



**Hybrid Work and its Effect
on Women's Labour Force
Participation:
A Policy Review**

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ABOUT LEAD at KREA UNIVERSITY

LEAD (formerly IFMR LEAD), is an action-oriented research centre of IFMR Society that leverages the power of research, innovation and co-creation to solve complex and pressing challenges in development. LEAD has strategic oversight and brand support from Krea University (sponsored by IFMR Society) to enable synergies between academia and the research centre. Since 2005, LEAD has been at the forefront of development research and programming in India, and has managed a portfolio of over 265 projects in collaboration with over 300 academics, governments, NGOs and private sector organisations from across the globe.

ABOUT IWWAGE

Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy (IWWAGE) aims to build on existing research and generate new evidence to inform and facilitate the agenda of women's economic empowerment. IWWAGE is an initiative of LEAD, an action-oriented research centre of IFMR Society (a not-for-profit society registered under the Societies Act). LEAD has strategic oversight and brand support from Krea University (sponsored by IFMR Society) to enable synergies between academia and the research centre. IWWAGE is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

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Executive Summary

COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns led to severe disruptions in the global economy, and redefined the idea of the 'workspace'. Global trends suggest that organisations across industries are shifting towards a hybrid model, where workers can work from home as well come to the office on a routine basis. This trend is reflected in India as well – in a survey by CBRE, 73% of the firms reported that they are planning to switch to the hybrid working model. Women are more vulnerable to such economic shocks due to prevailing structural and economic inequities, and women's labour force participation has always been linked to their disproportionate burden of unpaid care work. This burden of unpaid work was exacerbated during the pandemic, when all care-work institutions were closed down. Women's employment in India was disproportionately impacted as an immediate effect of the pandemic; between March-April 2020, 13.4 million women (26.6%) moved out of the labour force. The increased flexibility available to women in a hybrid work environment can potentially enable women's participation in the labour market – women who may have earlier chosen to quit, due to caregiving responsibilities, personal safety concerns or mobility restrictions.

This policy review examines the current landscape of policies implemented by governments and the private sector and identifies global best practices for developing hybrid work policies. Data for the policy review was collected through a literature review, including a review of the policy and legal framework for hybrid work in 60 countries and consultations with key stakeholders.

Hybrid work models have come into focus, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, for the flexibility they provide to employees and the opportunity employers get to enhance productivity. Given that Indians spend more time commuting to work than most countries in the world, hybrid models could reduce time spent commuting, and in time contribute to a better work-life balance. For people with disabilities, hybrid work could open doors for newer opportunities; this is especially true in India, where 1.3 crore employable persons live with disabilities but only an estimated 34 lakh are a part of the workforce. Lastly, 70% of Indian women reported either quitting or rejecting job roles that did not allow them to work flexibly, according to a LinkedIn survey. Thus, hybrid work and the flexibility it provides can be helpful to retain women in the workforce by enabling them to balance care responsibilities and formal employment.

Hybrid work and its effects have been observed to be gender disproportionate with women hybrid workers facing unique challenges as they adjust to the future of work. This can be attributed to increased care work responsibilities, increased levels of stress and burnout, and greater difficulty in balancing work-life and professional life. Findings from the policy review suggest that national policies regarding remote/flexible work have been in place even before the pandemic. About 60% of the countries evaluated have a flexible or remote work policy in place. These vary from acts, bills, provisions under umbrella labour laws, amendments to existing laws, and guidelines. Furthermore, a lot of countries have started deliberations regarding dedicated flexible work policies. Although the provisions under such policies are usually elaborate and detailed, there is no specific mention or special provision for women employees under any of these or legal documents. Sub-national policies are also not as common as national policies and the states and provinces of only a few countries have any remote work provision.

In India, there is currently no specific government policy that regulates remote work. However, since the pandemic and the disruption of the ways of working, there have been attempts by the

government to acknowledge the new norm of remote/flexible working. These attempts have come in the form of the Draft Model Standing Order (2020), which enables an employee to enter in an agreement with the employer that allows them to work from home for a mutually agreed period; and Special Economic Zones Rule 2006- 43A (2022), which states that work from home may be extended to maximum 50% of total employees, including contractual employees of the unit. In continuation in its efforts to recognise remote work, the government on 17th September 2022 stated that the rule be extended to allow 100% of the employees of an SEZ the option to work from home; in December 2022, the Department of Commerce amended the SEZ rules to allow work-from-home upto December 31, 2023 for employees working in SEZ units (Ministry of Commerce & Industry, 2022)¹. Furthermore, some states including Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Kerala have introduced schemes related to remote work.

Although there is a lack of special provisions for female employees in India under hybrid work policies, provisions in women centric policies can be extended to include remote work. For instance, the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 permits a woman who has returned from maternity leave and whose nature of work is such that it may be performed remotely, to work remotely on mutually accepted terms and conditions. Additionally, the scope and ambit of 'workplace' defined under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, has been interpreted liberally by the Indian courts to include under its scope any place where the employee is working, either at home or remotely.

Out of the 178 organizations assessed for the review, 138 companies have adopted a hybrid work policy. However, most organisations have simply stated the option to work in a hybrid work model to their employees through company announcements, and have not comprehensively detailed out nuances of their hybrid work policies. For instance, effect on pay of employees choosing to work from home is a critical provision; yet companies do not explicitly mention it. Few companies have provisions that address technology-based concerns, with 18% of the companies explicitly having a provision on the company's responsibility to install relevant logistical equipment for the remote setup. Furthermore, many of the policies reviewed clearly state that choosing to work from home on any given day of the work week is completely the employee's choice, dependent on the role which they work in. Challenges faced by women hybrid workers are not explicitly addressed by company policies, with women-related provisions mainly limited to option of flexible work as part of maternity or DEI policies.

This report recommends concerted efforts of both the government and private entities to build gender-inclusive hybrid policy framework, both for specific guidelines in the short term, and for broader policies in the long term. Companies can design their gender-inclusive hybrid work policies by following a three-factor implementation strategy of minimizing attrition and therefore maximising retention and maximizing productivity. To determine the specific challenges faced, the report recommends use of surveys to help organizations self-assess their gender inclusivity.

Certain features are vital when designing new workplace policies for the hybrid model. They should also be designed to ensure transparency in compensation policy and clear communication channels to receive feedback from employees. Evaluation systems should be adapted from a time-based evaluation system, as is common for physical work, to an output-based evaluation system. There should also be accommodations for regular trainings of old and new managers which sensitise them towards a gender-inclusive hybrid working environment. Companies can also provide childcare support for hybrid workers as well, and not limit their support to in-person employees. All of these factors reflect a new definition of the workplace to include hybrid work, which should also be reflected in the way that companies tailor their POSH policies.

¹ Department of Commerce amends SEZ rules to liberalize Work From Home (WFH) for SEZ units." Ministry of Commerce & Industry, 09 December 2022. URL: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1882070#:~:text=WFH%20can%20be%20provided%20to,sent%20by%20email%20till%2031.01>

1. Introduction

Starting March 2020, COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns led to a severe disruption in the Indian economy, and entirely redefined the concept of a 'workspace'. Hybrid work, in particular, witnessed an unprecedented increase during this period. Globally, 77% of organisations plan to rethink or redesign their offices to adapt to new ways of working (Poly 2022).² In India, 22% of employees surveyed desired a greater flexibility around any time, hybrid or remote work (Poly 2022).³ According to a study of firms across the US, 70% of organizations will be adopting hybrid work as the norm and many have labelled it as the 'Future of Work' (Bloom 2021).⁴ In India, 73% of the firms are planning to switch to the hybrid working model.⁵

Periods of economic distress, such as during COVID-19, are rarely gender neutral. Even prior to the pandemic, women consistently made lesser wages than men, with the weighted wage gap reaching 72% in 2018 in India (Nikore et al. 2022).⁶ Further, high frequency data from Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) reveals that women's employment was disproportionately impacted as an immediate effect of the pandemic; between March-April 2020, 13.4 million women (26.6%) moved out of the labour force. In addition, the Periodic Labour Force Survey Data indicates that while women's worker participation rate increased by 9% from 28.7% in 2019-20 to 31.4% in 2020-21, this increase is largely attributable to the shift of women into self-employment as both rural and urban women moved out of regular wage/salaried employment (MoSPI 2020).⁷

Women's labour force participation has always been linked to their disproportionate burden of unpaid care work. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), unpaid care work is one of the most significant barriers preventing women from entering and remaining in the labour force. In 2016, globally, 46.7% of women attributed their absence from the workforce to domestic responsibilities, compared to only 6.3% of men (Addati et al. 2018)⁸. In 2018, 606 million working-age women reported being unable to do so due to unpaid care work (ILO 2018).⁹ This disproportionate burden of unpaid care work leads to "time poverty," limiting women's ability to devote time to paid work and acquire the skills required to seek better job opportunities. According to India's 2019 time-use survey, females in paid employment take on approximately 6X more unpaid care work than employed males. (Nikore et al. 2022).¹⁰ This burden of unpaid work on women was exacerbated during the pandemic, when all care-work institutions were closed down.

² Poly. 2022. Recruit, Retain and Grow-The Importance of Meeting Equality to Long-Term Hybrid Work Strategies. 2021-22. <https://bit.ly/3BUZJ9C>

³ Poly. 2022. Recruit, Retain and Grow-The Importance of Meeting Equality to Long-Term Hybrid Work Strategies. 2021-22. <https://bit.ly/3BUZJ9C>

⁴ National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). April 2021. Why Working from Home Will Stick. https://www.nber.org/papers/w28731?utm_campaign=ntwh&utm_medium=email&utm_source=ntwg21

⁵ CBRE. July 2022. 2022 India Office Occupier Survey. <https://www.cbre.co.in/insights/reports/2022-india-office-occupier-survey>

⁶ Nikore et al. 2022. India's missing working women: Tracing the journey of women's economic contribution over the last seven decades, and during COVID-19. Nikore Associates. <https://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2779&context=jjws>

⁷ National Statistical Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, Periodic Labour Force Survey 2020-21. <https://bit.ly/3EejMCA>

⁸ Laura Addati et al. 2018. Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work, Geneva, International Labour Organisation, 2018, https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_633135/lang-en/index.htm

⁹ International Labour organization. 2018. Women do 4 times more unpaid care work than men in Asia and the Pacific. <https://bit.ly/3W9cwi4>

¹⁰ Nikore et al. 2022. Building India's Economy on the Backs of Women's Unpaid Work: A Gendered Analysis of Time-Use Data. Occasional Paper. Observer Research Foundation. 2022. https://www.orfonline.org/research/building-indias-economy-on-the-backs-of-womens-unpaid-work/#_edn11

The decrease in female labour force participation during the pandemic needs to be addressed through targeted, challenge specific solutions. One such solution lies in the transition of organizations to a hybrid work model. Hybrid work (sometimes also called 'telework') has been defined by Eurofound and ILO as follows:

Telework is defined as the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs), such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, and desktop computers, for work that is performed outside the employer's premises (Eurofound and ILO, 2017).¹¹

For the purpose of our inquiry however, we adopted a revised version with the additional condition that the work arrangement must be routine i.e. flexible work arrangement occurs as part of an ongoing regular schedule and is in no way ad hoc or situational:

Hybrid work refers to a spectrum of routine flexible work arrangements, using information and communications technologies (ICTs)¹², in which an employee's work location and/or hours are not strictly standardised.



¹¹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_751232.pdf

¹² https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_751232.pdf

The increased flexibility available to women in a hybrid work environment can potentially enable women's participation in the labour market – women who may have earlier chosen to quit, due to caregiving responsibilities, personal safety concerns or mobility restrictions.

However, while business and commercial enterprises could minimise operational costs and expand market reach with a pivot to a hybrid work arrangement, there are several potential deterrents to a woman's career advancement in a hybrid work setup. According to the Time Use Survey, published by the Government of India in 2019, women, on average, suffer from a greater burden of unpaid work and other domestic responsibilities; 92% of Indian women participate in unpaid domestic work compared to 27% of men¹³. Evidence suggests that while working from home did allow an increased degree of flexibility for women employees, the lack of a regular schedule, unpredictable work demands and increased care work resulted in longer hours (Nikore et al. 2022).¹⁴ Further, in a hybrid setup, women also suffer from additional emotional distress due to the blurring of lines between personal and professional work, a phenomenon aptly titled the 'double burden syndrome' and as a result, 4 out of 10 women in India suffer from anxiety issues while working from home. (Pink Ladder, 2020).¹⁵ Women have also expressed fear of losing out on promotion opportunities if they request for flexible work (Deloitte, 2022).¹⁶

Globally, and in India, only 33% of women say that their employers offer a flexible working policy (Deloitte, 2022).¹⁷ In the presence of multiple obstacles that place women in a disproportionately disadvantageous position in a hybrid work environment, well-crafted government and corporate policies can go a long way toward providing women as a distinct hybrid employee group with sustainable solutions.

This report pertains to the current state of gender-inclusive work policies at the centre, state, and private level. Followed by a rigorous analysis of the best practices and key features of flexible working policies, the report provides recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the policy while incorporating hybrid work plans.

2. Methodology

A detailed policy review covered existing structures across three components. The first, a literature review, comprised desk research of over 60 existing studies on hybrid work and the key concerns that women face as a part of the hybrid workforce. With respect to governments across the world, 60 countries, including all OECD members were studied. This included a review of existing legal framework and government guidelines around remote work. These were also reviewed from a gendered lens to identify any provisions for women remote workers. Furthermore, in order to gauge a sub-national view, 50 sub-national policies including states and provinces across the global regions were covered. This was accompanied by a specific review of policies across all 29 Indian states. To understand how corporates are reacting to this shift of hybrid work, 178 global corporate level policies on hybrid work, covering 21 industries (refer to appendix 1 for industry-wise details), which included 30 Indian companies were reviewed.

¹³ National Statistical Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, Time Use Survey, January-December 2019. <https://bit.ly/3RxT4bd>

¹⁴ Nikore et al. 2022. India's missing working women: Tracing the journey of women's economic contribution over the last seven decades, and during COVID-19. Nikore Associates. <https://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2779&context=jwvs>

¹⁵ Pink Ladder. 2020. Remote Working and its Impact on Working Women <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/jobs/five-in-ten-women-facing-motivational-challenges-in-work-from-home-scenario-survey/articleshow/77060437.cms?from=mdr>

¹⁶ Deloitte. 2022. Women@Work- India . <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/in/Documents/about-deloitte/in-about-deloitte-women-at-work-India-noexp.pdf>

¹⁷ Deloitte. 2022. Women@Work- India . <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/in/Documents/about-deloitte/in-about-deloitte-women-at-work-India-noexp.pdf>

The second, consultations, comprised primary research; wherein 15 key stakeholders (refer to appendix 2 for consultation list), from the private sector, and academia, were identified and consulted. These consultations were primarily used to understand the current landscape and prospects of hybrid work and related policies. Nuances with respect to the challenges that women face from a company and academic standpoint were captured from these sessions.

Lastly, a supplemental list of recommendations, gathered from both primary and secondary research, based on the best-practices is provided. These are aimed at government and private stakeholders to help them adopt gender-mainstreaming into their policy designing stage.

Figure 1: Methodology for Policy Review



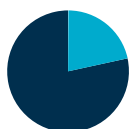
3. Literature Review

To better understand the current discussions and deliberations on hybrid work in a corporate and political environment, a literature review of over 60 documents including academic papers, corporate reports, and surveys was conducted. The goal of this review was to identify the challenges and best practices to consider when developing hybrid work policies that are in the best interests of women employees.

The purpose of the literature review was to examine three areas: (i) future of hybrid work and how companies aim to transition to the new normal; (ii) the specific challenges that women face as part of the hybrid workforce; and (iii) company policies and efforts to address these challenges.



45/62 studies primarily focus on women employees and women centric policies.



83% of the resources pertain to countries other than India or from a global viewpoint.

17% of the resources are studies in the Indian context.



Includes studies from **4 researchers** pioneering in hybrid work-study including Nicholas Bloom and Prithwiraj Chaudhary.



Includes studies on hybrid work conducted by **top MNCs** like Amazon, McKinsey, TCS, etc. including some of their policies on hybrid work.

On a global scale, companies as well as employees across various industries have accepted hybrid work as the new normal. According to Google's global survey that focused on knowledge workers but also included respondents from hospitality, retail, transportation and logistics, and healthcare, over 75% respondents, which include employees and managers, believe that hybrid/flexible work is viewed as the standard practice within their organisation in the coming three years (Google 2021)¹⁸. According to a report by McKinsey that surveyed jobs across eighteen sectors—including finance, management, IT and telecommunications, real estate, government support and utilities, arts and entertainment, healthcare, retail, manufacturing, transportation, and agriculture among others—globally 20% of the workforce could work remotely three to five days a week (McKinsey and Company 2020)¹⁹. Recent research conducted in India indicates that 73% of businesses in the sectors of technology, engineering & manufacturing, infrastructure, FMCG, BFSI, life sciences, research & consulting, and e-commerce are evaluating hybrid work models for the future (CBRE 2022)²⁰. Paul Marriott, President of SAP Asia Pacific Japan expressed that Indians are likely to remote work more owing to significant travel time to the office (McKinsey and Company 2020).²¹

¹⁸ Google. 2021. Global Hybrid Work Survey, October 2021. <https://cloud.google.com/blog/products/workspace/insights-from-our-global-hybrid-work-survey>

¹⁹ McKinsey and Company. 2020. "What's next for remote work: An analysis of 2000 tasks, 800 jobs and 9 countries" McKinsey and Company, November 23, 2020. <https://mck.co/3e3bcMq>

²⁰ CBRE, 2022. 2022 India Office Occupier Survey. Report. <https://www.cbre.co.in/insights/reports/2022-india-office-occupier-survey>

²¹ McKinsey and Company. 2022. The future of hybrid work - Podcast. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-asia/future-of-asia-podcasts/the-future-of-hybrid-work>

Benefits of Hybrid Work

Hybrid work models have come into focus, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, for the flexibility they provide to employees and the opportunity employers get to enhance productivity. A [study](#) published by the National Bureau of Economic Research in the USA, reported that hybrid workers experienced higher satisfaction with work and had 35% better retention. Closer home, [another study](#) conducted by Harvard Business School in Bangladesh found that workers who spent an intermediate level of days spent in office reported greater job satisfaction, lower isolation and improved quality of work. [A survey](#) by HP in 2022 reported that around 47% of respondents believe that home productivity with office visibility increases their chances of promotions and gives them more opportunities for team-building and showcasing their abilities. Given that Indians spend more time [commuting to work](#) than most countries in the world, hybrid models could reduce time spent commuting, and in time contribute to a better work-life balance. For people with disabilities, hybrid work could open doors for newer opportunities; this is especially true in India, where 1.3 crore employable persons live with disabilities but only [an estimated 34 lakh](#) are a part of the workforce. Lastly, 70% of Indian women reported either quitting or rejecting job roles that did not allow them to work flexibly, according to a LinkedIn [survey](#). Thus, hybrid work and the flexibility it provides can be helpful to retain women in the workforce by enabling them to balance care responsibilities and formal employment.

However hybrid work also brings along with itself certain challenges to the ones who are impacted the most- employees. These challenges vary from personal to professional challenges. In a global survey conducted by Microsoft, 43% of the employees mentioned that they do not feel included in virtual meetings (Microsoft, 2022)²². A similar study by LinkedIn with a geographical focus on India concluded that 73% of respondents agree that those who choose to work more from the office are more likely to be favoured by bosses or leaders (Pink Ladder 2020).²³

Hybrid work and its effects have been observed to be gender disproportionate with women hybrid workers facing unique challenges as they adjust to the future of work. Several surveys (Deloitte 2022, McKinsey 2021) and consultations undertaken by Nikore Associates have shown that women have reported experiencing different forms of non-inclusive behaviour in the workplace since companies switched to remote working.^{24,25} Women who work in a hybrid or remote model face different challenges on both the professional and personal fronts.

²² Microsoft. 2022. Work Trend Index: Annual Report. 2022. https://ms-worklab.azureedge.net/files/reports/2022/pdf/2022_Work_Trend_Index_Annual_Report.pdf

²³ Pink Ladder. 2020. Remote Working and its impact on Women Professionals. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/jobs/five-in-ten-women-facing-motivational-challenges-in-work-from-home-scenario-survey/articleshow/77060437.cms?from=mdr>

²⁴ Deloitte. 2022. Women@Work Global Outlook. <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/deloitte-women-at-work-2022-a-global-outlook.pdf>

²⁵ McKinsey & Company. September 2021. Women in the Workplace. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women-in-the-workplace>

(i) Increased care work responsibility:

The most highlighted and discussed challenge that women face as part of the hybrid workforce is the burden of increased care work responsibility. Globally, the restrictive measures put in place by governments in an attempt to control the spread of the pandemic had the unintended consequence of increasing women's share of unpaid work (ILO 2021).²⁶ A survey conducted in Brazil indicated that women who work remotely experienced the highest frequency in the increase of domestic and care work.²⁷ A study on Indian women who were working from home indicates that 27.6% reported care responsibilities at home as one of the key challenges of working from home.²⁸ A study by ILO that surveyed 1969 women executives of Indian Public Sector Enterprises highlighted getting preoccupied with unpaid care work and blurred boundaries between work and life as the two main personal challenges.²⁹

(ii) Difficulty balancing work-life and professional life:

A study that focuses on the impact on work-life balance of women during the lockdown in the southern regions of India found out that most working women cannot balance their work and personal life due to latent factors such as job performance and personal well-being: irrespective of their sector, the age group they belong to, the number of children they have, income, and their occupation.³⁰

(iii) Increased stress and burnout:

LinkedIn's Future of Work Study 2021 indicates that 1 in 3 professionals in India is burnt out due to increased workload (35%) and stress (34%) while working remotely. According to Deloitte's study 'Women@Work' (2022), which highlighted how Indian women face challenges more than their global counterparts as part of the hybrid workforce, 56% of women say their stress levels are higher than they were a year ago, and almost half feel burned out. 37% of Indian women cited burnout as a reason for their desire to leave their employer.

According to McKinsey's Women in the Workplace study (2021) on women from the United States of America (USA), being an only woman member of a team amplifies difficult experiences for women in the hybrid workforce.³¹ About 51% of women with children believe that being the only woman member of their team and requesting for flexibility puts them at the risk of being viewed as less committed to the work. This adds on to women's fear of risking their career progression.

(v) Hampered employer-employee relation:

A study by LinkedIn with a geographical focus on India concluded that 73% of respondents agree that those who choose to work more from the office are more likely to be favoured by bosses or leaders. Research indicates that women are likely to take up more remote work in the future.³² Consequently, their professional relationships run the risk of being harmed.

(vi) Microaggressions at work:

The Deloitte report further explains how women cite sub-conscious microaggressions as one of the key challenges. The top three microaggressions that women feel they face as part of the

²⁶ International Labour Organisation (ILO). 2021. ILO. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---ddg_p/documents/publication/wcms_791858.pdf

²⁷ Fares et al. 2021. Working, caring, surviving: The gender dynamics of remote work in Brazil under COVID-19. <https://pesquisa.bvsalud.org/global-literature-on-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/resource/pt/covidwho-1887744>

²⁸ Jasrotia and Meena. 2022. Women, work and pandemic: An impact study of COVID-19 lockdown on working women in India <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8653004/>

²⁹ International Labour Organisation (ILO). 2021 Impact of WfH on Women Executives/Managers in PSEs in India. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/publication/wcms_814727.pdf

³⁰ Haridasan et al. 2021. Work-life balance of women working from home during lockdown - An empirical study https://iaeme.com/MasterAdmin/Journal_uploads/IJM/VOLUME_12_ISSUE_1/IJM_12_01_042.pdf

³¹ McKinsey & Company. September 2021. Women in the Workplace. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women-in-the-workplace>

³² Future Forum by Slack. January 2022. Levelling the playing field in the hybrid workplace, <https://futureforum.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Future-Forum-Pulse-Report-January-2022.pdf>

hybrid work force are (i) being interrupted and/or talked over in meetings, (ii) not being invited to male-dominated activities, and (iii) being excluded from informal conversations.³³

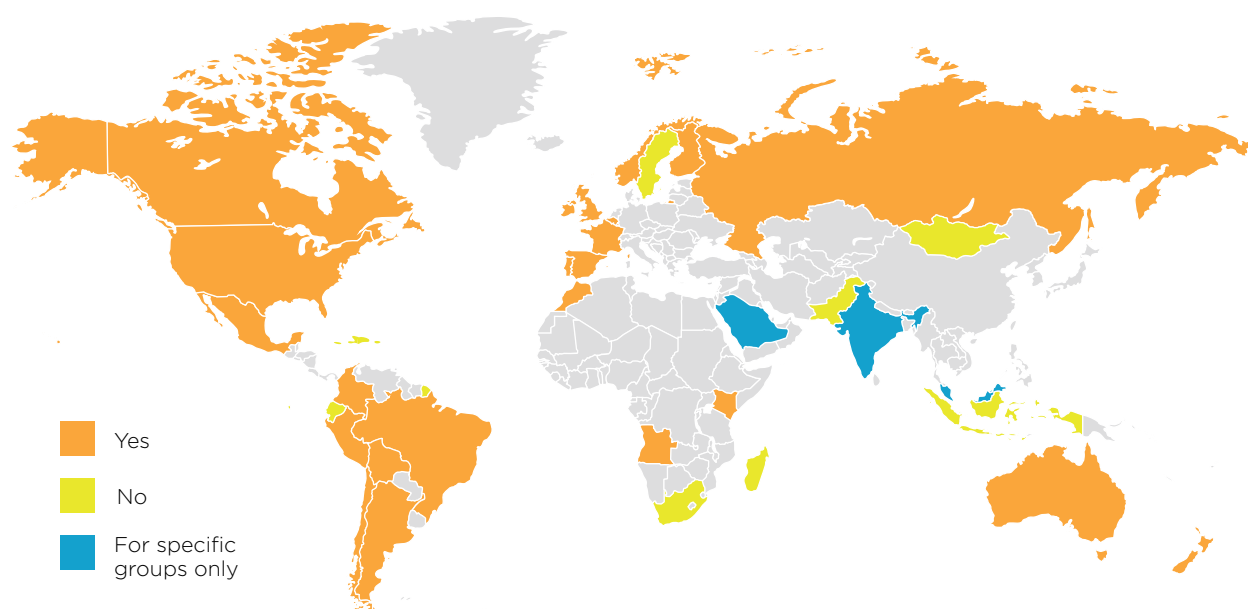
Cognizant of these challenges that women experience in a hybrid work model, this report serves as a comprehensive examination of policies that indicate how companies are preparing for the transition to hybrid work. The current landscape of hybrid work can be viewed in its entirety by analysing the existence of such policies alongside any mention of gender-specific nuances. In addition, it demonstrates how prepared corporations are to accommodate an inclusive hybrid work policy in the future.

4. Policy Review

A. National Policy Review:

For the purpose of the global analysis of national level policies and provisions on hybrid work, the policy frameworks of a total of 60 countries were evaluated. These include representation from North America, Central America, South America, East Asia, Middle East, South Asia, Europe, UK, and Oceania regions. National level independent laws for remote workers were checked for. Additionally, provisions regarding the rights of remote workers were also checked under national labour laws. The keywords used for this analysis were- remote work, work from home, flexible work, telework, telecommuting, and hybrid work.

Figure 2: Countries that have a remote/flexible work policy



³³ Deloitte. 2022. Women@Work- India . <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/in/Documents/about-deloitte/in-about-deloitte-women-at-work-india-noexp.pdf>

About 60% of the countries evaluated have a flexible or remote work policy in place. These vary from acts, bills, provisions under umbrella labour laws, amendments to existing laws, and guidelines (refer to appendix 2 for details). While some countries have explicit stand-alone policies for flexible work, clearly defining laws for remote working, others have provisions under their larger labour or work policies. Some governments provide workers of their country a legal right to disconnect after specified work hours. The Dutch Right to Work from Home Bill seeks to make working from home a legal right, and awaits a final approval from the Senate.



Dutch

Right to Work from Home Bill, 2022

The work from home bill is an amendment to the country's Flexible Working Act 2015, which gave workers the opportunity to request changes in the number of hours they worked, their work schedule and place of work

The new legislation will mean employers have to consider work from home requests from employees and give a valid reason if denying the request

However, the law forces employers to consider employee requests to work from home or hybrid work as long as their professions allow it.



Philippines' Telecommuting

Act of 2019

Fair Treatment

- Remote employees are treated equally as on site workers with regards to pay and benefits.
- Same access to training and career growth.
- Cannot be barred from communicating with unions or labor organizations.
- Measures should be taken to ensure that telecommuting employees do not feel isolated from their co-employees

Data Privacy

- Employer is responsible for the measures needed to ensure the protection of data used by the employee in a professional capacity.
- These measures may include modification of USB access and restrictions on the use of external cloud storage by remote workers.





UK Flexible Work Legislation

On 5th December 2022, the UK government announced that workers in the UK will now have the legal right to request flexible working from the first day of their jobs. The law further states that 'There is no 'one size fits all' approach to work arrangements'. The law also stated that among other employees, the law would benefit caregivers as it would allow them to supplement their income by working a second job if they desired.


According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, increasing flexible work options will not only improve the access of women to employment and aid in reducing pay gaps but will also support fathers who want better work/life balance.

As per the legislation, employers must deal with the requests in a 'reasonable manner' which may include:

- assessing the advantages and disadvantages of the application
- holding a meeting to discuss the request with the employee
- offering an appeal process

Further, if an employer does not handle a request in a reasonable manner, an employee can take them to an employment tribunal.

An employer can refuse an application if they have a good business reason for doing so.



National policies regarding remote/flexible work have been in place even before the pandemic.

15 out of the 36 countries had remote work-related policies that were legislated before March 2020. Some of these are New Zealand's Flexible Working Arrangement, Employment Regulation Act of 2007, USA's The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, Phillipines' Telecommuting Act of 2019. This highlights that the governments of certain developed countries had mainstreamed remote or flexible working long before the world was forced to work in a remote setup owing to the pandemic.

Post the pandemic, a lot of countries have started deliberations regarding dedicated flexible work policies. 58% of the countries that are a part of the study established a remote work legislation only after the pandemic. Many made amendments to their existing labour codes to include telework. This highlights that governments are incorporating specific laws regarding flexible work that protect the interest of employees of a country as organizations start adopting

hybrid work as the norm in the future. While some countries may not have a legal mandate on flexible work, some countries, such as Singapore, have laid out guidelines for employers to follow if they adopt hybrid work setup.³⁴ Consultation with a specialist in hybrid employment research in Singapore revealed that the government of Singapore is actively holding consultations with industry leaders with the aim to draft a legal act with regards to remote work.

The Tripartite Statement on FWAs lays out guidelines for employers implementing and adopting flexible work arrangements. Although the Advisory does not have a legal force, it is still followed and complied with by employers in Singapore.

Recommendations as part of TS-FWA:

- Employers should continue to make efforts to provide flexibility for employees, including redesigning jobs where needed, while taking into consideration business needs.
- Employers should continue to manage, assess, appraise and remunerate employees who use FWAs fairly and objectively, in line with the principles in the Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices.
- Employees should use FWAs responsibly and ensure continued work productivity. FWAs are not an entitlement and the requirements of the job take precedence.
- Trust should also be maintained between employers and employees, through regular and open communication to discuss on what FWAs are practical and sustainable, and the organisational outcomes and deliverables that need to be met.

None of the national policies reviewed include specific provisions for remote women workers.

When a national policy is present, the provisions under the remote/flexible work policies are elaborate and detailed for most. Yet, there is no specific mention or special provision for women employees under any of these or legal documents. Some countries such as Chile & Argentina, have a provision of equal pay and rights for all remote employees, they do not explicitly mention women as a distinct employee group which may need special emphasis.

Few provisions of the remote/flexible work policies at the national level seemed to be common across countries. Figure 3 elaborates on these common provisions.

³⁴ Ministry of Manpower. Government of Singapore. 2022. Tripartite Statement on Flexible Work Arrangements. April 2022. <https://www.mom.gov.sg/newsroom/press-replies/2022/0422-tripartite-statement-on-flexible-work-arrangements>

Figure 3: Observed global provisions under remote/flexible work legislations

Currently, the Indian government has not passed any specific policy that legislates remote work. Existing employment laws within the regulatory authority of the government do not recognize the concept of remote work. However, since the pandemic and the disruption of the ways of working in India, there have been attempts by the government to acknowledge the new norm of remote/flexible working.

(i) Draft Model Standing Order (2020)

On 30th December 2020, the government of India published the Draft Model Standing Order for the Service Sector which enables an employee to enter in an agreement with the employer that allows them to work from home for a mutually agreed period.³⁵

(ii) Special Economic Zones Rule 2006- 43A (2022)

The centre, on 19th July 2022, inserted a new rule 43A (work from home) in Special Economic Zones Rules, 2006. The notification states that work from home may be extended to maximum 50% of total employees, including contractual employees of the unit. In continuation in its efforts to recognise remote work, the government on 17th September 2022 stated that the rule be extended to allow 100% of the employees of an SEZ the option to work from home; in December 2022, the Department of Commerce amended the SEZ rules to allow work-from-home upto December 31, 2023 for employees working in SEZ units (Ministry of Commerce & Industry, 2022).³⁶

Despite the lack of a flexible work policy in India, the government is considering increased female participation as an important outcome of the shift to hybrid work. At the 44th national

³⁵ The Gazette of India. December 2020. https://labour.gov.in/sites/default/files/224080_compressed.pdf

³⁶ Department of Commerce amends SEZ rules to liberalize Work From Home (WFH) for SEZ units." Ministry of Commerce & Industry, 09 December 2022, URL: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1882070#:~:text=WFH%20can%20be%20provided%20to,sent%20by%20email%20till%2031.01.>

conference of labour ministries, Prime Minister, Narendra Modi remarked on the need for flexible workspaces in India. He highlighted flexible work hours and work-from-home ecosystems as the future. Further, the Prime Minister encouraged and urged the value of remote working to increase women's labour force participation in India.

Provisions in women centric policies can be extended to include remote work. Within Indian legislations and guidelines that protect women's interests as part of the workforce, there are certain provisions that allow women to work remotely.

(i) Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017

The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 permits any woman who has returned from maternity leave, and whose nature of work is such that it may be performed remotely, to work remotely on mutually accepted terms and conditions.³⁷

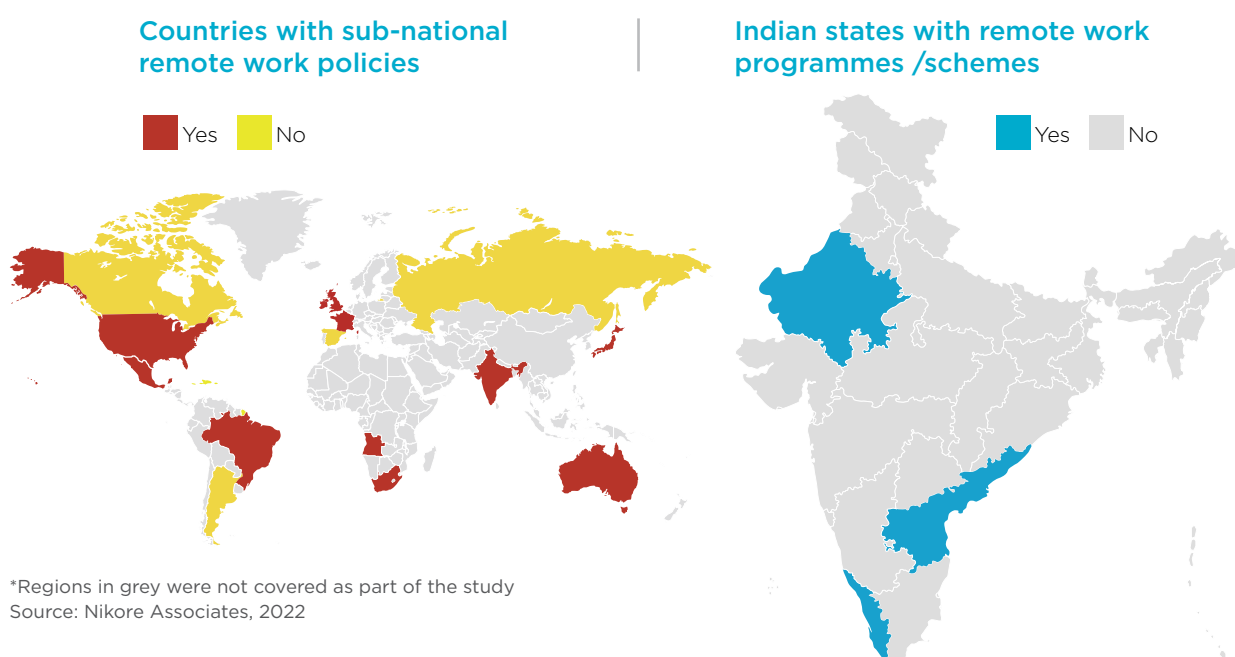
(ii) Remote work for nursing mothers

An advisory issued by the Ministry of Labour and Employment advises states and union territories to encourage employers to allow nursing mothers to work from home wherever the nature of work so permits.³⁸ However, this was done as a measure to protect new mothers during COVID-19.

(iii) Remote work under Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act (POSH)

Further, when it comes to remote work, protecting and safeguarding women from sexual harassment in the virtual workspace is necessary. In this regard the scope and ambit of 'workplace' defined under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, has been interpreted liberally by the Indian courts to include under its scope any place where the employee is working, either at home or remotely. In other words, the POSH Act would apply even in a remote work setup.³⁹

Figure 4:



*Regions in grey were not covered as part of the study
Source: Nikore Associates, 2022

³⁷ The Gazette of India. March 2017. The Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017. <https://labour.gov.in/sites/default/files/Maternity%20Benefit%20Amendment%20Act,2017%20.pdf>

³⁸ Ministry of Labour and Employment. June 2021. Centre Issues Advisory to State Governments/UTs to Encourage Work-from-Home for Nursing Mothers. <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1723504>

³⁹ Ungender. August 2021. POSH Updates - The POSH Act Now Includes a Virtual Workplace as Well. <https://www.ungender.in/posh-legal-updates-the-posh-act-now-includes-a-virtual-workplace-as-well-supreme-court/>

Sub-national policies are not as common as national policies and the states and provinces of only a few countries have any remote work provision. Out of the 50 states and provinces, only 19 had some sub-national level of labour policy related to remote work. US, Canada, and Australia are some countries where state or province laws on remote work are not uncommon. While some have specific laws, a few states or provinces have laid out certain guidelines that employers can adhere to while they exercise the hybrid work model.



Labor Code Section 2802 California, US

- Employers with remote employees in California need to ensure they are complying with the state's employment laws when it comes to those working from home.
- For purposes of the state's wage and hour laws, the home office is generally treated the same as the regular office.
- For remote employees, what an employer may need to reimburse could include internet and cell phone services
- California's meal and rest period requirements also apply to employees who are working remotely.

Remote or Isolated Work Safety (WHS) Policy Directive South Australia, Australia

- Employers have a primary duty of care to ensure the health and safety of their employees. This duty applies to both physical and psychological health and extends to the home when work from home arrangements are in place.
- Employers entering into a work from home arrangement with a worker need to consider the risks related to mental health.
- Both the employer and employee share responsibility for managing general WHS risks in the home environment.
- Both the employer and employee share responsibility for managing general WHS risks in the home environment.



There are no explicit state laws or policies with respect to hybrid or remote work in India, however some programmes and schemes seem to be emerging. As labour is a concurrent subject, states in India can govern and frame regulations for workers of a particular state. However, no state in India has any provisions related to remote or flexible work under their labour laws. Three states including, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Kerala, however, have introduced schemes related to remote work.

(i) Work from Hometown - Andhra Pradesh (2021)

The government of Andhra Pradesh (AP) considered the challenges that arise while working from a home remote setup which include, unreliable internet, power failure, lack of tech support, security and distractions and privacy. In October 2021, the Department of Information Technology of Government of AP, Electronics and Communication announced the Work from Hometown (WFHT) initiative of setting up co-working spaces in tier 2,3, and 4 cities. The WFHT is envisioned as a model to provide logistical solutions to IT employees of the state living in these cities. The envisioned workspaces shall have the facilities of highspeed broadband connectivity, uninterrupted power supply with backup generator, dedicated workspaces, small video conferencing rooms, surveillance systems (CCTV) cameras and clean spaces available within a short distance drive from their homes.⁴⁰

(ii) Work from Home Job Scheme – Rajasthan (Proposed in 2022)

In February 2022, the government of Rajasthan proposed a Work from Home Job Scheme for women who can contribute to family income while working from home for which it has claimed to allocate INR 100 crores in its Budget 2022-23 speech. Under the scheme, 20,000 women who had to leave their jobs due to family reasons will now be able to work online from their homes. Priority for providing work from home jobs will be given to widows, divorcees, and victims of violence. Those women who will not be able to do regular office jobs will also be provided such job opportunities. The Government of Rajasthan now operates an online portal called "Work From Home Portal" specifically for women, which allows organisations to post remote work opportunities, and female applicants to apply for the same.

(iii) Work Near Home – Kerala (Proposed in 2022)

The government of Kerala recognises that the future of work is hybrid. In this regard, to benefit people from villages and small towns to work for companies across the globe, the government came up with the Work Near Home (WNH) initiative. Under this initiative, in its 2022-23 Budget Speech the Kerala Government allocated INR 50 crore to establish IT based employment centres across the state to provide job opportunities to those who can't travel for work. Educated housewives were highlighted as a target group of the WNH initiative after the government realised during the pandemic how women will opt to enter the workforce if given the option to work from home.

C. Corporate Policy Review

Organizations are at the centre of the structural and management changes associated with hybrid work. When companies undergo such massive organizational changes, an informed policy governing the changes and the new norm of hybrid work ensure that the best interests of both employers and employees are taken into account. According to EY 2022 Work Reimagined Survey, both employers and employees feel that making provisions for hybrid and flexible work is a necessity, however not all employers have created and communicated a formal and clear policy and guidelines.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Government of Andhra Pradesh. Work From Hometown. https://apit.ap.gov.in/WFHT/pdf/W@HT_Presentation_ITAAP.pdf

⁴¹ EY (Ernst & Young). April 2022. How workforce rebalancing is building pressure in the talent pipeline. https://www.ey.com/en_gl/workforce/work-reimagined-survey

138 OUT OF **178**

companies globally have adopted hybrid work in some way*

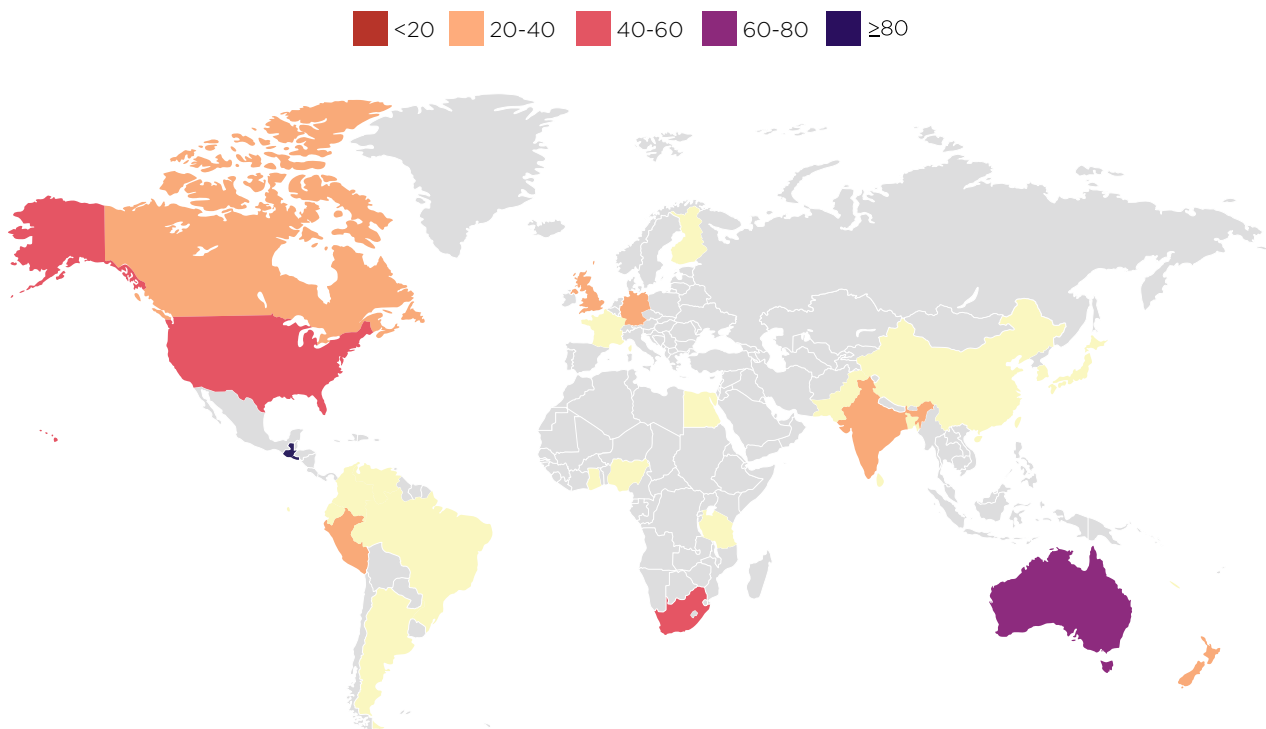
26 OUT OF **30**

Indian companies have adopted hybrid work in some way

*Note: Indicates that companies have either formally introduced hybrid work through company policies or through company announcements

Global analysis of 178 companies covering 21 broad industries and their policies and public statements regarding hybrid work was undertaken. This included an assessment of 30 Indian companies (refer to appendix 4 for details).

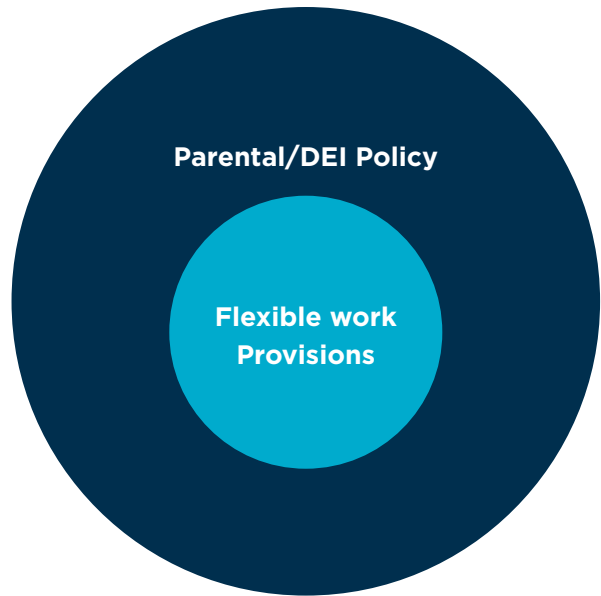
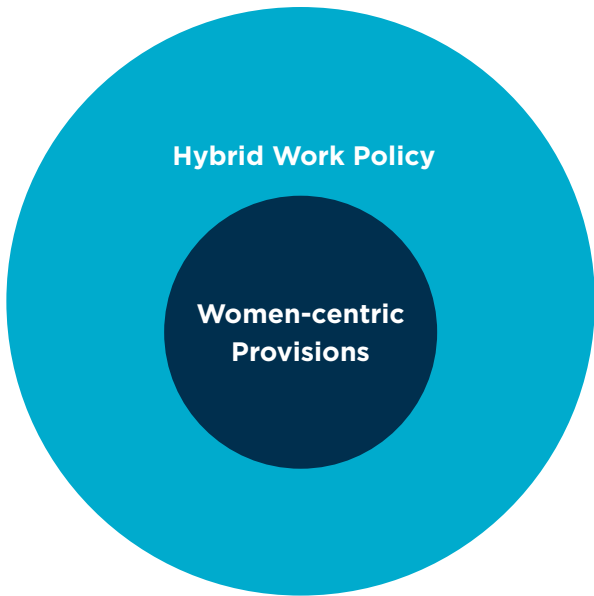
Figure 5: Percentage of companies reviewed that have a hybrid work model according to regions



*Regions in grey were not covered as part of the study

Source: Nikore Associates, 2022

Two types of policies were reviewed under the corporate policies. First, the hybrid work policies were analysed and were checked for any women employee related component. Second, women-related and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusions (DEI) policies were analysed and were checked for any hybrid work related component. Further, gender-inclusive provisions under a hybrid work policy were also checked for.



Corporates have started working on and implementing their hybrid work policies. Out of the 178 organizations assessed for the review, 138 companies have adopted a hybrid work policy. These policies have mainly come in place after the pandemic forced organisations to allow employees to work from home. Recognizing the benefits of hybrid work, employers have continued to provide employees with the option to work from home on certain days of the week. Many organisations see this as a strategy to retain the best talent and to remain competitive as employers.⁴²

There is a global trend of adopting hybrid work as the future of work; however, policy design seems to be at a nascent stage. Organisations have not yet fully drafted comprehensively written hybrid work policies. While some organisations have simply stated the option to work in a hybrid work model to their employees through company announcements, very few have comprehensive detailed out nuances of their hybrid work policies. This demonstrates that different employers are at different stages of accepting hybrid work as the work model of the future. For example, Unilever as an employer recognizes the benefits of hybrid working in response to which it laid out global principles to guide how the firm can make best use of office spaces while giving their employees flexibility and choice- however, there is no written hybrid work policy that Hindustan Unilever Ltd. has published on their company policy website.^{43,44}

RPG Group became the first Indian diversified conglomerate to launch a revolutionary permanent work from home (WFH) policy. While the company already had a policy that allowed for remote work on few days a week, the new extended policy post the pandemic will extend to even their factories, plantations, sales offices, with the new normal aim of 50%-75% of WFH or work from anywhere (WFA).⁴⁵



TATA Steel - Flexible Work Initiatives

About 30% of the other white-collar profiles in Tata Steel are working from home or have the flexibility to be location agnostic. **Tata Steel is now planning to bring the perks of work from home for factory operators and blue-collar employees too.**

The company has started pilot projects creating digital twins of their factories to make operations outside from the factories feasible. It is making a progress in **re-skilling and on robotics to help blue-collar jobs move to a flexible work mode.**

Introduced "agile working model in 2020" under which officers who are required to be based out of a particular location can now **work from home for unlimited days in a year.**

They give the employee the flexibility to operate out of any location in the country. After reviewing the policy, a year later, the company is **narrowing down profiles that can work from home permanently.**



⁴² DW. Meta turns to remote work as it expands across Europe. <https://www.dw.com/en/meta-turns-to-remote-work-as-it-expands-across-europe/a-60390423>

⁴³ Unilever. Future workplace. <https://www.unilever.com/planet-and-society/future-of-work/future-workplace/>

⁴⁴ Hindustan Unilever. Corporate Social Responsibility Policy. <https://www.hul.co.in/investor-relations/corporate-governance/hul-policies/>

⁴⁵ RPG Group. Workplace 2.0 - RPG'S Pioneering remote working policy. <https://rpgcom.rpggroup.com/2020/october/rpg-workplace-2-0-focus>

The employee's decision to work from home on any given weekday is entirely voluntary. 42% of the policies reviewed clearly state that choosing to work from home on any given day of the work week is completely the employee's choice. While the organisations have placed work-day mandates which range from four days a week to three days a year for different companies, an employee can choose to work full-time from the office if they wish to do so. The implication of this option can potentially result in an employee divide as some individuals would eventually visit the office more than others. Thus, keeping a record of employee's days in office could increase this divide. Consultation with an HR professional of one of India's leading FMCG companies revealed that not keeping a track of employee visits to the office in their hybrid work setup has fostered an equitable hybrid working environment.



Consultation with India's leading FMCG brand

Hybrid Policy: The company has a hybrid work policy since the beginning of 2022. As per the policy the employees are required to visit office 3 days a week and can choose to work from home on the remaining 2 days. The policy was disseminated through a company-wide announcement.

Applicability of policy: The policy is applicable in all the organisation's locations in India. However, the applicability of hybrid work depends on worker's job profile. It is not applicable in manufacturing units and plants as workers are required to physically maintain their presence for the smooth production of their products.

Attendance Tracking: The management does not track employee days in office. Further, as presence may be considered during employee appraisals and career progressions, the company has witnessed no impact on the promotion patterns of its employees owing to the adoption of hybrid work.



Effect on pay of employees choosing to work from home is a critical provision; yet companies do not explicitly mention it. Only 7% of the companies have clearly mentioned the effect on an employee's pay who chooses to work remotely or in a hybrid setup. Some state that there will be no discrimination between hybrid and on-site employees on the basis of pay and employee rights. However, some companies hint at differences in pay structure related to the cost of employing a worker from a particular location. For example, in USA, PwC has announced a pay cut of fully remote workers who move to a lower-cost location.⁴⁶ Given that women are more likely to engage in work from home, a pay cut in this regard could potentially widen the gendered wage gap.

Other than provisions that define the nature of hybrid work, there are some technology-based concerns that some companies address as part of their hybrid work policies. Adopting a hybrid work model also makes a company accountable for equipping its employees with relevant logistical and infrastructural requirements in their remote setup. In this regard 18% of the

⁴⁶ Financial Times. PwC tells 40,000 US staff they can work remotely permanently.

companies explicitly have a provision on the company's responsibility to install relevant logistical equipment for the remote setup. 6 companies also have WFH related compensations in the form of equipment allowances. For example, at NBN Co, a publicly owned telecommunication company in Australia, the Home Working Arrangements Policy clearly states that the company will provide an allowance to cover an appropriate portion of the internet, phone, lighting and heating etc. expenses.⁴⁷

The role of an employee determines whether they can opt for hybrid work. 34% of the companies clearly state that they provide the option to work from home to their employees on one condition that their job role is suitable for remote work. According to the company policy analysis, client-facing job roles are expected to work from office (WFO) more often than tech-based roles. Some companies expect senior management level employees to WFO full-time. Consultations with HR professionals revealed that roles pertaining to IT and relevant technology-based roles could work from home indefinitely in the future in comparison to all other roles of an organization.

Figure 6: Provisions that make up gender-inclusive hybrid policies



Wage Parity:

The company's policy should explicitly mention that those who choose to opt for hybrid work or work remotely will be treated equally when it comes to the pay and employee rights.



Project Assignment Discrimination:

Companies should consider the possible subconscious bias in project assignment that could arise as a result of the different days a week a hybrid employee can work from office.



Career Progression:

It should be clearly laid out in the terms of hybrid working that the employee's career progression and promotion shall not be affected by the amount of face-time with the manager.



Care Work:

Acknowledging care work responsibilities when extending the flexible working option to employees should be gender neutral. The hybrid work policy should also account for virtual care work allowances.



Skilling:

There should be explicit mention of how there should be no differences in the skilling opportunities of different hybrid workers.



Parental Flexible Work Option:

While a flexible work option for birthing/non-birthing mothers is not uncommon, companies should provide the same flexible work option to new fathers.

Challenges faced by women hybrid workers are not explicitly addressed by company policies.

Given the unique personal and professional challenges that women face as part of the hybrid workforce, organizations can play a critical role in recognizing these barriers and inhibitions by incorporating gender-inclusive solutions and guidelines into their hybrid work policies. However, only one Indian e-commerce company, Meesho, mentions of any women-related provision which safeguards their specific interests. Meesho, announced a Boundaryless Workspace Model in February 2022. In its BWS model, it provides day-care facility sponsorships to parents who require it.

⁴⁷NBNCo. Home Working Arrangements Policy. <https://www.nbnco.com.au/content/dam/nbnco/documents/g-j/home-working->



Consultation with India's leading FMCG brand

Decentralised workforce

While Meesho will be headquartered in Bangalore, the company will look to set up satellite offices across the country based on talent demand and density.

Annual workations

Meesho sponsored annual workations in places like Goa, Shimla, and Manali to foster team bonding and collaboration.

Quarterly Summits

Calendarised in-person quarterly connects to brainstorm, reflect and review goals while building team camaraderie.

New joinee community

Virtual boot camps and meet & greet sessions will help new joinees build a community culture and strong sense of connect with their entire team.

Regional committees

Employees can be a part of location-based regional committees like sports, marathons, community volunteering etc. These employee engagement activities will be augmented by centrally run employee delight events across boards.

Employee support

Meesho sponsored daycare facilities for employees with children below 6 years of age at suitable locations. This service can also be availed during official travel to Meesho's headquarters in Bangalore.



Women-related provisions are mainly limited to option of flexible work as part of maternity or DEI policies. Flexible work was the most common provision that companies provide to their female employees. Some of these provide flexible work option to new fathers as well, which makes the flexible work policy under parental policy more inclusive. Apart from parental policies, flexible work was also mentioned as part of some of the company's diversity, equity, and inclusion policies. For example, Safaricom, a telecommunication company in Kenya, provides flexible work to its women employees with the aim to achieve a 50:50 gender ratio amongst its senior leadership by 2025.⁴⁸

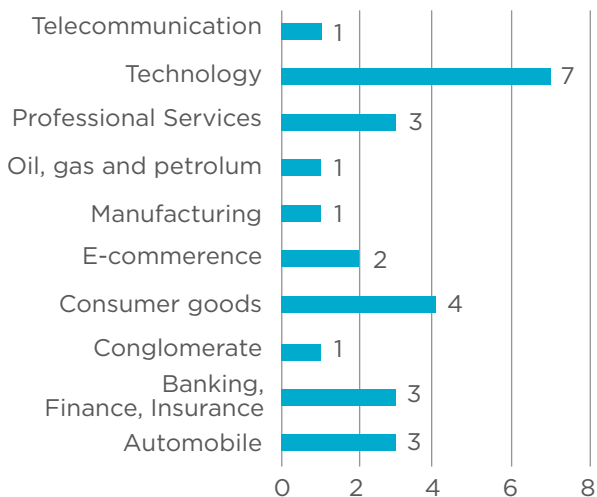
Among the organisations sampled for this review, Indian organisations provide a more inclusive working environment for women than global corporates. An analysis of the companies that provide a flexible work option to women under its maternity and/or DEI policies, reveals that Indian companies fare slightly better in this regard.

⁴⁸ Safaricom. Stakeholder Engagement. https://www.safaricom.co.ke/sustainabilityreport_2020/stakeholder-engagement/employees/

Out of **178** companies globally
21 maternity policies, and
44 DEI policies
 provide women the option to work flexibly

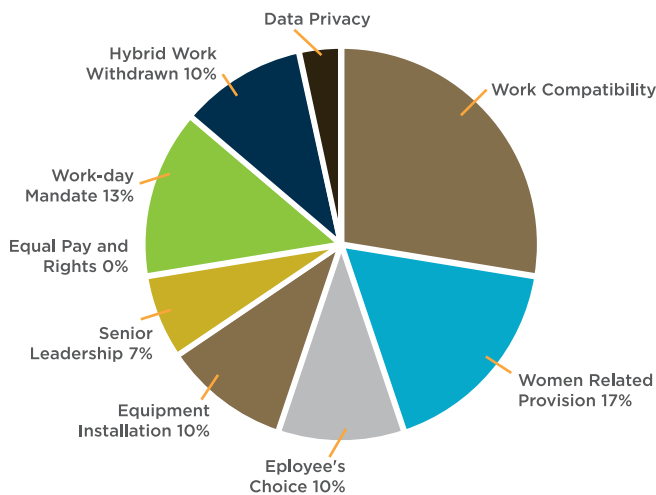
Out of **30** Indian companies
02 maternity policies, and
08 DEI policies
 provide women the option to work flexibly

Figure 7:
 Industry wise break up of Indian companies with hybrid work policy (Absolute numbers)



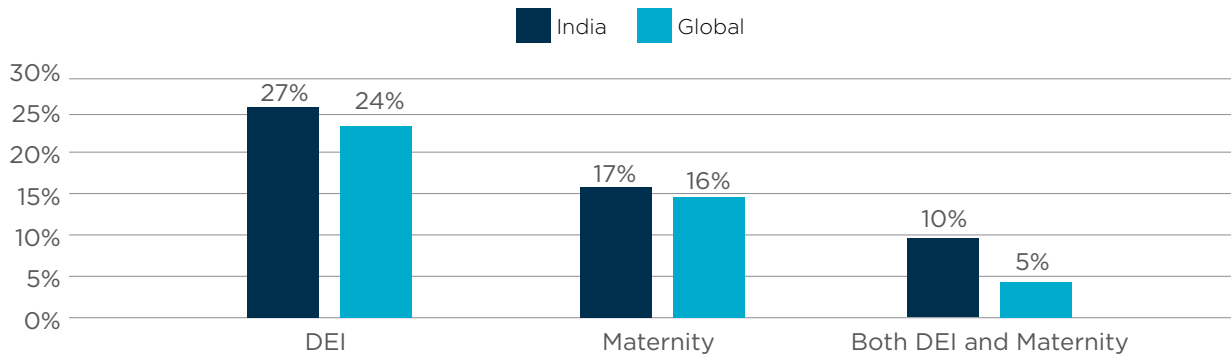
Source: Nikore Associates, 2022

%age of Indian companies including respective provisions in their hybrid policies



Source: Nikore Associates, 2022

Figure 8: Percentage of companies providing flexible work option to women under various policies India vs Global



Source: Nikore Associates, 2022

5. Recommendations

According to the 2020-21 data released by PLFS, under the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, the male labour force participation rate (77%) is approximately twice that of women (32.5%). Hybrid work provides women with a valuable opportunity to re-enter the workforce and thus policies need to incorporate provisions that help attract and retain women employees in the workforce.

The concerted efforts of both the government and private entities are required to build gender-inclusive hybrid policy framework. Central and state governments in India must set a level-playing field by recognizing that women are likely to take up more roles that offer a hybrid work setup or even full-time remote work due to the gendered nature of care work responsibilities, safety and mobility concerns. The government must make it clear that women are a special interest group under the hybrid work policy, and that companies are required to acknowledge their specific needs in a hybrid setup. National and sub-national policies can lay the foundation by specifying non-negotiable provisions that safeguard the interests of women hybrid workers.

In the short term, the government can lay out specific guidelines that companies can follow. However, in its efforts to provide a standardised gender-inclusive hybrid work environment, in the long-term, the government can design a hybrid work policy which clearly defines the tenets of hybrid work, including a standard definition, and provides specific gender-neutral provisions.

Private companies, on the other hand, must use the government's provisions as guiding principles in developing and implementing their own hybrid work policies. As the effect of any employee-related policy manifests at the workplace, businesses should carefully design policies that go above and beyond the government-provided guidelines and tailor their policies based on their company goals. Companies can design their gender-inclusive hybrid work policies by following a three-factor implementation strategy of minimizing attrition, maximizing productivity, and maximizing retention.

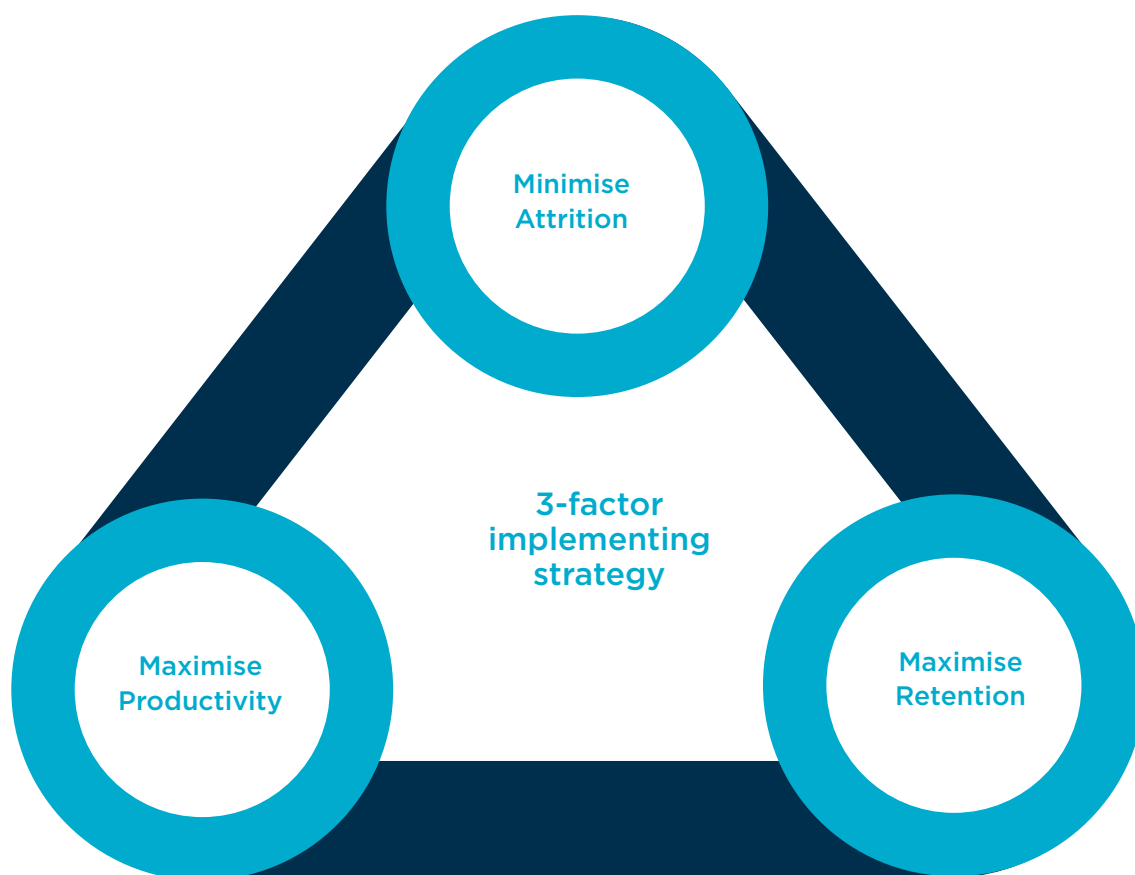


Table 1: List of recommendations for national/state/corporate policies

S.No	List of recommendations for national/ state/ corporate policies	Recommendation aimed at	
		Private Sector	Government (National/ Sub-national)
1	Gender-disaggregated survey	✓	
2	Pay Parity	✓	✓
3	Evaluation Parity	✓	✓
4	Clear Communication of challenges	✓	
5	Care support	✓	✓
6	Virtual safe space	✓	✓
7	Manager Trainings	✓	

5.1 Gender-disaggregated survey

The first step to draft informed gender-inclusive hybrid work policies is to quantify the findings in terms of the challenges that different employee groups face in a hybrid work model. Surveys are a useful tool to exactly understand the gendered-differences in this aspect. Existing surveys and subsequent reports, such as Deloitte's Women@Work 2022 and McKinsey's Women in the Workplace, demonstrate some best practices for identifying specific challenges and the level of urgency required to address certain barriers.

While consultations reveal that discussion forums with female employees provide qualitative inputs on the subject, company-wide surveys was not a practice that was adopted as much. Organizations can supplement them by conducting company-wide quantitative surveys to assess the severity of various challenges.

5.2 Pay Parity

Transparency in compensation is a key concern for all employees regardless of the sector that they are involved in, especially in times of economic distress. With a massive, ongoing debate around pay parity for hybrid and in-person workers, any hybrid work policy should clearly state the impact of hybrid work on the compensation structure of employees. This is imperative to ensure that the gendered wage gap is not widened, considering women are likely to take up more remote-working days than men. Policies should clearly mention that there should be no discrimination in the pay structure of remote and on-site workers. This helps assure women employees that their pay will not be affected if they choose to work more from home.

Consultation with the leading people's function of an investment platform company in India, revealed that the organisation has policies in place to ensure equal benefits for all; and that there is no discrepancy in the compensation of workers who choose to work remotely.

5.3 Evaluation Parity

Employee evaluation systems underwent significant changes post-pandemic. A concerted effort must be implemented to shift from a time-based evaluation system, as is common for physical work, to an output-based evaluation system. It is particularly pertinent for important metrics such as 'soft skills' which may be difficult to judge remotely. An output-based evaluation ensures that there is no discrimination between the employees who WFH or WFO. The policy should, thus, state that managers should evaluate employees solely on the basis of the quality of their deliverables. This, thus, ensures that there would be no discrimination in terms of career progression opportunities of hybrid working women.

Consultation with the managing director of human resources of India's leading financial services advisory firm revealed that in the hybrid setup employees are evaluated for career progression based on the quality of their deliverables and outputs and the number of in-office and work-from-home days that an employee takes are not considered in this evaluation process. The HR professional further shared that the company observed no gendered differences in career progression in the previous cycle of evaluation which included the period when employees were working in complete remote as well as hybrid setup.

5.4 Clear Communication of challenges

The relative novelty associated with hybrid work policies ensures that several may be reluctant to partake in the same; women, in particular, may have concerns surrounding compensation and

career progression. It is imperative that management professionals in companies employ active channels of communication with their employees to assuage their concerns. In order to get direct and indirect feedback on how the hybrid policy can be amended or drafted to accommodate for the specific challenges of women employees, such company-wide discussions can prove to be fruitful. A clause for regular discussion forums and feedback sessions under the hybrid work policy can help ensure such deliberations between managers and women employees are maintained while the organisation adopts the hybrid work model.

Consultation with the Chief People's Officer of a realty consulting firm in India revealed that women employees were more active during the feedback sessions organised to address concerns regarding remote work. Further, to help retain women a women senior leader of the organisation provided mentorships to other women employees during the pandemic.

5.5 Virtual Safe Space

Based on the Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act), the definition of a 'workplace' can be extended to include the online medium to cover remote work conditions as well. Company-specific anti-sexual harassment policies must also explicitly incorporate the same. It should cover the precise definition of a 'workplace', types of virtual harassment and grievance redressal procedures. In addition to this, organisations should tailor their POSH policies and trainings to include instances of virtual harassments. This will help sensitise both employers and employees on maintaining a safe virtual work space for its hybrid women employees.

Consultation with an academician from one of India's leading university who specialises in women and work in South Asia, revealed that a women's attire and upkeep at a home-office setup is at the risk of being sub-consciously monitored and judged, which often makes the woman employee uncomfortable to switch on the video while taking a call from the remote setup. However, this could be partially solved if turning on the video is specified not to be mandatory. Thus, the hybrid work policy must account for such nuances.

5.6 Care Support

While working in hybrid mode may ensure greater flexibility for all, women, on average, spend a greater proportion of their time involved in unpaid care work. This may translate into care for individuals who are either very young, very old, or both. Support for such hybrid workers is paramount to guarantee a clear separation between their work and personal lives. Companies, therefore, should provide childcare support for hybrid workers as well, and not limit their support to in-person employees. This may also take the form of virtual care allowances for parents with childcare responsibilities. Further, companies must monitor trends in uptake of flexible and hybrid work opportunities to aid a more equitable uptake of such opportunities for women as well as men. The hybrid work policy should, thus, provide a provision for care allowances which employees can avail while they work remotely. In addition to care allowance, employers should also ensure adequate day-care facilities on-site. The dual support, thus, ensures that care responsibilities of employees are accommodated for in-office as well as in the remote setup.

As part of a survey, the HR head of HSBC, India shared that the organisation has a policy that allows employees to reimburse their virtual care expenses under the remote work setup.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ The Times of India. 2021. Companies offer childcare with hybrid office. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/cos-offer-childcare-with-hybrid-office/articleshow/86950498.cms>

Consultation with a leading FMCG firm also revealed how employees actively use the day-care facilities that the organization provides to young parents, and how the employees benefited greatly once these services were restored after the pandemic subsided.

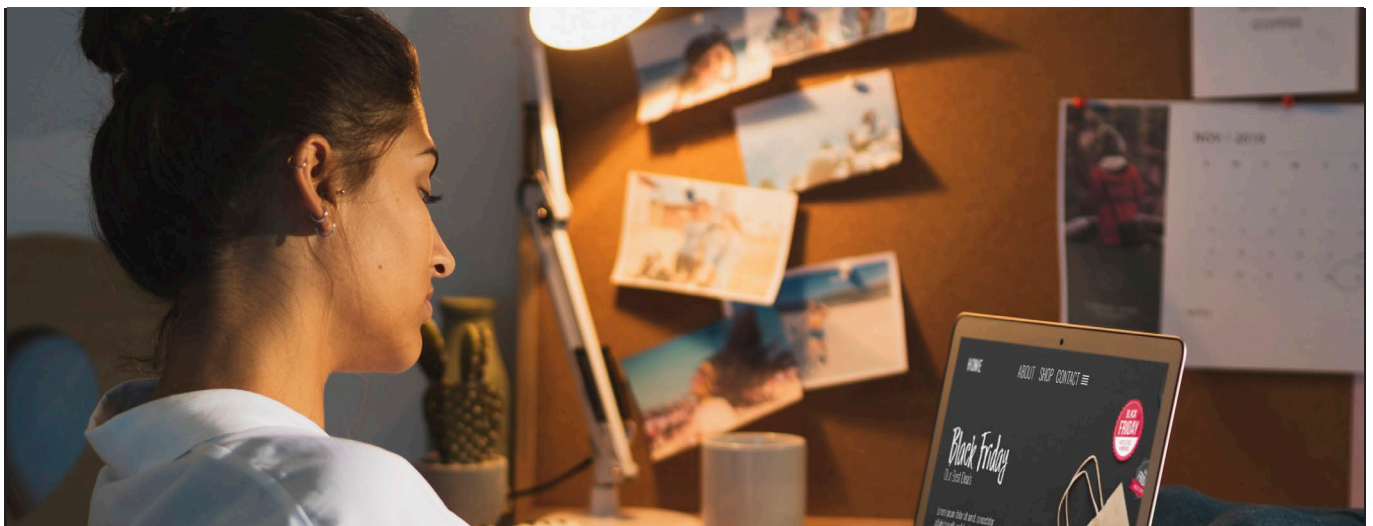
5.7 Manager Trainings

Professional challenges that women hybrid workers face, such as project allocation discrimination, feeling ignored in meetings, and the risk of inadequate career advancement, are dependent on the employee's relationship with their immediate reporting managers. Thus, the sub-conscious bias that managers may develop towards employees who choose to work more from the office needs to be minimised. Further in light of personal challenges, the National Health Services in England has issued guidance for line managers to make them aware of the difficulties menopausal women face in the workforce, which also introduces a flexible working policy for menopausal women. Through such guidance and interventions, managers will be able to comprehend specific nuances that they might not have considered without trainings that highlight the various personal and professional challenges hybrid women workers face. Hybrid work policies should accommodate for regular trainings of old and new managers which sensitise them towards a gender-inclusive hybrid working environment.

Consultations with HR professionals of a few organisations in India revealed that trainings which sensitise the managers on similar sub-conscious biases can be useful in this regard. These have helped their line managers and HR managers to dissociate presence with productivity. Hybrid work policies can essentially include a clause that specifies the frequency of such training sessions as well as their purpose.

6. Conclusion

The shift to hybrid work by companies brings with itself the benefits of working from office and working from home. While the policies pertaining to employee's engagement in office premises are comprehensive and concrete, there is a need to draft new policies which govern the responsibilities and accountability of both the employers and employees in a hybrid work model. In addition, women as a special employee group face challenges as part of the hybrid workforce, which can be mitigated by a policy structure that considers women's unique needs as hybrid workers. Carefully crafted hybrid work policies can help make the widely held belief that if given the option of working remotely or in a hybrid model, women would join the labour force in greater numbers a reality.



1. Appendix

Industry-wise break up of 178 companies

- Representation from all major industries was included for the analysis

S.No	Industry	%age distribution
1	Accounting	4%
2	Automobile	4%
3	Aviation	2%
4	Banking	8%
5	Conglomerate	4%
6	Consumer goods	5%
7	E-commerce	2%
8	Electronics	2%
9	Energy	2%
10	Financial Services	8%
11	Insurance	3%
12	Manufacturing	5%
13	Mining	1%
14	Networking hardware & software	1%
15	Oil, gas and petroleum	4%
16	Pharmaceutical	2%
17	Professional Services	4%
18	Retail	1%
19	Technology	16%
20	Telecommunications	10%
21	Transportation	2%
22	Others	10%

2. Appendix

Country-wise policy type

S.No.	Country	Act/Bill/Law	Year	Name of Act/Bill/Law
1	Angola	Law	2022	Presidential Decree under General Labour Law
2	Argentina	Law	2022	Remote Employment Law of Argentina
3	Australia	Act	2009	Fair Work Act, 2009
4	Austria	Law	2021	A Federal Act amending the Employment Contract Law Amendment Act, the Labour Constitution Act, the Employee Liability Act, the Labour Inspectorate Act 1993, the General Social Insurance Act, the Civil Servants' Health and Accident Insurance Act, and the Income Tax Act
5	Belgium	Law		Work from home, governed by the law of 3 July 1978 on employment contracts; structural telework, governed by the Collective Bargaining Agreement nr. 85 of 9 November 2005 on telework ("CBA 85"); occasional telework, governed by the law of 5 March 2017 on feasible and workable work ("law of 5 March 2017").
6	Bolivia	Law	2020	
7	Brazil	Awaiting conversion to Law		Provision Measure No. 1108 and 1109
8	Canada	Act	2017	Division I.1 - Section 177 Flexible Work Arrangements, Canada Labour Code
9	Chile	Law	2020	Distance Working and Teleworking Law No 21,220
10	Colombia	Law	2021	Remote Work Law 2121 and 2088
11	Czech republic	Act	2006	Act No. 262/2006 Coll., Labour Code.
12	Denmark	Rules/ Guidelines	2022	
13	El Salvador	Law	2020	Law of Regulation for remote work

14	Finland	Amendment in Act	2019	Finnish Working Time Act
15	France	Law	2017	Article L1222-11 of the French Labour Code (Pandemic specific only)
16	Germany	In progress		Mobility work Act
17	Greece	Law	2021	Legislation L4808/2021
18	India	SEZ centric	2022	The Department of Commerce 43A
19	Ireland	Bill	2021	Right to Request Remote Working Bill 2021
20	Italy	Law	2017	Law N 81/2017
21	Kenya	Bill	In progress	Employment Act section 10 of the Act
22	Luxembourg	Rules/ Guidelines	2021	
23	Malaysia	Only for government employees	2020	Service Circular No 5 Year 2020 (PP 5/2020)
24	Mexico	Law	2021	Remote Work Ammendment to Federal Labor Law on Teleworking
25	Morocco	Law In progress		Draft Decree
26	Netherlands	Bill	2022	Right to Work from Home Bill
27	New Zealand	Act	2000	Part 6AA: Flexible Working Arrangement, Employment Regulation Act, 2000, New Zealand
28	Philippines	Act	2019	The Telecommuting Act
29	Portugal	Law	2022	Remote Work Law Law No. 83/2021
30	Russia	Law	2021	Federal Law No.407-FZ
31	Saudi Arabia	Amendment to Law (Only for government employees)	2022	Amendment to labour laws
32	Slovakia	Law	2021	Ammendment to Labour Code
33	Spain	Law	2021	Law 10/2021
34	Turkey	Law	2021	Remote Working Regulation 1 under Labour Law
35	Ukraine	Law	2021	Law N 4051

36	United Kingdom	Law	2014	<p>"UK Government has committed to updating the Flexible Working Regulations (2014) which give all workers the right to request flexible working and imposes statutory obligations on employers to consider the request. Legislation expected in 2023 will enable workers to make this request from day one of employment.</p> <p>https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1398/made"</p>
37	United States of America	Act	2010	The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010

3. Appendix

List of Sub-national Policies

S.No.	State/Province	Country	Remote/ WFH Policy	Details
1	New York	USA	Yes	<p>Assembly Passes Bill Allowing Work-From-Home For State Employees</p> <p>The bill could allow nearly 20,000 state employees to work from home, easing the burden on many people</p> <p>Senate Bill S5536A</p> <p>Enacts the "New York city teleworking expansion act"; provides that each agency shall establish a policy and program to allow employees to perform all or a portion of their duties through teleworking to the maximum extent possible without diminished employee performance; defines the term "telework" to mean to perform normal and regular work functions on a workday that ordinarily would be performed at the agency's principal location at a different location, thereby eliminating or substantially reducing the physical commute to and from such agency's principal location.</p>
2	Paris	France	No	
3	Beijing	Japan	No	Beijing extended orders for workers and students to stay home and ordered additional mass testing
4	Toronto	Canada	No	

5	Moscow	Russia	Yes (bill)	Deputies of the Moscow city Duma introduced a bill suggesting adding provisions for remote work to the Labour Code. The ground for making such amendments are the difficulties in formalising transfer of employees to remote work which the employers faced during the pandemic.
6	Tokyo	Japan	No	
7	Queensland	Australia	Yes (Govt)	<p>Queensland Government employee flexible work entitlements are guaranteed by the employment standards contained in the Industrial Relations Act 2016. Most government employees have further guarantees provided for by a modern award and certified agreement.</p> <p>Most Queensland Government employees can request flexible work arrangements in the form of: hours of work (for example, changes to start and finish times) patterns of work (for example, split shifts or job sharing) locations of work (for example, working from home)</p> <p>The request must be in writing, state the change in the way the employee works in sufficient detail to allow the employer to make a decision about the request and state the reasons for the change.</p> <p>The employer may decide to grant the request, grant the request in part or subject to conditions or refuse the request.</p> <p>The employer must give the employee written notice about its decision within 21 days after receiving the request.</p>
8	Victoria	Australia	No	<p>COVID SPECIFIC</p> <p>*Many workers feel unsure of their rights as a result of COVID-19 coronavirus. There are five things Victorian residents are guaranteed during WfH:</p> <p>1. if your employer tells you to work from home because it is safer, this is probably legal</p>

				<p>2. your employer must make sure it is healthy and safe for you to work from home</p> <p>3. your employer can tell you to attend your usual workplace if that is lawful and reasonable</p> <p>4. if you cannot go to work and cannot work from home you might still be paid, but this depends on your situation</p> <p>*Employers must make sure that workplaces are healthy and safe. Employers must take reasonable steps to make sure working from home arrangements are safe for workers.</p>
9	New South Wales	Australia	Yes (Guidelines)	<p>* Some workplaces and workers may continue to work from home, depending on their circumstances.</p> <p>*Businesses have a legal responsibility to maintain a safe and healthy workplace and manage the risk of COVID-19 to workers. Businesses can allow staff to work from home at their discretion.</p> <p>*Whether working from home is reasonably practicable depends on the workplace and the facilities available to work remotely and safely from home.</p> <p>In deciding whether working from home is appropriate, businesses should consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the individual employee's role 2. the suitability of work activities 3. workflows and expectations 4. workstation set up 5. the surrounding environment such as ventilation, lighting and noise 6. the home environment, such as partners, children, vulnerable people and pets 7. the communication requirements such as frequency and type 8. the mental health and emotional wellbeing of the employee 9. safe working procedures and training requirements. 10. Any existing workplace policies on working from home also apply.

10	California	USA	Yes	<p>*Employers with remote employees in California need to ensure they are complying with the state's employment laws when it comes to those working from home. For purposes of the state's wage and hour laws, the home office is generally treated the same as the regular office.</p> <p>*For remote employees, what an employer may need to reimburse could include internet and cell phone services.</p> <p>*California's meal and rest period requirements also apply to employees who are working remotely. "Non-exempt employees are entitled to a 10-minute paid rest period for every 4 hours worked (or major fraction thereof)." Employees must also receive a 30-minute unpaid meal break for every five hours worked. Though meal and rest periods may be hard to track for a remote employee, it is important that employers communicate with the employees the company's policy and check in with employees to ensure compliance.</p>
11	Illinois	USA	Yes	<p>*Employers should also have a reimbursement policy in place and amend it as necessary to consider reimbursements related to telework. An employer telework policy must comply with the IWPCA, amended effective January 1, 2019, to require Illinois employers to reimburse employees for all "necessary expenditures or losses" incurred in the employees' scope of employment, with certain limited exceptions. When employees are required to telework, equipment costs (laptop, printer, doc camera, etc.), home office expenses (paper, toner, ink, etc.), phone bills, and internet costs may be concerns for employers and employees that were not previously at issue. In order for those expenses to be reimbursable under the IWPCA, they must be necessary expenditures required of the employee in discharging the duties of employment and must primarily benefit the employer.</p>

				<p>*Some employers have considered making changes to employees' compensation, such as reducing pay rates. Employers that are considering such changes should be aware of requirements imposed by the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act ("IWPCA"). First, any changes in an employee's rate of pay cannot be retroactive. 56 Ill. Admin. Code. § 300.630(d). This means that compensation for hours an employee has already worked must be paid at the employee's regular hourly rate. Second, if an employer wishes to change an employee's pay going forward, it must provide the employee a written notice of the change in pay.</p>
12	Ontario	Canada	Yes	<p>*Ontario, the ESA sets out specific rules pertaining to the minimum wage for "homeworkers". As contemplated under the ESA, homeworkers are individuals who do paid work out of their own homes. Employees who fall within this category are entitled to earn a minimum wage that is at least 110% of the general minimum wage rate. The earlier minimum wage rate applicable to homeworkers was \$15.70 per hour. Effective January 1, 2022, the minimum wage rate applicable to homeworkers is increased to \$16.50 per hour. they should be compensated for taking on certain overhead costs (e.g. heat, electricity, property taxes, cleaning, etc.) in connection with their employment</p> <p>*Employers who employ homeworkers are required to keep a register containing the name, address and wage rate(s) of the homemaker. This must be kept for three years after the homemaker has stopped working for the employer.</p> <p>*Homeworkers are eligible for every type of leave guaranteed to regular office workers including paid leaves, health leaves, family leaves, parental leaves.</p>

13	Alberta	Canada	Yes	<p>*Telecommuting workers may be covered under workers' compensation. When coverage is in effect, responsibilities under workers' compensation legislation (including recording and reporting accidents) still apply, even though the work is performed from the worker's home or another remote</p> <p>location</p> <p>*Telecommuting arrangements may be temporary or permanent. Temporary arrangements may include carrying out a time-limited project at home or working from home during a quarantine period. Permanent arrangements include workers who perform all or part of their duties out of their home on a regular basis.</p>
14	Washington DC	USA	Yes	<p>*The District of Columbia Human Rights Act (DCHRA) is one of the broadest workplace discrimination statutes in the country</p> <p>*The DCHRA protects both employees who are working remotely outside the District for employers located inside the District and employees who are working remotely inside the District for employers located outside the District</p> <p>*The District of Columbia Wage Payment and Collection Law (DCWPCL) requires employers to, among other things, pay employees on regular paydays; pay any outstanding wages to a discharged employee within one working day of their discharge</p> <p>*Like the DCHRA, the DCWPCL covers employees who are working remotely outside the District for employers located inside the District as well as employees who are working remotely inside the District for employers located outside the District. The only requirement that needs to be met is that the employer "employ[s] any person in the District of Columbia.</p>

15	Wisconsin	USA	Yes	<p>*Executive to come up with long-term telework options to boost and diversify state employee recruitment and a new all-in-one digital platform to streamline resident services</p> <p>*Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook Chapter 746 deals with Alternative Work Patterns and Telecommuting Policy</p> <p>*It provides guidance to agencies and appointing authorities to develop and implement Alternative Work Patterns, Telecommuting and Short-Term Telecommuting (STT) policies for employees</p>
16	Texas	USA	Yes	<p>*Texas Labour Laws are applicable to even remotely working employees</p> <p>*Salaried remote and on-site workers are subject to Texas and federal pay and overtime laws</p> <p>*Workers' Compensation Laws, Discrimination and Harassment Laws same as applicable to on-site employees are applicable even to remote workers</p>
17	Arizona	USA	Yes (Govt)	<p>*ARIZONA STATE PERSONNEL SYSTEM STATEWIDE Remote Work Program gives conditions for employment</p> <p>*It defines Remote Work that includes Virtual Office (Home)</p> <p>*The Remote Work Program is designed to make working at home an effective alternative to the traditional office arrangement</p> <p>*Employees will complete the required training and sign the remote work agreement</p>
18	New Mexico	USA	No	<p>Despite the lack of legislation or programs regarding remote work, the New Mexico government offers plenty of incentives, tax credits, and grants for small businesses throughout the state. These incentives include: Tax credits for high-tech companies, Tax credits for rural companies or companies that hire rural workers, High wage job tax credits, Research and development tax credits.</p>

19	Western Australia	Australia	Yes (guidelines)	<p>*WA government came up with guidelines for helping agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic to prepare for and facilitate remote working arrangements, including working from home where practicable *Directors general and CEOs have responsibilities under the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 for providing a safe place of work which extends to any approved remote workplace, including the home offices of employees who are working from home.</p> <p>As a general guide, agencies should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure they can continue to deliver essential services and government priorities under remote working arrangements 2. Have a specific response plan in place so that, if there is a government decision to close a workplace, agencies can quickly activate alternative ways of working 3. Be pragmatic when considering the risks associated with remote working, and develop flexible, practical processes and practices, consider how work could be redesigned to suit remote working arrangements 4. Refer to the latest Public Sector Labour Relations circulars which outline matters such as remote working and leave arrangements.
20	South Australia	Australia	Yes	<p>Remote or Isolated Work Safety (WHS) Policy Directive</p> <p>*Employers have a primary duty of care to ensure the health and safety of their employees. This duty applies to both physical and psychological health and extends to the home when work from home arrangements are in place *Safe Work Australia has an informative guide to cleaning and disinfecting work areas whether in the office or at home.</p> <p>* Employers entering into a work from home arrangement with a worker need to consider the risks related to mental health.</p>

				<p>*Both the employer and employee share responsibility for managing general WHS risks in the home environment.</p> <p>*Both the employer and employee share responsibility for managing general WHS risks in the home environment.</p>
21	Northern Territory	Australia	Yes	<p>*The NT Govt came up with a guide to raise awareness among persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs), safety practitioners, managers, supervisors and workers of the hazards that may be present for people required to work remotely or in isolation.</p> <p>*Under the WHS Act, both PCBUs and workers have a duty to ensure health and safety in the workplace. The Act defines the meaning of 'workplace' as a place where work is carried out for a business or undertaking and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work</p>
22	Tasmania	Australia	No	Only Lone Work +Remote Work Policy
23	Indiana	USA	Yes (Govt)	<p>*State of Indiana changing workplace policies, looking to hire employees</p> <p>*State has flexible work policy to establish eligibility requirements, procedures, and recommendations for Remote Work and Alternative Work Schedules. This policy is intended to further governmental efficiency and responsiveness without sacrificing accountability and the inherent benefits of in-person collaboration</p> <p>*This policy shall apply to all agencies in the executive branch of state government who employ individuals in the State Civil Service and all employees in the State Civil Service whose work may be performed somewhere other than state facilities.</p>
24	Cataluna	Spain	Yes	*In September 2020, when the Spanish government approved a new regulation saying that the implementation had to be agreed upon between worker and employer, and this agreement will be voluntary, reversible, and cannot be cited as a cause of dismissal of employees.

				*The Catalan government announced new economic and work measures to mitigate the impact of the covid-19 coronavirus
28	Saskatchewan	Canada	Yes (Govt)	<p>*This policy provides a framework for remote work within Executive Government. The policy outlines the circumstances where employer- or employee-initiated remote work may be appropriate, the process for approving such arrangements, and the manner in which these arrangements will be undertaken</p> <p>*Objectives: Set clear expectations to promote a consistent approach for remote work across Executive Government, Support the use of remote work as a business delivery model, support operational needs and contribute to a modern public service *Improve recruitment and retention of employees, Support a more diverse workforce and inclusive workplace, Support a healthy work environment for employees, Improve employee productivity, engagement and job satisfaction. ***Remote work is not a substitute for dependent care arrangements. The employee must ensure dependent care arrangements are in place and that personal responsibilities are managed in a way that allows the employee to successfully meet the position requirements</p>
29	Santa Cruz	Argentina	Yes	<p>*County Adopts Remote Work Policy</p> <p>*County announced the formal continuation of remote work options for employees, adopting new policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion while offering staff additional quality of life benefits</p>
				*While preserving government services and public counter hours, the new policy is expected to result in half of county employees working from home two days per week
30	Buenos Aires	Argentina	No	*Buenos Aires Pitches Remote Working but no policy in place
31	Mendoza	Argentina	No	

32	Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	No	Though there is national level policy, where in 2018, the Brazilian Labour Reform recognised remote work, there is no provincial level policy
33	Sau Paulo	Brazil	No	Though there is national level policy, where in 2018, the Brazilian Labour Reform recognised remote work, there is no provincial level policy
34		South Africa	No	
35	Vienna	Austria	No	
36	Burgenland	Austria	No	
37	British Columbia	Canada	Yes	<p>*Employees working remotely does not change employer's fundamental obligations. Management must comply with BC's employment standards in the same way they would if you were working from the office.*An employer's duty to maintain a safe working environment does not cease to exist just because their employees are now working from home.</p> <p>*It is your right, as the employee, to have access to the same health and safety protocols that you would have had whilst working in the office.</p> <p>*Under the BC Employment Standards Act, employers are prohibited from expecting their employees to incur any business expenses.</p> <p>*As with health and safety obligations, the employer still has a duty to ensure that employees are not being harassed, bullied or discriminated against.</p> <p>*If your company has decided to adopt remote working on a more permanent basis, it is important to adapt all current workplace policies to accommodate these changes.</p>
38	Quebec	Canada	No	
39	Manitoba	Canada	Yes(Govt)	Guide for implementing WFH at public offices
40	Lower Austria	Austria	No	
41	Chiapas	Mexico	No	
42	Hidalgo	Mexico	No	
43	Yucatan	Mexico	No	
44	Saxony	Germany	No	
45	Mato Grosso	Brazil	No	

46	Zurich	Switzerland	No	
47	Glarus	Switzerland	No	
48	Wales	United Kingdom		Introduced in September 2020, the Remote Working Policy promotes a workplace model where staff can choose to work in the office, at home or in a hub location. They aim to see 30% of the workforce working remotely on a regular basis, and create inclusive workplaces in their local communities that have equality at the heart of decision making.
49	Scotland	United Kingdom		Guidance for businesses and workplaces on reducing the risk of COVID-19 and supporting staff and customers. This provides recommendations to firms undertaking a hybrid work policy during the pandemic, in order to improve the wellbeing of the workers. For instance, it emphasizes agreeing with workers or their representatives, what model or models of hybrid working are going to be offered to the workforce.



4. Appendix

List of Indian organisations studied for the review

Sno.	Company	Industry	Hybrid Model	Details of Hybrid Model
1	Meesho	E-commerce	Yes	<p>*Permanently allow its employees to work from home, office or any location of their choice.</p> <p>*Meesho has over 1,700 employees currently and the new policy will be applicable to all employees</p> <p>Boundaryless Workplace Model</p> <p>Decentralised workforce While Meesho will be headquartered in Bangalore, the company will look to set up satellite offices across the country based on talent demand and density.</p> <p>Annual workations Meesho sponsored annual workations in places like Goa, Shimla, and Manali to foster team bonding and collaboration. Quarterly Summits Calendarised in-person quarterly connects to brainstorm, reflect and review goals while building team camaraderie.</p> <p>New joinee community Virtual boot camps and meet & greet sessions will help new joinees build a community culture and strong sense of connect with their entire team.</p> <p>Regional committees Employees can be a part of location-based regional committees like sports, marathons, community volunteering etc. These employee engagement activities will be augmented by centrally run employee delight events across boards. Employee support. Meesho sponsored daycare facilities for employees with children below 6 years of age at suitable locations. This service can also be availed during official travel to Meesho's headquarters in Bangalore.</p>

2	Accenture	Professional Services	Yes	<p>1. FlexLeave: a voluntary sabbatical programme which the company offers where there is a recognised business need. This programme is typically a 6-18 month partially paid opportunity for employees to pursue their interests (for example, travel, charity work, non-company sponsored study, work in a different field)</p> <p>2. Part time</p> <p>3. Telecommuting/Work from Home</p> <p>4. Compressed work week</p> <p>5. Enabled their people with disabilities to work effectively from home with the help of the right technology and tools including assistive technologies and ergonomic adjustments</p> <p>6.No one size fits all and therefore their approach to how, when and where their people work will vary by business, team, and the type of work people do</p> <p>7. To enable work from home, it extended a \$250 allowance to purchase furniture, etc.</p>
3	Amazon	E-commerce	No	Amazon is inviting its employees back to the workplace
4	Infosys	Professional Services	Yes	<p>With the Infosys Return to Workplace initiative, the company is moving towards a hybrid model of working - Virtual@Home and Physical@Offices.</p> <p>Infosys has a three-phased plan on work from home. In the first phase, the company is encouraging employees who are in their home locations where DCs (development centres) are located or are in the upcountry town close to the DCs to come to the office twice a week. In the second phase, the company will encourage people who are outside the DC towns to start making preparations over the next few months to see if they can come back to their base development centres. In the long term, it is looking at the hybrid model on work, depending upon the clients, regulatory environment and a number of other considerations.</p>
5	Wipro	Technology	No	

6	ITC Infotech	Technology	Yes	<p>*Developed a Work from Anywhere (I - WFA) productivity framework</p> <p>*It enables digital, distributed, flexible, outcome driven and secure future work scenario for clients and employees. It powers a distributed workplace and decentralised workforce.</p>
7	Tata Steel	Manufacturing	Yes	<p>*About 30 per cent of the other white-collar profiles in Tata Steel are working from home or have the flexibility to be location agnostic. Tata Steel is now planning to bring the perks of work from home for factory operators and blue-collar employees too.</p> <p>*The company has started pilot projects creating digital twins of their factories to make operations outside from the factories feasible. It is making a progress in re-skilling and on robotics to help blue-collar jobs move to a flexible work mode.</p> <p>*Some roles and profiles like that in IT have now completely moved to work from home and have opened the doors for talent across cities.</p> <p>*The company is aiming at 100 percent of its employees to have access to flexible working</p> <p>*Introduced "agile working model in 2020" Under this, officers who are required to be based out of a particular location can now work from home for unlimited days in a year.</p> <p>*They give the employee the flexibility to operate out of any location in the country. After reviewing the policy a year later, the company is narrowing down profiles that can work from home permanently</p>
8	Zerodha	Digital Stockbroking	Yes	<p>*The company's core team will continue to work on a hybrid model, and nearly 950 of its total 1,100 employees will work from home permanently.</p> <p>*Opted for permanent work from home for close to 90 per cent of its employees</p>

9	Maruti Suzuki	Automobile	Yes	<p>* Company has opted for a hybrid model and continued with the flexible working option</p> <p>*It was announced that they will select a section of people who can completely work from remote locations without the need to come to the office</p>
10	Oziva	Consumer goods	Yes	<p>*It provides a work from home option for mothers with children upto the age of 3 years. The company also provides permanent work from home option for new mothers..</p>
11	TCS	Technology	Yes	<p>*Providing its employees with the flexibility to work from home. TCS has also been considering letting a section of their employees work in the hybrid model i.e where an employee works in the office for 2 days a week and works from home for the rest of the working week.</p> <p>*TCS has said that only 8% of the employees will be working from the office in a hybrid model. The 8% of employees will include senior executives and top authorities who will be working 3 days a week from the office. For the remaining days, they can work from home, i.e. 50,000 top level employees</p> <p>*TCS is implementing its 25:25 vision for a remotely based workforce that is free to collaborate digitally and innovate without the constraints of a physical office.</p> <p>*The 25:25 concept means that by 2025 only a quarter of the TCS workforce will be in an office at any given time, and each employee will spend no more than 25% of their time in an office throughout the year.</p>
12	Whitehat Jr	Online education technology	No	

13	Tech Mahindra	Technology	Yes	<p>*Tech Mahindra will eventually have close to 25-30 percent of its employees work from home (WFH) permanently</p> <p>*Post-COVID, as businesses seek to migrate to permanent WAH contact centre solutions, company's "people and technology model" becomes imperative for this wave of the future</p> <p>*Tech Mahindra, a proven global leader in the WAH Contact Center space, has successfully deployed over 15,000 agents remotely globally in response to the COVID outbreak; Remote agents allow to keep the business going</p>
14	Mercedes-Benz	Automobile	Yes	<p>* Mercedes-Benz India is looking to mandate only three working days in the office per week while having two days of work-from home days</p> <p>* The new normal will be a mix of both online and offline.</p>
15	HUL	Consumer goods	Yes	<p>Hybrid working arrangements</p> <p>*HUL believes that when done right, hybrid working creates an inclusive, flexible environment where people can perform at their best and teams can collaborate, connect, create and celebrate successes together. *In the long term, company expects a ratio of 80:20 where 20 per cent of its staff could fall in the flexible bracket.</p> <p>*U-Work:Under this employment model, employees get the freedom and flexibility associated with contract roles with the security and benefits typically linked to permanent roles.</p> <p>*Employees opting for this can design work patterns that suit them - anything from a few days a week for a few months, to short, concentrated bursts of full-time with breaks in-between</p>

16	Cisco	Networking hardware & software	Yes	<p>*Employees can opt to work permanently from home</p> <p>*Flexible and adaptable workplace to what works best for each individual and team.</p> <p>*Cisco is challenging itself as Fortune's World's Best Workplace two years in a row to becoming the "World's Best Hybrid Workplace."</p> <p>*Office Spaces to be converted to centres of collaboration.</p>
17	Grant Thornton Bharat	Professional services	Yes	<p>*First company in India to offer unlimited leaves.</p> <p>*Offers work from anywhere forever option.</p> <p>*Its national office at New Delhi has has a digitally enabled hot-desking system i.e workers do not have a permanent assigned seat in an office and take up whatever desk is available.</p> <p>*The firm will also offer alternative career paths to individuals who choose to work from home permanently.</p>
				<p>*The company has planned to open multiple offices to give access to people and reduce travel time. This will also give those who do not have appropriate space to work from home the option to work from an office space which is closer to them</p>
18	Reliance Jio	Telecommunications	Yes	
19	Swiggy	Online Food Ordering	Yes	<p>*Swiggy announces permanent work-from-anywhere policy for most roles.</p> <p>*The corporate, central business functions and technology teams will continue to work remotely and converge once every quarter at their base location for a week to promote in-person bonding.</p>
20	Zensar Technologies	Technology	Yes	<p>*The company has started asking employees to come back to office a few days in a week to ensure they are able to connect with their managers, peers, and colleagues</p>

				<p>*It is providing a flexible option of two/ three days a week at the moment</p> <p>*Around 10-20 per cent of its employees are working from office locations.</p> <p>* Hybrid policy will be based on feedback from our employees, customer requirements, regulatory environment, and other factors</p>
21	HDFC Bank	Banking	Yes	<p>*Adopted a hybrid work policy, which will be revisited time and again</p> <p>*People have to attend office but no further details on the same has been discussed</p>
22	Tata Motors	Automobile	Yes	<p>*Adopted a hybrid work model</p> <p>*45 per cent of its employees are required to come to the office twice a week while the rest are employed at its factories.</p>
23	HCL Technologies	Technology	Yes	<p>*In the long term, the work model will be hybrid in which the employee would come to the office and also work from home.</p> <p>*After a few weeks, the management will analyse whether it is possible to get people back to offices.</p> <p>*However, the company is focussed on getting its employees back to office</p>
24	Nestle	Consumer goods	Yes	<p>Employees can choose to work from the office or continue to work from home; it's their choice. For the next couple of months, this will be the case, after which we will take a further call.</p>
25	PAYTM	Technology	Yes	<p>The company will allow employees in tech, business and product roles to work from home or any location of their choice. This is a continuation of the remote working movement that began during the covid period.</p>
26	Marico	Consumer goods	Yes	<p>*The company has rolled out a hybrid work policy for all its employees.</p> <p>*According to the new policy, employees will be moved to a 'Work from Office on Roster' (WFOR) system under which they can come to the office on a pre-decided frequency.</p>

				<p>*Over the next 12-18 months, the company will provide a location flexibility option to all its members across grades based on role and individual needs, allowing them to work from a location outside the 'base location' of their role.</p> <p>This will be based on personal circumstances. Employees can avail this option if their partner's work location is based out of Marico's base location and if an immediate family member requires immediate medical attention for an extended duration. Depending on the life stage of the employee, if there are any other circumstances, it can be discussed with the manager and approved by the respective CXO and CHRO on a case-to-case basis.</p> <p>*A "hot desking" area will also be reserved for staff coming out of their turn</p> <p>*The company has already provided laptops to all members, enforced stronger cybersecurity measures, implemented an organization data classification framework, launched a new internet policy, as well as rolled out an MS Productivity tool.</p>
27	Vedanta	Oil, gas and petroleum	Yes	<p>* Vedanta Group has started a roster system where each employee has to come to the office two days a week, and has no plan to return to 100% back to work</p>
28	Rama Prasad Goenka (RPG) Group	Conglomerate	Yes	<p>*RPG Group sets a benchmark once again by launching India's first and permanent WFH policy that no longer needs its employees to go to their workplaces every day - even beyond these unprecedented COVID times.</p> <p>*The RPG Group is the first Indian diversified conglomerate to create and launch such a policy. This trailblazing Employee-First policy is setting global benchmarks on:</p> <p>a) How companies can work for the best interests of their people b) Benefits and infrastructure support to ensure smooth remote working</p>

				<p>The company always had a WFH policy for our office staff up to a few days in a month. But this new policy will extend to even our factories, plantations, sales offices, etc. If you are not physically required to be at your workplace e.g. a shop floor employee or a security officer, you could avail of this policy.</p> <p>*The new normal is 50% WFH or WFA (Work from Anywhere), going up to 75% in certain cases. This will also help them rationalise our office real estate space and enable hot desking and covers employees in all its group companies in all geographies around the world, including CEOs and senior leadership.</p>
29	Cognizant	Technology	No	The company has started to call back its employees since April
30	ICICI Bank	Banking	Yes	<p>*The bank has stated 3 kinds of roles evolving</p> <p>1) customer-facing roles which require employees to have face-to-face interactions such as servicing and sales. This set of employees will necessarily be WFO as the WFH model is not practical.</p> <p>2) here will be certain roles that can be performed from home. This involves specialised individual contributors who need minimal supervision such as specialist underwriters and data scientists. They can move to work from home</p> <p>3) there are hybrid roles where employees need to come to office for team meetings or where employees are working in cross-functional projects and need to interact with others. Here, it will develop a framework where employees can opt for WFH on certain days of the month.</p> <p>*The option of WFH will definitely be given to employees who are caregivers, or have health conditions.</p>



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