



“I Have No Room of My Own”: COVID-19 Pandemic and Work-From-Home Through a Gender Lens

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Abstract

Working from home is not gender neutral. As the COVID-19 pandemic has relocated all non-essential work to the home setting, it becomes imperative to examine the phenomenon through a gender lens. Accordingly, I conducted a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews with 30 dual-earning married couples in India to study the gendered work-from-home experiences of men and women during the pandemic. The findings suggest that the pandemic has disproportionately increased the burden of unpaid work for women as compared to men. Women are negotiating gendered time–space arrangements within their households with the allocation of limited resources being in favor of men. When this interacts with work, gender inequalities are reinforced both at work and home. Gender roles and unpaid work determine women’s choices regarding when and where to work, boundary management between work and non-work domains, and their experiences of social isolation. Further, gender roles have also affected women’s decisions regarding returning to work post-pandemic, where some women may not be returning to work at all. Finally, the paper identifies how gender intersects with the existing conceptual frameworks of working from home, and makes a strong case for integrating gender considerations in the work-from-home policies.

Keywords COVID-19 · Work-from-home · Gender roles · Unpaid work · Autonomy · Work-life balance

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the world in unimaginable ways and caused disruptive changes in the lives of people. Among other things, the pandemic has relocated all non-essential jobs to the home setting, with most people now doing what is popularly known as “work-from-home”. While such a transition is expected to have a multitude of implications on employees and how they navigate workspaces, it is not a gender-neutral phenomenon [7, 48]. The emerging gender literature on COVID-19 highlights that the pandemic has exacerbated gender inequalities, where women are sharing a greater burden of unpaid work as compared to men [20, 44]. The pandemic has created new types of unpaid work including homeschooling, catering to the needs of all family members who now stay indoors, and maintaining sanitization and hygiene which has added to the existing unpaid domestic work. Simultaneously, the lockdown has also reduced reliance on domestic workers for performing household work [20]. These new intricacies of the pandemic have increased women’s burden of unpaid work even more as compared to the pre-pandemic times [20, 46]. Thus, it is likely that the shifting of workspace to home will result in different experiences for men and women. When unpaid work interacts with paid work performed from home, it will have implications on their performance at work and also affect their overall well-being.

In this context, the paper attempts to understand the differences in how men and women in India are navigating work-from-home during the pandemic through a gender lens, and provide gender-disaggregated evidence for the same. For this, the paper does a comparative analysis of gender differences in working from home for men and women and specifically focuses on the role of the pandemic in determining such gender differences.

Review of Literature

Conceptual Frameworks for Determining Outcomes of Work-From-Home

There are three conceptual frameworks to assess outcomes of work-from-home arrangements for employees [39]. First is the perceived control and autonomy framework which emphasizes the choices that work-from-home offers to employees in terms of deciding how, when, and where to work [30, 58]. This contributes to the increased flexibility of the employees and allows them to exercise greater control on schedule, location, and the process of work [39]. The benefits of enhanced control and autonomy include higher job satisfaction [39, 42], greater productivity [65], organizational agility [63], and improved work morale [67]. Second is the work-life balance framework which focuses on the ability of employees to successfully manage both work (paid labor) and non-work commitments (unpaid labor). Work and family are distinguished as two separate socially constructed domains with cognitive, physical, and behavioral boundaries between them [6, 8]. The boundary management strategies between the two domains fall along a continuum of segmentation

-with separate, rigid, and impermeable boundaries on one end, and integrated and flexible boundaries, at the other end [8, 24]. Since the household becomes a space where both domestic and professional work is to be performed, work-from-home results in the integration of the two separate domains [23]. It may lead to positive outcomes by allowing employees to manage both work and family commitments simultaneously [32, 69] or increase conflict by blurring boundaries between work and family roles [54]. The third is the relational impoverishment framework which emphasizes the negative implications of work-from-home concerning diminished social interactions at work [41, 59] by contributing to feelings of social isolation, lack of trust, weakening of interpersonal bonds, and ineffective communication [11, 17].

Integrating Gender in Work-From-Home Frameworks

Work-from-home is not gender neutral [23, 49, 77]. Owing to gender roles and social norms, there exist gender differences in outcomes of work-from-home for men and women. In the perceived control and autonomy framework, the positive outcomes for women including job satisfaction, job retention, and maternal employment for women are due to greater flexibility and control [31, 76]. Increased flexibility allows women, especially new mothers, to undertake paid work instead of dropping out of the labor force [22, 57]. However, evidence also suggests that work-from-home may perpetuate gender inequality, by pushing women into household work and putting a ‘career penalty’ with low compensation for their part-time work [40, 55, 81].

In work-life balance frameworks, gender division of unpaid work plays a prominent role [53, 80]. The concept of work and life being separate spheres is itself gendered where the public sphere of work is a man’s world and the private sphere of the family is a woman’s responsibility [10]. Here, work is conceptualized using the idealized male model [52, 71], where an “ideal worker” prioritizes work over family [1, 54]. In contrast, an “ideal mother/woman” has to prioritize responsibilities of unpaid domestic and care work at home, over her personal and professional interests [54]. For women engaged in paid labor, the contesting identities of ‘ideal worker’ and ‘ideal mother/woman’ disadvantage women both at the workplace and at home [55]. Furthermore, the literature on outcomes of work-from-home for work-life balance is contradictory. Some studies suggest that work-from-home reduces work-family conflict, especially during the transition to motherhood [74]; others suggest that it blurs boundaries due to responsibilities of unpaid work, therefore contributing to work-family conflict [40].

Gender literature on relational impoverishment emphasizes gender differences in nature and outcomes of social relations, networks, and friendships at work [73, 75]. The lack of social capital and networking opportunities for women is one of the reasons for their disproportionately lower presence in leadership positions [50, 72]. There is evidence that same-sex friendships and interpersonal relations become a source of power, career advancement, and influence in the workplace, resulting in gender gaps in access to male-dominated networks, translating to gender gaps in career outcomes [15, 82].

Gender and Work: The Indian Context

Typically, women across the globe spend disproportionately higher time on unpaid work as compared to men. On average, men globally spend 83 min per day in unpaid work as compared to 265 min per day spent by women [2]. Owing to the social construction of gender, domestic and care work is seen as the ‘natural’ duty of women. However, such work is non-remunerative which women are expected to perform out of ‘love’ and a sense of ‘duty’ towards their families, and not for remuneration [33, 37]. Simultaneously, women’s responsibility for unpaid work is essential to the performance of their femininity. Since the reproductive roles of women are performed within the private sphere of the household, it does not produce any commodity to be sold in the market, and therefore, it has no ‘value’. As such, domestic and care work continues to be unpaid, devalued, and excluded from the national accounting frameworks [36, 38]. However, the unpaid reproductive work performed by women remains essential to the functioning of economic life [36]. Such tasks are necessary to provide for the labor force so that they can go to work without worrying about performing tasks like cooking, cleaning, laundry, etc. which are essential to the functioning of socio-economic life. This is not only the case in households with a strict gender division of labor where men are the breadwinners and women are the homemakers. Even in cases where women participate in the labor force, they are unable to avoid the responsibility of unpaid work. Some studies suggest that in cases where both men and women earn equal incomes, women perform more household work [13, 26]. This is because by taking the responsibility of unpaid work, women are conforming to the normative feminine behavior integral to their being an ‘ideal wife’ or ‘ideal mother’. Thus, for women in the labor force, there is a dual burden of both paid and unpaid work.

Discussion on women’s burden of unpaid work and its interaction with paid work is relevant in the context of India because of its dismal female labor force participation. India’s female labor force participation has shown a continuously declining trend for more than a decade from 32 percent in 2005 to 21 percent in 2019. During the pandemic, female labor force participation has further declined and stands at 19 percent in 2021 [83]. Simultaneously, time-use patterns in India highlight stark gender gaps in time spent on unpaid work between men and women, where men spend approximately 51.8 min/day on unpaid work as compared to 351.9 min/day by women [61]. In urban areas, women on average spend 337 min/day on unpaid activities compared to men who spend only an average of 110 min/day [61]. Additionally, women spend an average of 367 min/day on paid activities compared to an average of 486 min/day spent by men [61]. Thus, not only do women bear the disproportionate burden of unpaid work, but employed women work for much longer hours than men. This puts competing claims on their time, forcing them to continuously negotiate their multiple roles in the household and the workplace.

A study conducted by the Pew Research Centre further highlights the dominance of traditional gender roles and norms in India [64]. It emphasizes that despite a majority of Indians believing in the concept of gender equality and advocating for equal rights for men and women, they continue to hold to the traditional beliefs with respect to both the household and work. Specifically, the report highlights that 72

percent of Indians believe that men and women should have equal rights, 62 percent of Indians believe that both men and women should be responsible for childcare, and 54 percent of Indians agree that both men and women should be responsible for earning money. However, 34 percent of Indians believe that women should be primarily responsible for childcare, and 43 percent agree that men should be the primary earning members in the household. Further, 56 percent of Indians believe that in a scenario of limited job opportunities, men should have greater rights to employment as compared to women. Finally, 61 percent of women and 67 percent of men agree that wives should completely obey their husbands, thus emphasizing men's role as the patriarch and primary decision-makers in the household. The findings of this study highlight that even if a majority of Indians believe in the concept of gender equality, in practice traditional gender roles regarding child care, domestic work, rights to employment, and dominance of men continue to be prevalent in the Indian society.

Studies have also highlighted the role of social norms reinforced through marriage, social status, and economic class that limit women's labor force participation in India. For instance, a recent study highlights that marriage reduces the likelihood of women's participation in the labor force by 17 percent in urban areas [19]. Other studies have also highlighted that women's participation in the labor force is not only determined by their educational qualifications but also by factors like the educational qualification of their husband, family income, consent of family members, number of children, etc. [3, 18]. Further, women's non-participation in the labor force is also seen as a symbol of the status of the family in society [34]. In such a scenario, women's participation is seen as a response to the inability of men to fulfill their masculine roles of breadwinners. On the other hand, women's withdrawal from the labor force is seen as a symbol of the affluence of the family. Even in dual working households, this reinforces the idea that men should necessarily be engaged in paid labor, whereas women may choose to be in the labor force depending upon their household responsibilities.

Gendering the COVID-19 Pandemic

The gender literature on work-from-home and its implications are inconclusive and contradictory. The advantages of work-from-home have highlighted the role of flexibility in facilitating women's use of time to fulfill their dual burden of paid and unpaid work. However, such discussions have focussed on the issue of "women" in exclusion of the gender relation of power. The disadvantages of working from home have emphasized the significance of gender norms and roles in assessing work-from-home outcomes. Added to this, the intricacies of the pandemic and its interaction with gender norms in the household have made the problem of studying gender and work-from-home even more complex [20, 46, 48]. The emerging gender literature on the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that women have been spending more time on unpaid work and reducing their working hours [7, 79]. The closure of schools, norms of working from home, and restrictions on mobility have confined people within the household. More people within the household means more

people to feed and care for, without any additional help [78]. The evidence suggests that the increased responsibility of domestic and care work during the pandemic has adverse implications on women's time poverty, work-life balance, mental and physical health, and wages among others [5, 14, 46]. Further, the pandemic has exacerbated the work-life conflict for women with adverse consequences for their job satisfaction, performance, and productivity [45]. Also, more women are likely to be laid off or voluntarily move out of the labor force because of the pandemic. A study conducted by McKinsey Global Institute finds that women's jobs are 19 percent more at risk than men's jobs because women are highly concentrated in sectors like hospitality, food service, accommodation, etc. which are negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic [56]. Thus, the gendered segmentation of work and concentration of women in specific industries has resulted in higher job losses for women as compared to men. Another study shows that mothers who have children under the age of 12 are most likely to move out of employment as compared to women without children, women with children above 12 years of age, men without children, men with children, men with children above 12 years of age, and men with children under 12 years of age [62]. This is explained on account of child care and homeschooling responsibilities undertaken by women during the pandemic. Reports also show that the lockdowns have also increased the incidents of domestic violence against women [35, 51, 66]. It should be noted that such implications are observed not only for the countries which rank low on the gender equality index but also for countries like Iceland, Ireland, etc. which rank among the highest on gender equality indices [9, 25, 27].

Research Objective

The objective of the study is to build upon the existing literature and examine the phenomenon of working from home during the pandemic through a gender lens. The study aims to provide gender-disaggregated evidence on the work-from-home experiences during the pandemic. Further, the paper seeks to do a comparative analysis of gender differences in working from home during the pandemic and before the pandemic, and its consequences for gender equality. Finally, the paper also seeks to identify how gender intersects with the three conceptual frameworks to understand the outcomes of working from home, namely the perceived control and autonomy framework, work-life interface framework, and relational impoverishment framework.

Research Method

The paper follows a qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 dual-earning married couples in India. Non-random sampling techniques, specifically purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques were used for sample selection. The criteria for selecting the respondents include –(i) the respondents should be working from home since March 2020 after the first official

lockdown was announced in India, and (ii) they should have had the experience of both working from home and working from office before the pandemic. Such criteria make it possible to analyze the gendered implications of work-from-home arrangements within a household. The data was collected in the months of April and May 2021. Data collection was done virtually because of the mobility restrictions, either through video or audio calls, based on the preferences of the respondents. The respondents were interviewed separately from their partners. Each interview lasted for 40–50 min and was recorded and transcribed with the consent of the respondents. Each quote shared in the findings section is crossed-checked with the respective respondent to confirm if the meaning is correctly conveyed. The respondents are assigned pseudonyms for privacy and anonymity.

Data analysis is done using thematic analysis guided by the review of existing literature and research objectives, which identify domains and topics to be investigated. However, they are only used to guide the process of thematic analysis and not to set expectations about specific findings. The themes were developed using the six-step guidelines [16]. The first step included reading all the interviews so that the author could familiarize themselves with the data, identify meanings and patterns within the data, and develop ideas for coding. The second phase focused on categorizing data into codes using a data-driven or inductive approach. Coding was initially done on data collected for five couples in the sample, which gave preliminary codes. The preliminary codes identified in this stage were then used in the interviews of another five couples. At this stage, some new codes were created and old codes were revised and applied to the remaining sample. This process was repeated till the time all the interviews were coded consistently. Following this, in the third stage, codes were categorized into potential themes. The initial mapping of the themes as done in this phase is given in Table 1. In the fourth phase, the themes were refined which included eliminating themes that lack sufficient supporting data, combining different themes that convey similar arguments to form one theme, or breaking down one single theme into separate themes. In the fifth phase, the themes were defined and named based on the essence of each theme as shown in Table 2. Finally, in the sixth phase, the final themes are reported as discussed in the findings section below.

Findings

The descriptive characteristics of the respondents in the sample are given in Table 3. Out of 30 couples, 20 couples have children and 10 couples do not have children. Based on the family structure, 12 couples live in a joint family, and 18 live in nuclear families. Only four couples (C5, C8, C17, C24) live in a nuclear family and do not have any children. The total number of members living in the household ranges from two to 12 members. Here, a nuclear family is defined as a household comprising of the couple and their dependent children only. A joint family, on the other hand, is defined as a household comprising the extended family of the husband which may include his parents, brothers along with their wives and children, sisters, etc. all living within the same household, and sharing common household resources like the living room space, kitchen, family income, etc.

Table 1 Initial thematic map

Similar experiences of men and women	Different experiences of men and women
Increase in time spent on paid work	Types of chores in domestic work
Increase in time spent on unpaid work	Primary childcare
Time saved from commuting	Homeschooling
Increase in child care responsibilities	Playtime/emotional support for family
No social contact	Voluntary vs. mandatory participation in household work
Increased expectation at work	Supervision of household work by women
Work spilling over to weekends and breaks	Use of saved time
Increased time for family (not enough supporting data)	Desk allocation
	Room allocation
	Use of break times
	Privacy
	Interruptions
	Leisure
	Working hours in a day
	Motivation to participate in informal meetings
	Interpersonal relationships and motivation to work
	Return to work preferences
	Factors affecting return to work decision making
	Expectations of family
	Quitting/moving to part-time jobs
	Compulsion to spend time with family (Not enough supporting data)
	Performance at work (Not enough supporting data)
	Coping mechanisms (Not enough supporting data)
	Role of HR/policies in the organization (Not enough supporting data)
	Job insecurity (Not enough supporting data)
	Strained family relations (Not enough data)

Source: Author's own based on the fieldwork

Before the pandemic, all the respondents had hired domestic worker/s for household chores like cooking, cleaning, laundry, and/or grocery shopping; and/or also care work including child care and/or elderly care. None of the respondents were using the services of domestic workers during the interviews. This is significant as it is a common practice in India to outsource household chores to domestic workers. Specifically, the number of domestic workers in India ranges from 4.2 million as per official estimates to more than 50 million as per unofficial estimates, 75 percent of which are women [60]. The domestic worker market in India has specifically risen in India after the economic reforms of 1991 due to the rise of the Indian middle class, urbanization, proliferation of nuclear families, entry of educated women into the formal labor force, and lack of adequate social support system among others [12]. As gender gaps persist in time spent on unpaid work for men and women, outsourcing some of the domestic responsibilities becomes essential for women to participate in formal employment. Furthermore, the 'feudal imaginations' of the urban middle class that links hiring domestic workers to the status of the family, also affect decisions to employ the domestic

Table 2 Final themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Women share disproportionate burden of unpaid work	Use of time saved Categorization of domestic chores Categorization of childcare Primary vs. secondary household managers
Gendered allocation of household resources favors men	Room allocation Desk allocation Privacy Interruption
Unpaid work determines schedule for women, not men	Work hours Working on weekends and break time Unpaid work and breaks
Gender differences in social isolation	Participation in informal meetings Unpaid work and participation in informal meetings Interpersonal relationships
Gender differences in return to work preferences and decision making	Return to work preferences Factors affecting return to work preferences Quitting labor force Interpersonal relationships and motivation to work

Source: Author's own based on the fieldwork

worker in urban households [28, 70]. It should be noted that outsourcing unpaid domestic and care work to domestic workers for wages allows the more privileged women to delegate the already undervalued domestic chores to the less privileged women, thus perpetuating gender inequality at the intersection of gender, caste, and class [43]. However, such an analysis is beyond the scope of the study. The focus, here, is exclusively on the lack of services of domestic workers during the pandemic and its implications for employed women's burden of unpaid work.

All the respondents live in tier-1 metropolitan cities in India. Specifically, 12 couples live in Delhi, six in Bangalore, five in Mumbai, three in Chennai, and four in Hyderabad. Further, all the respondents have reported post-graduation as their highest educational qualification and are working professionals in the corporate sector. The annual income of all the respondents lies in the range of INR 16,00,000–31,00,000. The comparative salary of the partners is such that for 14 couples both the partners earn similar income; for four couples, women earn more than men; and for 12 couples, men earn more than women.

Women Share a Disproportionate Burden of Unpaid Work

All the respondents reported that they saved time while working from home before the pandemic because of no commuting time and less time required to get ready before starting the work day. All the respondents reported that they consider time-saving as a positive aspect of working from home. Before the pandemic, the time saved on work-from-home days was used for relaxation and

Table 3 Sample characteristics

Couple name	Names*	Gender identified	Number of children	Age of children (years)	Family type	Total household members
C1	Anita	Woman	2	3	Nuclear	4
	Sunil	Man		6		
C2	Tanya	Woman	1	7	Nuclear	3
	Madhav	Man				
C3	Ritu	Woman	0	NA**	Joint	7
	Deepak	Man				
C4	Pooja	Woman	2	4	Joint	10
	Sarthak	Man		9		
C5	Charu	Woman	0	NA	Nuclear	2
	Sahil	Man				
C6	Preeti	Woman	1	12	Joint	5
	Manan	Man				
C7	Prerna	Woman	2	7, 12	Nuclear	4
	Kartik	Man				
C8	Anjali	Woman	0	NA	Nuclear	2
	Ravi	Man				
C9	Supriya	Woman	1	3	Nuclear	3
	Surya	Man				
C10	Kiran	Woman	0	NA	Joint	7
	Prateek	Man				
C11	Aditi	Woman	2	5,10	Nuclear	4
	Rishab	Man				
C12	Rekha	Woman	0	NA	Joint	5
	Amit	Man				
C13	Alka	Woman	1	3	Joint	9
	Udit	Man				
C14	Nayna	Woman	1	5	Nuclear	3
	Aditya	Man				
C15	Vaishali	Woman	1	7	Nuclear	3
	Anurag	Man				
C16	Pratiksha	Woman	1	4	Nuclear	3
	Raman	Man				
C17	Kanika	Woman	0	NA	Nuclear	2
	Suresh	Man				
C18	Apurva	Woman	2	2	Nuclear	4
	Ayush	Man		5		
C19	Bhumika	Woman	1	5	Joint	12
	Parv	Man				
C20	Manju	Woman	0	NA	Joint	7
	Mukesh	Man				

Table 3 (continued)

Couple name	Names*	Gender identified	Number of children	Age of children (years)	Family type	Total household members
C21	Mona	Woman	1	4	Nuclear	3
	Rahul	Man				
C22	Somya	Woman	2	5, 8	Nuclear	4
	Abhishek	Man				
C23	Ananya	Woman	1	6	Nuclear	3
	Sandeep	Man				
C24	Trisha	Woman	0	NA	Nuclear	2
	Pavan	Man				
C25	Mugdha	Woman	2	5, 7	Nuclear	4
	Pranit	Man				
C26	Vani	Woman	0	NA	Joint	6
	Piyush	Man				
C27	Divya	Woman	1	3	Nuclear	3
	Roshan	Man				
C28	Sargam	Woman	2	5, 8	Joint	11
	Vaibhav	Man				
C29	Ramya	Woman	0	NA	Joint	7
	Manoj	Man				
C30	Surali	Woman	1	4	Joint	8
	Rajat	Man				

*Names of the respondents are changed and pseudonyms are assigned for anonymity

**NA means not applicable

Source: Author's own based on the fieldwork

leisure, recreational activities, spending time with family and friends, and/or pursuing hobbies. Both men and women were engaged in similar types of activities in the time saved from commuting before the pandemic. Four women (C4, C13, C19, C28) living in joint families, as compared to zero men, reported using the saved time to do unpaid domestic and care work, before the pandemic.

As most of the household and care work before the pandemic was outsourced to domestic workers for wages, a majority of respondents could use the time saved from working from home for enjoyment, leisure, or personal care. However, during the pandemic, the services of domestic workers were not available. Therefore, the work that was previously outsourced is now to be performed by the household members themselves, despite the norm of using the services of the domestic workers in the educated, urban, dual-income Indian households in the pre-pandemic times. As a result, all the respondents reported higher time spent on both paid work and unpaid work during the pandemic as compared to the pre-pandemic times. While there are similarities in the use of saved time for men and women before the pandemic, stark

gender differences are observed in time-use patterns during the pandemic. The time spent on unpaid work has increased for all the respondents, but women's burden increased disproportionately owing to gender roles. For men, unpaid work is in addition to the earlier activities that included relaxation, leisure, pursuing hobbies, and/or family time. However, for women, the household chores and care work have replaced the activities that were pursued in the time saved before the pandemic. As Prerna (C7) states,

Before the pandemic, I would spend quality time with family, go out, and indulge in self-pampering like getting a spa. Now, I am occupied with cooking for everyone, cleaning the utensils, managing the house, and taking care of homeschooling my daughters. I am not able to do anything for myself that I used to do earlier (before the pandemic). I am also neglecting my health and not working out.

Her spouse Kartik (C7) states,

Work-from-home saves me time, which is definitely a good thing. I used to sleep more, go out for a game of football, binge-watch some web series, and have fun with my kids, spend some private time with my wife. The COVID-19 pandemic has limited all these activities to the house itself. So, I have switched to indoor games with kids and watching web series mostly. Some time is consumed in homeschooling, and helping my wife with household work like cleaning the house.

Furthermore, there are differences in the type of chores undertaken by men and women. Out of 30 couples, 28 reported that cooking is the primary responsibility of the woman respondent. Only two couples (C12, C24) reported that cooking is done by both the respondents on an equitably shared basis. All women reported that they clean the dishes at least once every day, as compared to only six men. Men reported greater involvement in chores like cleaning the house, doing laundry, and/or grocery shopping. The division of chores is such that men are engaged in unpaid work that has to be performed with less frequency as compared to women. For instance, cooking and cleaning the dishes (performed by women in the sample) needs to be done at least once every day as compared to grocery shopping or laundry (performed by men in the sample), which can be done at the convenience of the person. Thus, even in domestic work, there is a categorization of feminine-type activities and masculine-type activities. Cooking and allied activities performed in the kitchen space within the household are perceived as "women's work" and feminine activities. On the other hand, unpaid activities like grocery shopping, which involves interaction in the market space beyond the household are done by men. Further, men taking up the responsibility of unpaid domestic chores that are performed with fewer frequency highlights that their contribution to unpaid domestic chores is optional, voluntary, and can be done at their convenience. On the other hand, women's responsibility for tasks like cooking, binds them to domestic chores multiple times a day, making their contribution to unpaid chores mandatory. This puts women in the role of primary

household managers, with men's role as voluntary and secondary to women's role. As Tanya (C2) reports,

My husband helps me with cleaning the house and watching over our baby. We both look after our child's online classes. He does his laundry, sometimes mine too. But the kitchen work is solely managed by me. My husband doesn't know how to cook, not even make his tea. It is me who spends more time on household chores than he. Cooking is extremely time-consuming. I also have to do cleaning and the dishes. And little things -like taking out the garbage, and watering plants; look small and easy but taken together, they take time and energy.

Her spouse Madhav (C2) shares,

I have never done any household work before. I take care of my child, especially when my wife is busy cooking or is in a meeting. Earlier, we used to go out to parks and game zones together. Now there is so much housework, still, my wife has managed it all perfectly. I help her with cleaning and organizing the house on weekends. I also look after some classes for my child.

There is also an increasing involvement of men in childcare activities. Out of the 20 couples with children, 16 men reported being involved in child care during the pandemic as compared to 20 women. Out of 16 men involved in child care, six reported that they look after their homeschooling needs only, six reported that they play and spend leisure time with their kids, and four (C9, C14, C16, C27) reported that they share the load with their wives and contribute to the overall well-being of the child in addition to homeschooling and/or playing with them. On the contrary, four women (as compared to zero men) reported being the only caregiver to their children, 12 women reported being the primary caregiver to the children with sharing some responsibilities with their spouse, and four couples (C9, C14, C16, C27) reported equitable sharing of child caring work. This means that like domestic work, there is a categorization of responsibilities in childcare as well. Women are responsible for childcare activities that are essential for their everyday needs like feeding, cleaning, bathing, etc. as compared to men who are mostly their children's playmates, and/or watch them over when the mother is not available. As Anita (C1) states,

I am the primary caregiver for my children. My husband helps when I am absolutely busy. When it comes to cooking fresh food, bathing my kids, dressing them up, and putting them to bed, I am the one taking care of it. When I am working, my kids are in the same room as me. So even their minutest of requirements are fulfilled by me. Kids need attention all the time. My husband spends time with them when it suits him, like in between his breaks, and does all the fun activities with them after his office hours.

Based on the family structure, out of the 12 couples living in joint families, 10 men as compared to zero women reported that they are engaged in recreational activities, pursuing hobbies, leisure, relaxation, and/or skill building in the time

saved from commuting during the pandemic. Out of 18 couples living in nuclear families, 16 men as compared to only four women reported engaging in such activities. Based on the number of children, out of 20 couples with children, 16 men as compared to zero women reported being engaged in such activities. This suggests that similar gender inequalities regarding unpaid work exist among couples despite differences in their family structure and number of children. In the overall sample, only four women, all living in a nuclear family structure with no children, reported using time saved from commuting to pursuing hobbies, relaxation, leisure, and/or acquiring new skills that can be useful at work.

Gendered Allocation of Household Resources Favors Men

There are gender differences in the use of space within the house for work. Before the pandemic, members of the household would spend time outside the house for various activities like productive work, schooling, leisure, etc. As a result, more space was available within the house to work from home on the required days. Both men and women reported similar availability of space within their homes to do office work before the pandemic.

With the mobility restrictions during the pandemic, all the activities including work, education, and leisure are to be performed within the household, resulting in overcrowded homes. As such, there is a struggle to find a dedicated workspace within the house. Accordingly, eight women as compared to 14 men have separate rooms equipped with a functional work desk which is used for office work only. Six women as compared to 14 men reported that they set up their work desks in their bedrooms. It should be noted that all the six women had such work desks in their bedrooms before the pandemic too, and their spouses have a separate room with adequate infrastructure to work from home. Further, six women as compared to two men (C12, C26) are working from their living rooms. The two men (C12, C26) who are working from the living room have set up their work stations there but the six women working from the living room do not have work desks. These respondents used to share work-from-home space with their spouses before the pandemic as only one of them would use it at a time. It should also be noted that Amit (C12) and Piyush (C26) willingly moved out to the living room as their family considers their “work in high importance” and gives them adequate privacy to work even in the common living room. On the other hand, moving to the living room for their spouses would mean “regular interruptions” and “expectations from the family members” that they are “available for them” all the time. So, they willingly moved to the living room, and their spouses Rekha (C12) and Vani (C26) work from the privacy of their bedroom. On the contrary, the women who are working from the living room are doing it unwillingly as there is no other space left for them in the house. Their husbands have assigned the existing workspaces within the house to themselves, and the women involuntarily moved out to the living room in search of a workspace. Finally, 10 women as compared to zero men do not have a dedicated workspace in the house. They have to frequently switch rooms in search of a quiet space. Further, their use of workspace is based on other family members’ use of space within the

house. As such, the pandemic has resulted in the allocation of limited household resources, including the infrastructure and space in the households in favor of men as compared to women. As Anita (C1) shares,

I don't have proper space to work from home -no work desk, nothing. I and my husband had set up a workstation in our bedroom. We rarely had meetings before, and we would usually opt for work-from-home on separate days. Now all of us are at home all the time. So, he has taken up that work desk permanently. I am mostly in the living room working from my couch. It is really hard to focus. My back hurts sitting on the couch. There are interruptions when I am in my meetings. I have changed my room in between the meetings so many times because my children are usually in the room where I am working. My husband locks the room from the inside when he needs to concentrate. I don't have that liberty. I have no room of my own.

Sunil (C1) states,

I have a workstation in my bedroom. It is difficult to work from there, I get lazy. My wife works from the living room. We both used the same desk before the pandemic started. But I don't like to work from the living room, I need a proper desk and my own space. My wife is flexible that way. And this works for us -she can watch over the kids while doing her office work.

Furthermore, all men as compared to only eight women reported that they have the required privacy to work from home. All the respondents irrespective of their gender reported interruptions by family members, but there are gender differences in the nature of such interruptions. The interruptions faced by the men respondents include -asking about their food preferences, reminders to have meals, kids making noise in the background, lack of silence, reminders to pay bills, and/or requests by the spouse to play with the child. On the other hand, the interruptions faced by the women respondents include feeding the child, meeting their emotional needs, fulfilling day to day needs of the elderly in the family like serving them food, reminders when groceries or medicines or other items run out, receiving home deliveries of groceries and other items, and/or requests to clean in case of mess being created. Therefore, the kind of interruptions that men face can be avoided for some time and does not need their immediate availability. On the other hand, the interruptions that women face have to be immediately addressed and are centered around care work and day-to-day management of the house and family. This requires that women must be available to cater to the needs of the family and the household, despite their professional responsibilities. This also puts competing claims on the time of women, who need to multitask and simultaneously meet their professional and personal commitments, as compared to men who can prioritize productive work over household chores.

Similar gender inequalities are observed in the resource allocation, privacy, and interruptions among women despite the differences in family structures and the number of children. Only among couples who live in nuclear families without

children, do both men and women report establishing their office at home in a separate room with adequate infrastructure, similar levels of privacy, and interruptions.

The findings of this section indicate that men have more control over the use of space and household resources like a work desk, workspace, private room, etc. within the household. Men's productive work is prioritized not only over their responsibilities of household work but also prioritized over similar professional commitments of women. Thus, a similar type of paid work is valued more when it is performed by men as compared to women. This is reflected in men's allocation of limited household resources for facilitating their work whereas women are left to work in the common spaces and use the infrastructure that is not used by men. Interestingly, even in cases where men (C12, C26) have volunteered to work from common spaces within the house, they have managed to maintain boundaries between work and non-work domains. This is indicative of the social and cultural specificities in the Indian family, which place a higher value on men's paid work and expect women to be available for the household chores even when they have similar responsibilities.

Unpaid Work Determines the Work Schedule for Women, Not for Men

Before the pandemic, the respondents reported that their work-from-home timings would be scheduled mostly within office hours. Twenty-six men and 28 women reported that their work-from-home timings were less rigorous and shorter in length as compared to their regular office hours. The remaining four men and two women stated that their work-from-home timings were the same as their office hours. The respondents have also emphasized that before the pandemic there was no expectation to work beyond office hours or over weekends, except for urgent ad hoc situations.

During the pandemic, work-from-home is characterized by longer working hours for all the respondents. Despite longer work timings for all, there are gender differences in the scheduling of the day and choosing working hours for men and women. Six women as compared to 28 men reported that their work-from-home is mostly scheduled within office hours, and extra working hours are decided based on the requirements at work only. On the contrary, 24 women as compared to two men (C12, C15) reported that their working hours differ immensely from the regular office hours and their office timings are scheduled based on the requirements both at home and at work.

Similarly, all the respondents, irrespective of their gender reported that office work spills over to the weekends and they have no dedicated break times during weekdays. Eight women and 12 men stated they cannot take full lunch breaks or tea breaks during their working hours on weekdays because of work intensification and the expectations of their managers. However, 20 women as compared to only two men (C12, C26) reported that the prevalence of unpaid domestic work and care work has reduced their time spent on taking breaks during the weekdays. These respondents also reported that even when the requirements at work are less for the day, they cannot take breaks as they use that time to finish the household chores

at home. Simultaneously, two women (C8, C17) as compared to 16 men reported that despite the difficulties, they schedule their breaks that include tea/coffee breaks, naps, watching short films, and/or meditating which helps them to get back to work again. As Tanya (C2) states,

I get no breaks. At work, it is expected that I am available all the time. Earlier, there were tea/coffee breaks, and that would help re-energize me. Now there is a continuous working environment. When there is less work, I finish household chores. Sometimes I tell people at the office that I will not be available. But I have to compensate for it by working more, especially at night. Those breaks are not even refreshing. I do laundry, mop the floor, do dusting, and organize the kitchen at that time. I get no time for myself.

Madhav (C2) states,

Initially, I could not take any breaks. It was all mixed with too much work everywhere, all the time. But then I decided that I cannot go on like this. I started blocking my calendar during my break time and using it for a power nap, tea, playing games with my child, or doing nothing. So, I had to bring that kind of habit to scheduling my time for work, my family, and myself.

The findings suggest that the responsibilities of unpaid domestic and care work are an important factor that determines women's scheduling of paid work. This has resulted in the integration of work and non-work domains, not only for physical boundaries evident in the previous section but also at the level of behavioral and cognitive boundaries. On the contrary, unpaid work does not determine men's scheduling of paid work when working from home. Rather, it is the professional commitments that determine men's availability to participate in household chores and care work, as is evident from the secondary roles that men have assumed in the domestic space. Overall, women's autonomy and choices regarding work-from-home decisions are constrained by gender roles.

Furthermore, the work-from-home provisions that the corporate entities have made are also important. Before the pandemic, the organizations expected employees working from home to align their working hours with office hours. This is because while a few employees would be working from home based on their requirements, their colleagues would be working from the office. As such, there was no requirement to work beyond office hours, except on days of high workload when everyone in the office was working overtime. However, the pandemic changed this expectation of the employers on account of work intensification, and all the employees working from home. However, a majority of the workplaces as reported by the respondents, have given the liberty to the employees -both men and women, to choose their office hours, and are assigned professional responsibilities accordingly so that the demands of unpaid work at home could also be met. Some workplaces have made such provisions only for women. However, even with the provisions for flexibility, there is an overlap of professional and personal commitments of the respondents, more so for women as compared to men because of no fixed timings for household work. Despite the flexibility, this may also have negative implications on

career advancement for women. Scheduling of work based on the commitments both at home and work, most evident in the case of women, has adverse implications in terms of allocation of work assignments, participation in informal decision making, and informal feedback, thus affecting women's career advancement [47].

Gender Differences in Social Isolation

Before the pandemic, the respondents did not experience social isolation or relational impoverishment because of the low frequency of work-from-home days ranging from twice a month to twice a week. Further, all the respondents reported participation in formal and informal events at work, though some women reported that they were not available or would leave early from such informal gatherings due to time and location constraints.

As the pandemic has caused prolonged work-from-home, all the respondents have reported social isolation. However, there are gender differences in the experiences of social isolation for men and women, and its impact on them. In the context of informal and semi-formal group activities, 28 men as compared to only two women (C5, C24) reported the same participation in virtual informal meetings in terms of time but highlighted their declining quality. Before the pandemic, such meetings were useful for de-stressing, networking, relaxing, and creating interpersonal relations with the team. Now, such meetings are limited to “catching up with the team”, “recreating and reliving the pre-pandemic times”, and “addressing the loss of friendships not just at the workplace but in general due to the pandemic”. In addition, three men as compared to zero women also highlight that such meetings are now an additional burden on them because of the already high screen time.

Women have emphasized two issues with respect to informal gatherings. First, 13 women as compared to only one man (C15) have reported that their participation in the informal meetings has increased as compared to the pre-pandemic times. This is because virtual meetings allow them to address the limitations of being physically present in these gatherings such as the inability to stay out late due to safety concerns, unavailability of transport, responsibilities towards family and children, and/or incompatibility with the family culture regarding working hours. The virtual spaces have addressed these limitations and women are now able to participate in such informal meetings without worrying about these issues. As Aditi (C11) states,

I could not stay for long at many office parties before the pandemic. My home is very far from the place where most parties were organized. Being there meant commuting alone at night. It is unsafe, my kids and husband would be waiting for me at home. So, I used to skip most of these social events. Now, I don't have to travel, my kids are there with me. My kids join virtual parties and say hello to my team members. They have connected well with the kids of my colleagues which has never happened before.

Second, 15 women as compared to only one man (C12) have reported that they are overworked on account of both paid and unpaid work, and therefore do not have any time left to participate in such informal events.

Kiran (C10) shares,

I go to monthly team meetings for 10 mins to show my face, and then turn off the video and mostly sleep or do some work.

Other than the group activities and events, all the respondents have reported a decline in interpersonal relationships with colleagues. However, the impact of deteriorating interpersonal relationships on men and women respondents is different. Both men and women have emphasized declining productivity, efficiency, and motivation, and/or a lack of belongingness to the workplace. However, 12 women as compared to zero men have also emphasized that deteriorating interpersonal relations have also taken away their coping mechanism and/or support system in their lives which is much needed during the pandemic.

As Alka (C13) shares,

The pandemic has taken away my biggest support system. I have experienced the most amazing female friendships at work -encouraging one another, listening to each other's problems, helping and cheering for one another. They would sometime even babysit my daughter. They would always support me if I was feeling low or when I was not doing very well at work. Earlier we would share our stories and feel okay, now there is no way to vent out what I am going through.

Gender Differences in Return to Work Preferences and Decision Making

A majority of respondents irrespective of their gender stated that they prefer a mixed model of working with the option of both going to the office and working from home after the pandemic. Only six women as compared to zero men prefer going to the office on all days after the pandemic. The reasons stated for the same include -no separation of work and non-work life, the burden of unpaid work, lack of work infrastructure and quiet space, and/or inability to concentrate at home. While the responses in preferences for working from home are similar for both men and women, the factors that determine their choices are different. All women respondents as compared to only two men (C29, C12) stated that their continuation of work-from-home arrangement is contingent upon the availability of domestic workers. Further, 14 women as compared to zero men reported that their preferences are also determined by the presence of other family members in the house. Specifically, if other family members stay at home, their preference to work-from-home declines. Interestingly, all the women who live in a joint family made this the primary criteria in deciding their preference for work-from-home. Other factors that affect their decision-making include the amount of time being spent with children, the extent of separation between work and non-work life, the burden of unpaid work, and social isolation at work, which are common to both men and women. As Alka (C13) narrates,

I want to work from home and spend time with my child. I can see her grow right in front of me. But realistically speaking, I will not be able to continue like this. My house is crowded, there is no space to work. My mother-in-law keeps expecting me to do household work for everyone. I also have to do household work for my husband's brother, cook for him and do his laundry. I can't. So, I will prefer to go back to the office.

She further states,

I can take more work-from-home if I get back my maids (domestic workers). It takes less time to manage them than to do all of it on my own. And also, only if my husband and his brother also resume their office. If they don't, I can't work from home, even though I want to.

In addition, five women also mentioned that they are contemplating quitting their jobs permanently or shifting to part-time jobs which can be easily managed along with their household responsibilities. This can be attributed to the work-life imbalances, inability to simultaneously fulfill responsibilities of domestic work, care work, and professional commitments, and lack of support by the family members for women pursuing their career ambitions. All these factors have led women to experience contestations in their roles as an 'ideal mother' who prioritizes children and her family over and above her personal interests and career goals, as compared to an 'ideal employee' who gives primacy to professional life without being affected by the personal interests and family responsibilities. As Pooja (C4) explains,

I want to quit my job. This year has been extremely difficult for me. My family was not very supportive of my work even before. But I fought for myself, for my career. If I work, I am not being a good mother. And these are very important formative years for my baby, he needs mental attention and company. On top of it, my family has made conditions hostile for me to work. I have not been able to perform well in the office, I keep missing deadlines and my work is not up to the mark. So, if I am performing badly everywhere then the least I can do is leave my job and try to be a good mother.

The above experiences not only highlight the burden of unpaid work that women have undertaken during the pandemic but also throw light on the expectations of the family from a woman. Despite being employed, the Indian family expects a woman to fulfill her family duties of being a mother, a wife, a sister-in-law first, and an employee later. If a woman is singlehandedly managing her multiple roles in the family, sacrifices her interests, and gives up on her career then she is glorified and celebrated as the 'epitome of womanhood'. On the other hand, if a woman prioritizes her work and personal interests over her domestic responsibilities and family relations, she becomes the subject of criticism and ridicule by her family members. Some of the implications reported by the participants include strained family relations, conflicts among the couple, less access to common family resources, etc.

Discussion and Conclusion

The pandemic has exacerbated gender differences in men and women regarding the ways in which they negotiate and experience working from home with varying impacts on them, where women are the lesser equals. The findings suggest that women's burden of unpaid work has increased disproportionately as compared to men. Women's responsibilities for unpaid work interact with their choices in deciding where and when to work. Both paid and unpaid work has put competing claims on women's time and they are navigating within the gendered time–space arrangements to do unpaid and paid work. In economics, intrahousehold bargaining models are used to explain the distribution of resources among individuals within the household [4, 29, 68]. Gender affects the bargaining power of individuals in the household, which determines resource allocation [21]. A higher level of income and education increases bargaining power translating to greater allocation of resources [29]. The findings in the study are not consistent with such an intrahousehold model for resource distribution. Despite the similar levels of income and educational qualification among men and women, the allocation of household resources is in favor of men. Therefore, gender, examined as a power relation with the balance of power being in favor of men over and above economic independence continues to discriminate against women, both at home and at work [13].

The findings have implications for conceptual models of work-from-home. As women are negotiating within gendered time–space arrangements, gender roles and norms put constraints on women's choices of when and where to work from home within the household during the pandemic. There are gender inequalities in exercising control and autonomy in work-from-home arrangements. In other words, the perceived control and autonomy of women in making choices regarding work-from-home is in itself a product of gender norms and gender roles. Thus, flexibility and perceived autonomy of work-from-home is itself a gendered concept, where women's choices are constrained by gender norms and roles.

Furthermore, there are gender differences in the extent of integration of work and non-work domains. While both men and women have experienced the integration of physical work and non-work domains, women have experienced almost full integration of behavioral and cognitive boundaries as well. Men have managed to maintain segmentation to a greater extent, especially regarding behavioral and cognitive boundaries. Further, men have greater autonomy in their use of space and time within the household with respect to both paid and unpaid work as compared to women. Thus, they have also managed to create artificial segmentation of the physical boundaries in work and family life due to their gender privilege. This is because of the external factors like family expectations, and internal factors like feelings of guilt, that regulate their behavior with respect to domestic responsibilities and work commitments. The expectations that families place on men is that they should prioritize their professional commitments, and contribute to household work if and when they have the time to do so. On the other hand, the expectations from women are that they need to be available for the family, and manage their professional life based on their domestic and care work

responsibilities. Such behavior is also internalized where women feel the guilt of not being a good mother if they are unable to manage both paid and unpaid work, whereas men feel satisfied by contributing the bare minimum to the household. The impact of such internal and external factors is evident in gender gaps in desk allocation, work room allocation, interruptions from family, and use of break times in the findings. This has created new challenges in employment and work-life balance for women. Before the pandemic as well, the women were experiencing work-life balancing where they had less time for the family. However, the physical demarcation of work and non-work domains allowed them to maintain segregation, and act on both their responsibilities in different domains. Further, some of the household and care work was outsourced to domestic workers for wages, thus reducing their responsibilities at home. However, working from home during the pandemic is characterized by a collapse of the physical demarcation between work and home, and the inability to outsource domestic work. Women are working more both at home and at the workplace resulting in continuous multitasking and higher time poverty. Not only do women experience competing claims on their time but they also experience marginalization in accessing household resources like workspace, workroom, and privacy. This puts women at a disadvantage by constraining their participation in the workforce, as they do not have the required resources to work from home. Further, when limited access to resources that facilitate working from home is combined with the feeling of guilt of not being a ‘good mother/wife’, women have reported either quitting the labor force or shifting to low-paying part-time jobs. Such gendered experiences of working from home also throw light on the gendered nature of parenting in India. Specifically, in the sample population that is based in middle-class urban families, there is an emphasis on gender equality in terms of access to education and their participation in the labor force. However, after marriage, women automatically assume the role of household managers along with their employment, whereas men continue to prioritize work life and personal life. This is reflective of their social conditioning through parenting, where such behavior has been normalized and therefore, both men and women have internalized their gender roles in the household. This also influences the next generation where children learn about gender roles within their families. There is a potential for parenting to break the stereotypical gender roles by setting an example for the next generation and normalizing contributing to household chores irrespective of gender.

Finally, work-from-home has caused social isolation among all irrespective of gender. However, there are instances where work-from-home is positively associated with women’s participation in informal interactions at work. Virtual informal interactions have eroded the location and time constraints women faced before the pandemic, resulting in their greater participation in informal interactions. This is not consistent with the relational impoverishment model and throws light on new ways in which gender affects women’s social interaction at work. Furthermore, the intensification of both unpaid and paid work during the pandemic has put competing claims on women’s time resulting in reduced participation in informal interactions at work. Such factors do not play a vital role in how men socialize at work. While lack of interpersonal relationships at work has negatively impacted both men

and women, women also reported losing bonds of same-sex friendships which has affected their confidence, motivation, and coping mechanism at work.

Discussions on the centrality of unpaid care work and its interaction with paid work are not new to feminist literature. However, this study is significant as it assesses gender differences in working from home which is an involuntary and mandatory imposition necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The emerging literature on the COVID-19 pandemic has already highlighted the increased burden of unpaid work for women, work-life imbalance, psychological impact, and implications for women's labor force participation among others. This study is unique as it assesses gender differences in navigating work-from-home arrangements in the context of gender time-space arrangements within the household. Specifically, the findings on men's contribution to paid work, gender gaps in work-desk allocation, privacy, interruptions, control over the use of time, and factors determining return to work preferences contribute to the understanding of how gender interacts with the conceptual frameworks of determining work-from-home outcomes.

It is interesting to note that gender roles regarding unpaid work are an important factor in all three conceptual frameworks. Despite this, it is remarkable to see how gender roles in general, and unpaid work in particular, are missing from the mainstream models for assessing outcomes of work-from-home. The assumption of mainstream models that work-from-home is gender-neutral is misleading. Unpaid work and gender roles constrain the choices of women and determine control and autonomy in deciding when and where to work from home. Unpaid work is at the core of boundary management where women are juggling between paid and unpaid work and have less control over prioritizing work over family. Finally, time spent on unpaid work at home also determines women's participation in informal and social interactions at work. Therefore, it becomes necessary to mainstream gender considerations and unpaid work in the work-from-home frameworks for assessing outcomes for employees. In addition, unpaid work has also affected women's decisions regarding returning to work post-pandemic, where some women may not be returning to work at all. Thus, gender dimensions should be mandatorily included in making any assessments regarding the benefits and challenges of working from home. Gender components should not only be included in assessing the problem but also in organizational policies that are compatible with the needs and requirements of women. In other words, organizational policies to facilitate work-from-home arrangements should be based on gender-disaggregated evidence of the varying needs, experiences, advantages, and challenges of men and women. However, caution should be exercised in addressing women's needs in isolation to the gender dynamics that unfold within the household, as it may perpetuate gender inequality. Gender inequality is not a woman's issue, but a power relation with the balance of power being in favor of men. Thus, men must be equally engaged in conversations on gender equality, work-from-home, and equitable sharing of unpaid work in the household. Finally, integrating gender components in work-from-home policies will enable organizations to pursue their goals of gender equality in the workplace. Else, the post-pandemic world will be more gender unequal and unjust.

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Conflict of interest The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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