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At the end of December 2019, Chinese health officials informed the World Health Organization (WHO) about a cluster of patients with a mysterious pneumonia. On 30 January 2020, WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. Pandemic suddenly became a household word inundating our daily lives, and the definition - an infectious disease where we see significant and ongoing person-to-person spread in multiple countries around the world at the same time - familiar to all.

Within days of the outbreak, work from home (WFH), until then practiced sporadically by companies and organizations, became mandatory - a question of physical and financial survival. To prevent the spread of the virus and protect workers, governments around the world instructed employers to close their offices and enable employees to work from home - to telecommute. It is estimated that more than four out of five people (81 percent) in the global workforce of 3.3 billion are being affected by full or partial workplace closures.

Many, employers and employees alike, had limited experience with WFH on such a large scale before the outbreak. Companies had been comfortable following the standards of office-based work and employees were comfortable with the dichotomy of work and home life. Suddenly companies were faced with the very real possibility of losing revenue and jobs. Combined with the fear and uncertainty of the virus, this disruption was huge, stressful, and painful. WFH was looked on as a potential solution to relieve the pain.

Work from home, a phrase commonly used since the onset of COVID-19, can be defined generically as employees working outside company offices. It includes four basic characteristics: a person who is an employee of a company or a staff member of an organization; actual work engagement with a company or an organization on specific tasks; work being performed outside the company's physical premises; and telecommunication with the employer.

It is worth mentioning that two other popular terms, often used synonymously to describe work from home, are telecommuting and remote work. The Google

COVID-19 and Work from Home

Organizations that have enhanced their IT capabilities and remotely engaged their employees are in a much better position to not only survive these unprecedented circumstances, but to overcome the short and long term challenges that will inevitably follow.



Trends of searches made worldwide in the past three months for telecommuting and remote work, indicate that remote work was used more frequently.

Not only are searches using remote work more frequent, but the availability of information resources mentioning remote work is also greater. There are 22.5 million pages with the term remote work compared to 13.2 million web pages with the term telecommuting. Conversely, Google Scholar offers 51,000 articles on telecommuting and 14,400 on remote work.

Often used interchangeably, remote work and telecommuting have subtle differences in meaning, indicating two somewhat different approaches to the concept of working from home.

Telecommuting is a work arrangement in which the employee works outside the office. This often means working from home or from locations close to home, such as coffee shops, libraries, or co-working spaces. Rather than commuting to the office, employees 'travel' using IT tools, keeping in touch with coworkers and employers via mobile devices, telephones, online chats, video conferences, collaboration platforms, and email.

A comprehensive review of a wide range of telecommuting studies conducted in 2015 found that most definitions of telecommuting have two things in common: working from a location other than the traditional office, and using technology to perform work-related tasks. It also identified three areas in which the definitions differ: the

extent of telecommuting (e.g., once a month, once a week, full-time), the type of employment relationship (e.g., staff member, independent contractor or consultant, self-employed), and the location of remote work (e.g., home, satellite office, coffee shop).

Benefits of telecommuting for both employees and employers, besides saving money, include increased job satisfaction and productivity, greater flexibility, reduced office costs and requirements, increased staff retention, improved employee work-life balance, keeping older generations in the workforce, and environmental benefits.

However, disadvantages also exist such as sociological and psychological challenges resulting from isolation, long work hours,

and lack of separation between work and home. Telecommuting requires self-discipline and dependence on personal IT tools, communication, and other resources. There are also the costs involved for organizations when transitioning to new work methods and training, along with employees' lack of both commitment and identification with organizational culture and values. The increased risk of privacy and security issues should not be underestimated. Some authors also mention the increased danger society faces by creating detached individuals.

Remote work, another type of work from home, is seemingly synonymous with telecommuting. However, while telecommuting means working outside the office, usually from home, remote work

implies that the employee lives outside the vicinity of the organization's main headquarters or office. This geographical distinction may seem inconsequential, but in fact, it demands change in the management and engagement of the workforce. Managers need to adopt different communication and management styles and make additional efforts to properly lead and ensure the required level of productivity of a remote workforce. Different labor legislation, financial obligations, cultural backgrounds, time-zones, scheduling, and expectations are just some of the dissimilarities between remote work and telecommuting. Often, remote workers are freelancers and independent contractors who spend their time outside the traditional office settings.

The benefits of a diverse globally distributed workforce boil down to the large pool of specialty professions and the financial gains brought about by different standards of living and local pay. Remotely recruited employees often have considerable financial benefits such as higher salaries, better working conditions, and international exposure.

The disadvantages mentioned above for telecommuting are more or less the same for remote work. However, disadvantages unique to remote workers include their emotional well-being, limited career development opportunities, working outside regular local work hours due to different time zones, professional or even geographical bias, and emotional resentment of coworkers and local colleagues.

As the ripple of COVID-19 careens around the globe, we are being forced to innovate and change the way we work and live. In a matter of days, organizations have been required to improve their capabilities for long-distance collaboration. Videoconferencing, online purchasing, special deliveries, telemedicine, e-learning, electronic trading, online marketing, video streaming, and many other IT enabled processes have undergone virtual transformation, replacing traditional work practices. Organizations that have enhanced their IT capabilities and remotely engaged their employees are in a much better position to not only survive these unprecedented circumstances, but to overcome the short and long term challenges that will inevitably follow.

Seafood Industry in India: A Perspective

RAJEN PADHI

The Covid-19 pandemic has left a disastrous impact on seafood production and trade. Customer psyche has been seriously affected; supply chain has been disrupted. All links - from purchase to procurement, logistics and labour - are in total disarray. From individual to industry - everything stands battered and bruised.

Seafood industry is hard hit during the lockdown as two thirds of its sales proceed from food services and institutional sales. The pandemic has led to complete closure of food services and institutions. Seafood trade with its global integration had its own challenges. India exports substantial seafood every year; last year, it exported seafood worth about USD 7 billion; the USA, China and EU being the main markets. Even though restrictions for the marine trade have been relaxed, only a few processing units have started operations with a very limited staff. However, the other facets of the trade such as hatchery, aquaculture and shrimp feed were struggling due to various factors. A few hatchery owners are almost on the verge of offloading the PL (post larvae) tanks as seed uptake is not possible. Reaching to the aqua farms also poses a challenge and aqua farms stocking (release of shrimp PL to ponds) are delayed. Ironically, China market was the first to revive and buy from India. Japan and Vietnam followed suit and the USA entered the fray, much to the relief of seafood exporters. Export gateways like VCTPL and CPT are operational on the East coast. Delayed shipments, cancelled contracts, payment delay—all lead to disastrous consequences. Cash is dented and implications are severe.

China is the biggest importer of global shrimp and unfortunately, the pandemic coincided with the Chinese New Year celebrations. The trade started shuttering with China reeling

under the impact of Covid-19 and severe domestic lockdown conditions restricting imports. The Chinese New Year is a big festival where sales are usually very high. As domestic consumption in China showed a downward trend, India soon felt its tremors. Desperation was noticed among exporters which percolated to the levels of aqua farmers. With Janata Curfew on March 22, subsequent state-wide and nation-wide lockdown, seafood industry in Odisha came to a grinding halt.

Production in shrimp farming output is expected to be much lower as only 35-40 % of stocking has been

Implementation of government policies by making best use of the packages offered by it provides key to the success of seafood industry. Success can be achieved by adhering to international food safety norms, extending appropriate support to the industry for making aquaculture sustainable, emphasizing on traceability, value addition and environmental protection. The industry, with the active support of the government and all stakeholders, is defying all hurdles lying on its way to achieve a sustainable growth and contribute to the country's exports.



over. The first crop due in June would be delayed substantially and have its roll over effect on subsequent crops. China, which is still the largest importer of raw shrimps in traditional

block form, may capitalize and exert pressure on sale price. A change in consumer behaviour in food habits is more palpable. The sooner Indian seafood industry

changes its orientation to value added shrimps, the more secured it would be in its modus operandi. Considering the current political situation, any change in Government

policy vis-à-vis China may also affect exports to our northern neighbour. Even though India did not sign RCEP, seafood exports to China still enjoys privileges under APTA (Asia Pacific Treaty Agreement). USA, Japan, Vietnam and Middle East would continue to be major destinations. Diplomatic channels should now be used to explore markets in Australia, South Africa and other African countries.

Fish and fishery products contribute about 17 % of the animal protein to the human body. The per capita fish consumption is consistently on the rise, currently at 22 kg, and the anticipated growth of seafood is about 1.7 % globally. We must now capitalize on emerging demands of a new order and cater to the customer demand for seafood which is both nutritional and sustainable.

To kick start the economy, it is imperative to induce demand and restart manufacturing sector. Disposable income has to be utilized. Velocity of money vis-a-vis consumerism needs to be increased. It is pertinent to emphasize on two crucial aspects: life and livelihood. Government has offered stimulus packages and incentives for the MSME sector, which constitutes the soul of an emerging economy like India. Revival of rural economy is the need of the hour.

Seafood Industry supports a lot of ancillary industries like packaging, ie , food additives, shrimp feed, hatchery, shrimp medicines, machinery, spare parts, electric appliances and safety gear logistics, to mention a few. As trade regenerates, MSME associated with it will be activated too. The challenges are daunting. Yet as the saying goes, when journey is difficult, the destination is beautiful. In all possibility, there would be a surge in seafood demand and the gap between demand and supply needs to be bridged.

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