

Home sabbaticals help boost family bonding

Employees Utilise Leave To Escape Digital Fatigue Rather Than On Higher Edu, Travel

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Mumbai: The pandemic may have resulted in new types of leave policies being introduced at the workplace over the last one year. But the good old sabbatical leave is still around and being availed, albeit for different reasons.

In the pre-pandemic era, sabbaticals allowed employees to pursue their passion, be it hobbies like travelling or while going in for higher education. Although a world tour is now out of the question, the key reason why employees feel the need to take a sabbatical leave is to spend more time with their family. While most are working from home, experts said there is digital fatigue and people are keen on bonding better with family members while staying away from work.

Kellogg South Asia director (HR) Nimisha Das said, "Despite the pandemic, it is unlikely that sabbaticals will go out of vogue. Working professionals will continue taking them, with the exception that the reasons for taking a sabbatical will change. For instance, one of the reasons earlier could be travelling. Now, it might be to deal with the challenge of digital fatigue, pursue a newly acquired passion, or to simply spend time with their families."

Bajaj Allianz General In-

surance designed its sabbatical policy so that an employee can take time away from office (ranging from 6 months to 2 years) to pursue any of their personal or professional interests. The company's MD & CEO Tapan Singhel said, "During the pandemic, we have observed that while working from ho-

ty, health insurance and group term life insurance. Such leave can be availed twice during the employment period. Singhel said as the dynamics of the job market change, the firm's focus has been to ensure that there is appropriate work-life balance, matching the employee's changing working style.

GIVING TIME AWAY FROM WORK

> Most progressive cos offer sabbaticals, with experts saying these will always be needed by employees

> At Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, the sabbatical policy allows employees to take a break from work for 6 months to 2 years

> While on sabbatical, which

can be taken only twice during employment, benefits of gratuity, health cover as well as the group term life policy continue

> With health status becoming vital, Wells Fargo in India gives a 28-day paid leave to employees who are Covid-positive to take their time to recover from the infection



me, employees have got a chance to introspect and have looked for education opportunities abroad. We do have one instance where the employee has taken sabbatical leave for education purpose. Given the current situation, employees (self or family) are facing several personal/health issues which has resulted in taking the sabbatical leaves. Another reason employees are opting for sabbatical leaves is to spend quality time with their family and loved ones."

During sabbatical leave, the employee continues to accrue the benefits of gratui-

In the past, employees have also taken sabbatical leave for maternity and for any health exigency within the family. The pandemic has generated several such reasons for employees to take leave. There are companies which offer care-giver leave and even 'unlimited' leave. Wells Fargo in India provides 28 days of paid leave to those who test Covid-positive. Although it's not termed as a sabbatical leave, the 28-day leave is aimed at helping Covid-positive employees to recover well without worrying about work commitments and deliverables.