Singh A. k., Present scenario of work from home, 2023). The phrase "moonlighting" will become more popular in the near future, but for now, it's important to be mindful of work-from-home fraud. Reactions to the idea that automation and artificial intelligence would replace some tasks in the workplace are mixed. In addition to technological adjustments, there are a variety of additional changes brought about by the implementation of work-fromhome policies. Improved work-life balance is always a major advantage of working from home, according to previous research; cost savings and greater flexibility follow in second and third. The main problem in the setting is internet connectivity, and the issue with the power supply is always the main problem. Lack of supervision, accountability, and maintenance of team spirit comes second.

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