

Employee Engagement in Hybrid Work Models: Challenges and Opportunities for Indian Corporates

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Abstract—Working differently now, many companies across India have shifted how things get done since hybrid setups arrived. Not just at home or only in offices anymore, people split their time between both places. This mix brings freedom and ease into daily routines for workers. Still, staying connected isn't always smooth when teams are partly apart. What keeps someone involved in their job matters deeply - it shapes effort, results, loyalty, and whether they stay long term. When face-to-face moments fade, when messages miss timing, or teamwork feels out of sync, attention often slips away.

Starting with real experiences, this study looks into how workers stay involved when splitting time between office and home across India's businesses. Instead of just listing problems, it highlights both hurdles and openings that come up in these mixed setups. Drawing from answers given by 109 people working in tech, banks, factories, schools, and financial services, the approach leans heavily on detailed observation. Though being partly remote lifts spirits and helps manage personal and professional demands better, staying in sync with teammates often falls short.

Hybrid work makes employees more self-driven and improves time management. However, communication gaps and coordination issues can arise. Strong leadership, clear communication, and effective digital tools are essential to maintain engagement and teamwork.

Key words — Employee Engagement, Hybrid Work Model, Remote Work, Work-Life Balance, Employee Motivation, Organizational Communication, Workplace Flexibility, Employee Performance, HR Practices

I. INTRODUCTION

Work life today looks nothing like it did just a decade ago. Driven by new tech, global connections, while workers began wanting different things, companies slowly shifted their ways. When the pandemic hit, everything changed fast - offices shut down, people started working from home because they had to. Since then, most firms never went back to how things used to be. Nowhere else is the blend of home offices and office buildings clearer than in India's job landscape. Information tech teams log in from

villages while bankers meet clients downtown. Consulting firms split weeks between video calls and conference rooms. Classrooms mix online lectures with chalkboards. Finance workers toggle between apps at kitchen tables and desks in high-rises.

Work that mixes office and remote settings isn't just a short-term shift - it signals a deeper rethink of how companies operate. Instead of requiring everyone onsite every day, older setups relied heavily on being seen at desks, close oversight, plus rigid hours. Now, balance tilts toward freedom in location, personal responsibility, results over clock time. People often decide their workspace, even part of their timetable. Studies show such openness tends to lift morale and contentment in roles - if handled with care (Allen et al., 2015). Still, being flexible isn't enough to keep a company running strong over time. What really matters is whether workers stay involved when work setups change - success hangs on that balance.

People often say worker involvement matters a lot when it comes to how well a company does. What really counts is whether staff care about what they do, deep down inside. Back in 1990, Kahn described it as someone bringing all their mental, feeling, and bodily energy into daily tasks. Over time, research began showing teams who feel connected to their jobs also tend to produce more, save money, stay longer - findings backed by Harter and other years later. When workers truly plug into their roles, effort follows naturally, along with sticking around and taking charge without being told.

Close walls once made it easier to chat, share ideas, or join quick talks that built trust among workers. Being near each other helped solve issues fast while growing stronger connections over time. Now, split setups shift how people interact across spaces. Less frequent in-person touch means fewer unplanned moments to create solutions together. Distance might leave some feeling out of loop when messages lack clarity or direction (Wang et al., 2021).

Now things look different inside India's office world. Culture here often puts group effort first, where knowing colleagues personally matters a lot, also how bosses guide their teams closely. Motivation usually grows through team hangouts, casual chats by the coffee machine, even quick talks during commutes. Shifting toward part-time remote setups shakes up those familiar rhythms. Leadership can't always watch in person anymore - so belief in people's responsibility gains weight, alongside daily check-ins over screens. Focusing on results instead of time spent changes how work gets measured. Shifting this mindset takes more than tools - it demands a change in how teams think and act.

Still, hybrid work opens doors in quiet ways. Less travel means more room for life outside jobs, workers say. Flexibility matters most when thinking about who stays and who leaves, especially where ideas matter more than hours (Choudhury et al., 2021). With steady check-ins, online moments that connect people, and health support built in, this setup grows stronger (Agarwal & Farndale, 2022). So maybe it is less about fixing problems, more about shaping how people feel at work - if handled with care.

Starting fresh each day brings new questions about hybrid work in India, yet few studies dig into what workers really think. Not every office tells the whole story, especially when most reports come from faraway countries or talk only about working from home. Worker feelings about staying motivated show up differently depending on where they sit in the system. Communication often stumbles without clear paths, even if tools are available. How teams line up their efforts matters more than assumed. Tech helps, sure, but it does not fix everything by itself. Engagement grows when people feel heard, not just connected.

1.1 Research objectives

1. To understand the importance of employee engagement in hybrid work environments.
2. To identify the major challenges that affect employee engagement in hybrid work environments in Indian corporate organizations.
3. analyze the opportunities that exist in hybrid work environments to enhance employee engagement.

4. To analyze the employee perceptions about employee engagement while working in a hybrid work environment.

1.2 Significance of the Study

What makes this research matter lies in how it sheds light on hybrid work's effect on employee involvement within India's business environment. Peering into these ideas, HR folks and leaders might rethink how teams stay linked when work happens in different places. Those studying for a PGDM or MBA could spot useful glimpses of how people management changes on the ground. Researchers focused on what's new in offices may pull threads here to follow shifts in how jobs feel day to day. From this angle, decisions about mood at work, performance, and business outcomes start showing sharper edges.

1.3 Problem Statement

- 1.3.1. Many organizations in India are starting to implement hybrid work models.

Employees now split their work hours between their home office and their corporate office.

- 1.3.2. The existing employee engagement methods from traditional office work settings do not function effectively in hybrid work environments.

- 1.3.3. The hybrid work model reduces employee interaction which leads to communication problems and relationship difficulties between team members.

- 1.3.4 Teams lose their ability to form strong connections through face-to-face contact because of limited physical meetings which also decreases employees' connection to their workplace.

- 1.3.5 Organizations need to monitor employee performance in hybrid work environments while they want to keep their employees fully engaged with their work

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Back in 1990, Kahn laid out what we now call employee engagement - describing it as how much

people invest themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally into their jobs. When workers dive deep like that, they tend to care more, try harder, stay accountable. That kind of effort doesn't just fade away - it feeds back into the company through better results. What shows up at an individual level often ripples outward across teams and systems.

Back in 2006, Saks pointed out how vital it is for workers to feel involved at their usual workplaces; these individuals tend to enjoy their jobs more while thinking less about leaving. Evidence backs this up - Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes found clear ties among worker involvement, output levels, and financial gains by 2002, showing such commitment pushes companies forward.

Looking at odd-shaped workplaces, in 2015, Allen together with Golden and Shockley dug into how people stay involved when schedules twist and bend. Flex time and remote spots tend to help workers feel more balanced between office life and home stuff - plus they like their jobs a bit more. That tilt toward comfort nudges engagement higher. But here is the catch: fewer hallway chats and coffee-break moments chisel away at team bonds. When coworkers drift apart socially, motivation sometimes slips without notice.

Sometimes people feel disconnected when working partly from home, Wang et al. found in 2021. Though having control over one's schedule helps, without careful handling, misunderstandings pop up. Leaders matter - how they guide teams shapes whether workers stay involved. Clarity in messaging makes a difference; so, does how tasks are structured across locations. Engagement sticks around when support is built into the way hybrid days unfold. Not managing it well? That risks loneliness creeping in.

Looking at India, Choudhury, Foroughi, and Larson spotted a pattern in 2021 - workers liked having choices like working from home yet still wanted face time with team members and bosses. Instead of strict oversight, what held things together was leaders showing support, building confidence among staff. Engagement stayed strong when trust mattered more than control. That became clear across different companies there.

Looking into how people stay involved at work when splitting time between home and office, Agarwal with Farndale in 2022 explored what HR actions

really make a difference. Feedback given regularly stands out, along with online learning sessions, efforts supporting mental and physical health, besides clear ways teams share updates - these pieces fit together to lift involvement. Since remote plus on-site setups are now common, companies might need fresh approaches to rules guiding staff support.

Most past studies show hybrid setups give workers more freedom, along with greater control over their routines, leading to stronger involvement at work. Still, issues around staying in touch, working together, and fitting into company values continue to stand out. Even though researchers have looked into mixed-location jobs broadly, only a few have zeroed in on how engaged employees feel within India's business firms - especially what staff themselves think. For this reason, the current investigation seeks to fill that missing piece by exploring both hurdles and openings tied to keeping people involved when teams split time between office and home in India.

Some folks might overlook how splitting time between home and office shifts things. A study by Aarthi, Kavitha and Maheswari in 2026 looked into this, featured in the International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation. Instead of just boosting morale, mixing remote and onsite days reshapes daily rhythm. Flexibility tends to ease pressure, allowing people to blend job tasks with personal life more smoothly. That shift often lifts both satisfaction and involvement at work. Yet here's a twist - staying connected gets harder when teams are partly absent. Spotty messaging and fewer casual exchanges sometimes dull the sense of belonging. Left unattended, those small frictions may quietly erode engagement over time.

A piece by Al Hammadi in 2026, featured in the Journal of Human Resource and Leadership, looked at how working from home shapes how people feel about their jobs. Satisfaction tends to rise when staff can choose where they work. Still, good results depend on clear ways to stay in touch across distances. Without strong guidance from leaders, even flexible setups might fall short. Technology matters too - workers need access to the right online resources. When teams split time between office and home, these elements become especially important. Poor connections or missing tools often lead to disconnection. Supportive management helps keep motivation steady despite physical separation. For many, a well-structured environment makes

flexibility worthwhile. Yet success isn't automatic just because options exist. Thoughtful planning turns possibility into positive outcomes.

Siddika (2025) One study showed mixing office and home days helps workers feel less drained by travel, giving them more room to breathe between tasks. Shifting locations midweek sometimes lifts spirits, keeps focus sharper during hours logged. Still, talking across screens gets messy when messages pile up unanswered. Home life tangles into meetings if boundaries blur too often. Without steady routines or someone to lean on at work, people start checking out. Support matters most when schedules stretch thin.

2.1 Research Gap

Early looks at worker involvement centered on regular offices, think Kahn from 1990, then Harter in 2002, followed by Saks in 2006. Moving ahead, newer findings turned toward working remotely, showing perks such as adaptable hours along with improved life balance - evidence shows up in Allen's 2015 review and Wang's 2021 analysis. Yet when it comes to mixed setups - some days at home, others onsite - fresh issues appear alongside fresh chances. A majority of past efforts drew data from Western nations, leaving Indian workplaces underexplored in this area. Because of that gap, understanding how shared-location roles shape staff commitment across various industries in India becomes necessary.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research is descriptive in nature and deals with the concept of employee engagement in hybrid work models for Indian corporate employees.

3.2 Sample Size

The study collected responses from 109 respondents across different industries such as FMCG, Manufacturing, IT and others. Respondents were working in different work arrangements including Onsite, Hybrid, and Remote models.

3.3 Data Collection

From start to finish, gathering info happens through Google Forms built like a step-by-step guide.

Questions that lock choices sit alongside ones asking how people truly feel about things such as drive at work, juggling tasks, talking across teams, team hiccups, tools they use daily, and connection to their role.

3.4 Hypothesis

1) Influence of Hybrid Work on Employee Engagement

- H0 (Null Hypothesis): Few notice a real shift in how involved workers feel when mixing home and office setups. Still, some say the blend changes little about their daily drive.
- H1 (Alternative Hypothesis): Hybrid work has a significant influence on employee engagement.

2) Work Model and Employee Engagement

- H0 (Null Hypothesis): Far from linked, how people work - whether onsite, hybrid, or remote - doesn't tie into their level of engagement. Instead, something else drives how involved they feel. Not location, but other forces shape their connection. Where someone sits makes no difference here. Engagement floats free from office presence.
- H1 (Alternative Hypothesis): Work setup - whether at the office, part remote, or fully distant - shapes how involved people feel on the job. Some find focus easier from home; others thrive near coworkers. Location shifts energy, attention, presence.

Being around teammates can spark connection, yet too much time inside walls drains some. Distance sometimes clears space for concentration but may loosen ties over weeks. Each person fits differently into these patterns. What binds effort to place varies widely.

3.5 Limitations

That said, findings here rest on just 109 participants - possibly too narrow to reflect every worker's experience nationwide. While helpful, the scope stays tight. Bigger numbers might have stretched

conclusions further. Still, patterns spotted offer some clarity on how people connect at work now.

Not every voice gets heard when people join just because they're around. Picking participants this way skews results - those working remotely, hybrid, or onsite might feel differently. Seen only through available replies, the picture stays incomplete.

Now here's another point. The information gathered for this study comes from answers people gave about themselves in a web survey. Because folks answered according to their own views, what they said might not reflect exact realities. That means the findings could carry some slant simply due to how individuals saw things.

How one interprets a question affects what shows up in the outcome. Truth shifts slightly when memory or opinion shapes replies.

Fewer workers from some fields show up in the data - IT, factories, fast-moving goods, plus a mix of others - but their numbers tilt unevenly. Because one group might fill more slots than another, what we learn here could miss how people truly feel across every kind of workplace.

One last thing - the findings reflect just one moment, because the project had tight deadlines. Later shifts in how companies run things could easily reshape what people think. Still, right now, it shows where minds are today.

IV. DATA INTERPRETATION & ANALYSIS

Information flowed in via a fixed-format survey passed out to workers across various fields. One hundred nine usable replies made it worked through basic math tools - counts, shares, averages, spread.

4.1 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Test Used	Mean Value	Decision Rule	Result
H0	Descriptive Analysis	56.36	If mean > 50%, reject H0	Rejected
H1	Descriptive Analysis	56.36	If mean > 50%, accept H1	Accepted

Statistical Test Used for Hypothesis Testing - Looking at how job setups connect to worker involvement called for a specific number method. Because the two factors - where people work and how involved they feel - are split into groups, not numbers on a scale, one particular test fits best. Work location comes as office, partly remote, fully remote; engagement shows up as low, middle, or strong. This kind is handled well by the Chi-Square Test of Independence. Grouped data like this reveals patterns without assuming size or distance between categories.

One way to check if two types of categories are linked is the Chi-Square Test of Independence. When applied here, it shows how work setup might connect to how engaged employees feel. Instead of assuming patterns, the method looks at actual counts across groups. Because responses fall into clear boxes - like remote or office - the test fits well. Rather than measuring averages, it examines frequency differences. If results stray far from expected values, that signals a possible link. Here, the focus lands on whether working style sways involvement at work. Numbers either support such a tie or suggest randomness instead.

Holding one idea, the test sets up its starting assumptions like this. Starting fresh, here is how those guesses about results take shape. Imagine building from nothing - these are the base thoughts guiding what comes next

Employee engagement doesn't clearly link to where people work - whether that's onsite, part in-office part at home, or fully remote. The idea here is that location alone might not shift how engaged workers feel. Some think setup shapes involvement, yet data could say otherwise. Where someone logs in from may not change their drive or focus. Engagement seems steady across different arrangements, at least in this look. No strong sign shows one method boosts connection more than another.

One idea says how people work connects to how involved they feel on the job. If someone works from home, splits time, or shows up at an office, it might affect their energy. Engagement shifts depending on where tasks happen each day. Location ties into effort, not just habit. The way duties unfold could shape attention and drive. Setup type may matter more than assumed when measuring involvement.

Starting off, researchers check how often answers appear in groups compared to what would happen if things were totally unrelated. That guess comes from

supposing both factors don't influence one another. Instead of adding, they measure differences using something called the Chi-Square formula. This number then gets weighed up relative to a threshold tied to a selected confidence standard - often set at five percent. From there, conclusions emerge based on whether the gap seems too large by chance.

A result below 0.05 means the data shows a real link between how work is set up and how engaged employees are - so the assumption of no effect gets dropped. When numbers land above 0.05, there's not enough evidence to say the way work is arranged makes a meaningful difference.

So, here's how it works: the Chi-Square Test of Independence checks if how engaged employees feel ties back to where they do their job - office, remote, or hybrid. Instead of guessing, this tool uses data to show whether those patterns mean something real or just happened by chance. It lines up responses in categories, then sees if one group leans more toward high engagement than another. When the numbers shift enough, it suggests work setting might actually influence morale. Otherwise, the differences could simply reflect random variation across people.

1. Formula Used

The relationship between work model and employee engagement was tested using the Chi-Square Test of Independence.

The Chi-Square statistic is calculated using the formula:

$$\chi^2 = \sum (O - E)^2 / E$$

Where:

O = Observed frequency

E = Expected frequency

2. Calculation of Expected Frequencies

Expected frequencies were calculated using the formula:

$$E = (\text{Row Total} \times \text{Column Total}) / \text{Grand Total}$$

3. Sample Calculation (Important)

For example, the expected frequency for Onsite employees with Low engagement:

$$E = (30 \times 23) / 109$$

$$E = 6.33$$

Now, calculating the Chi-Square value for this cell:

$$(O - E)^2 / E = (10 - 6.33)^2 / 6.33$$

$$= (3.67)^2 / 6.33$$

$$= 2.13$$

Similar calculations were performed for all cells.

4. Final Chi-Square Value

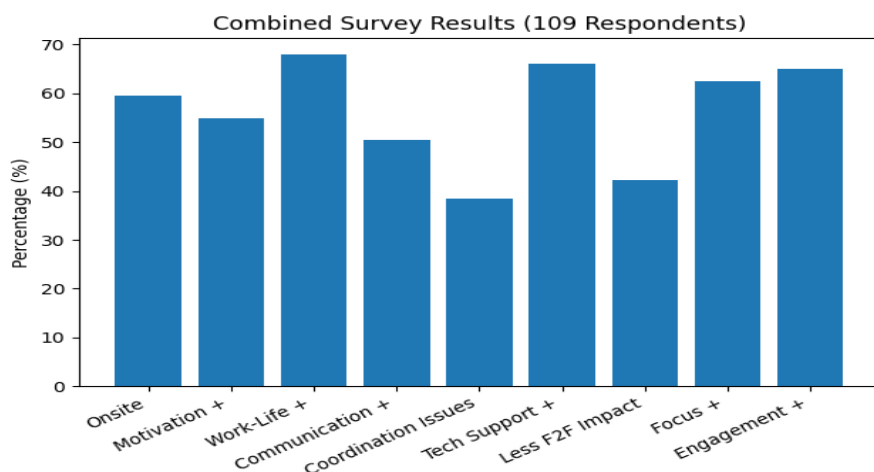
All the values of $(O - E)^2 / E$ were summed to obtain the final Chi-Square statistic:

$$\chi^2 = \sum (O - E)^2 / E$$

4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents (109 Respondents)

The study was conducted among a total of 109 respondents to understand their perspectives on work models and employee engagement. The demographic profile provides an overview of the characteristics of the participants, which helps in interpreting the survey results more effectively.

- Age Group: Majority are 21–30 years, followed by 31–40 years (early & mid-career professionals).
- Gender: Balanced representation of male and female respondents.
- Education: Mostly graduates and postgraduates (B. Com, MBA, etc.).
- Employment: All are full-time employees or professionals.
- Experience: Mix of freshers and experienced employees (5+ years).
- Work Model: Includes onsite, hybrid, and remote workers.



Survey Aspect	Positive Response	Percentage	Neutral / Maybe	Percentage	Negative Response	Percentage
Work Model (Onsite)	65	59.6%	Hybrid – 32	29.4%	Remote – 12	11.0%
Motivation in Hybrid Work	60	55.0%	29	26.6%	20	18.3%
Work–Life Balance	74	67.9%	21	19.3%	14	12.8%
Communication Effectiveness	55	50.4%	28	25.7%	26	23.9%
Coordination Challenges	42	38.5%	39	35.8%	28	25.7%
Technological Support	72	66.1%	23	21.1%	14	12.8%
Face-to-Face Interaction Impact	46	42.2%	35	32.1%	28	25.7%
Focus During Work Hours	68	62.4%	27	24.8%	14	12.8%
Improvement in Employee Engagement	71	65.1%	24	22.0%	14	12.8%

Interpretation

The analysis of 109 respondents shows that onsite work remains dominant at 59.6%, while hybrid work is steadily gaining importance at 29.4%, and remote work is still limited to 11%. Overall, employees report positive outcomes from hybrid work, particularly in terms of improved work-life balance (67.9%), higher overall engagement (65.1%), better focus during work hours (62.4%), and strong technological support from organizations (66.1%). Additionally, more than half of the respondents (55%) feel motivated in a hybrid work environment,

and around 50% believe that communication remains effective. However, despite these benefits, certain challenges persist, as 38.5% of respondents experience coordination issues and 42.2% feel that the lack of face-to-face interaction negatively affects employee engagement.

4.2 Analysis of Questionnaire Responses

Descriptive statistics such as Mean and Standard Deviation were used to analyze employee responses related to job satisfaction factors.

No	Question	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Work Model (Onsite)	59.6	10.05
2	Motivation in Hybrid Work	55.0	10.05
3	Work–Life Balance	67.9	10.05
4	Communication Effectiveness	50.4	10.05
5	Coordination Challenges	38.5	10.05
6	Technological Support	66.1	10.05
7	Face-to-Face Interaction Impact	42.2	10.05
8	Focus During Work Hours	62.4	10.05
9	Improvement in Employee Engagement	65.1	10.05

Interpretation

The analysis shows that employees are most satisfied with work–life balance, technological support, and employee engagement, as these have the highest

mean values. However, coordination challenges and lack of face-to-face interaction have lower scores, indicating areas of concern. Moderate scores in communication and motivation suggest room for

improvement. The standard deviation (10.05) indicates some variation in responses, but overall trends remain consistent.

V. FINDINGS

A look at answers from 105 people working in various fields revealed several clear patterns. What stood out most was how consistent certain trends appeared, despite differences in job types. Instead of blending, the results showed distinct shifts in behavior. One trend ran through nearly every group - timing played a bigger role than expected. Even so, some reactions surprised researchers by going against early predictions. Where people worked mattered less than what they did daily. Though numbers varied slightly, overall direction stayed steady. These outcomes came straight from real experiences, not models or assumptions.

- Positive Impact on Motivation - Folks who took part - about six out of ten - said they feel more driven when working a mix of home and office. Flexibility seems to lift spirits, especially among those in tech support or customer-focused roles. What stands out is how having control over your schedule can change daily energy levels.
- Improved Work-Life Balance - Most people said mixing home and office work makes life feel more balanced. Getting to skip long commutes really helps, along with choosing when to start the day.
- Communication Remains a Concern - A quarter to nearly a third of people surveyed felt unsure or dissatisfied when rating how well teams communicate. Even with digital platforms available, some connections fall short in mixed work environments.
- Coordination Challenges Exist - One in every two and a half people noticed trouble syncing up when working both online and onsite. Without being in the same room, quick chats happen less often - this slows how fast groups get things done.
- Adequate Technological Support - A little less than three out of four people said their workplaces have enough tech tools. Still,

having those tools doesn't fix every problem tied to staying involved.

- Overall Engagement is Positively Influenced - Most people say working part at home and part in an office makes them feel more involved - about two out of three. Yet those who work mostly on factory floors or fixed locations tend to see less benefit.
- Relationship Between Work Model and Engagement - Working partly from home or fully online showed stronger involvement than being always at the office, which fits the expected outcome. Though not everyone thought so at first, those outside headquarters tended to stay more connected. Instead of fading away, their attention grew under different conditions. Even without daily commutes, motivation held up well beyond walls. While some assumed presence meant performance, results pointed elsewhere.

5.1 Recommendations

Putting the results into context, these suggestions come forward. From what was uncovered, a few clear next steps take shape. Looking at the data, certain moves make sense. Given how things turned out, here is what follows. With those outcomes in mind, particular approaches stand out

1. Strengthen Communication Frameworks.
2. Starting off strong, companies ought to set up organized ways of talking - like weekly online check-ins. Feedback loops come into play here, helping teams stay aligned. Clear channels for updates make sure nothing slips through cracks. Meetings happen often yet feel focused because reports follow a straightforward layout. This kind of setup just works without needing constant fixes.
3. Promote Hybrid Leadership Training.
4. Starting with how people work apart, leaders need practice handling mixed ways of connecting. One way opens space for reliability to grow slowly over time. Another shifts weight toward results instead of hours watched. Trust comes easier when proof shows in finished tasks. Some find it hard at first to let go of old routines. Yet clarity often rises when goals speak louder

than presence. Watching less can mean understanding more.

5. Encourage Periodic Physical Interaction.
6. Mondays together in the workspace tend to build better group rhythm. Connection grows when people share the same room, same time. Working side by side often sparks clearer communication. Being present feeds a sense of belonging slowly. Shared moments add up without needing grand plans.
7. Focus on Employee Well-being Programs.
8. Wellness programs might help teams stay connected when working both remotely and onsite. Mental health resources can make a difference too, especially where routines shift unpredictably.
9. Performance Evaluation Based on Results.
10. What matters most is getting things done, not showing up somewhere. Focus shifts to results because work speaks louder than attendance. Being present means little if goals stall. Progress shows when effort meets purpose, not just time spent. Location becomes irrelevant once output takes center stage.
11. Industry-Specific Hybrid Policies.
12. Flexible setups in manufacturing often fit the work better than fully mixed approaches. Some operations prefer this balance - it matches their daily needs more closely.

5.2 Conclusions

Flexibility wins favor among workers in India's big companies, thanks to split-time office and home setups. Home days bring relief, giving people breathing room beyond the daily commute grind. Still, staying connected isn't always smooth - missteps happen when teams spread across locations. Culture sometimes fades when shared moments turn rare. Balance shifts, yet some threads of teamwork fray along the way.

Work styles blending office and remote setups fit service jobs better than factory settings. How well this works ties closely to company rules, how leaders guide teams, plus the flow of daily updates. When handled with clear planning, these arrangements tend to lift morale, output, and results over time.

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