



70 hour work week – Pros & Cons

Description

Theme:

- Recently, the founder of Infosys, N.R. Narayana Murthy, said that young people need to work 70 hours a week to help make the country’s economy reach the level of developed countries. Some employers agree with this idea, while others are against it.

In Favor of 70 hour work week:

- N.R. Narayana Murthy pointed out that both Japan and Germany increased work hours in the years following the second world war as examples of how nations successfully advanced their economies. He emphasized that as India currently enjoys a demographic dividend, increased productivity could contribute to the country’s economic progress.
- Increasing working hours may result in higher wages, a positive outcome that can contribute to increased consumption, ultimately benefiting the overall economy.
- Entrepreneurs running successful businesses typically work longer hours.

Against the idea of 70 hour work week:

- Spending prolonged hours at work can significantly affect one’s mental health and can potentially lead to burnout. A 70-hour work week means that working 5 days a week for around 14 hours per day, or 6 days a week for about 11.5 hours. Germany and Japan increased work hours post second world war to about 8.3 to 9 hours per day in a five-day workweek (max 45 hours per week). This is way less than a 70-hour workweek.
- Maintaining a good work-life balance is crucial, as the saying goes, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy”. Allocating time for leisure and relaxation is important to ensure overall well-being. Already, Indians spend less time on sports and leisure activities when compared with Japan and Germany ([Source](#)). So, a 70-hour work week can further decrease the time for leisure activities and can increase dissatisfaction in life.



- Indians are already putting in more hours at work. According to the data from the International Labour Organization (ILO), in 2021, Indian workers worked for 47.7 hours a week compared to Japan's 36.6, Germany's 34.3, and the US's 36.4. ILO's hours of work convention, 1919 set maximum work hours at 48 hours per week with a few exceptions. So, increasing work hours more than that can go against International Labour Standards (ILS).
- Not following labour laws properly can impact India's free trade agreements (FTAs) with other countries. At present, India is currently in discussions for Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with both the European Union and the United Kingdom. International Labour Standards is also one of the things that is being discussed.
- India is already struggling with a high unemployment rate. So, increasing the work hours of the existing employees can reduce the number of new jobs. Germany and Japan struggled with labour shortages during post second world war. Due to this, they had to bring in immigrants and also had to increase work hours. But in India, we have a labour surplus. So, there is no need to increase work hours.
- Longer work hours may not always result in increased wages. Some employees have no choice but to agree to the increase in work hours for the same pay. That will be totally unfair to the employees.
- In general, most of the women in India are putting more hours in house chores and unpaid care work at home when compared with men. So, longer work hours may discourage some women from joining the workforce and thereby increase the gender gap in the workforce.
- Developed countries could reduce the number of work hours per week with the help of technology and innovation. In India, the productivity per worker per hour is lower than in developed and a few developing countries. Instead of increasing work hours to increase productivity, we need to invest in innovation and technology to improve the efficiency of workers. As per the NITI Aayog report, in 2018, India's gross expenditure in Research and Development (R&D) was 0.65%, one of the lowest in the world. Increasing the investment in R&D can improve the productivity of the workers.

Conclusion:

The idea of working long hours may not be everyone's cup of tea. It depends on personal preferences and the industry they are in. It's about the passion for the work they do and the willingness to dedicate such a significant amount of time to their job. While some individuals may want to invest more time in their work, some others may prefer a work-life balance.

Your Turn!

Do you think a 70-hour work week can boost India's economy? Express your point of view through the comment section below. Subscribe to our blog to read answers to the trending GD topics.

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References:

- [Long hours is not the productivity fix India needs](#)
 - [Why responses vary to a 70 hour work week call by Narayana Murthy](#)
 - [Putting the "70-hour work week" idea into perspective](#)
 - [The problem with the "70 hour a week" line](#)
 - [Should Indians work longer hours?](#)
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