



Striking a balance

With 'work from home' being the new concept now, employees, especially women, have started realising that it is not as simple or exciting as they always thought

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Work from home' (WFH) is the new buzz in the corporate world that is keeping us afloat and running amid the lockdown observed by the globe. While HR managers across organisations and countries demonstrated swiftness and grit in weighing their options and streamlining processes to help employees smoothly transition into the work from home scenario, the whole concept has emerged into something, which most employees did not comprehend. Millions of employees, especially the women workforce, have started realising that WFH is not as simple or exciting as they always thought.

Years of evolution and social conditioning affect men and women differently, more so because of the gender segregation and household responsibilities. Women across are feeling the pressure exerted upon

them both by workplace and family. The concept of a healthy work-life balance seems to have taken a backstage, as women virtually cope with two full-time jobs — one at office and one at home. Moreover, it has also come to the fore that working-women are experiencing greater difficulty as compared to their male counterparts in balancing family and work.

The cause could be attributed to the distinct norms set for women in the society in general. Moreover, this has been one of the major challenges faced by the women workforce in the current Covid-19 context too.

A large proportion of women are experiencing difficulties due to excessive work pressure, which leaves no time for themselves while fulfilling expectations of others. Furthermore, working from home, in most cases has also meant extended work hours with job spill over into the home.

These developments have led to high levels of stress and anxiety in

domestic environment, which is causing job burnout and inability to realize full potential particularly among women. There is a new normal to adjust to and women have to strive to re-do her mind map and find her way to get it all together.

Addressing these concerns, here are some quick tricks and tips to glide through the lockdown - the foremost of them all is prep up for multiple distractions. Avoiding all distraction is next to impossible and therefore it is advisable to set some logical boundaries. A major chunk of the day should be kept aside for work, but prior to that sit down with family members and explain to them why staying focused is important to you and how they can help. Stay away from your mobile phone as much as possible, majorly abstaining from social media platforms while working.

Another way of beating the distraction is to start early. An early start, clubbed with dressed for work is the

best way to stay focused throughout the day and get a major chunk of the work done. One can also create a to-do list, plan the day and pretend that you are in office. It might sound frivolous, but the point is, sticking to routine helps. Do remember to take the mandatory coffee and snacking break though. Now while there are challenges abound for women amid this lockdown, it is not all dark and gloomy. The WFH has also opened up newer work avenues and opportunities for women.

The social media has exploded with the amazing talent people have been able to display and much of it has the potential to turn to business ideas. Parents are encouraging extracurricular activities like never before and are enrolling children for a plethora of activities undertaken by these talented women — sports, arts, literature and games. The situation has paved way for better work distribution across the country.

Realising the benefits of WFH, there are many organisations contemplating making this arrangement a permanent one. And the silver lining is, it encourages more women to join the work force. One of the major reasons of lower women participation was lack of flexibility, and with this lockdown, that could change permanently. Minus the hassles of travelling daily, mothers can give some time to their children and continue to be a part of this terrific work force.

The Covid era has brought to fore our cultural and societal deficiencies and given us an opportunity to challenge and change this. Every norm has to be examined in context and recalibrated. We must realize that the ability to take care of one's household chores and family is a life skill and not a gender based skill. It is time we have an equal world.

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