

'Silly to say 70 hours of work...': PMS major First Global's founder Devina Mehra believes long working hours doesn't improve productivity

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Devina Mehra noted that 70 hours per week is not going to work out; here's why

SUMMARY

- Devina Mehra has weighed in on the debate surrounding Infosys founder Narayana Murthy's 70-hour-a-week work pitch
- Murthy said on a podcast that Indian youth need to work 12 hour days for India to catch up with countries such as China
- Devina Mehra, however, is not the only one to raise questions on the 70-hours-a-week work pitch

Portfolio management services (PMS) company First Global group founder, chairperson and managing director Devina Mehra is the latest person to share her opinion regarding the 70-hour-work-week pitch by Infosys founder NR Narayana Murthy. Mehra believes that longer working hours don't do anything to improve productivity but in fact quite the opposite of that.

“Overall, in general, working longer hours means productivity goes down. I mean this is well understood all over the world. So, it's silly to say that you work 70 hours a week and that will be you know just what you're doing into x per week. I mean that's not going to work out,” the First Global group founder told Business Today TV.

She also noted that 70 hours per week is not going to work out, while adding such a work routine assumes that employees have no other responsibilities outside of work. Mehra also explained that a lot of women in the workforce also have other responsibilities and that they would not be able to work if case of such a work routine.

“I mean it assumes that people have no other responsibilities outside work. I mean currently, which I want it to change. But currently, a lot of women, for example, have a lot of other responsibilities. So you know, they are not going to be able to work and I mean as an employer, I can tell you that hours of work don’t equal the output,” she said.

To explain her point further, she noted women in her office have been more rigid about not staying until very late for several reasons and they have been more productive.

Mehra further noted that men, on the other hand, waste a lot of time taking smoke breaks and talking on the phone and claim that they are working till late.

Furthermore, Mehra said that youngsters have to put in more time not necessarily in the office but to hone their skills. She added they need to put in more hours to hone their skills and to be really proficient in their field of work.

“See one thing is that when you are young, you do have to put in a lot of time especially. I mean, I’m talking more from my business which is a learning business. I always say that at the beginning, you have to put in those not necessarily in the office but you have to do that much of learning. You know you have to put in those 10,000 hours of work to be really proficient in it.”

Towards the end, she said, “As an employer, I can tell you that I’m focused on output, I am not focused on the number of hours and it is a well known fact that productivity is not high when you work too long.”

Narayana Murthy’s remark on Indian work culture and reactions

Infosys founder NR Narayana Murthy, on a podcast with former Infosys CFO TV Mohandas Pai, advocated a 70 hour work week for youngsters for India to catch up with countries such as China that have seen tremendous economic progress in the last 2-3 decades. He also claimed that India’s productivity is among the lowest globally. His remarks divided social media, with many siding with Murthy and many differing with him. Emcure Pharmaceuticals executive director and Shark Tank India judge Namita Thapar, for instance, raised her concerns about the impact of such a work routine on family time and mental health.

Similarly, Curefit co-founder Mukesh Bansal, Marico’s Harsh Mariwala, RPG Group’s Harsh Goenka and Karnataka IT Minister Priyank Kharge were also among those who disagreed with Narayana Murthy’s take on work-life balance. Murthy’s comments, on the other hand, were backed by the likes of JSW Group’s Sajjan Jindal, former Shark Tank India judge Ashneer Grover, Ola’s Bhavish Aggarwal and Zerodha’s Nikhil Kamath.