

Women, House Work & Covid-19 Pandemic: Content Analysis of Digital Discussions¹

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown brought to light the severely coded gendered roles of housework. The lockdown has led to a shadow pandemic with the women being burdened with multiple roles and responsibilities. The purpose of this study is to explore the digital media discourse revolving the gendered division of labor during the lockdown. Digital media became an integral part of information dissemination during the pandemic and thus it became an important source of understanding how and what was reported during the period of April 2020 to August 2020. This is a qualitative research using content analysis and a descriptive design to examine three media spaces- News Sites and Instagram and Facebook. Analysis reveals that the Covid-19 induced lockdown led to a reinforcement of gender roles. The digital discourse is predominantly urban and focuses on urban working mothers juggling work from home routines, home schooling and the smooth functioning of the household. It pointed to the fact that it took a global crisis for men of the house to finally shoulder some responsibility, with many men contributing for the first time. Men taking up household chores was something "special" and came with the expectation of admiration. The lockdown was opportune for women to voice out against the deep-sated patriarchal norms of society and bring focus on the amount of work they have to shoulder under the guise of "duties", which remain unheard otherwise.

Key Words: *Division of housework, Covid-19 Shadow Pandemic, Gendered division of labor, Gender inequalities and lockdown*

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