

A DOUBLE SHIFT: A SOCIO-LEGAL STUDY ON WORK FROM HOME, UNPAID DOMESTIC WORK, AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF WORKING MEN AND WOMEN

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Abstract

Working from home was meant to give employees more control over their day. For many it has done the opposite, because the office has moved into the house and the housework is still waiting there. This non-doctrinal, empirical paper asks whether working from home has produced a "double shift" for working women, and how far Indian law recognises or addresses it. Data were collected through an online questionnaire of 22 closed questions, and 112 responses from working women (n = 63) and men (n = 49) were analysed after removing 64 suspected duplicate submissions. Most respondents worked in the IT sector (61.6%). Women were far more likely than men to spend three hours or more on housework in a day (53.2% against 18.4%, $p < 0.001$) and to manage office work and housework together every day (47.6% against 20.4%, $p = 0.003$). Married respondents carried more housework than unmarried ones (53.4% against 20.8%). Only 18.8% could always log out on time, 87.3% received work calls or messages after office hours, and 82.7% reported stress, pain or lost sleep at least sometimes. Awareness of the Supreme Court's view that homemaking is valuable work was low (31.2%), although 91.9% agreed that housework is real work and 86.4% wanted a law against after-hours contact. The paper reads these findings against the Time Use Survey data, the Constitution, the Labour Codes,

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international standards and recent Supreme Court decisions, and ends with practical suggestions for law and workplace policy.

Keywords: Work from Home; Unpaid Domestic Work; Double Shift; Work-Life Balance; Right to Disconnect; Gender and Law; Non-Doctrinal Research; India

1. Introduction

When the lockdown of 2020 sent millions of Indian employees home, the first reaction was relief. There would be no commute, no rigid timetable, and more time with the family. A few weeks in, many people noticed something less comfortable. The laptop sat on the dining table, the pressure cooker whistled in the next room, and a child or an elderly parent needed attention in the middle of a meeting. For a large number of working women this was not new. It was simply the old arrangement, now happening in one room instead of two.

The sociologist Arlie Hochschild gave this arrangement a name. In her study of American working couples she described the unpaid work waiting at home after a paid day as "the second shift", and she found that it fell mostly on women. Work from home changes the picture in one important way. The two shifts no longer follow each other. They overlap. A person can answer an email with one hand and stir a pan with the other, and that overlap is what this paper calls the double shift.

The Indian numbers on unpaid work were already lopsided before the pandemic. The National Statistics Office's Time Use Survey of 2019 recorded that women who took part in unpaid domestic services spent about 299 minutes a day on them, against 97 minutes for men who took part. The 2024 round shows almost the same picture, at 289 minutes for women and 88 minutes for men. These are averages per participant, so they describe how long the job takes once a person does it. They do not say how many people do it. Still, a gap of nearly three to one after five years suggests that the pandemic did not shift the balance.

1.1 Background of the Study

Two things make the Indian position unusual. First, Indian law has no general statute on working from home. The Special Economic Zones Rules were amended in July 2022 to allow work from home for employees of units in those zones, and the Maternity Benefit Act permits an

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employer and a woman who has returned from maternity leave to agree on home-based work if the nature of the job allows it. Beyond these two, the employee depends on the employer's own policy. The four Labour Codes came into force on 21 November 2025, but they do not set out a general right to work from home or a right to switch off.

Second, the courts have been moving towards a fuller view of what housework is worth. The Supreme Court has used the value of a homemaker's labour to fix compensation in motor accident claims, and in June 2026, in *Shishu Pal @ Shish Ram v Surjeet*, it was reported to have described homemakers as contributors to the nation's economy. Yet recognition in a compensation case is a long way from a rule that protects a working woman's evening. The study sits in that gap between what the law says about housework and what working households actually go through.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Work from home is usually discussed as a question of productivity and office policy. It is seldom discussed as a question of who does the unpaid work in the background, or whether the law notices. If women carry most of the housework and also meet the same office targets, then a policy that looks neutral can still produce unequal results. This paper therefore asks three connected questions. Do women and men who work from home spend different amounts of time on housework? What does this do to their ability to switch off from work and to their health? And does Indian law give them anything to rely on?

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To compare the time that working women and working men spend on housework while working from home.
2. To find out how often respondents have to manage office work and housework at the same time.
3. To examine whether marital status makes a difference to the share of housework a person carries.
4. To study how far respondents can disconnect from office work after working hours, and whether they report stress, pain or loneliness.

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5. To measure how aware respondents are of the Supreme Court's recognition of housework, and what they think of a legal right to disconnect.
6. To suggest legal and workplace reforms based on the findings.

2.1 Hypotheses

- H1: Women spend more hours on housework than men while working from home.
- H2: Women are more likely than men to manage office work and housework together every day.
- H3: Married respondents carry more housework than unmarried respondents.
- H4: Women and men differ in how often they report stress, back pain or lost sleep.
- H5: Women and men differ in their awareness of the Supreme Court's view on housework.
- H6: Most people who work from home cannot fully disconnect after office hours.
- H7: Most respondents support a law that bars employers from contacting staff after office hours.

3. Review of Literature

- **Hochschild (1989).** Hochschild followed fifty couples in California and described how women, even those in full-time jobs, came home to a second round of cooking, cleaning and childcare. She estimated that over a year this added up to roughly an extra month of working days for women. Her point was that the unfairness is rarely noticed because both partners have learned to treat it as normal. Our survey tests whether the same pattern shows up when the workplace is the home itself.
- **Waring (1988).** Marilyn Waring looked at how national accounts are built and showed that unpaid household work is left out of the count of economic output. A woman who cooks for her family is treated as "not working". This matters for law as well as economics, because what is not counted is rarely protected.
- **Folbre (2001).** Nancy Folbre argued that care work produces something every society depends on, yet the people who do it bear the cost in lost income and lost time. She argued that care should be valued and supported publicly rather than left to families alone.
- **Okin (1989) and Fineman (2004).** Susan Moller Okin showed that theories of justice usually stop at the front door of the family, so that unequal sharing of housework escapes

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scrutiny. Martha Fineman added that dependency, such as that of children and the old, is a normal part of life and that the state should support those who take care of it. Both help explain why a law about the workplace cannot ignore what happens at home.

- **Dalla Costa and James (1972).** Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James argued that housework is real labour that sustains the paid economy and that it deserves recognition and a wage. The suggestion has been debated ever since, but it frames the question that courts face today when they put a value on a homemaker's work.
- **International Labour Organization (2021).** The ILO's report on home-based work found that working from home grew sharply during the pandemic and that those who do it often have weaker protection of hours, pay and safety than office staff. The report is useful here because it treats the home as a workplace that labour standards can reach.
- **Microsoft (2021).** The company's survey of knowledge workers found that stress and the difficulty of balancing childcare or schooling with work were prominent concerns, including among Indian respondents. This corroborates the health questions in our survey, although the Microsoft report does not break the findings down by gender in the way this paper tries to do.
- **Government statistics (2020 and 2025).** The two Time Use Surveys, mentioned above, supply the national baseline against which a small sample like ours should be read. What they do not capture is whether the paid job is done at home, which is the question we add.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The paper follows a non-doctrinal, empirical design supported by doctrinal material. Primary data came from a structured online questionnaire. The legal analysis relies on statutes, cases, official statistics and secondary writing, which are cited in the footnotes. A socio-legal approach was chosen because the question is about how law operates in everyday life, which a reading of statutes alone cannot answer.

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4.2 Universe, Sample and Sampling

The target group was working men and women who had worked from home at some point. Chennai was the intended study area, but the form did not ask for a respondent's city, so the findings cannot be described as Chennai-only. Respondents were reached by convenience sampling, with the Google Form circulated through professional and personal contacts. The sample therefore represents those who were reachable and willing, not the whole working population.

The form was open between 1 September and 3 October 2026 and received 176 usable responses. Sixty-four of these arrived in two short bursts (50 within about a minute on one evening and 14 a little later), and the later group had identical answers on four questions. They looked like repeat or automated submissions, so they were removed. The analysed sample is 112: 63 women and 49 men. Two further rows with no gender recorded were dropped earlier.

4.3 Tool of Data Collection

The questionnaire has 22 closed questions. Questions 1 to 3 record gender, marital status and job sector. Questions 4 to 8 cover the company's work-from-home policy, hours of housework and office work, handling both together, and who does most of the housework at home. Questions 9 to 16 ask about logging out, calls after office hours, monitoring, health, loneliness, satisfaction and future preference. Questions 17 to 21 ask about awareness of the Supreme Court's view, whether housework is real work, a right to disconnect, equal sharing and which work is more tiring. Question 22 lets respondents tick more than one change they want. No names or contact details were collected, and participation was voluntary.

4.4 Variables and Tests

Gender, marital status and sector are the independent variables. Age was not asked, so no age comparisons are made. The dependent variables are the answers to questions 4 to 21. Percentages describe each pie chart. The chi-square test was used to compare groups, and Fisher's exact test where numbers were small. For housework hours, the banded answers were converted to mid-points of 0.5, 1.5, 3.5 and 5.0 hours so that averages could be compared with the Welch t-test and the Mann–Whitney test. A result is called significant when p is below 0.05. Percentages are

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calculated on those who answered each question, so the base is sometimes 109, 110 or 111 rather than 112

5. Analysis

The tables and charts below show what respondents said. Every pie chart carries the number of people behind it and writes the count and percentage next to each slice, so it can be read without any statistics. Where the chart is split into two, the left chart is for the first group named in its title and the right chart for the second.

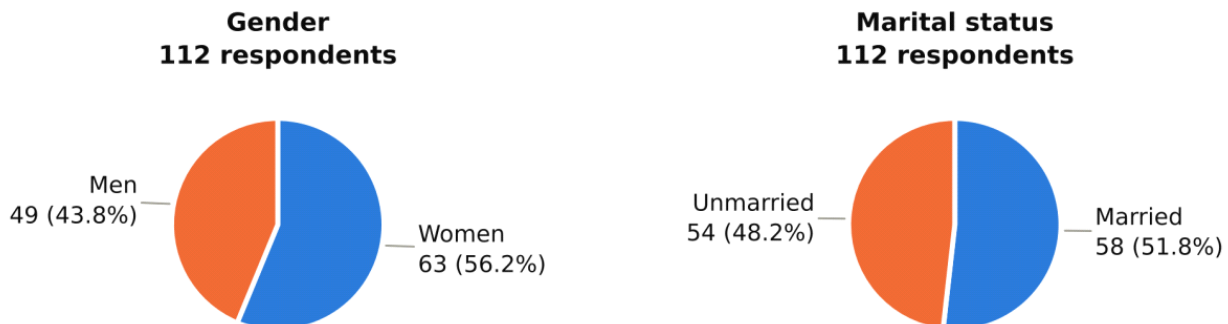
Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Women	63	56.3%
	Men	49	43.8%
Marital status	Married	58	51.8%
	Unmarried	54	48.2%
Job sector	IT	69	62.2%
	Other private company	29	25.9%
	Teaching	8	7.1%
	Banking	4	3.6%
	Government	2	1.8%
Company had a work from home policy before COVID	Yes	31	27.9%
	No	80	72.1%
Daily office hours while working from home	6 to 8 hours	81	73.0%
	8 to 10 hours	18	16.2%
	More than 10 hours	8	7.2%
	Less than 6 hours	4	3.6%

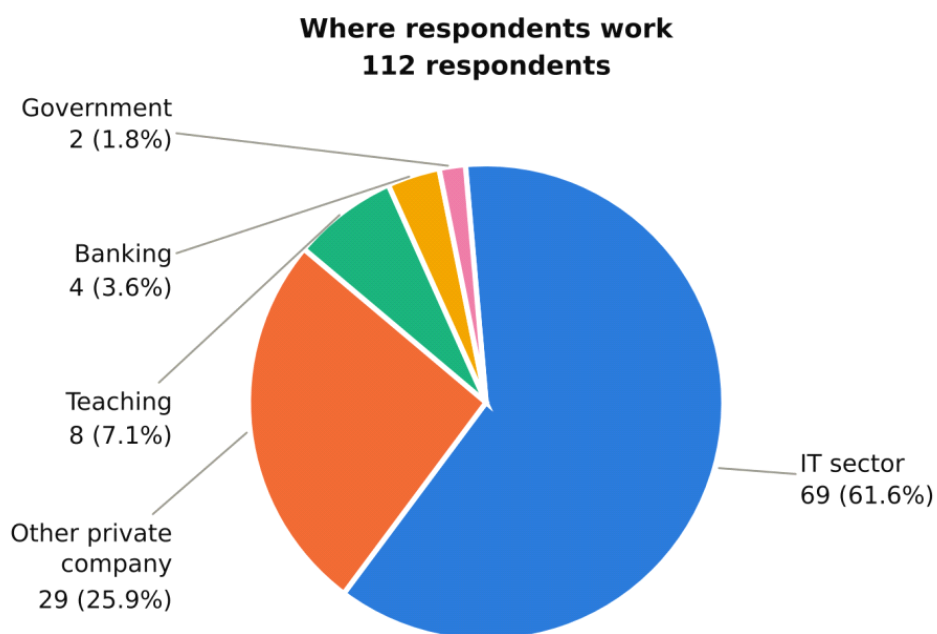
Note: Percentages for gender and marital status add to 100.1% because of rounding. Policy and office-hours rows are based on 111 answers.

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Figure 1: Gender and marital status of respondents

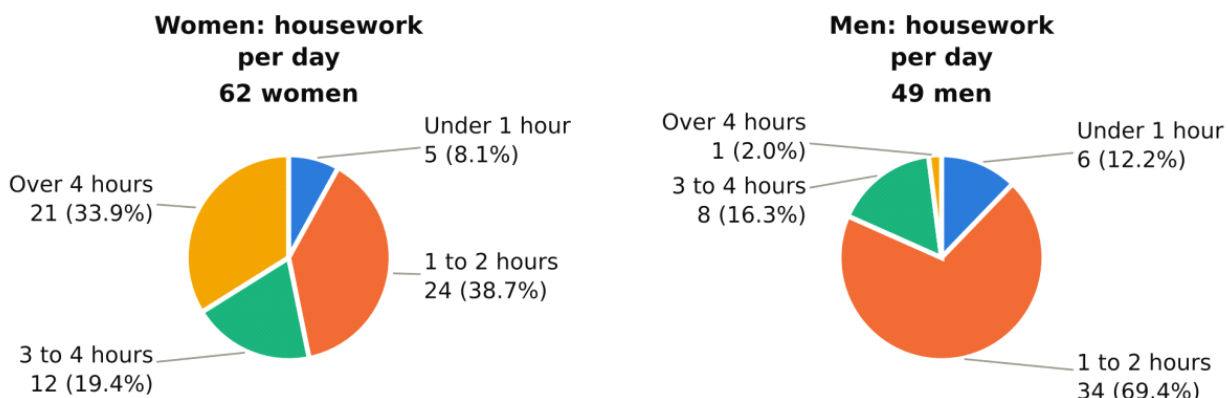
Legend: The figure 1 represents the profile of the 112 respondents. The left pie shows that 63 respondents (56.3%) are women and 49 (43.8%) are men. The right pie shows that 58 (51.8%) are married and 54 (48.2%) are unmarried.

Figure 2: Job sector of respondents

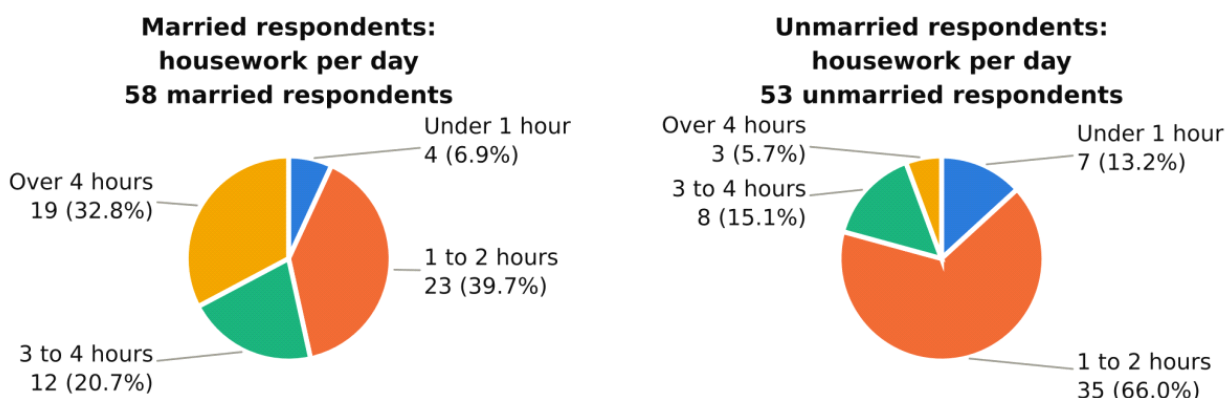
Legend: The figure 2 represents where the 112 respondents work. The largest slice is the IT sector with 69 respondents (61.6%), followed by other private companies with 29 (25.9%), teaching with 8 (7.1%), banking with 4 (3.6%) and government with 2 (1.8%).

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Figure 3: Housework per day: women and men

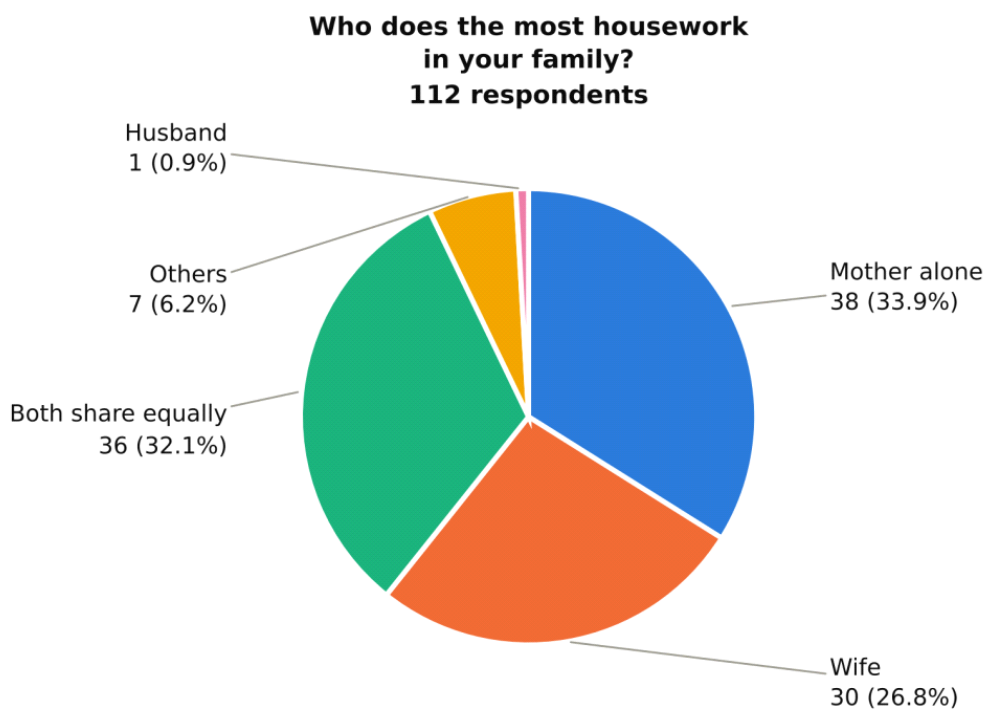
Legend: The figure 3 represents how many hours women and men spend on housework in a day. Among 62 women who answered, 21 (33.9%) spend more than 4 hours and 12 (19.4%) spend 3 to 4 hours. Among 49 men, only 1 (2.0%) spends more than 4 hours and 8 (16.3%) spend 3 to 4 hours. Most men (34, or 69.4%) spend 1 to 2 hours.

Figure 4: Housework per day: married and unmarried respondents

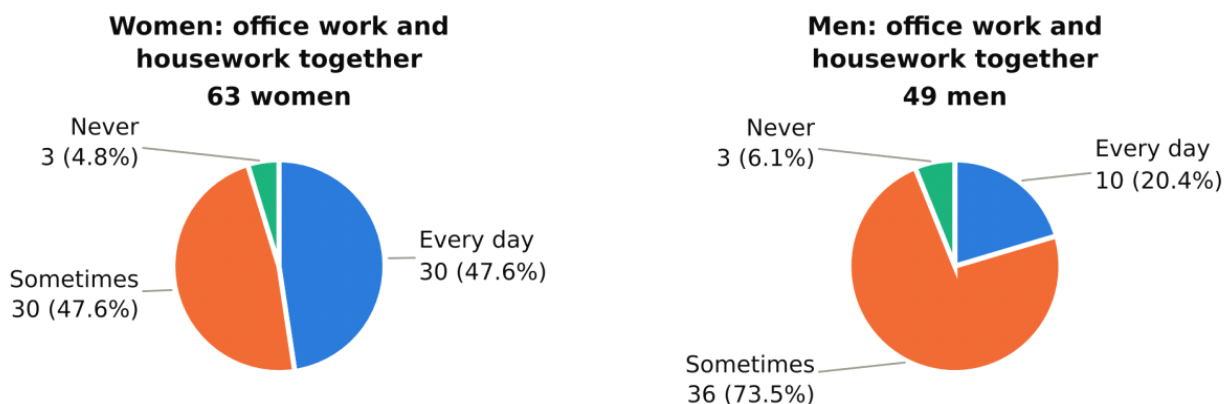
Legend: The figure 4 represents the same question for married and unmarried respondents. Of 58 married respondents, 19 (32.8%) spend more than 4 hours and 12 (20.7%) spend 3 to 4 hours. Of 53 unmarried respondents, 3 (5.7%) spend more than 4 hours and 8 (15.1%) spend 3 to 4 hours. Two-thirds of unmarried respondents (35, or 66.0%) spend 1 to 2 hours.

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Figure 5: Who does the most housework in the family

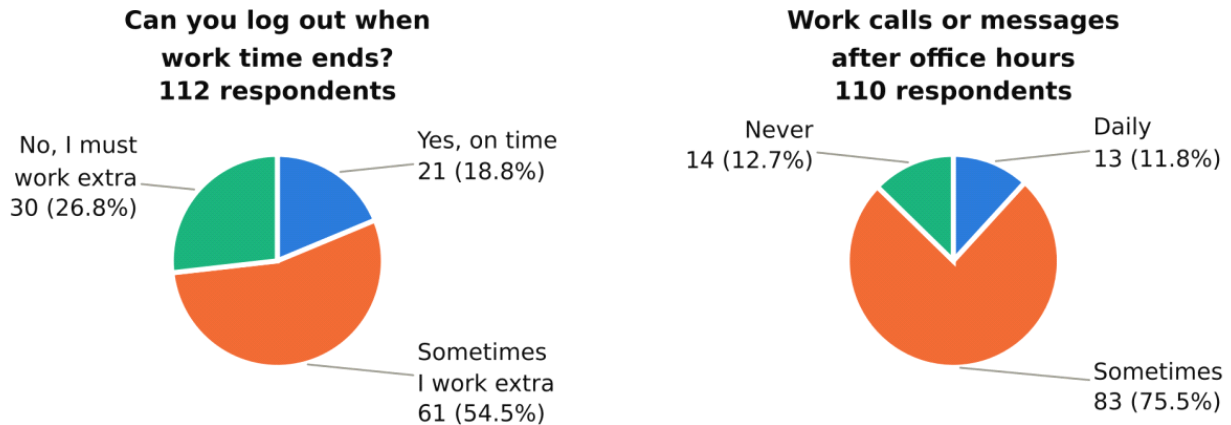
Legend: The figure 5 represents who respondents say does the most housework at home. 38 (33.9%) say it is the mother alone and 30 (26.8%) say it is the wife, while 36 (32.1%) say both share equally. Only 1 respondent (0.9%) names the husband and 7 (6.2%) name others.

Figure 6: Managing office work and housework together: women and men

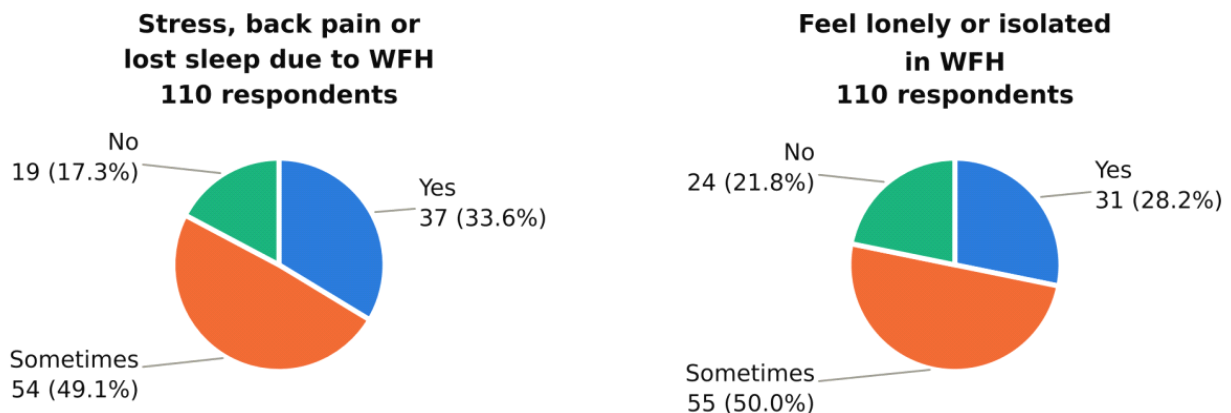
Legend: The figure 6 represents how often respondents had to handle office work and housework at the same time. Among 63 women, 30 (47.6%) say every day, 30 (47.6%) say sometimes and 3 (4.8%) say never. Among 49 men, 10 (20.4%) say every day, 36 (73.5%) say sometimes and 3 (6.1%) say never.

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Figure 7: Logging out on time and calls after office hours

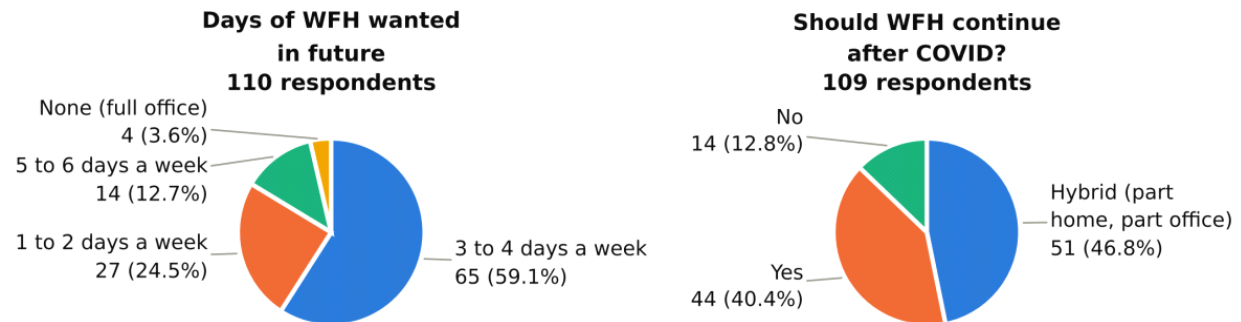
Legend: The figure 7 represents the limits on switching off. In the left pie, only 21 of 112 respondents (18.8%) can log out on time, 61 (54.5%) sometimes work extra and 30 (26.8%) have to work extra hours. In the right pie, 13 of 110 (11.8%) get work calls or messages every day, 83 (75.5%) sometimes and 14 (12.7%) never.

Figure 8: Health effects and loneliness during work from home

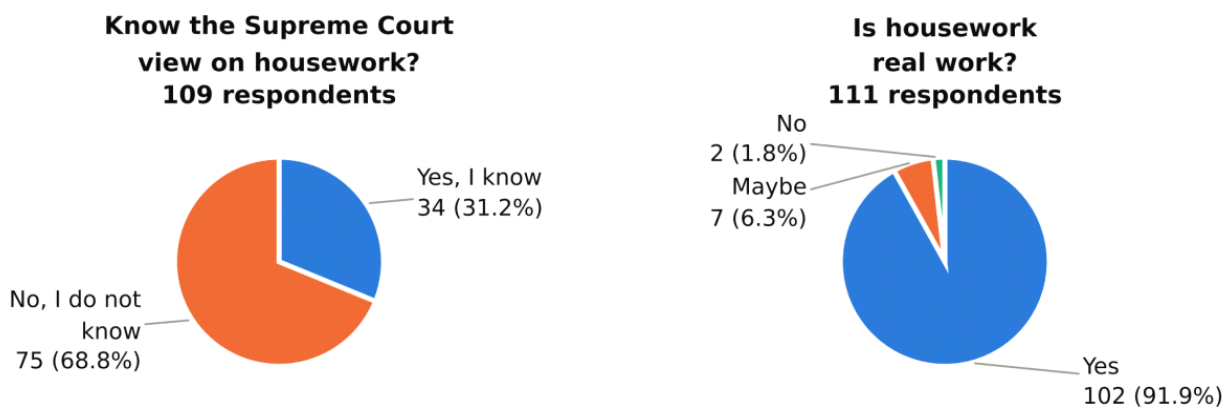
Legend: The figure 8 represents how respondents felt. In the left pie, 37 of 110 (33.6%) say they feel stress, back pain or lost sleep, 54 (49.1%) say sometimes and 19 (17.3%) say no. In the right pie, 31 (28.2%) say they feel lonely, 55 (50.0%) say sometimes and 24 (21.8%) say no.

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Figure 9: Preferred days of work from home and whether it should continue

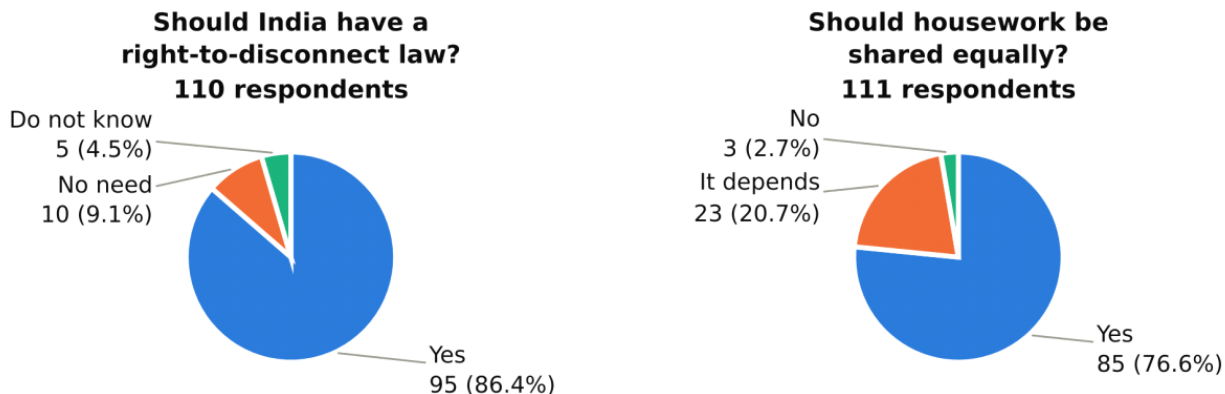
Legend: The figure 9 represents what respondents want for the future. In the left pie, 65 of 110 (59.1%) prefer 3 to 4 days a week at home, 27 (24.5%) prefer 1 to 2 days, 14 (12.7%) prefer 5 to 6 days and 4 (3.6%) prefer a full office. In the right pie, 51 of 109 (46.8%) want a hybrid model, 44 (40.4%) want work from home to continue and 14 (12.8%) do not.

Figure 10: Awareness of the Supreme Court's view and views on housework as real work

Legend: The figure 10 represents knowledge and opinion. In the left pie, 34 of 109 respondents (31.2%) know that the Supreme Court has said housework is valuable work and 75 (68.8%) do not. In the right pie, 102 of 111 (91.9%) agree that cooking, cleaning and childcare are real work, 7 (6.3%) say maybe and 2 (1.8%) say no.

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Figure 11: Support for a right-to-disconnect law and for equal sharing of housework

Legend: The figure 11 represents what respondents think should change. In the left pie, 95 of 110 (86.4%) want India to have a law that stops employers calling or messaging after office hours, 10 (9.1%) say no need and 5 (4.5%) do not know. In the right pie, 85 of 111 (76.6%) say housework should be shared equally, 23 (20.7%) say it depends and 3 (2.7%) say no.

Table 2: What respondents want changed (question 22, more than one answer allowed)

Change wanted	Respondents (n)	Percentage of 111 (%)
A law to stop office work after office hours	85	76.6%
Housework should get a salary or value	79	71.2%
Equal leave for husband and wife for family work	69	62.2%
Company should not watch us through camera or screen at home	35	31.5%

Note: Respondents could tick more than one option, so the percentages add to more than 100.

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Table 3: Comparison of women and men

Measure	Women	Men	Test result
Housework 3 hours or more a day	53.2% (33/62)	18.4% (9/49)	$\chi^2 = 14.14$, df 1, $p < 0.001$
Average housework hours (estimated)	3.0	1.8	Welch t = 4.76, $p < 0.001$
Office and housework together, every day	47.6% (30/63)	20.4% (10/49)	$\chi^2 = 8.89$, df 1, $p = 0.003$
Company tracks my screen or status ("Yes")	27.0%	10.6%	$\chi^2 = 9.23$, df 2, $p = 0.010$
Stress, pain or lost sleep ("Yes")	33.9%	33.3%	$\chi^2 = 3.21$, df 2, $p = 0.201$
Feel lonely ("Yes")	21.0%	37.5%	$\chi^2 = 3.96$, df 2, $p = 0.138$
Knows the Supreme Court's view	37.1%	23.4%	$\chi^2 = 2.34$, df 1, $p = 0.126$
Can log out on time	22.2%	14.3%	$\chi^2 = 4.13$, df 2, $p = 0.127$

Note: The overall housework distribution also differs by gender ($\chi^2 = 19.54$, df 3, $p < 0.001$, Cramér's V = 0.42). For married and unmarried respondents, housework of 3 hours or more is 53.4% (31/58) against 20.8% (11/53) ($\chi^2 = 12.58$, df 1, $p < 0.001$).

Table 4: Hypothesis Validation Summary

Hypothesis	Evidence	Outcome
H1 – Women spend more hours on housework	3.0 hours against 1.8 hours; $p < 0.001$	Validated
H2 – Women more often manage both every day	47.6% against 20.4%; $p = 0.003$	Validated
H3 – Married respondents carry more housework	53.4% against 20.8%; $p < 0.001$	Validated
H4 – Gender difference in health effects	33.9% against 33.3%; $p = 0.201$	Not validated
H5 – Gender difference in awareness of the Supreme Court view	37.1% against 23.4%; $p = 0.126$	Not validated
H6 – Most cannot fully disconnect	87.3% get after-hours contact; 18.8% log out on time	Validated
H7 – Most support a right-to-disconnect law	86.4% say yes	Validated

6. Result

The sample has 112 respondents, of whom 63 (56.3%) are women and 49 (43.8%) are men, and 58 (51.8%) are married (Figure 1). Most work in the IT sector (61.6%) (Figure 2). The clearest result is the difference in housework. Among women, 53.2% do three hours or more a day, against 18.4% of men, and one in three women (33.9%) does more than four hours, against

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one man (2.0%) (Figure 3). Marriage matters as well: 53.4% of married respondents do three hours or more, against 20.8% of the unmarried (Figure 4). When asked who does the most housework at home, 33.9% name the mother alone and 26.8% the wife, while 32.1% say it is shared equally and only one respondent names the husband (Figure 5). Women were more than twice as likely as men to be handling both kinds of work every day (47.6% against 20.4%) (Figure 6).

Switching off is difficult for nearly everyone. Only 18.8% can log out on time, 87.3% receive work calls or messages after hours at least sometimes, and 20.0% say their company tracks their screen or status (Figure 7; Table 3). Over four in five respondents (82.7%) report stress, back pain or lost sleep at least sometimes, and 78.2% feel lonely at least sometimes, and these figures are about the same for women and men (Figure 8). Even so, respondents do not want to give up working from home. Some 59.1% would like three to four days a week at home, and 46.8% prefer a hybrid model (Figure 9). Only 31.2% know about the Supreme Court's view on housework, yet 91.9% agree that housework is real work (Figure 10). On what should change, 86.4% want a law against after-hours contact, 76.6% want housework shared equally, and 71.2% want housework to carry some salary or value (Figure 11; Table 2). Of the seven hypotheses, five are validated and two are not (Table 4).

7. Discussion

Figure 1 represents who answered the survey. There are a few more women than men, and the group is split almost evenly between married and unmarried people. This is useful because the later comparisons are between groups of fairly similar size, so a difference between them is not a result of one group being tiny.

Figure 2 represents where the respondents work. Nearly two out of three are in IT, which is the sector that moved most quickly to home-based work. The findings therefore speak mostly about IT and private-sector employees. Teaching, banking and government are too few (14 in all) for anyone to draw conclusions about them. Also, only 27.9% of respondents say their company had a work-from-home policy before COVID, so most people were working at home under arrangements made in a hurry. That is what the law's silence looks like in practice: there is no standard to fall back on, so every employer sets its own.

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Figure 3 represents the most striking result in the survey. About half the women spend three hours or more on housework every day, while most men spend one or two hours. This is the same direction as the national time-use data, in which women who do domestic work spend close to three times as long on it as men who do. The survey is small and not random, so the exact percentages should not be applied to all working Indians. But the pattern is unlikely to be an accident, since the statistical tests show it very clearly ($p < 0.001$).

Figure 4 represents the effect of marriage. A married person does far more housework than an unmarried one. This is where gender and marital status work together: among married respondents, 75.0% of women (24 of 32) do three hours or more, against 26.9% of married men (7 of 26). Among the unmarried the gap is much smaller (30.0% against 8.7%) and not statistically significant ($p = 0.058$). In other words, the burden does not fall equally on all women. It seems to grow when a woman marries. Hochschild described the same thing, a division of labour that is formed inside the household and then treated as natural.

Figure 5 represents who respondents say does most of the housework at their home. It is revealing that the answer "mother alone" or "wife" comes from six out of ten people, and that "husband" was chosen by only one person in 112. About a third say the work is shared equally. That is encouraging, but it is a perception. When respondents report their own hours, however, Figure 3 shows men at the lower end, so "shared equally" may sometimes describe a perception more than a measured split. This is the kind of invisibility Waring described, where work that is routine and unpaid is not noticed even by those who benefit from it.

Figure 6 represents the overlap that gives the paper its title. Almost half of the women (47.6%) manage office work and housework together every day, while only one man in five does. The next group, "sometimes", is the largest for men. So almost everyone has experienced the overlap, but for women it is a daily condition. It is also why a woman may be logged on and present while she is in fact doing a different job in the same hours.

Figure 7 represents the lack of boundaries. Only about one in five respondents can log out on time, and almost nine in ten are contacted after hours. This applies to women and men alike. For the law, this is the area where Indian rules are thinnest. The Labour Codes do not give a right to disconnect, and a private member's Right to Disconnect Bill introduced in 2019 did not become

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law. France has had a duty on larger employers to negotiate disconnection since 2017, Portugal bars employers from contacting workers outside working hours, and Australia has given employees a right to refuse out-of-hours contact that is unreasonable. The survey suggests that Indian employees want something similar.

Figure 8 represents health and loneliness. Only 17.3% say they never feel stress, back pain or lost sleep, and only 21.8% say they never feel lonely. The men were not better off than the women here. Women and men reported health problems at almost the same rate (33.9% against 33.3% saying "yes"), and men reported loneliness more often (37.5% against 21.0%), though this difference could be chance ($p = 0.138$). So H4 is not validated. The double shift may therefore show up more in time and in the ability to switch off than in how people rate their own health. A more careful measure would be needed to say more.

Figure 9 represents what people want from work from home. They do not want it abolished. Three to four days a week is the favourite, and the hybrid model is the most popular answer for the future. This matters for lawmakers, because a rule that simply bans or discourages home-based work would go against what workers want. What is needed is a rule that keeps the flexibility and adds protection around it. The Maternity Benefit Act already allows agreed home-based work for women after leave, and the Special Economic Zones rules allow it in those zones, but neither is a general framework.

Figure 10 represents the gap between belief and awareness. Nine in ten respondents think housework is real work, but only three in ten know that the Supreme Court has said so. The Court has been developing this view over many years. It has accepted that a homemaker's services have economic value for compensation, and in *Shishu Pal @ Shish Ram v Surjeet* it was reported in June 2026 to have gone further and called the homemaker a contributor to the economy. Women were somewhat more aware than men (37.1% against 23.4%), but the difference is not statistically significant ($p = 0.126$), so H5 is not validated. The finding that matters is that most people on both sides have not heard of the decisions.

Figure 11 represents what respondents want the law to do. Almost nine in ten want a law against after-hours contact, and more than three in four think housework should be shared equally. Question 22 points the same way: 76.6% want a law to stop work after office hours and

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71.2% want housework to carry some salary or value (Table 2). The Constitution does not mention housework, but its guarantees of equality, dignity and a just share of work provide a base on which such a law could be built. At the international level, the ILO Convention on workers with family responsibilities and the CEDAW Convention both treat unequal caring duties as a matter of equality at work. India is a party to CEDAW but has not ratified the ILO convention.

Taken together, the figures describe one story. At home, a large share of the unpaid work falls on women, and more heavily on married women. At work, the day has no clear end for anyone. People are tired and a good number feel isolated, but they want to keep home-based work, and they want the law to catch up.

8. Limitations

1. The sample is small (112) and was gathered by convenience sampling, so the results cannot be generalised to all working Indians.
2. The questionnaire did not record the respondent's city or age, so findings cannot be claimed for Chennai alone or compared across age groups.
3. Nearly two-thirds of respondents work in IT. Teaching, banking and government have too few responses for separate analysis.
4. Sixty-four suspected duplicate submissions were excluded. The decision was based on timing and identical answers, not on any identifying information, and the result holds when they are included.
5. Housework hours were asked in bands, so averages are estimates. Answers are self-reported and can be affected by memory or by what a person thinks is the right answer.
6. Several comparisons have small cell counts and wide uncertainty, and a "not significant" result does not prove that no difference exists.
7. No interviews were conducted, so the survey shows what people do and think but not why.

9. Suggestions

1. A statute or Code rule on work from home. It should cover written terms, working hours, reimbursement of reasonable costs, and the employer's duty of safety at the home workplace, and

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apply to every sector and not only to special zones. The ILO has treated home-based workers as workers entitled to decent conditions.

2. A right to disconnect. The simplest model is a duty on employers to fix working hours, with a protected right to ignore messages after them, backed by a duty to negotiate exceptions. France, Portugal and Australia show that different forms are possible.

3. Recognition of care in labour law Equal paid family-care leave for men and women –which was the request by 62.2 per cent of respondents– would put an end to work-related disadvantages arising from the prejudice that caring duties are something that women should do.

4. Advice on monitoring. There should be no monitoring of screens or cameras in the home without a policy in place and it should be limited to working hours.

5. Public information. The Supreme Court's recognition of homemakers is unknown to most respondents. Courts, legal-aid bodies and employers could publish plain summaries.

6. Better data. Future rounds of the Time Use Survey could ask whether paid work was done at home, so that the overlap that this study found can be measured nationally.

7. Ratification and reporting. India could consider ratifying the ILO convention on workers with family responsibilities and report regularly on its CEDAW duties concerning unequal care.

10. Conclusion

This study set out to see whether working from home produces a double shift, and the survey says that for many women it does. Women in the sample did far more housework than men, managed both kinds of work together on most days, and the gap was widest among married couples. At the same time, the employees of both sexes found it hard to log off, and a large majority want a law that protects their time. The evidence also points two ways. Health complaints and loneliness did not differ clearly by gender, and awareness of the Supreme Court's view was low everywhere.

The law is not empty on the subject. The Constitution protects equality and dignity, and the Supreme Court is now willing to treat homemaking as work with economic value. But there is still no ordinary rule that gives a person working from home a fixed day, a quiet evening or an equal chance of sharing the household load. The suggestions above are meant to fill that space. A

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small sample cannot settle the question, but it shows where the problem lies and where larger studies and legislators should look.



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