

**Protecting Women's Right to Work in the Post
COVID-19 World: How Do We Deal with the
Blind Spots in the Jurisprudence of
International Human Rights Law?**

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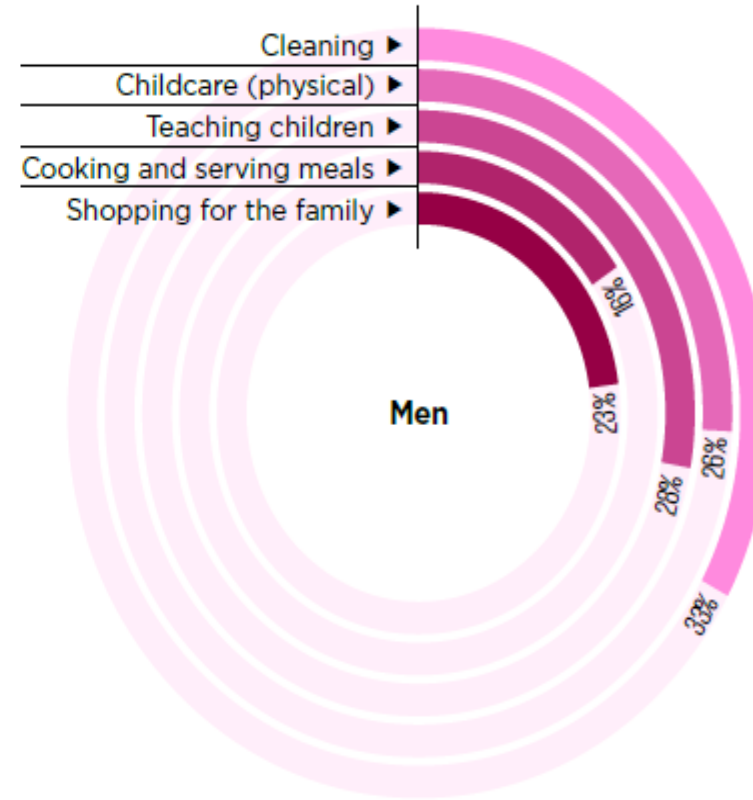
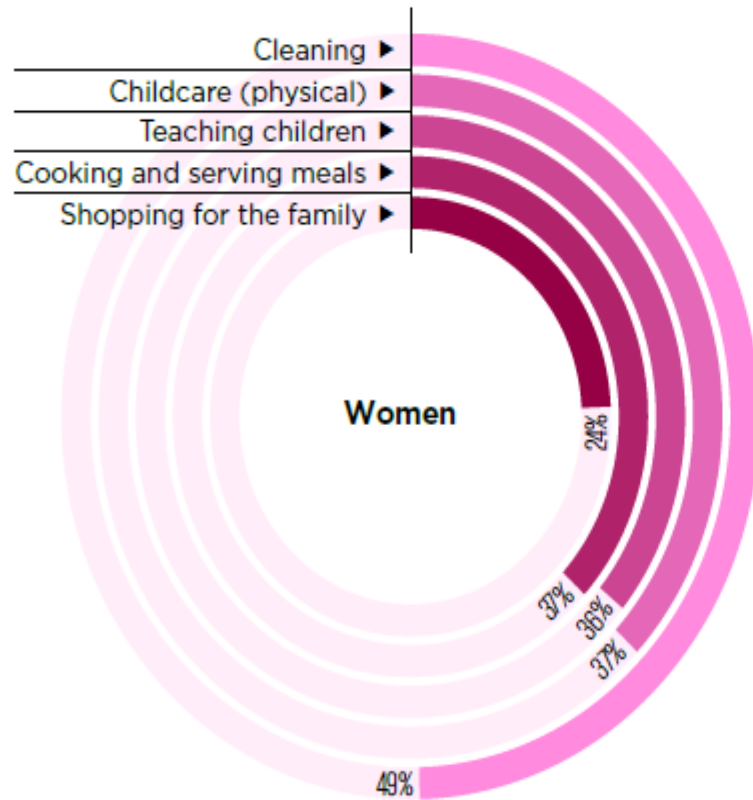
- **Blind spots in international human rights law and how does Covid-19 make them visible?**
 1. unpaid domestic care work mainly undertaken by women
 2. undervalued paid care work at the labor market
 3. unequal resources women have at the workplace
 4. Interactions between gender and space at the workplace
- **What actions can States and other stakeholders take?**

Unpaid Domestic Care Work

- the jurisprudence of the right to work focuses on paid market jobs and has hardly noticed the unpaid care work at home
- during the pandemic, due to the lock-downs and other forms of virus control measures, women around the world undertake more unpaid care work, which is not counted as economic contribution, and affects women's ability to perform paid jobs mainly because of reduced time, energy, and health
- **e.g. Closure of schools and day-care centres** also has a differential impact on women parents or guardians, who will often be expected to take on **additional caregiving** responsibilities due to discriminatory gender norms, further **restricting their work and economic opportunities**


Gender difference in increased domestic work during the pandemic

Share who reported an increase in time spent, based on 22 countries in Asia and the Pacific and Europe and Central Asia:



Undervalued Paid Care Work at the Labor Market

- paid care work are undervalued economically and socially and thus lacks adequate protection
- during the pandemic, care work cannot be performed from home, including domestic work, health care or community services
- affecting the right to work of domestic workers and the right to favorable working conditions of health care workers
- lack of domestic help affects women's right to work

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- In many countries **women are concentrated in the low-wage and informal sector** jobs that are **highly prone to disruption**. Women are also over-represented in the hospitality (hotels, restaurants), retail and service industries that have been among the hardest hit by the response to COVID-19.
 - Women's concentration in **the informal sector** means they are more likely to **not receive paid sick leave** or **family leave**; have **no health insurance** and have no **social security**⁴⁹ Access to livelihoods is threatened for these women
 - E.g. Concerns over the spread of the virus and xenophobia may limit **migrant women's work opportunities**, cutting off livelihood support and any social protections for them and their families

Unequal Resources Women Have at the Workplace

- the jurisprudence of the right to work emphasizes the equal opportunity which is based on the merits but ignored the unequal resources that women have at the labor market
- Covid-19 pandemic further reduces the resources women have for paid work, including time, energy, health, mentorship, means to commute, work equipment, gender digital divide, etc.
- e.g. Currently 327 million fewer women than men have a smartphone and in some countries, women are up to 31 percent less likely to have internet access than men

Interactions between Gender and Space at the Workplace

- Work space distribution reflects the power structure in the workplace and is thus gendered
- More private space at the workplace provides men with better health protection
- The pandemic forces workers to work from home, which shift the power structure from the workplace to home and women are disadvantaged in the space sharing at the work from home.
- more private space that men have contributes to sexual harassment at the workplace and now contributes to domestic violence instead during the pandemic.

What actions can States and other stakeholders take?

- **1) Promote equal caregiving responsibilities of all parents and guardians and flexible, family-friendly work-practices.**
- **2) Ensure that economic incentives and social safety nets are gender-sensitive and reach and empower every woman and girl. This can include establishing or scaling up cash transfer programmes, family leave policies, unemployment benefits, partial unemployment-/short-time work benefits, pensions or child grants, and delivery of humanitarian cash transfers which reach both women and men**



Thank you!