

CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN PROFESSIONALS WORKING FROM HOME, IN RANCHI, JHARKHAND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The present study explores work from home (WFH) experiences among the women professionals in Ranchi, Jharkhand, India during the lockdown. It is a thematic analysis. 15 women professionals from varied sectors were randomly selected for semi-structured interviews.

The analysis divulged the top remote work challenges related to the respondents' role conflict and disturbed family time. Technical glitches and knowledge deficiency were second most-cited challenges. Focusing on professional and domestic activities at the same time, was the third highest cause of distraction among the respondents. The respondents also shared positive things about WFH. They felt relieved because of the workplace flexibility that the setting provided. They were more in control and comfortable. When asked about a chance to permanently move towards the WFH setup, some had serious concerns about how their career growth. The question received mixed responses.

Keywords: Pandemic, Work from home, Ranchi, Jharkhand, Working women, Covid-19, WFH

1. INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 or the Coronavirus infection, would undoubtedly be the deadliest pandemic in the 21st Century, which affected the world at large (Harris & Moss, 2021). The first ever reported case of the disease was in China (Sirajuddin et al., 2021). China did inform the World Health Organisation (WHO), about the nature of the disease before December 31, 2019. By that time, the deadly virus had spread exponentially to a dangerous extent in various parts of the world and would soon be uncontrollable. Outside China, it was reported in Thailand in January, 2020. Since then, the world has been reeling under the unaccountable losses suffered by all the sectors (WHO, 2020).

International travels were banned. Local travel was restricted. This led to closure of several businesses. All the economic activities in a country- corporate, religious, education, production, transportation, etc. suffered badly, which distorted the economic statuses of countries. Economies at large have suffered major setbacks and devastated more than a million families (Moss & Harris, 2020).

The work-life of people worldwide was disturbed. Employees in India too went through the agonizing situation. The GOI announced relief packages to support businesses and ensure job security for both Indian nationals as well as the foreigner employees staying here (Dev & Sengupta, 2020; Chakraborty & Thomas, 2020; Balajee, Tomar, & Udupa, 2020). Some of these included immediate help to the jobless and homeless migrant workers, paid and unpaid leaves to employees, exceptional financing, liquidity initiatives, extended unemployment insurance, and various economic stimulus packages (Kapoor & Tyagi, 2020).

Even though these schemes and programmes were almost immediately brought in practice, the workforce in the country underwent critical economic conditions. Job loss caused havoc in the lives of the people, including women professionals. Most of employees had to work for extended hours in inconvenient setups at home without any increase in their compensation. Because of this, the present study aimed to explore how WFH arrangement impacted the women professionals in Ranchi, with respect to their rights and family roles.

The research question, therefore, is, what were the positive and negative aspects of WFH for women professionals of Ranchi?

It presented an interesting viewpoint of whether the remote work setting became more regressive for the female employees.

In Ranchi, women professionals come from diverse backgrounds, battling different levels of patriarchal pressure. The need for gender equity in the Indian labour market has been a point of discussion since long. Activists in Jharkhand have been working tirelessly for right to work among the local women (Achyut et al., 2016). The pandemic forced employees to engage in their professional tasks from home. Would this setup indirectly mean a regression of female rights in the country?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The present study looks at the theoretical structures already in place regarding the global challenges faced by women in the workplace. It specifically talks about the WFH challenges faced by women workers in India and Jharkhand. It also briefly looks at the impact of the pandemic on employees.

2.1 Role of Women Professionals in Nation-Building

The previous century witnessed a major transformation in the role of women in society. From being considered as the caregivers to gradually being included among the real contributors to the economy, women are receiving more opportunities in almost all the sectors. Owing to the religious

traditions and family doctrines, there was a misconception in India related to the roles of women, which has not ceased to exist till date. The paper titled, 'Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in India: Mapping through UN Sustainable Development Goals', by Hasan & Parveen (2020) explored the programs undertaken by the Government of India (GOI) for achieving the goals and targets set under the UN Sustainable development Goals (SDG). The paper concluded that despite the initiatives of the GOI, the implementation of those policies is an area of concern. Female literacy remains at one of the lowest in Asia (Parmar, 2023).

Researchers studying the issues related to women's rights and their participation in the workforce, have significantly contributed in the struggle for equal opportunities to women. Kooli and Muftah (2020) believe the movement for gender equality received additional support due to a rise in the belief that women empowerment is crucial for overall and sustainable economic development of the world. A majority of the gender equality theories overlap with those advocating equal opportunities for females at the workplace and the society as a whole. Agassi (1989) gave four themes for such theories: on the basis of women's social roles; sexuality; family structure and household; and production and property relations.

2.2 Challenges faced by the female workforce in India and Jharkhand

Barati, Arab, and Masoumi (2015) write that although, in India, women have been contributing in the growth of the economy in some way or the other, there is no reliable and formal account of their contribution. The GOI is working consistently for bringing reforms with an aim to establish gender equality in the country.

The visible challenges faced by the women professionals in India are: pay gap, sexual harassment, inadequate and improper facilities in the area of sanitation, unsafe means of transportation and unsafe streets, gender-based discrimination, and work-life imbalance (Dashora, 2013; Dutta, 2017; Verma & Mulani, 2018; Bhandari, 2020). The hidden challenges which are rarely documented include those due to religious and cultural barriers, and those for unpaid care work done by women (Tomy & Menon, 2019; Mondal & Chakraborty, 2022).

One of the biggest challenges faced by women workforce in Jharkhand is largely about having an access to quality employment opportunities in the state (Endow & Dutta, 2022). The other issues include cultural barriers, unhygienic working conditions, compulsory household responsibilities, unpaid care work, and gender pay gap (Mosse et al., 2002; Kumar, 2022; Kujur & Singh, 2022; Kakati & Kakoty, 2022; Mishra, 2023).

2.3 Covid-19 and its impact on female workforce in India

Covid-19 has had a distressing effect on everyone, irrespective of gender, location, or situation (Kooli, 2021). Its effect on our way of living, communication and business is still visible. The global impact of Covid-19 on female workers has been studied by many researchers who observed that female workforce has been severely affected (Andrew et al., 2020; Qian & Fuller, 2020; Manzo & Minello, 2020; Carlson et al., 2020; Hennekam & Shymko, 2020; Craig & Churchill, 2021; Collins et al., 2021).

They were mostly stressed due to increased household and social responsibilities. The other issues include: lesser pay than their male counterparts (Guha et al., 2021; Arnout & Al-Sufyani, 2021; Maqsood et al., 2021); loss of job (Baburanjan, 2021); high levels of stress (Kooli, 2021; Ahuja et al., 2021). There was a steep rise in domestic violence during the pandemic (Gulati & Kelly, 2020; Piquero et al., 2021; Sediri et al., 2020; Bradbury-Jones, & Isham, 2020). Indian women too faced severe psychological and social stress (Mittal & Singh, 2020; Kumar, 2020; Indu et al., 2021; Maji, Bansod, & Singh, 2022).

2.4 WFH Challenges and Advantages for Women

The socio-historical pattern of patriarchal dominance in the Indian society worsened the situation for working women in Indian during the lockdown phase of the pandemic (Debata, Patnaik, & Mishra, 2020; Jasrotia & Meena, 2021; Chattopadhyay, 2021; Roy, 2021; Singh & Kaur, 2022). Studies identified that challenges that women professionals faced during the pandemic were not sudden and not solely due to the pandemic, but largely because of the long-drawn crisis caused by the systemic malfunctions and structural ruptures in the Indian society since time immemorial (Neetha, 2021). If WFH is out of choice and in normal times, then it is a cause of comfort for the women professionals, otherwise WFH demands more time. Due to lockdown, women professionals who were working from home, without any domestic helpers, had a hard time balancing their professional and household tasks (Kaur & Sharma, 2020). They neglected their personal health and at times their household responsibilities while trying to meet task deadlines (Kaushik & Guleria, 2020; Sharma et al., 2022; Tayal & Mehta, 2022; Sengupta & Al-Khalifa, 2022; Soman & Mohanan, 2022).

Female workers in Jharkhand experienced job losses at alarming rates. WFH set-up affected their job performance and caused immense psychological distress to many. They were burdened with role overload, operational difficulties and family distractions (Verma et al., 2021; Jaiswal & Dewan, 2022). Priyadarshini, et al. (2022) highlighted the significance of spousal support in domestic work in improving women's professional performance during the WFH setup. Jasrotia and Meena (2021) identified major WFH challenges for women professionals as: improper workspace at home, distractions, poor internet connectivity, functional deficiencies, invasion of office work into private lives, responsibility of home, lack of co-ordination with office-mates, coronavirus related anxiety, etc. In addition to the mentioned issues, the working women also found themselves at a weaker position with respect to their employers in the form of a decrease in their power of bargaining and autonomy (Nanerjee & Wilks, 2022).

WFH setup had some positive points also (Kaushik & Guleria, 2020; Makwana & Dave, 2020; Shirmohammadi, Chan Au, & Beigi, 2022; Mukherjee & Narang, 2022). Flexibility remains the topmost advantage in case of WFH arrangements. They got more time with their families, and could manage homes and workplace duties. They were able to save time earlier spent in commuting to their workplace, and could invest this time in healthcare routine or getting more productive results at work. Provided that they had the required skills in technology, they could

stay connected with their workplace from the comforts of home,. Working mothers who had embraced motherhood during the pandemic did not have to take a career break.

2.5 Substituting a complete remote work setting

As discussed, a complete remote work set-up has advantages as well as disadvantages. But compared to the advantages and with their male counterparts, the disadvantages of WFH are on a higher side for women. Therefore, post-pandemic, organisations need to look for more ways to provide safe and fair workplace options to their employees irrespective of their gender.

Organisations can give flexi-time opportunities to the employees, where employees can schedule their work hours according to their other personal commitments. It's a family-friendly initiative. Office work can be performed anytime and from anywhere. This digitally-enabled flexi-time alternative would be highly beneficial for women professionals (Matilal, 2020; Anand, & Raghuvanshi, 2021; Veluchamy, Kumar, & Dey, 2021; Smite, et al., 2023).

A reduction in the number of working hours or offering part-time work options will also be welcomed.

Making legal provisions for sabbaticals and leaves on demand in the employment contract would allow the employees a right to an annual leave duration (Kooli & Muftah, 2020). Leaves can be paid or unpaid; or can be specialised like childcare, or maternity or paternity leaves, etc. This would provide the women professionals a way to balance their career and their family life in a better way, without risking any of the two (Snyder, & Worlton, 2021; Singh, Mathur & Gupta, 2022; Thompson, 2022).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study explored the challenges that women professionals in Ranchi, Jharkhand have been facing post-pandemic. The study utilises the deductive method of research. A deductive research method is mixing the already existent theories with primary data inputs so that the phenomenon under study can be seen with a fresh point of view (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The present research utilised this method to derive inference on the subject. Primary data was collected through the qualitative method of semi-structured interviews. The respondents were randomly selected, carefully including women professionals from top sectors in Ranchi, as well as from caregiving and homemaking professions. Probability sampling technique was adopted for sample selection. The participants were living and working in Ranchi and had family responsibilities.

3.1 Data Collection

Table 1 shows the sociodemographic profiles of the 15 female working professionals in active employment interviewed for primary data collection. They are in various private and public organisations of different sectors of employment in Ranchi, viz., healthcare, childcare, engineering, education, production, etc.

Table 1. Socio-demographic profiles of respondents

Sl. No. of Respondents	Age	Educational Qualification	No. of Children	Type of Employment	Sector of Employment	No. of years of Experience
1	25	Graduate	0	Full-Time	Private	2
2	32	Post Graduate	2	Full-Time	Public	10
3	38	Post Graduate	1	Full-Time	Public	16
4	31	Intermediate	2	Full-Time	Private	10
5	26	Intermediate	0	Full-Time	Private	8
6	25	Post Graduate	0	Full-Time	Private	2
7	23	Graduate	1	Full-Time	Public	3
8	40	Doctorate	3	Full-Time	Public	13
9	29	Graduate	2	Full-Time	Private	8
10	43	Graduate	2	Full-Time	Private	11
11	22	Intermediate	0	Full-Time	Private	2
12	31	Post Graduate	0	Full-Time	Public	7
13	25	Intermediate	0	Full-Time	Private	3
14	33	Graduate	1	Full-Time	Public	9
15	40	Graduate	2	Full-Time	Public	15

As given, the respondents belonged to the age-group of 20-45 years. The average age of the respondents was 30 years. The average work experience held by the respondents was 7.9 years. 60% of the respondents were married with at least one child dependent on them. All of the participants were full-time employees. The highest percentage 40% of them were graduates, 27% had a post-graduate degree, 27% had received intermediate education, and 6%, which accounted for one of the respondents had a doctoral degree. All of the interview participants loved their jobs and had worked from home during the lockdown period.

4. RESULTS

The participants were interviewed about the positive and negative aspects of the WFH set-up during the lockdown period.

4.1 Disadvantages of WFH

Most of the respondents agreed that during WFH, often their professional assignments would invade their household activities. Their family time was hampered. The following responses would bring a clear picture of how WFH was challenging their Work-Life Balance (WLB):

“My child is very little to understand that though I am at home, I am constantly chasing deadlines. Whenever he calls me for some assistance, I have to attend to him. This disrupts my workflow, and makes me stressed.”

“The kids are having online classes. Of course they need me to help them with their work. This leaves little time for my official work.”

These statements were found consistent with the studies in the past, according to which, an employee’s WLB is hampered during WFH since it leads to an invasion of office work into the family time of the employees (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Grunberg & Matei, 2020).

The respondents also felt that the management had very high expectations from them since they were working from home and didn’t have to travel to office; resulting in unfairly long working hours. They considered this attitude of the employers as trying to take an advantage of the situation. The following responses bring out the feelings of the respondents:

“Earlier our working hours were fixed and once out of office, we got calls from the management only in case of emergencies. With WFH, we are required to be available 24x7, and not being connected at odd hours is being seen as non-serious behaviour among the employees. This was so stressful.”

“Working from home has led the management to believe that since we are saving time by not commuting to office, we have to work longer hours. Even the workload has increased.”

Such behaviour shown by the management causes work-family conflict and ultimately cause more stress and inefficient individual performance (Guillaume & Pochic, 2009; Chanana, 2021).

A few respondents reported data-related problems, internet connectivity issues, knowledge deficiency, lack of appropriate gadgets, etc. Following responses express the above mentioned challenges:

“In the physical workspace, meetings happen smoothly and we are able to concentrate in our work after; however, in the online meetings, there are frequent glitches and most of our time is wasted in waiting to communicate with the team. Time is critical for us.”

“It gets frustrating when internet connectivity keeps on breaking and the tasks aren’t met on time.”

Information and Communication Technology plays an extremely critical role in successful WFH. Internet connectivity issue and knowledge deficiency are major challenges faced by women professionals during WFH (Fogarty et al., 2011; Makwana & Dave, 2020; Mukherjee & Narang, 2022).

The respondents also complained about distractions in office work due to domestic and care-giving responsibilities while WFH. Following statements relate to the challenge:

“I don’t get any help in my domestic responsibilities. Some or the other work comes up at home requiring my immediate attention. This results in loss of focus in my official tasks, causing mistakes and is stressful.”

“It is challenging to concentrate on the work at hand and children calling out for help at the same time. Neither can be ignored. It is so distressing.”

Patriarchal dominance is stronger in small cities like Ranchi (Chakravarty, Kumar & Jha, 2013; Jain, 2021). In such societies, women face serious issues combining their professional and domestic duties. Patriarchal culture worsened the situation for women professionals in Ranchi. Responses given by them revealed that they were burdened with their domestic responsibilities, with little help from their spouses.

4.2 Advantages of WFH

The previous section gave an account of the challenges full-time women professionals faced in the WFH arrangement during the pandemic. Here, we discuss some advantages which WFH provided to the respondents. Many interviewees pointed towards the flexibility that remote working provides. Some even claimed they could maintain their work-life balance because of the WFH set-up during the lockdown.

“I can finish my official work anytime and from anywhere. Working from the comfort of my home is blissful.”

“I am helping my child finish the homework and working on my laptop side by side. This flexibility is freedom.”

It shows that flexibility is important for maintaining work-life balance (Halford, 2005; Fogarty et al., 2011; Mukherjee & Narang, 2022; Sharma, Saini, & Virani, 2022).

Some were joyful about the family-time because of WFH, which they were not getting earlier. The following responses describe their feelings about the same:

“I am my children all through the day and myself take care of their needs. This is a big advantage of working remotely.”

“Before the pandemic, I wasn’t able to give more time to my family because job demanded me to be at office for longer hours. Now I am working from home and spending more time with my

family. I participate in their day-to-day activities without any stress of going out or ignoring my official duties.”

“I am a new mother. As my maternity leave period was about to be over, I was worried about resuming office, leaving my little baby with the caretaker. Remote working has supported me in taking care of baby, without any career break.”

These resonate with the theories that WFH is a source of happiness and relief (Harpaz, 2002; Perlow, 2020).

Some said that they were saving a lot of money paid to the caretakers earlier. The following responses resonate the same:

“Keeping a caretaker for my sick parent was a necessity. When I got an opportunity to WFH, I realised that I had been spending a huge sum of money on the caretaker and still felt guilty for not being there myself near my parent.”

“Although my kid’s day care centre is nearer to office, it pinched to pay so much money and still be stressed about the kid’s care.”

These abide by the theories about WFH and advantage of saving money (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001; O’Brien & Aliabadi, 2020).

Many respondents felt safe to WFH and prevent the deadly virus from spreading. The following responses illustrate the same:

“It is good to be able to finish my daily official tasks from the safety of my home.”

“Sometimes there’s too much work to be completed when working remotely, but it is for our own safety.”

These feelings are on the same lines as some of the theories about WFH (Dingel & Neiman, 2020; Dennerlein et al., 2020).

According to the above responses received, it is evident that WFH has certain advantages too, depending on the person’s circumstances, and these are: flexibility, more time with family, saving money, keeping safe and healthy.

4.3 Preference for Remote Work setting

The present study also sought to get an idea about what would be the preferred workplace setting for the women professionals in Ranchi, once the mandatory WFH arrangement was removed and physical office work was resumed. It was gathered from the responses that the participants had mixed feelings about resuming working from office. Some were sceptical about the safety

measures being followed at their workplace; some couldn't wait to resume working from office; some wanted to continue with working remotely. The following statements given by the respondents illustrate their mixed feelings regarding resuming work from office or continuing with WFH:

“Being physically present at the workplace is important for career growth. I feel face to face communication plays an important role in finishing tasks efficiently and also team bonding. I prefer working from office.”

“Given a choice, I would continue working from home since I get ample time with my little kids, without my career getting hampered.”

“Working from has more advantages than the disadvantages. I feel more in control of my surroundings and can be more productive.”

“WFH sucks up a lot of energy. I can not wait to be back at office.”

“I think a hybrid work environment would be more helpful after the pandemic is over. It would be difficult to make all the arrangements at home all of a sudden. Some days at office and some days at home would be relieving.”

“Getting trained online was okay. But my work requires me to be in the field, then only I can grow in my career.”

“Being surrounded by office mates is very encouraging. It is like a break from the monotony of home routine.”

“Even though I have no time for myself when I am working from home, I actually am happier to keep up with my professional duties and live in the warm company of my family members.”

5. DISCUSSION

The responses received after interviewing 15 women professionals in Ranchi, Jharkhand, helped in drawing inference about the issues that working women in Ranchi must have faced while working from home during the lockdown imposed for prevention of the spread of coronavirus infection. The main focus of the study was to understand how women's rights and family life were affected by this.

The findings suggest that during WFH, most women in Ranchi felt challenged in balancing their social role with their professional responsibilities. The invasion of office hours into their personal lives caused a great discomfort and increased their stress levels. This is also called work-life conflict. The origin of this conflict can be traced back to the Role theory given by Merton (1957). It states that work-family conflict is an inter-role conflict where sometimes a person faces role pressures from both their work domain and family domain, making these two roles mutually incompatible. In the sixties, similar role conflict theories were described by Kahn et al. (1964) and Katz & Khan (1967). According to them, a person is unable to handle the expectations from various roles played by them. Major (1993) talks about the role conflict faced by women owing to the cultural practices and social pressure. Carr (2002) confirms that though role conflict is faced by both men and women, women are still the primary handlers of family responsibility and therefore, are more inclined to opt for tele-working or remote or part-time work.

The Spillover theory by Grzywacz et al. (2007), talks about crossing of borders by the two roles: work role and family role. Edwards and Rothbard (2000) state that emotional disturbances by either of the two roles, also tend to hamper other domains.

The Border theory (Akinyele et al., 2016; Clark, 2000) discusses the difficulties faced by women in balancing their office and domestic tasks, and their reasons.

Apart from the crossing over of work-family roles, respondents talked about the knowledge deficiency, internet connectivity and lack of appropriate technological resources as challenges during WFH. Malfunctioning gadgets, technical glitches and network disruptions would not have been a major issue if they had been in office. This challenge came as a surprise since there is too much emphasis on digital India for the last few years and Ranchi has quite a tech-savvy population. Looking at the case, the transition from a hybrid to a complete remote work in future becomes questionable and requires immediate attention.

In the course of this study, WFH was found to be welcomed by many full-time employed mothers, especially by the nursing mothers. The majority of the interview participants were content to be able to spend longer hours with their families, without compromising on their career. In the cases of child care and the care of the elderly, WFH seemed to be a promising option.

Many respondents were delighted that they need not worry about what to wear, where to sit and work, freedom of movement, during WFH. Clearly, comfort of home scored above physical presence at office.

WFH assured that they were safe and healthy; and could also make sure that families remained safe and healthy.

Some were concerned about a slowdown in their career progression if they had to continue with WFH, because they believed that face -to-face meet ups with organisational members facilitated team bonding, employee engagement, work planning, and increased confidence. They could identify more with their organisational objectives and were aware of company expectations. Employee and management relations become stronger with physical office presence.

Hence, the study noticed that the three important assumptions made at the beginning of the paper are abiding by the findings:-

a. Similar to their global counterparts, the female working professionals of Ranchi had to face many challenges while working remotely during the Covid-19 lockdown.

The result of the interviews give strong reasons to accept the above assumption as the null hypothesis for the study. Major challenges faced by the women professionals of Ranchi include Role-family conflict, technological issues, distractions and slowdown of career growth.

b. Remote working is advantageous for the women professionals.

The present study has found this hypothesis to be partially true. The women professionals are divided over the comfort of home and confidence of workplace. The choice depends on help available to them at home.

c. The women professionals of Ranchi are more inclined towards achieving a work-life balance and that's why prefer WFH.

Most of the participants looked forward to achieving a work-life balance. But, many are still keener to achieve great degrees of professional growth, attainable only by working at the office. It would be beneficial if a middle path could be found where they were able to reach their career goals without sacrificing their social roles. This hypothesis too is partially acceptable.

6. CONCLUSION

Table 2 shows the advantages, disadvantages and recommendations about for WFH.

Table 2.

WFH advantages	WFH disadvantages	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility • Family time • Efficient working • Freedom of movement • Health and Safety • Easy and fast • Multi-tasking • Comfortable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge deficiency • Technical glitches • Distractions • Time discipline • Monotonous • Spill-over 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other flexible working arrangements: telecommuting, sabbaticals, shorter working hours, part-time option, job sharing, flexi-time, leaves; can be adopted by the organisation. • Government intervention in form of policies for inclusion of more women at post-Covid workplace. • Implementation of work-life balance legislation for women professionals in the state. • Establishing monitoring agencies for implementation of the above legislation in the private sector. • Passing and implementation of legislation for protection of women's rights in various sectors of employment.

The above findings acclaim that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to understand the challenges that women professionals faced during lockdown. It can be concluded that WFH does not equate professional success. There are mixed feelings among the women professionals about continuing WFH. Some women enjoy the freedom that WFH provides; while many women feel that this might delay their career growth or stagnate their career growth.

Considering the positive and negative aspects of WFH arrangement for women professionals in Ranchi, the present study proposes government intervention in the policy framing for women workers in the organisations, so that more women can join the workforce and attain their objectives. Women's rights of career advancement and achieving work-life balance can be

included in the legislation, in all the sectors of employment. Exclusive agencies for monitoring smooth implementation of these legislations can be established by the state. In the Indian society, women play a significant role in the prosperity of the family. And, families are important for women. Adopting and careful implementation of laws which make it possible for female employees to choose on their own free will whether they want to work remotely or in a hybrid manner; would prove beneficial for the Indian families as well.

7. IMPLICATIONS, SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The findings of the present study have crucial implications both for policy makers and future researchers. Further studies on specific factors associated with the female workforce in Ranchi can be conducted. Similar research including the employees as a whole and not gender-specific, working from home in Ranchi, is suggested. A comparative study on a larger scale including other geographic areas might bring new insights into the topic. Quantitative studies on the same topic are highly recommended since that would produce better outcomes.

The findings of the present study contribute to the existing literature by mentioning the remote work experiences of full-time female workers living in Ranchi, a small city which is still dominated by the patriarchal mindset. These findings would go a long way in improving the work-life of women professionals in small cities. It would help the policymakers in creating better programmes, where self-esteem and self-realisation needs of the women professionals can be balanced with their family ties, while taking care of the cultural barriers faced by them.

A quantitative survey along with the interviews would have yielded more generalisable findings. Future research studies with larger sample size are required for better representation of the population of study.

DECLARATIONS

funding: “This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.”

Conflict of Interests: “The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.”

Financial Interest: “The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose”

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