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Original Article

Freshers' Attitudes towards Work from Home: A Study on Perceptions, Challenges, and Adaptation

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Abstract

This study explores whether freshers- individuals at the beginning of their professional careers are inclined towards remote work opportunities or prefer traditional office settings. Due to their limited work experience, freshers often face challenges in securing employment, particularly when balancing education and work. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to a substantial number of participants. The study reveals several factors influencing freshers' decisions to accept work-from-home (WFH) roles. While the desire to begin a career, flexible working conditions, and infrastructure support encourage adoption of WFH, issues such as living in joint families, inadequate workspace, lack of technological resources, and the need for mentorship and communication skill development act as deterrents.

Keywords: *Remote work, freshers, work-from-home, work-life balance, early career.*

Introduction

Freshers are individuals who have recently graduated or post-graduated from educational institutions and are entering the workforce for the first time. Understanding their willingness to take up work-from-home (WFH) opportunities is a significant concern in today's evolving job market. With shifts in professional dynamics, remote work has become increasingly prevalent across industries. **WFH**, short for "work from home," refers to a modern employment arrangement where individuals fulfil their job responsibilities remotely, typically from their own residences. This setup offers several advantages, including greater flexibility, improved work-life balance, and cost savings for both employees and employers. Remote work allows employees to operate from various locations outside the traditional office setting such as home offices, co-working spaces, or private setups. For those whose roles permit offsite execution, this model enhances autonomy, minimizes commuting time and expenses, and can promote productivity. For employers, it contributes to employee satisfaction, better retention rates, and lower overhead costs. However, effective remote work also demands well-defined policies regarding equipment usage, data security, and performance standards. For freshers who are new to the corporate environment, choosing the right career path can be a challenge. The appeal of remote roles lies in the flexibility they offer and the ability to avoid long commutes. Additionally, it can reduce micromanagement and may present fewer daily pressures. However, this mode of work may deprive them of critical early-career experiences, such as direct mentoring, real-time communication, and immersion in workplace culture. These are vital for developing soft skills, understanding corporate etiquette, and building professional networks. Moreover, remote roles may demand that freshers demonstrate a higher level of independence and accountability. With limited experience, they must adapt quickly, be proactive in communication, and deliver results to prove their credibility. They face the dual challenge of learning job responsibilities while working in isolation, which can amplify the pressure to perform. Beginning one's career away from a structured office environment may hinder professional growth, as it limits exposure to collaborative settings and spontaneous learning from colleagues. In contrast, starting a career in an in-person setting offers the advantage of continuous feedback, mentorship, and opportunities to engage with diverse professional scenarios: all of which are crucial for building a strong foundation.

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Review of literature:

1. **Dr. R. Sridevi(2021):** A study of 111 IT employees in Coimbatore revealed that while many maintained productivity levels while working from home, 27% felt less productive. Issues such as poor communication, limited professional growth, and health concerns were cited as challenges. A significant portion of respondents expressed willingness to work remotely only if no other option existed, indicating potential drawbacks of sustained remote work.
2. **Ujjawal Aggarwal (2021):** Aggarwal highlighted that while WFH is initially challenging for freshers due to lack of experience, consistent mentorship and access to online learning resources can turn the experience into a productive one.
3. **Astha Jain (2021):** A software engineer's firsthand account highlighted initial difficulties faced as a fresher working remotely, including lack of training, limited communication, and challenges in understanding work culture.
4. **Techgig(2023):** An article discussed Gen Z's preference for remote work. The generation values flexibility and work-life balance and is resistant to returning to traditional office settings, often preferring job opportunities that support WFH or hybrid models.
5. **Anshuman Sood, 2022:** With the outbreak of COVID-19, many states issued stay-at-home orders, prompting businesses to adopt work-from-home (WFH) policies to reduce the virus's spread. This study aims to assess respondents' perceptions of WFH compared to working onsite. Data was collected via structured questionnaires distributed through Google Forms, and responses from a sample of 110 participants were analyzed using MS Excel, Tableau, and Power BI.

Findings reveal that employees experienced heightened stress during the COVID-19 lockdown due to the sudden shift to remote work. Many respondents reported challenges balancing work and domestic responsibilities, leading to increased conflict, stress, and anxiety. Despite these challenges, some had prior WFH experience, although not in a flexible format as seen during the pandemic.

The study highlights that while some employees prefer remote work, a significant number Favor a hybrid model. Most respondents, primarily males aged 25–32 from the private sector reported receiving tools from their employers, though often inadequate for effective remote work. The research suggests that a fully remote work setup may not be sustainable long-term, as it risks increased stress and reduced job satisfaction. Future work models are likely to Favor a hybrid approach. To support this, managers should engage employees in conversations about optimal work arrangements and provide clarity on objectives and available support. Organizations must also address mental health and well-being, encourage flexible work policies and foster open dialogue especially with male employees about balancing work and personal responsibilities. Establishing robust safety, wellness, and support policies will be essential to ensure flexible work arrangements benefit both employees and employers.

Objectives:

1. To assess freshers' preferences between traditional and remote working systems.
2. To examine freshers' perceptions of work-from-home roles.
3. To explore how freshers' career expectations align with remote work.
4. To analyze the challenges and benefits of WFH from a fresher's perspective.
5. To raise awareness among freshers about the dynamics of remote working.

Implications of the Study:

The study addresses several key questions:

1. In what environment do freshers prefer to work?
2. What challenges do they face in WFH versus in-office roles?
3. What are the advantages of WFH for freshers?
4. What factors contribute to their satisfaction with WFH roles?
5. How can awareness be created about remote work expectations and realities?

Limitations of the Study:

1. The sample size was limited to 63 participants, which may not represent broader trends.
2. The study was geographically confined to South Mumbai, limiting generalizability.
3. Self-reported data may be influenced by social desirability or personal bias.
4. Time and location constraints prevented in-person interviews, which could have enriched the findings.

Research Methodology:

Data Collection:

Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized. The primary data was collected via a structured questionnaire comprising 33 questions: both closed and open-ended distributed to freshers in the Mumbai region. The data collection period spanned one week and targeted the 2024 graduating class.

Sample Size:

A total of 63 freshers from randomly selected colleges in Mumbai participated in the study.

Sampling Method:

Convenience sampling-a non-probability technique was used to select participants. The goal was to capture insights efficiently and generate awareness about freshers' attitudes toward remote work.

Research Design:

A descriptive research design was employed to investigate the perspectives of Mumbai-based freshers toward remote working. This approach facilitated an in-depth understanding of the expectations, challenges, and perceived benefits associated with WFH.

Analysis and Interpretation:

A set of 33 questions were asked to the respondents and except the demographic related questions all the questions were closed ended.

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1. **Age:** For this specific research, participants in the age group of 17 years to 28 years commonly referred to as "freshers," in the job market have provided their responses.

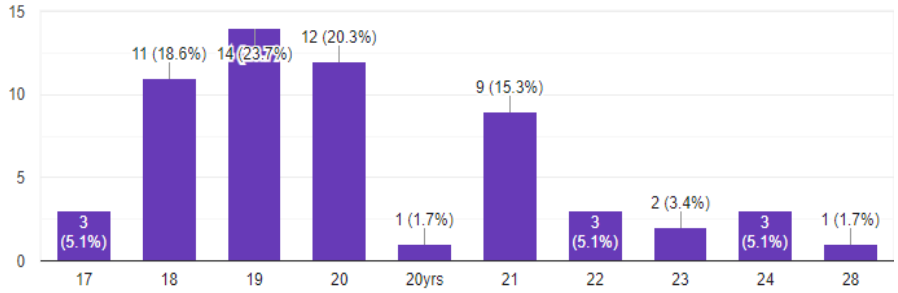


Chart 1: Age

2. Gender:

It's evident that most respondents are females, which is 74.6% of the respondents. On the other hand, the response received from males is 25.4%.

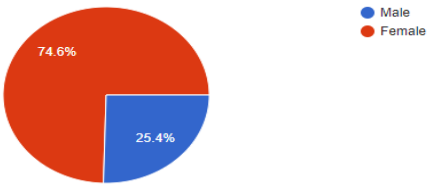


Chart 2: Gender

3. Qualifications:

Respondents with diverse educational backgrounds have shared their opinions on remote work. The majority, comprising first-year (44.1%), second year (16.9%), and third year (22%) students, indicated a significant interest. While Graduates make up a smaller portion that is 15.3%, while post-graduates are even smaller in percentage.

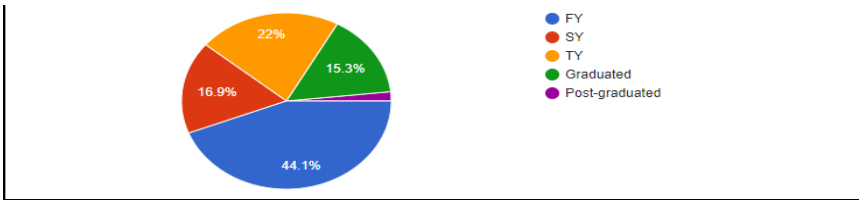


Chart 3: Qualifications

4. Field of study:

The respondents represent a diverse array of educational fields, with a significant portion specializing in Commerce, specifically B. Com (25.4%). English Literature (11.9%), while the rest are from BA Economics and BMS.

5. Employment status:

Through the analysis it is interpreted that only 15.3% of respondents are currently employed, while a majority of almost 84.7% are currently unemployed. The reason for unemployment is the freshers are still figuring out what field and role to choose.

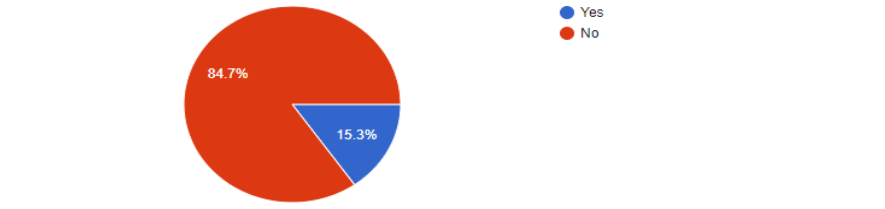


Chart 4: Employment Status

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6. Job Search:

Around 23.7% of respondents are currently not seeking any job, whereas a considerable 76.3% are actively seeking job opportunities.

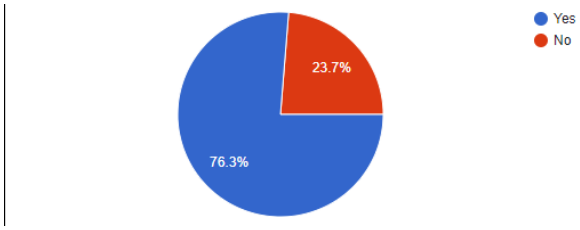


Chart 5: Job Search

7. Nature of Job:

Most respondents are engaged in remote work, that is about 40.7%, followed by office-based workers which is 16.9%, and those who have a hybrid job (both remote and office-based) are around 15.3%. The remaining 27.1% of respondents are currently unemployed.

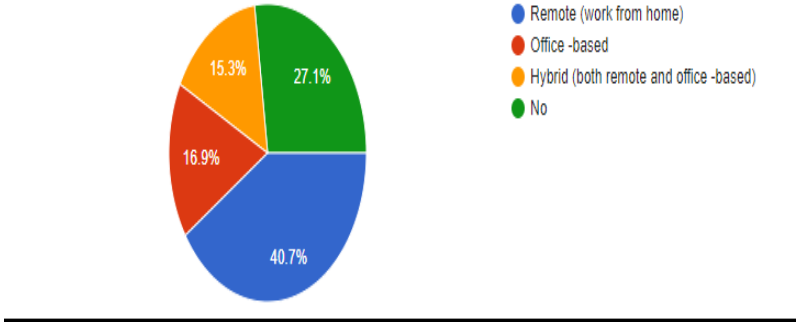


Chart 6: Nature of Job

8. Comfort Towards Wfh

Approximately 39% of respondents express comfort with remote work, while 28.8% are strongly agreeing to the idea of WFH. 27.1% of respondents are neutral with the idea of WFH, and the remaining respondents simply disagree with remote work.

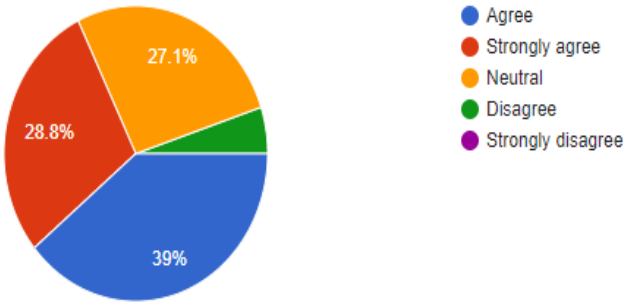


Chart 7: Comfort towards WFH

9. **Opting for Remote work:** Most respondents, that is about 89.8%, are prepared to work from home if given the opportunity, while the remaining 10.2% are not ready for remote work.

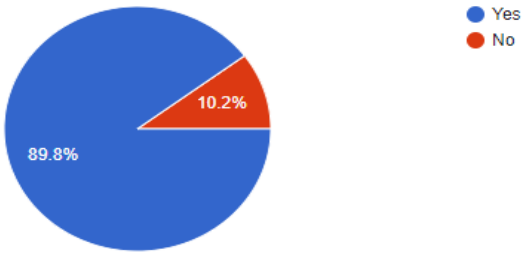


Chart 8: Opting for remote work.

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10. **Experience of WFH:** Most respondents, that is about 84.7%, haven't engaged in any remote work before, whereas the remaining 15.3% have prior experience with remote jobs.

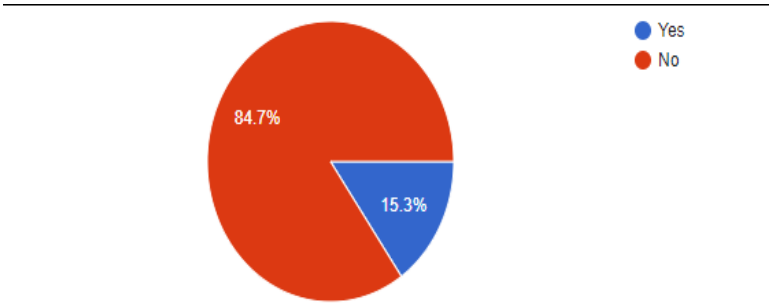


Chart 9: Experience of WFH

11. Preferred Job Types:
The respondents' top job preference is part-time employment, which is about 62.7%, followed by full-time that is at 28.8%. And a smaller percentage, around 8.5%, express a preference for internships.

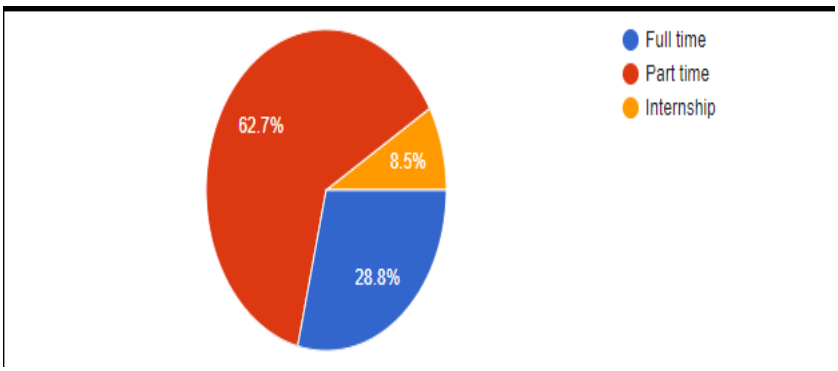


Chart 10: Preferred Job types

12. Platforms for Job Search:
The most used platform for job searches among respondents is online job portals, that is about 66.1%, followed by networking at 16.9%, and career fairs at 13.6%. The remaining percentage is acquired from referrals through friends or other means.

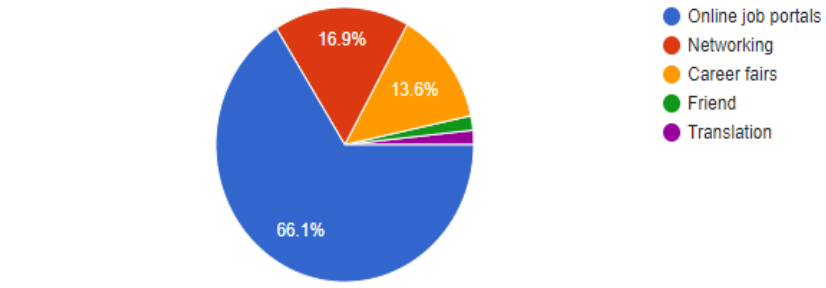


Chart 11: Platforms for Job search

13. Challenges in Job Search:
The primary challenges faced by respondents in their job search include limited job opportunities (44.1%), followed by a lack of experience (36.6%), and difficulties in networking (16.9%). Some respondents face a combination of these challenges, while others do not face any of the mentioned obstacles.

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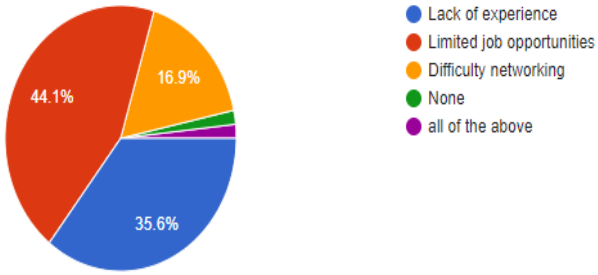


Chart 12: Challenges in Job Search

14. Infrastructure support for Remote work:
Most respondents, approximately 62.7%, have a dedicated space at home for remote work, while around 22% do not. The remaining 15.3% express the intention to create a dedicated workspace.

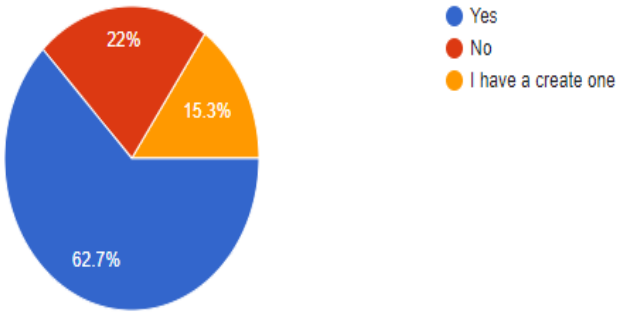


Chart 13: Infrastructural support for remote work

15. Structure of house:
Most respondents reside in 1RK type housing, that is about 45.8%, followed by 1BHK type at 42.4%. About 8.5% have 2BHK housing, while the remaining respondents reside in 3BHK houses.

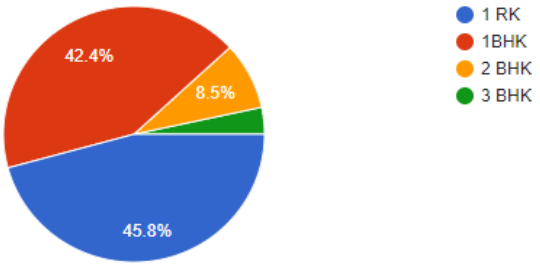


Chart 14: Structure of House

16. **Nature of Family:** Most respondents, that is about 62.7%, belong to nuclear families, while the remaining 37.3% are part of joint families.

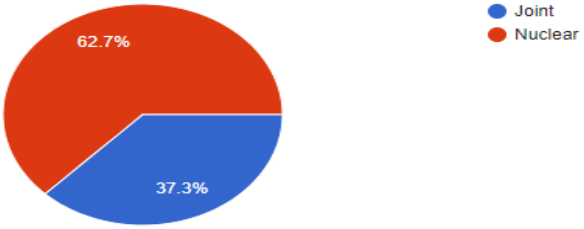


Chart 15: Nature of Family

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17. Motivation for remote work:

Work life balance motivates 37.3% of the population to consider a remote job and 15.3% of the population gets motivated to consider a remote job to avoid in person communication while one of the major parts of the population that is 47.5% consider a remote job for the personal preference.

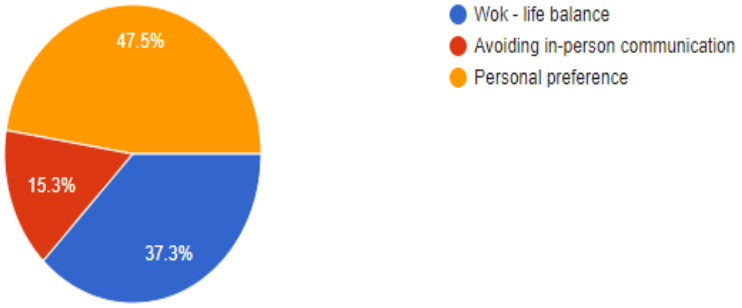


Chart 16: Motivation for remote work

18. Advantages of Remote work:

There are many advantages of work from home for a fresher entering the work force, like 23.7% of the population feels flexibility is one of the advantages and 25.4% of the population thinks increased focused is the advantage while half of the population that is 50.8% of the population feels better work balance is one of the advantages of for a fresher entering the work force.

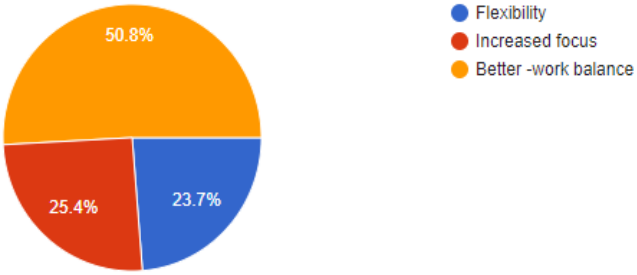


Chart 17: Advantages for remote work

19. Challenges of Remote Work:

According to the population there are specific challenges and concerns about working from home like 28.8% of them face trouble in communication,18.6% have privacy issues,27.1% have network issues and 25.4% have over-working problems.

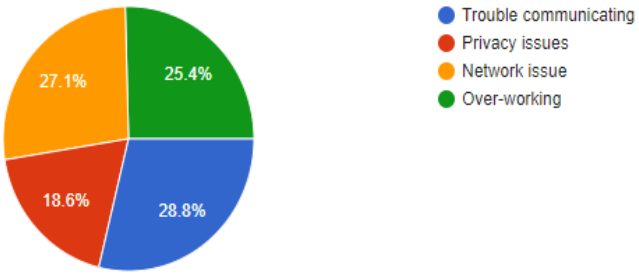


Chart 18: Challenges of remote work

20. Adjustment towards WFH:

There are many ways in which respondents plan to manage their work routine when they're working from home.72.9% of them set specific work hours and 13.6% of them create a dedicated workspace, 6.8% of them go to the library, 5.1% of them do co working while on the other hand 1.7% of the population do not have work.

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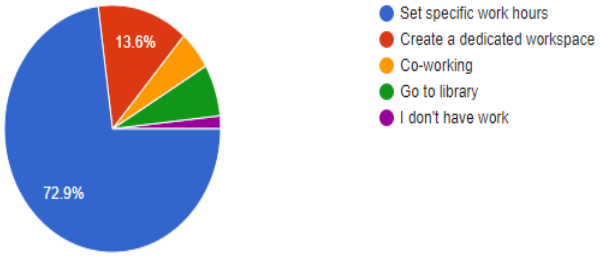


Chart 19: Adjustments towards WFH

21. Technology support:

The access to the necessary technology and infrastructure for remote work is only available to 64.4% of the population and whereas 35.6% of the population do not have technology support.

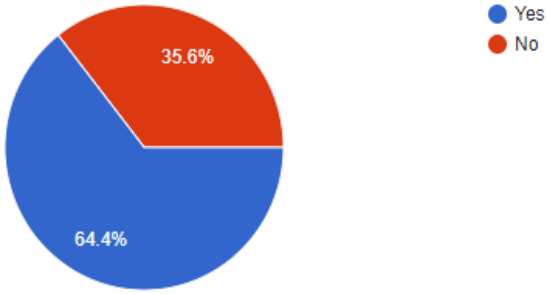


Chart 20: Technology Support

22. Speed of internet connection:

When it comes to the internet connection 35.6% of the population have better internet connection and 40.7% have fast enough and 15.3% have not very fast and on the other hand only 8.5% of the population have very fast internet connection.

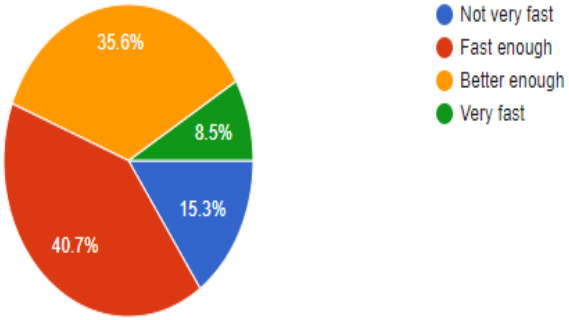


Chart 21: Speed of Internet connection

23. Requirements for additional trainings for WFH:

74.6% of the population would prefer additional training or support for remote work while on the other hand only 25.4% population do not prefer additional training or support for remote work.

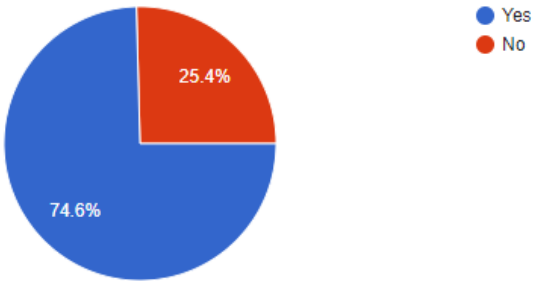


Chart 22: Requirements for additional trainings for WFH

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24. Confidence in Managing remote work:
13.6% of the population feels extremely confident in managing work from home independently and 42.4% of them feel very confident and 23.7% of them are moderately confident and 20.3% of them all little confident.

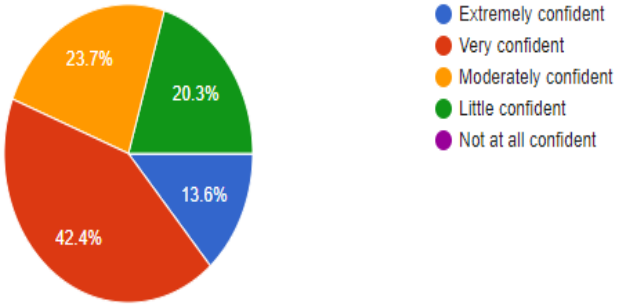


Chart 23: Confidence in managing remote work.

25. Communication management while WFH:
Question was asked how people maintain communication with colleagues while walking from home the answer we received was 67.8% of the population prefers instant messaging and 22% of them prefers regular video meetings and 8.5% of the population prefers email updates while 3% of them prefers messages and calls.

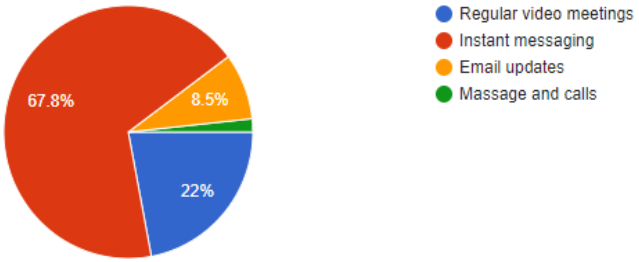


Chart 24: Communication management while WFH

26. Effective Model:
55.9% of the population think remote collaboration can be as effective as in-person collaboration whereas 44.1% do not find it effective.

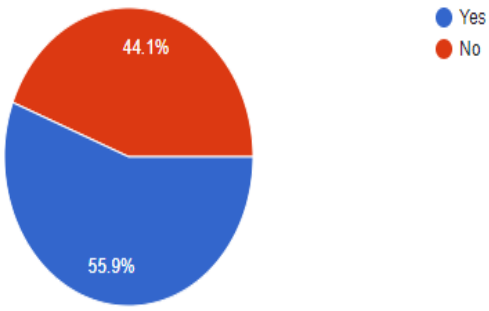


Chart 25: Effective Model

27. Impact on Productivity and job satisfaction:
According to the data 33.9% of the respondents said that remote work will not impact productivity whereas 66.1% of the population think work from home will impact their job satisfaction and productivity. This impact can be a positive or a negative one.

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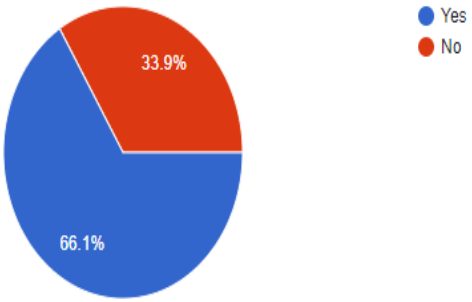


Chart 26: Impact on Productivity and job satisfaction

28. Impact on career development:

49.2% of the population believe that working from home would affect the career development whereas 50.8% population believed that it would have no impact.

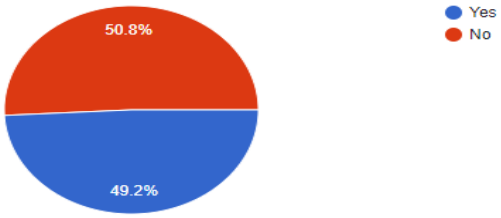


Chart 27: Impact on Career Development

29. Influence of Covid 19:

When the question was asked has the COVID pandemic influenced your views on remote work, 42.4% denied and 57.6% of the population agreed to this.

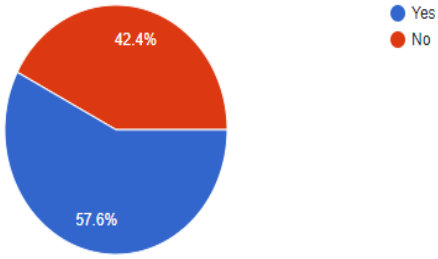


Chart 28: Influence on Covid 19

30. Preferred setting:

For a hybrid work setting which is a mix of both office and remote work, 45.8% of the denied and 54.2% of the population are in its Favor.

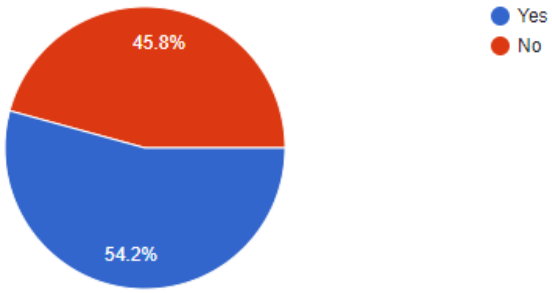


Chart 29: Preferred Setting

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31. Conditions for Remote work:

According to the data 25.4% of the population do not have specific conditions if they are given work from home while 74.6% of the population have specific conditions if they are given work from home.

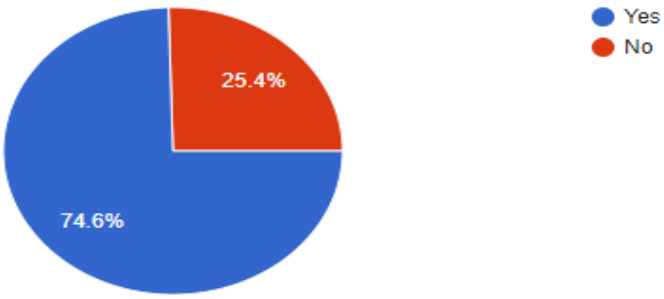


Chart 30: Conditions for remote working

Findings:

Based on the responses collected from the participants, the following key findings were observed:

1. Most respondents were between 17 and 28 years old and were actively seeking job opportunities.
2. They commonly use online job portals and networking to connect with professionals and explore career options.
3. A majority have no prior work experience, neither in traditional office environments nor in remote settings.
4. Their basic educational qualifications make it challenging to secure employment in a competitive market.
5. Due to limited exposure, many freshers are unsure about which job roles are suitable for them at this stage.
6. To avoid prolonged unemployment, they are willing to accept work-from-home (WFH) roles to initiate their careers.
7. Adopting WFH requires significant investments, including setting up a dedicated workspace, installing high-speed internet, purchasing laptops, or renting co-working spaces.
8. These needs arise from limitations such as lack of space at home and insufficient access to necessary infrastructure or technology.
9. As they are new to the workforce, freshers face difficulty adjusting to workplace norms, ethics, and expectations. They are more vulnerable to micromanagement and often feel pressure to overperform to prove their capabilities.
10. Respondents acknowledged that WFH arrangements could positively or negatively influence job satisfaction, productivity, career growth, and long-term salary expectations.
11. There is a strong awareness among freshers about the need to upskill in order to stay competitive in the job market.
12. Freshers from nuclear families, with separate workspaces and access to technology, believe that remote work is feasible. However, they still anticipate challenges related to communication, privacy, overwork, and internet connectivity.
13. Many feel that companies should provide initial training, allowances for setting up home offices, and support for recurring costs such as electricity and internet.

Conclusion:

This study was conducted to examine the perspectives of freshers who are entering the job market for the first time, specifically in relation to work-from-home opportunities. Using both primary and secondary data, the research indicates that while many freshers are open to WFH roles, they require extensive training, financial support, and structured onboarding processes to succeed in a remote setup. Freshers often opt for remote roles due to the scarcity of traditional job opportunities and their lack of professional experience, which makes entering the workforce particularly challenging. However, starting a career remotely poses several risks. It limits real-world exposure, reduces access to in-person mentorship, and restricts opportunities to develop communication, strategic thinking, adaptability, and networking skills that are naturally acquired in an office setting. Despite these limitations, WFH offers notable advantages, such as flexibility, cost savings, reduced commute times, and freedom from office politics. These factors can support early-career professionals in gaining confidence, learning how to navigate challenges, and gradually transitioning from academic to professional life. In summary, freshers tend to prefer in-office roles for the sake of experience and career development. However, in the absence of such opportunities, they are willing to accept remote positions as a stepping stone into the professional world. Starting with something is often better than waiting indefinitely for the ideal role, especially in a competitive job market.

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Conflicts of interest
The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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