



Voice of Women

The largest pan-India study of working women

August 2024



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Foreword

Profound socio-economic changes in recent decades have created new opportunities for women's involvement in India's rapidly evolving workforce and industries. Despite progress, statistics on workplace gender diversity in India reveal that there is still work to be done.

Women continue to face underrepresentation in leadership roles, discrimination in hiring and promotions, disproportionate domestic responsibilities, safety risks, and barriers to reaching their full potential.

The Voice of Women Study, 2024 by Aon sheds light on the complex challenges surrounding women's diversity and inclusion in India's changing workplace dynamics, offering valuable insights and solutions.

Embracing women's full participation in the workforce is not only a matter of rights but also an economic imperative for India, leading to increased productivity and prosperity.

Collective efforts are needed to create an inclusive society where every woman can fulfil her potential and contribute meaningfully. It calls for the involvement of government, private sector, social sector, academia and individuals to dismantle barriers and foster women's advancement.



Nitin Sethi

Chief Executive Officer,
Aon Consulting, India



Shilpa Khanna

DEI Practice Head & People
Advisory Leader,
Aon Consulting, India

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Introduction



Methodology



Survey aim

To explore gender-related experiences and challenges in corporate India, thoughtfully capturing cultural and contextual nuances to inspire change.



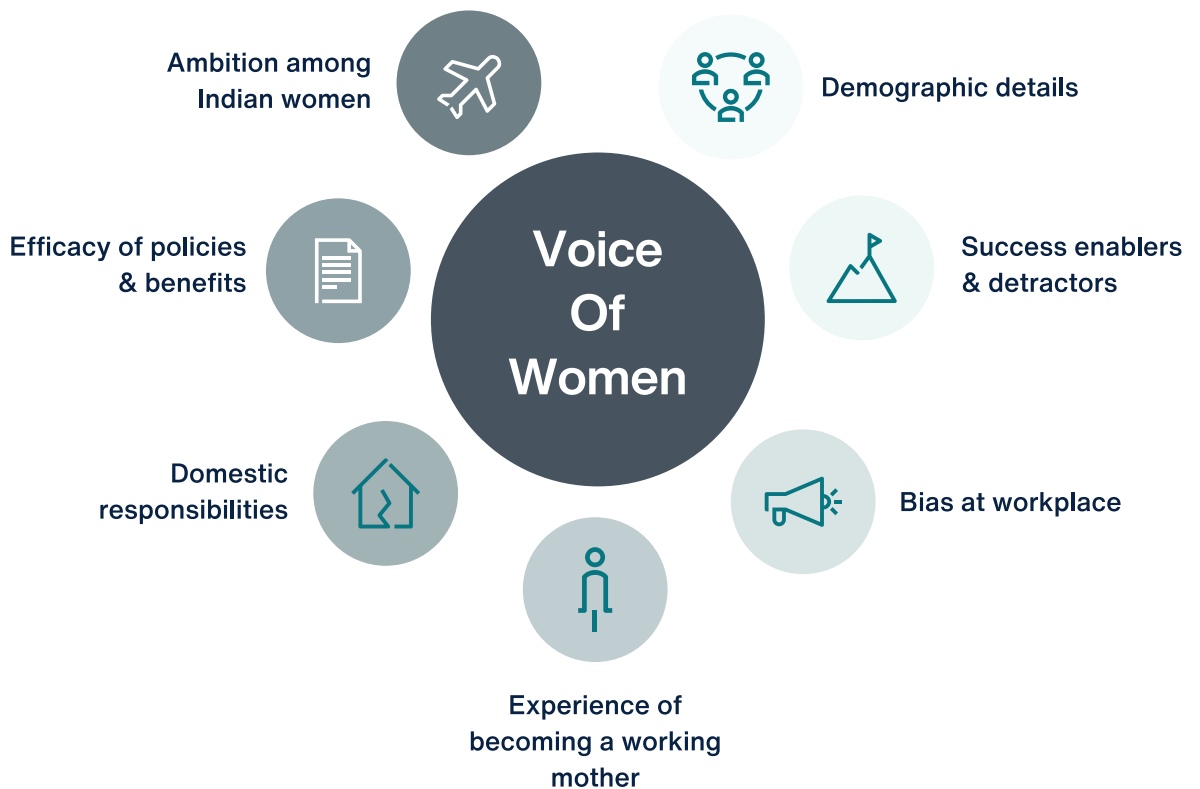
Survey duration

The findings in this report are based on a three-month survey conducted from March to June 2024 followed by two-months of analysis.

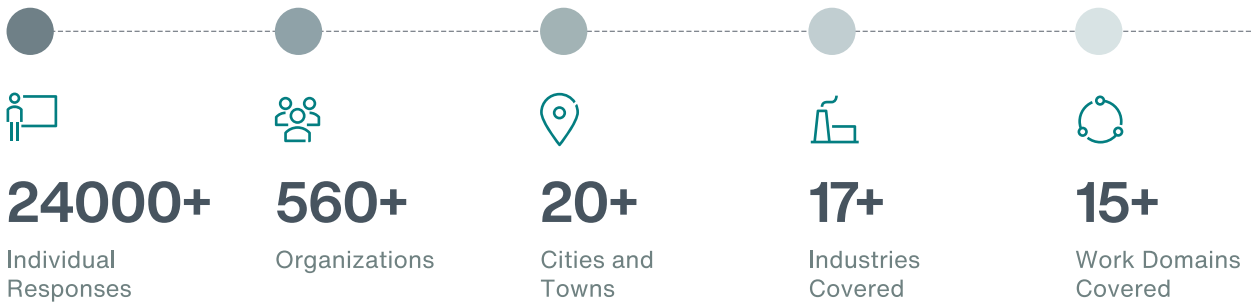


Data collection

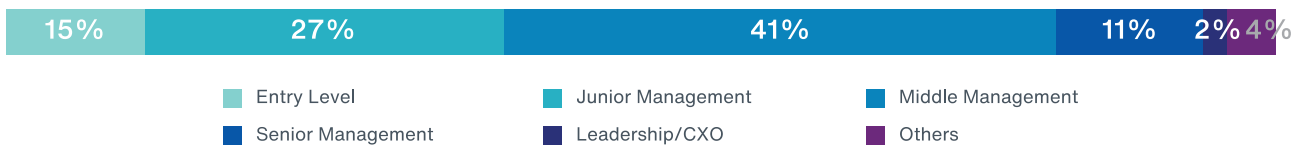
Data was collected through a dynamic online survey.



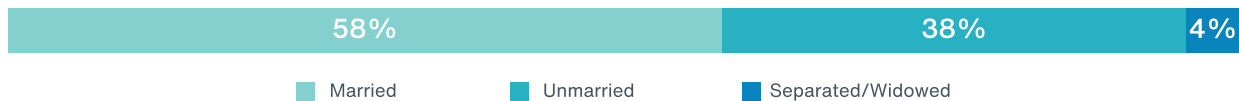
Participants Demographics



Career stages



Marital status



Intersectionality



Representation of mothers



Family structures



2

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

The "Voice of Women Study 2024" is the largest study of women in the Indian workforce. Key insights from this comprehensive research provide valuable data on the cultural and contextual nuances of enablers and challenges faced by women in corporate India. The study aspires to encourage transformative changes within India Inc. by unapologetically uncovering ground realities.

Women continue to be resilient in the face of workplace discrimination

Women are motivated and ambitious, yet many face workplace discrimination based on gender, age, marital status; experience microaggressions and deal with career setbacks after maternity. As per our findings 1 in 3 women experience insensitive behaviour at work. Critically, women who face bias are 3.5x more likely to leave their organisation in less than 1 year.

Women are driven by key success enablers and detractors

Work-life balance, supportive management, and career development were rated as the top 3 success enablers that impact women's workplace experiences, while inequitable pay, limited career progression, and work stress were rated as the top 3 detractors.

Managers define a woman's workplace experience

A supportive and inclusive manager is key to work success and reduces the likelihood of attrition for women. As per our findings the primary reason influencing intent to leave within 2 years was the lack of a supportive and inclusive manager.

Support on the personal front is a game-changer

Women continue to be burdened with the larger share of household and caregiving responsibilities, leading to mental exhaustion and less time for self-care.

Women leaders are the silver lining

Having visible female leadership has a positive impact on women in the workplace. It reduces their perception of prejudice and increases confidence in themselves and trust in the organisation.



73%
women rate themselves as highly ambitious



90%
women are willing to put in extra effort at work



42%
women have faced bias at the workplace or remain unsure



56%
of women who faced sexual harassment in their workplace, did not report it



36%
women have faced a career setback post maternity break



64%
is women's share of domestic responsibilities regardless of income or family structures

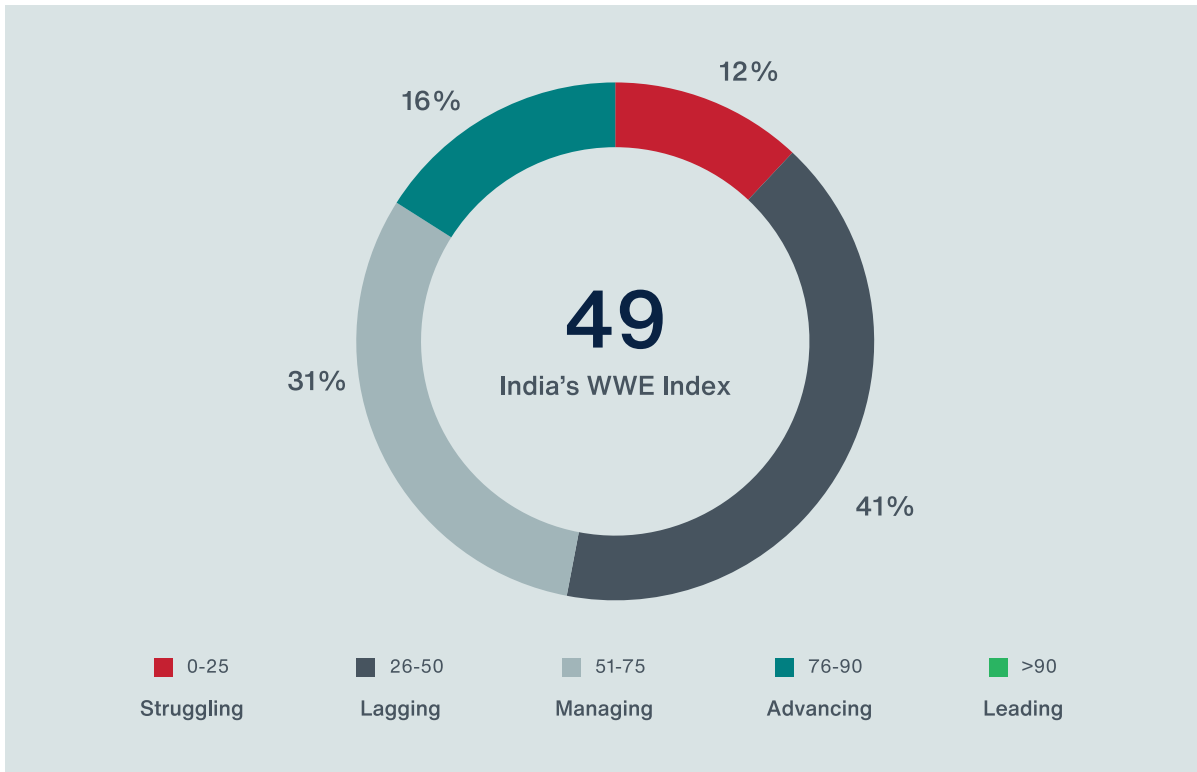


81%
women feel mentally exhausted



53%
women feel they can grow in an organisation with visible female leadership

Women's Workplace Experience (WWE) Index



Aon's Women's Workplace Experience (WWE) Index assesses women's experiences based on the Voice of Women Survey and their representation in the workplace. The score provides an overall view of women's perception of positive experiences in their workplace in relation to diversity numbers. This comprehensive analysis plays a crucial role in evaluating gender equity within organisations.

India Inc. is falling behind. 53% of participating organisations are struggling or lagging behind. 31% demonstrate an average performance in managing workplace experiences for women. No organization in the survey scored high enough to be in the green zone.

We looked at women's experiences across:

- Ambition
- Success enablers and detractors
- Policies and programs at work
- Bias at the workplace
- Maternity and domestic responsibilities

The factors that significantly impact the score at a national level in India Inc. are:

- Visible female leadership
- Flexi-work options
- Inclusive work culture
- Returnship program after career breaks
- Work life balance

3

Women are
willing to go
the extra mile



3 Women are willing to go the extra mile

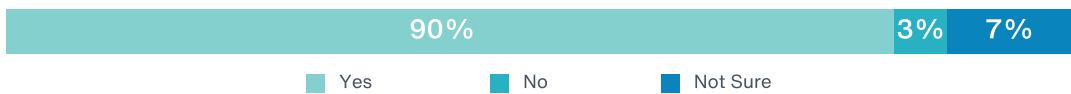
9 out of 10 professionally working women in India say they are ambitious



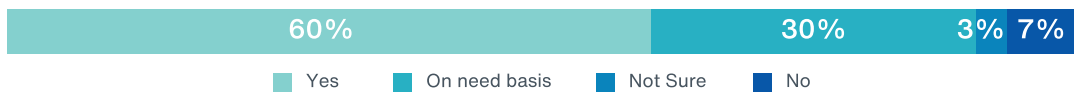
73% of women rate themselves as highly ambitious—busting the conventional notion that women aren't as ambitious as their male counterparts and that lack of ambition holds them back.

9 out of 10 women demonstrate eagerness to go the extra mile

I am willing to take extra effort to achieve professional success



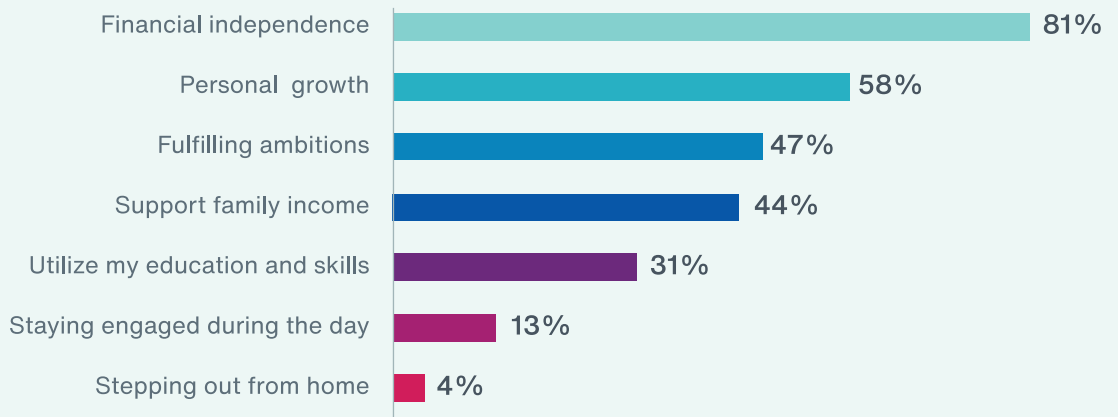
I am willing to travel for work



90% of women are willing to put in extra effort, upskill themselves, and take up challenging projects and assignments to boost career growth and achieve professional success. Furthermore, data indicates that marital status and maternity have minimal impact on women's willingness to travel for work, with 89% of married women and 88% of mothers expressing readiness for work-related travel, compared to 92% of unmarried women and non-mothers.

Women's motivations for pursuing corporate careers in India demonstrate clear priorities

My primary motivation to work is

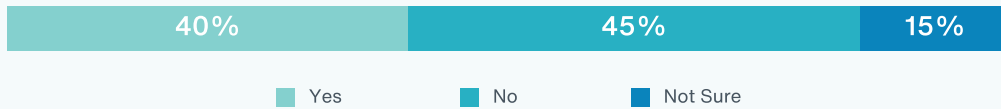


Financial independence, personal and professional growth rank among the top three reasons for women pursuing work. Our analysis also showed that the most popular and least popular motivators for women at work do not change across demographics, such as age groups, career stages, marital status, motherhood, or tiers of cities. Across these groups, being financially independent ranked as the number-one reason for women pursuing corporate careers. For women belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community and women who were widowed, 'support family income' replaced 'fulfilling ambitions' as the top 3 motivator. Less prominent motivators included "staying engaged during the day" (13%) and "stepping out from home" (4%).

3 Women are willing to go the extra mile

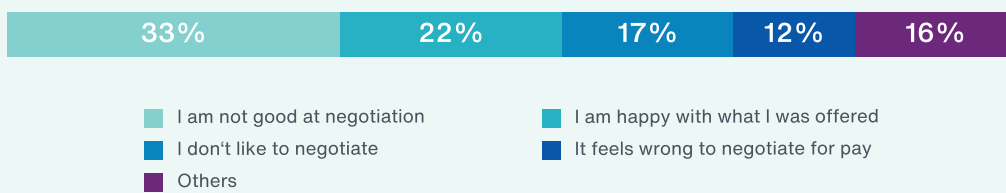
Silence at the salary table

I have negotiated for my compensation



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not Sure

What holds you back from negotiating for



■ I am not good at negotiation ■ I am happy with what I was offered
■ I don't like to negotiate ■ It feels wrong to negotiate for pay
■ Others

Did you get what you negotiated for



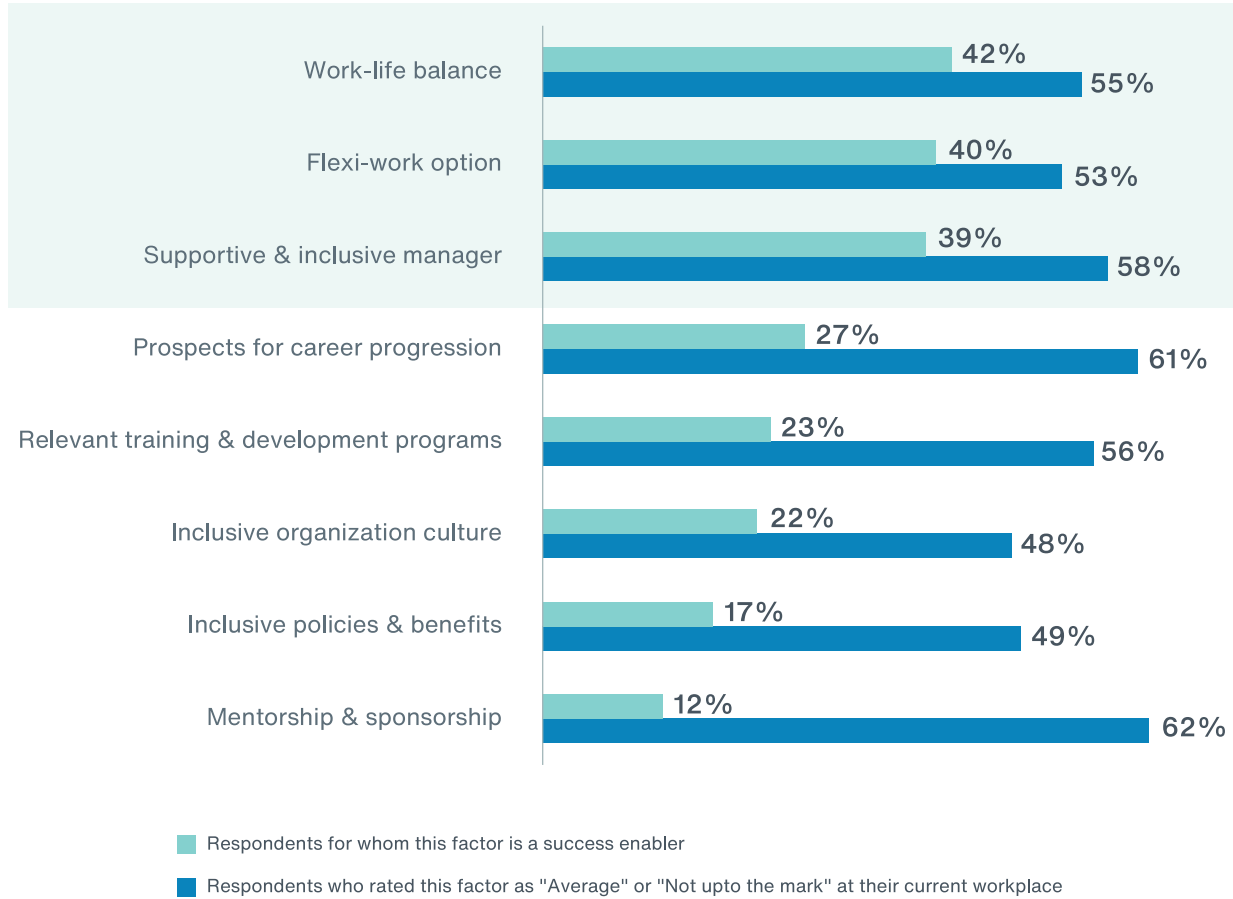
■ Yes, I got what I asked for ■ I got a better offer than before, not what I asked for ■ No, there was no change in the offer

60% of women reported reluctance to negotiate or lack of skills to advocate for themselves in salary negotiations. However, among those who did negotiate, 62% achieved positive outcomes, either securing better offers or precisely what they asked for. Often, a lower starting salary is the biggest contributor to the gender pay gap in organisations. Negotiating fair pay from day one is key to closing this gap, as initial wages can shape earning potential throughout a career.



3 Women are willing to go the extra mile

Accelerators for professional success of women



In order to bolster their ambition and set them up for success, it is important for us to consider these key enablers. The high ranking of supportive managers accentuates their critical role in fostering women's career growth and enhancing the overall employee experience. Notably, inclusive policies, benefits, and caregiving support rank in the bottom three, which could suggest these are seen as fundamental workplace requirements rather than direct success enablers. This hierarchy of factors provides valuable insights for organizations aiming to optimize women's career advancement and job satisfaction in the Indian corporate landscape.

A concerning gap emerges between identified enablers and workplace realities. Despite the evident importance of flexible work, supportive management, and work-life balance, a substantial percentage of respondents report dissatisfaction with these factors in their current roles. The gap between acknowledged success enablers and actual experiences accentuates the need for organizations to translate awareness into actionable strategies, creating more conducive environments for women's professional growth and satisfaction.

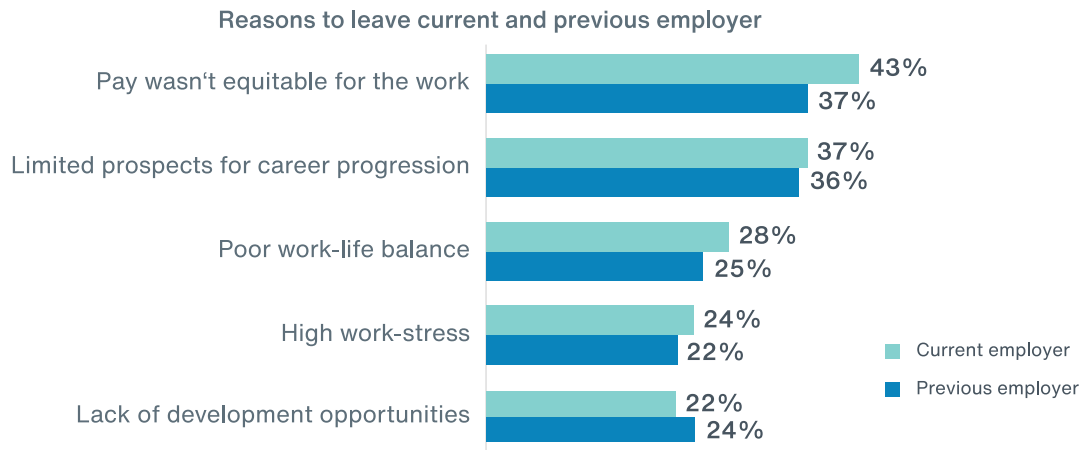
4

But why are
they leaving?



4 But why are they leaving?

Inequitable pay cited as the main driver for leaving their past and current employer



Our analysis reveals that inequitable pay, limited career progression prospects, and poor work-life balance are the top reasons for women to consider leaving their current employers. Notably, these same factors were instrumental in their decision to depart from their previous organizations. It's worth highlighting that traditional factors like marriage and childcare played a minimal role.

These top reasons remained the same even when looking at different cohorts, like working mothers, women with disabilities and women from the LGBTQI+ community. These findings suggest that creating a more equitable, supportive and inclusive work environment may be vital in retaining female employees across various demographics.

The primary reason influencing intent to leave within 2 years is lack of supportive and inclusive manager

- #1** Lack of a supportive and inclusive manager
- #2** Lack of an inclusive organizational culture
- #3** Experiencing microaggressions or bias

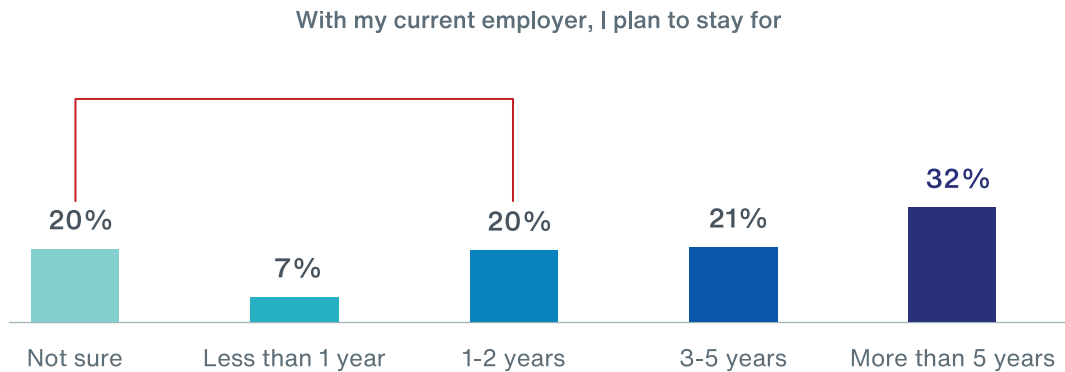
We used predictive modelling to understand the factors that were influencing women's intention to stay in their jobs. The model considered 169 different survey variables and categorized respondents as either "plans to stay for less than two years" or "plans to stay for more than two years."

The topmost influential factor on staying intention was having a supportive and inclusive manager. If a respondent rated their manager as not supportive and inclusive, the model was more likely to predict that they would leave within 2 years. Factors related to the workplace environment were found to be the most critical in determining whether someone plans to stay, while domestic and familial duties were not even among the top 15 influencing factors out of the 169 variables.

Our research reveals a gap between the reasons women report for leaving their organisations and the underlying factors influencing their decisions. While women cite inequitable pay, limited prospects of career progression, and poor work-life balance as catalysts for departure, our model identifies some of the latent factors which don't get acknowledged. These encompass the lack of supportive manager, absence of an inclusive organisational culture, and experience of microaggressions or bias. This disparity suggests that companies may be missing the real reasons why women leave their organisations.

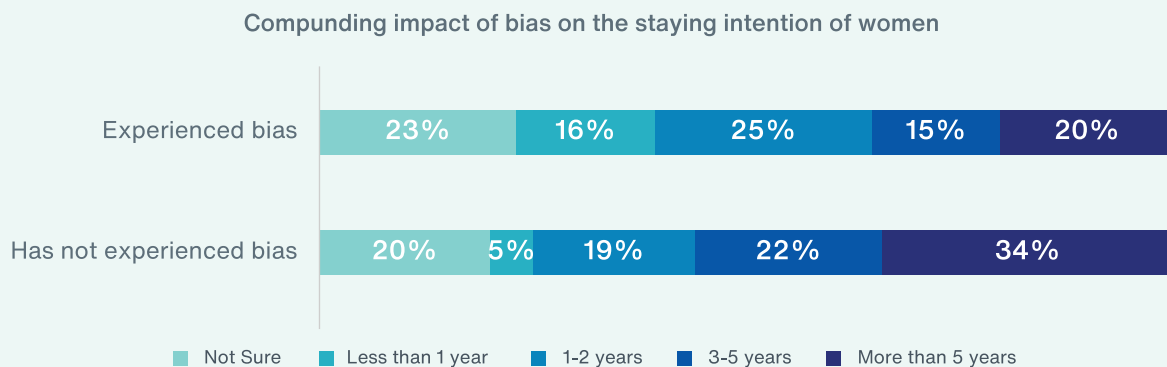
4 But why are they leaving?

**27% of women plan to leave their current organisation within the next two years,
20% remain unsure**



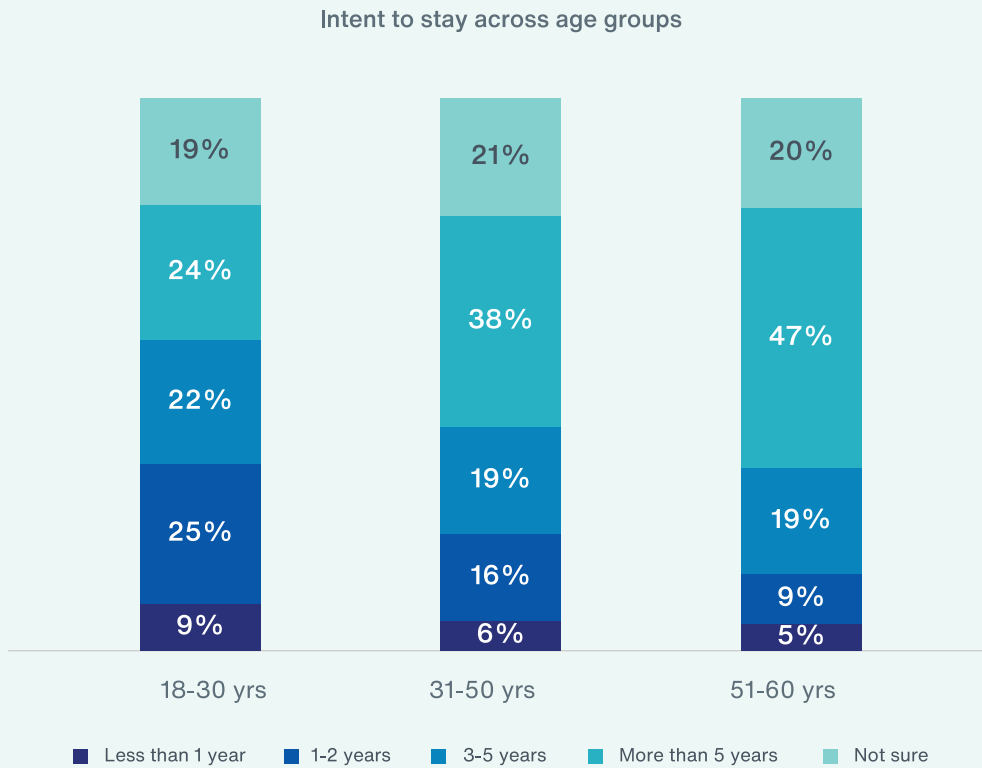
27% of women in Indian organizations intend to leave their current positions within two years. Working mothers showed a higher affinity for stability with approx. 60% reporting that they plan to stay for 3 years or more in their current organisation.

Experiences of discrimination significantly impact women's intentions to stay with their current employers



Out of the women who have experienced bias at the workplace, 41% reported that they will leave their organization within two years. However, this percentage was significantly lower (24%) for women who hadn't experienced bias. This 17-percentage points difference highlights the impact of bias on job satisfaction. These findings emphasize that creating an inclusive culture is not just an ethical imperative but an essential strategy for retention.

Longevity at a company is not for the young: Younger women are 1.6 times more likely to leave the workforce within two years



Younger women in the workforce are more likely to leave their current organizations within two years. Data shows that 34% of women aged 18-30 intend to depart within two years, compared to 22% of those aged 31-50. This 1.6-fold difference in turnover intention highlights the need for age-specific retention strategies.

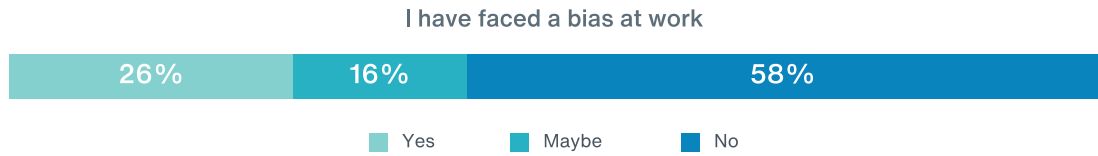


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Discrimination
persists

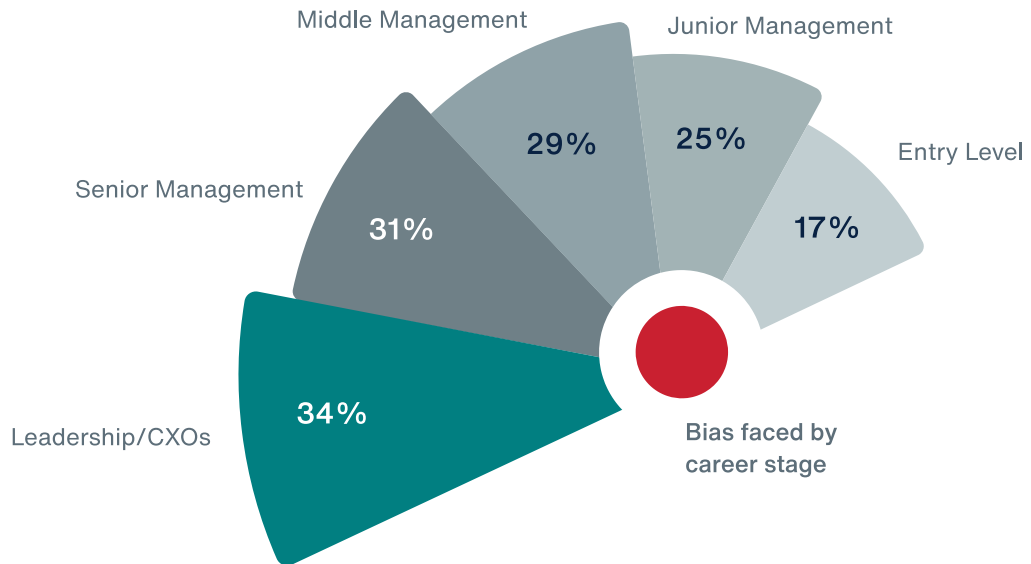


42% of women encounter workplace bias during their careers



26% of women reported experiencing bias in the workplace, and an additional 16% of women reported that they may have encountered bias in the workplace.

Women in leadership roles are twice as likely to face bias compared to those at entry levels



Women in senior and top management face increased discrimination with over 30% of them reporting facing bias as against 17% at the entry level. Furthermore, 29% of women at middle management reported having faced bias at their workplace. This layer likely encounters bias from upper management and direct reports both, amplifying its influence and possibly contributing to the “leaky pipeline”.

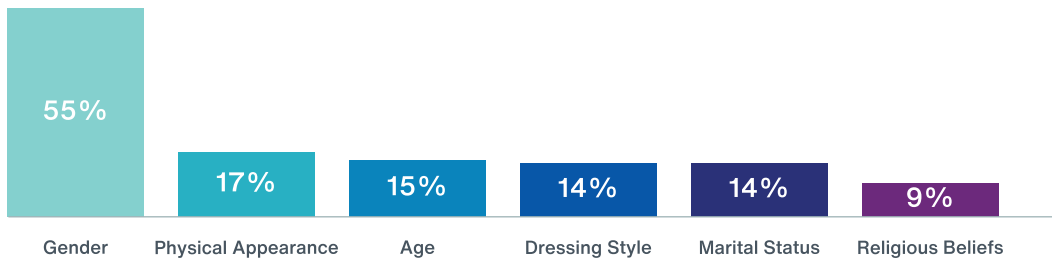
Bias is pervasive for working mothers and other under-represented groups



Have or may have encountered bias at the work

Bias has a greater impact on women across certain cohorts. Women in leadership roles, working mothers, women with disabilities and those belonging to LGBTQIA+ community face a higher incidence of bias.

Bias at work manifests in various forms



A deep dive into data indicates that women across career stages experience a multitude of bias, with gender bias being the primary one. Bias is embedded in the system and continues to operate even as women progress across career levels and life stages.

Bias in action; one in three women experience insensitive behaviour at work

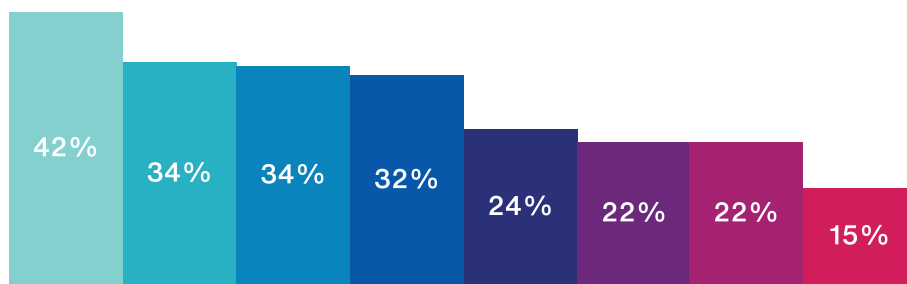
Have or may have encountered microaggressions at work



There is a concerning prevalence of microaggressions occurring in the workplace as 37% of women have reported experiencing the same. These experiences of insensitivity can have far-reaching implications that don't just affect their immediate work environment but also the overall culture of the organisation.

Insensitive behaviour is directed towards undermining commitment and value

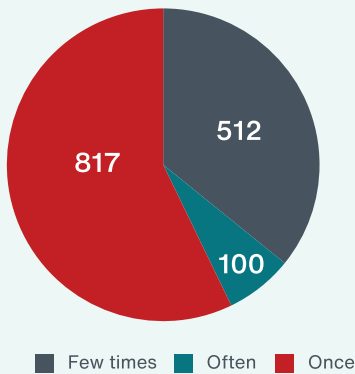
Types of insensitive behavior at work



- Judgemental comments or expressions on leaving work early/remote working
- Being interrupted and/or talked over in meetings
- Having someone else take credit for my idea
- Being excluded from informal conversations or interactions
- Assumption of career growth due to gender/disability/sexual orientation over competence
- Unwanted jokes at my expense
- Assumption of lack of competence due to gender/disability/sexual orientation
- Subtle exclusion from formal meetings (for example at late hours)

The findings reinforce years of research that women face microaggressions at work in the form of subtle and seemingly innocent comments based on stereotypes. Being excluded from informal conversations or interactions; being talked over in meetings, as reported by 1 in 3 women, are subtle forms of discrimination.

1 in 16 women report having experienced sexual harassment at work



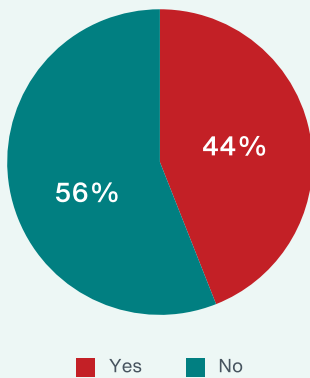
6% (1429) women have reported facing sexual harassment at least once in their careers.

These findings suggest that sexual harassment in the workplace remains an unresolved problem.

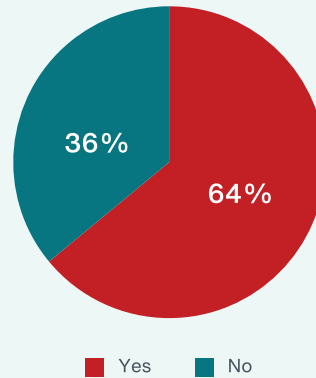
The experience of harassment highlights the need for comprehensive measures that address both recurrent and isolated cases.

1 in 2 women who experienced sexual harassment did not report it

I reported the incident



I believe it got adequately resolved



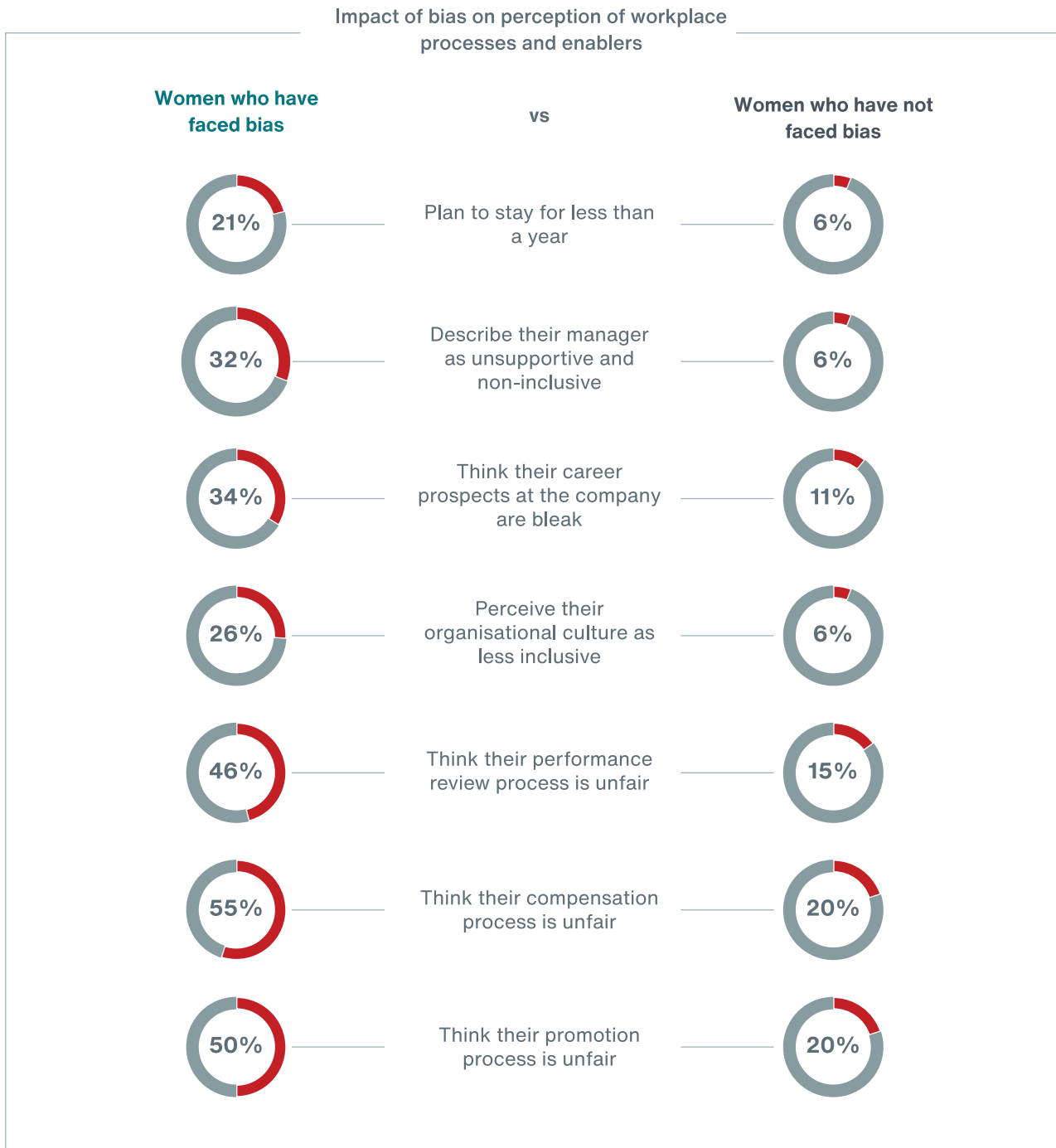
56% of those who conveyed experiencing sexual harassment at work did not report the incident. Of those that reported the incident, 1 in 3 women say it was not adequately resolved. No significant difference was noticed in reporting if one has a female or male manager.

Higher rates of sexual harassment among women with disability and women from the LGBTQIA+ community



Women from marginalised groups are more likely to experience sexual harassment at the workplace. The incidents of sexual harassment reported by women with disabilities and women from the LGBTQIA+ community were 1.5 to 2 times more than their non marginalised counterparts.

Bias has a compounding impact



Women who face bias are **3.5x** more likely, than those who haven't, to perceive aspects of their organisational experience as unfair. The compounding impact of bias erodes organizational trust.

6

Paying the
maternity
penalty



Going on a maternity break significantly impedes career advancement

Facing a career setback after returning from maternity break

1 in 3 Mothers faced a **career setback** after returning from maternity

75%

Faced a career setback of up to 2 years

25%

Faced a career setback of 3+ years

Working mothers in India Inc. confirm a visible impact of the maternity penalty on their careers. A concerning 36% of women report experiencing significant career setbacks post-maternity, reflecting across multiple professional dimensions such as pay, promotion, and performance ratings. This trend has potential far-reaching consequences for both individuals and organizations.

A multifaceted penalty

22%

got a job role that they didn't prefer

39%

received a lower performance rating than previous year

38%

were due for promotion and didn't get promoted thereafter

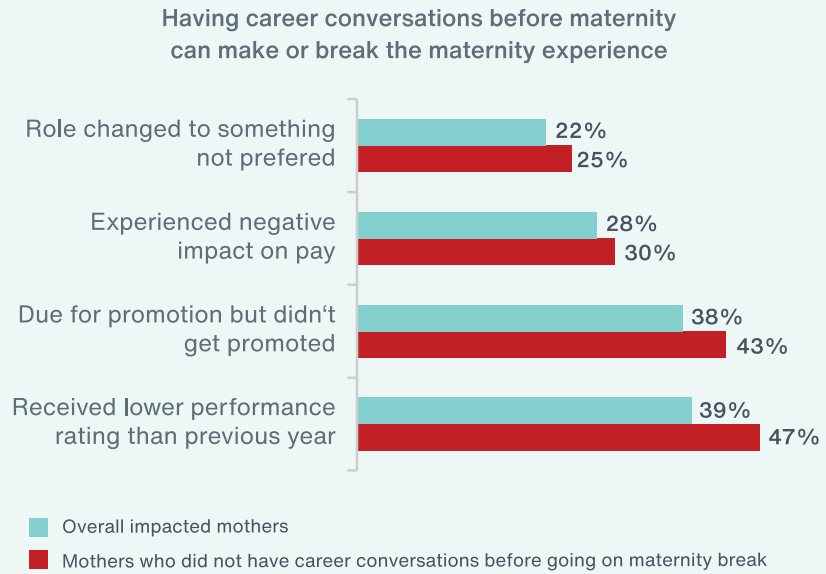
28%

experienced a negative impact on pay

The maternity penalty permeates multiple facets of a woman's professional life, significantly impacting role assignments, performance evaluations, promotion and advancement opportunities, and compensation structures.

The compounding impact across multiple dimensions creates a formidable barrier to career progression.

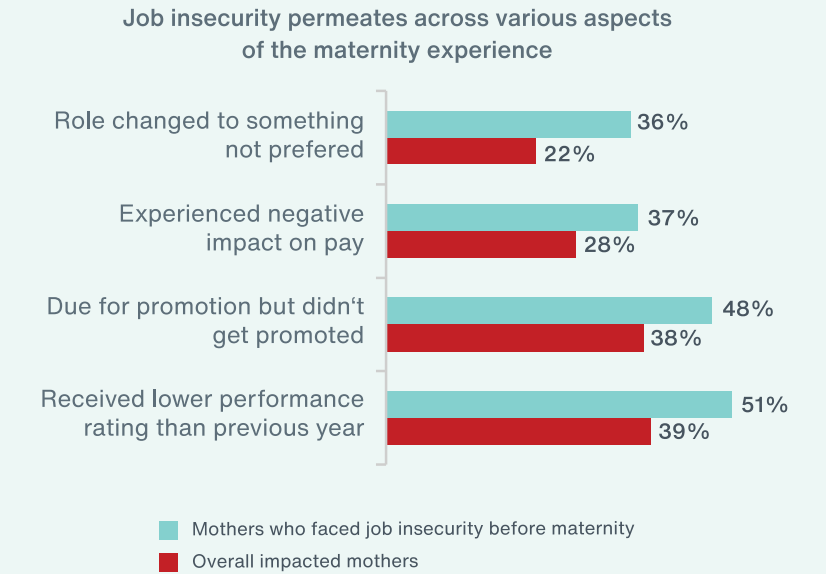
Pre-maternity career conversations are pivotal to career progression



Analysis of the maternity experience across respondents reveals that women who engage in structured conversations with their managers before maternity leave consistently report more positive outcomes across multiple career dimensions upon their return. These findings emphasize the critical role of managerial support, open dialogue and reintegration plans in mitigating the maternity penalty.

Moreover, the data suggests that these discussions serve as a powerful tool for aligning expectations, ensuring continued career momentum, and fostering a supportive workplace culture. The contrast in outcomes highlights the imperative for organizations to institutionalize pre-maternity career discussions as a standard practice, potentially through formalized programs or managerial training initiatives.

The uncertainty principle



About 18% of women in the workforce clearly stated that they experienced job uncertainty before going on maternity leave. Our data indicates that job insecurity is linked to increased concerns across various aspects of their careers such as role, performance ratings, promotion, and pay. Therefore, addressing concerns about job security before taking maternity leave could have a positive impact on critical professional areas.

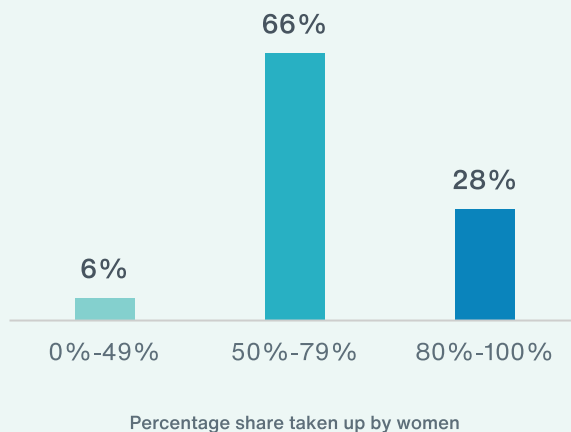
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Facing the
burden of
caregiving

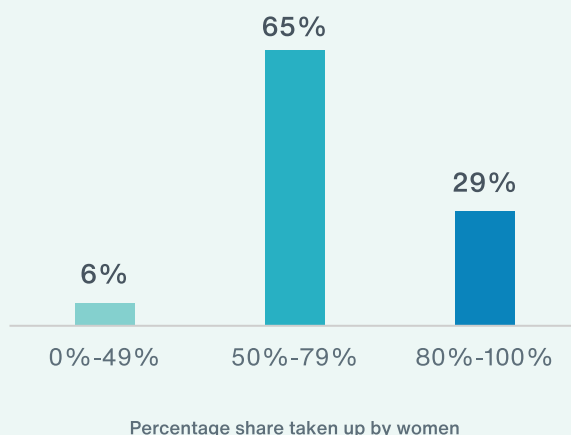


Women still take up the larger share of household and childcare responsibilities

Overall share of household responsibilities taken up by respondents



Overall share of childcare responsibilities taken up by respondents



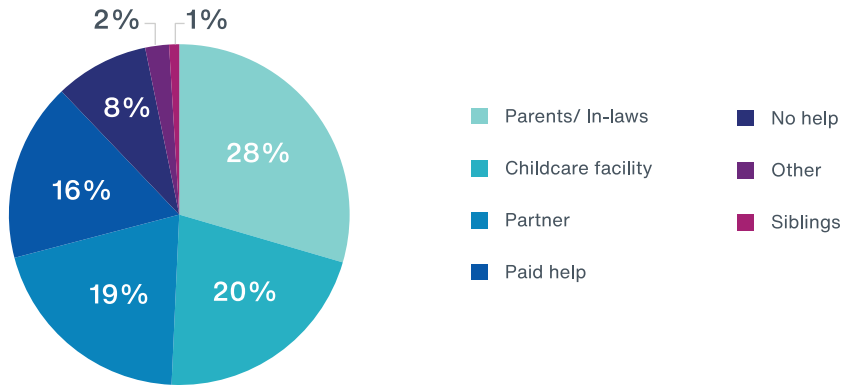
Women face a "time poverty," i.e. Women shoulder majority of household and childcare responsibilities regardless of their income or family structure. This leaves little or no time for self-care or leisure.

66% of women manage between 50 to 79% of household responsibilities, and nearly 1 in 3 women handle 80 to 100% of domestic responsibilities. A similar share is taken up by women in the case of childcare responsibilities as well.

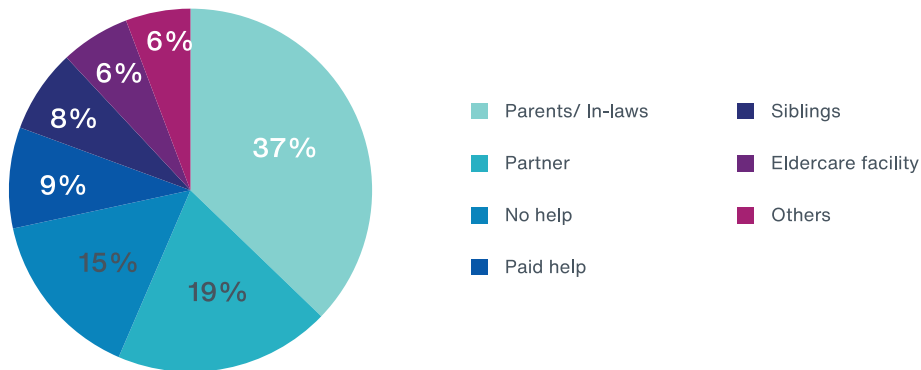
The disproportionate distribution of unpaid domestic duties presents a significant challenge for women, underscoring the need for organizations to have supportive and flexible policies that accommodate their diverse needs.

Family support is the most leveraged form of support for care-giving

Childcare support for women



Eldercare support for women



For childcare and eldercare, Indian working women rely on their parents/in-laws and partners for support. With childcare, women also leverage personally arranged childcare facilities, while for eldercare, they take the onus on themselves or family.

63% of women leverage family and paid help for childcare support, only 20% of mothers rely on childcare facilities such as daycare centres and creches. Indian women’s preference for family and paid help over organisational or institutional support indicates the effect of societal norms around intergenerational family ties and the perpetuation of traditional gender roles.

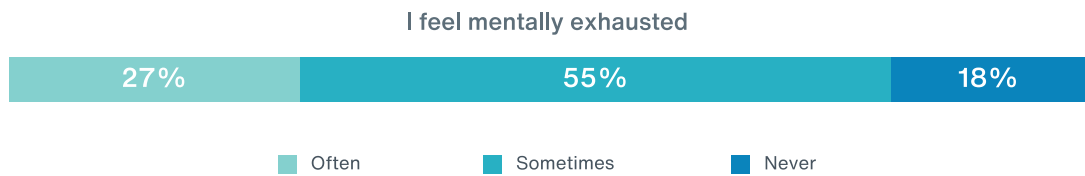
It also emphasises the need for organisations to relook at their childcare policies and work with childcare centres to best meet the need of parents balancing work and family responsibilities.



Gambling mental health



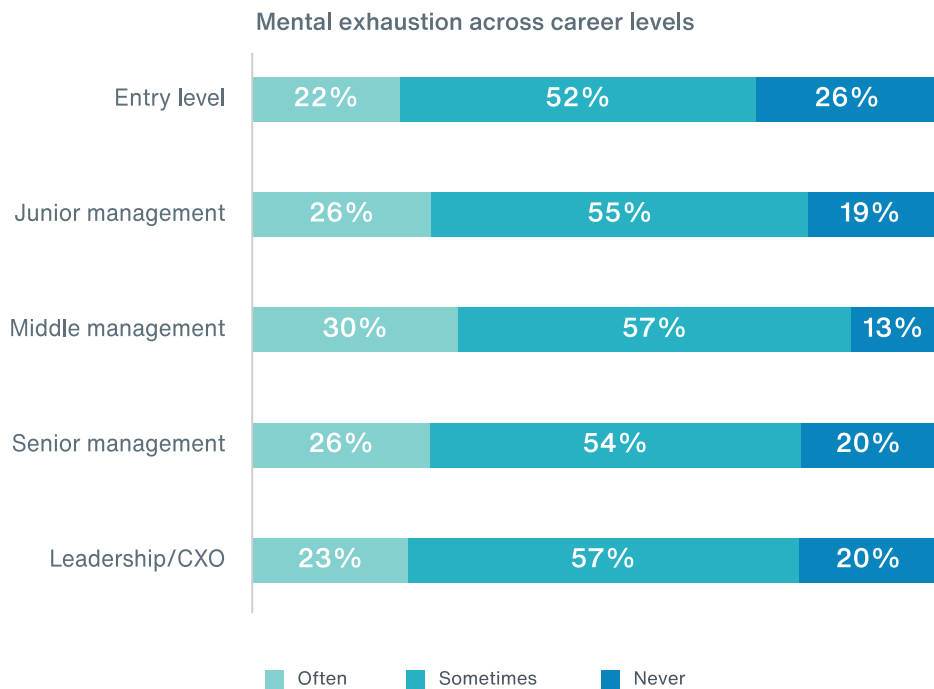
Women are mentally exhausted



Mental exhaustion is a prevalent cause for concern among working Indian women. According to our data, 8 in 10 women report experiencing mental exhaustion. The data accentuates the significant pressure women face while balancing career and domestic commitments and navigating societal and workplace bias and insensitivities.

There is a deep struggle with addressing mental health issues culturally, and the lack of focus on this, particularly in the workplace, may lead to continued burnout, characterized by reduced performance, disengagement, and potentially stepping away from the workforce.

Women in middle management experience greater mental exhaustion



These numbers place emphasis on the challenges that women in middle management face due to evolving life stages, which involve new experiences such as motherhood. These experiences may exacerbate time poverty and push women to work that much harder to prove themselves, thereby contributing to increased mental exhaustion and potentially a leaky pipeline. This data also suggests that systemic issues need to be addressed to support women's mental well-being in the workplace in line with their life stages and experiences to prevent burnout.

Experiences at work fuel mental exhaustion among women

Top factors that exacerbate mental exhaustion among women

- #1** Exposure to microaggressions
- #2** Poor work-life balance
- #3** Exposure to bias

We did further analysis of our data to determine what are the top factors that are positively correlated with poorer mental health outcomes for women. Exposure to microaggressions, poor work-life balance and bias can all heighten mental fatigue.

Our data shows that 1 in 3 women experience microaggressions in the workplace. This is concerning since, according to the above, experiencing microaggressions is the factor that exacerbates mental exhaustion among women the most.

Safe and culturally inclusive workspaces contribute to better mental health outcomes along with family support

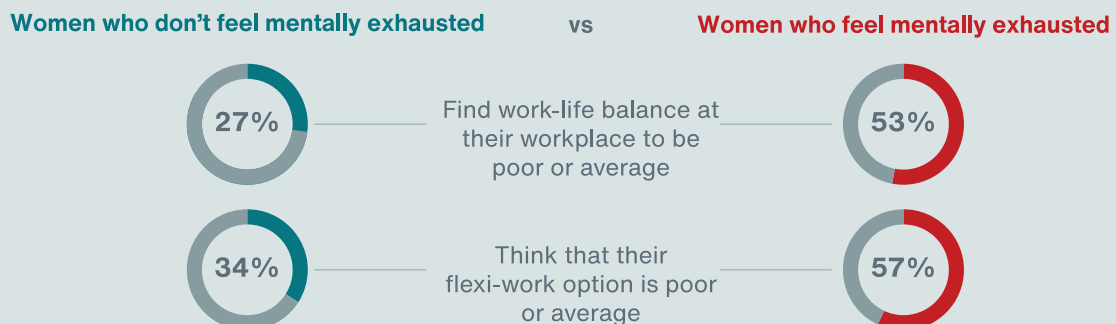
Factors that mitigate mental exhaustion among women

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; color: #c00000; margin: 0;">#1</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0 0 20px;">Absence of discrimination (bias, insensitive behaviour and sexual harassment)</p> | <p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; color: #c00000; margin: 0;">#2</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0 0 20px;">Support from family, especially parents</p> | <p style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold; color: #c00000; margin: 0;">#3</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0 0 20px;">Being able to freely use inclusive policies</p> |
|---|---|---|

Analysing factors negatively correlated with poor mental health outcomes revealed three mitigating factors: absence of discrimination in all forms, having the support of family, notably parents and the ability to freely utilise inclusive policies in the workplace.

The strongest correlation with reduced mental exhaustion is found in workplaces that are free from discrimination. Moreover, women who feel they can freely utilize inclusive policies, such as flexible working, tend to experience better mental health outcomes. These are important indicators for organizations to consider to prevent burnout and fatigue among working women.

Higher levels of mental exhaustion can lead to poor perceptions of work arrangements and balance at work



High levels of mental exhaustion among women are linked to greater perceptions of poor organizational practices, particularly in areas of work-life balance and flexible work options. This connection implies that women suffer noticeably less mental exhaustion in workplaces that provide flexible work schedules and successfully enforce work-life integration policies.

This highlights the critical importance of progressive workplace practices in fostering a healthier, more balanced work environment for all employees, with a particular positive impact on women's mental well-being.

9

Broken
organisational
promises



Organisations' efforts towards inclusion are getting noticed

My organization is taking concrete steps to advance gender diversity & inclusion at workplace



Policies and programs at my workplace are designed to be inclusive and equitable

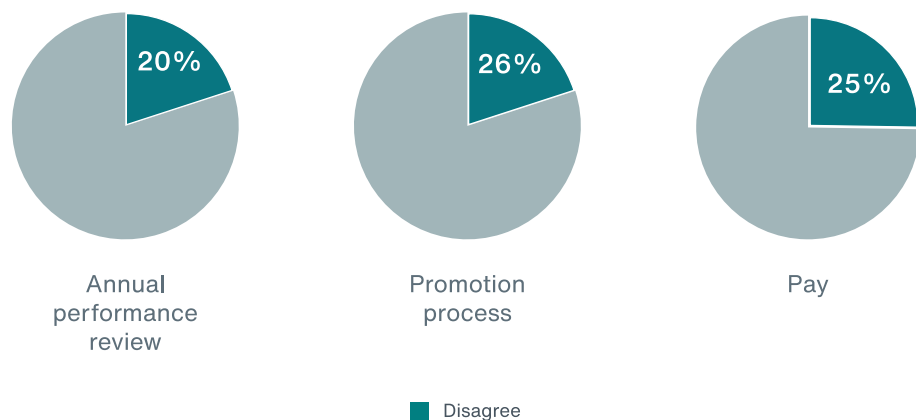


Data indicates growing optimism among Indian women about workplace diversity, with 83% observing concrete steps towards gender inclusion and perceiving policies as equitable.

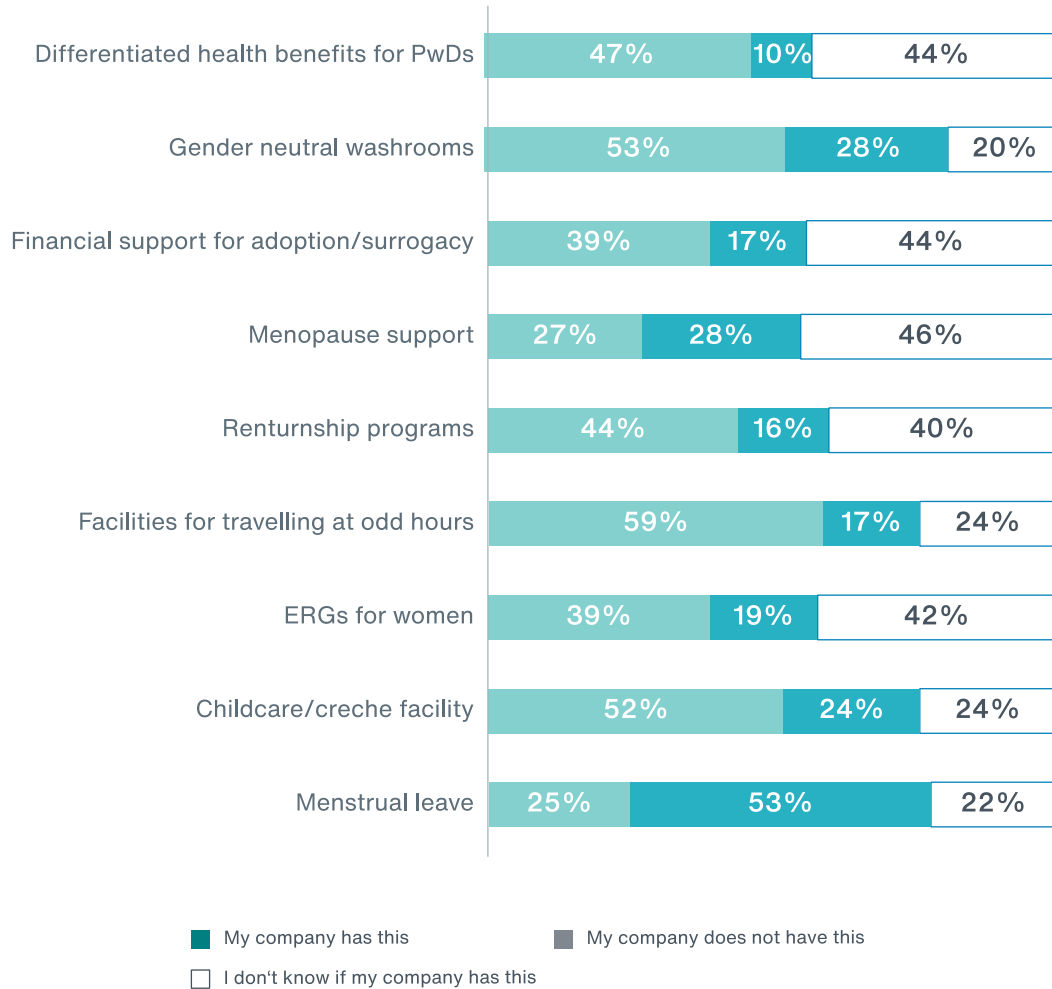
1 in 4 women find critical processes/practices unfair between men and women

Despite increased awareness and policy advancements promoting pay equity, 25% of women perceive unfairness in pay relative to their male counterparts. This statistic elaborates on the ongoing disparities, emphasizing the imperative for organizations to implement robust and transparent pay management processes to ensure fairness and equity.

These processes are fair between men and women



Lack of awareness on organizational policies and practices impedes support for women in India Inc.



A significant proportion of women in Indian organizations remain uninformed about the support policies available to them, highlighting a critical awareness gap that needs to be addressed.

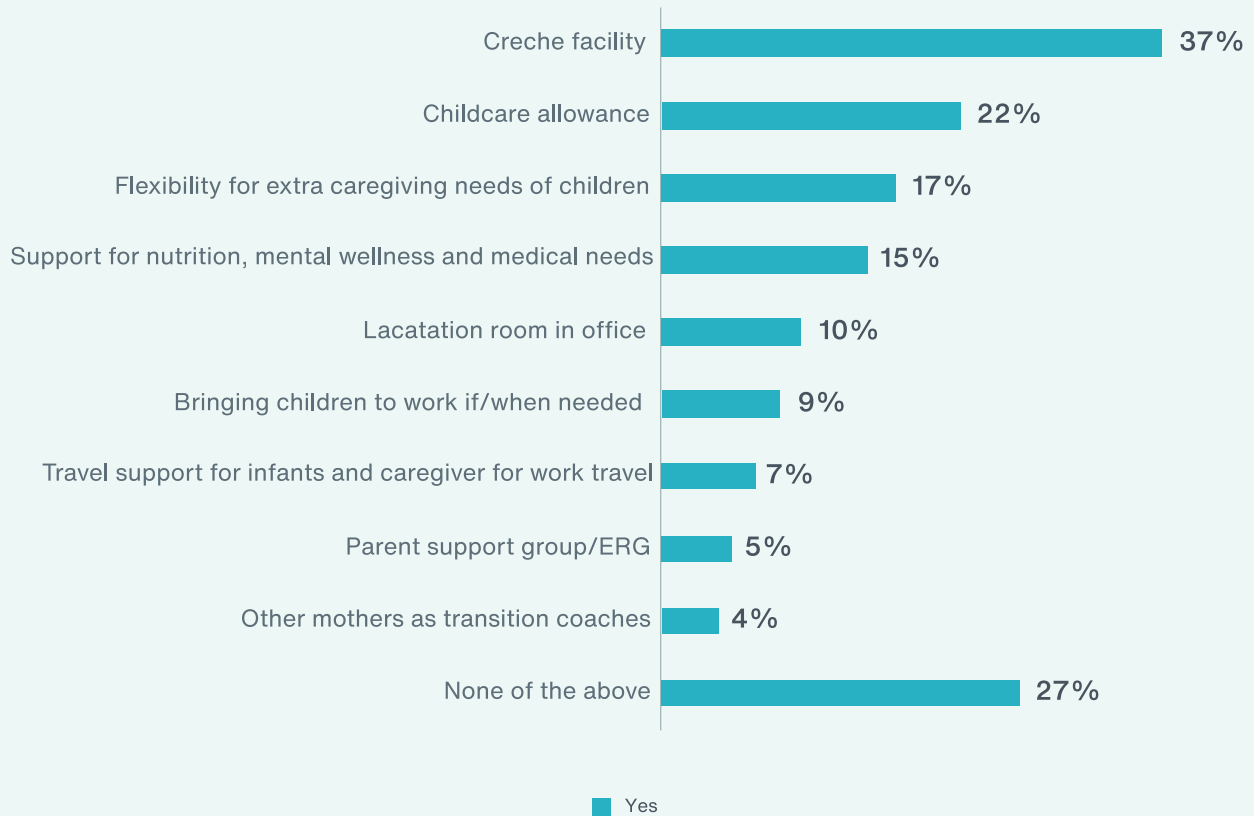
Specifically, many women are unaware of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) designed for their support, financial assistance for adoption and surrogacy, menopausal support programs, and health support for persons with disabilities (PWDs). 40% of women did not know if their company has a returnship program to support women post a career break.

Gender-neutral washrooms and safety measures for late-night travel are among the most utilized policies, emphasizing their importance and the need for their widespread implementation.

Being aware of the resources and benefits available better prepares the women employees to navigate the challenges of career breaks, menopause, adoption, surrogacy, disability etc. Hence, bridging this awareness gap is crucial for fostering a more equitable workplace in India Inc.

India Inc. falls short in supporting working mothers

My company has the following programs to support mothers



The data from our study showcases lack of awareness and utilisation of these benefits with more than 90% of survey respondents reporting lack of lactation rooms, travel assistance and parent support groups and 63% reported absence of creche support. This potential gap between policy and execution is crucial to ensure effective support for working mothers in Indian organizations.



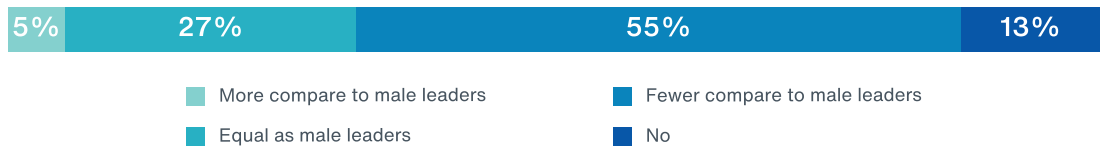
10

Women are
women's
silver lining



Gender gap in leadership positions continues to persist in India Inc.

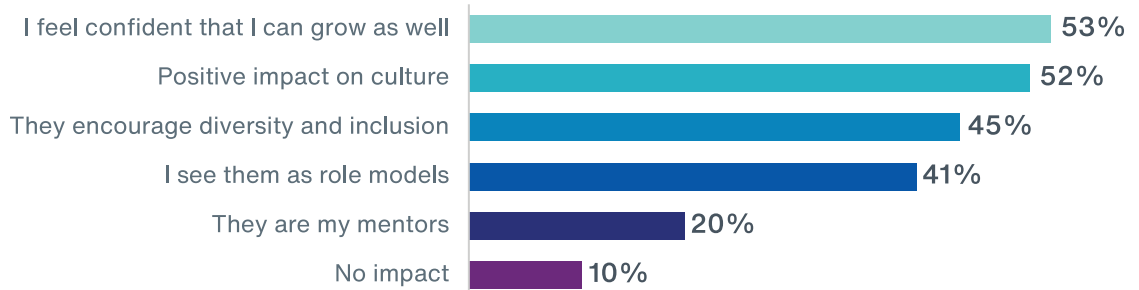
My current company has female leaders



The scarcity of women in leadership positions within Indian organisations represents a critical challenge for workplace diversity and organizational performance. Despite narrowing the gap in junior and middle management, the persistent underrepresentation of women in leadership roles suggests systemic barriers to career advancement.

Women in leadership have a positive impact on female employees

Impact of having female leaders



Despite underrepresentation, women leaders are setting new standards for leadership and are viewed to have a positive impact on organisation culture. More than 50% of survey respondents believe that women leaders improve company culture and provide confidence regarding the opportunity for growth in their organisations. About a similar percentage reported that women leaders are active champions of diversity and inclusion in their organisations and are viewed as role models.

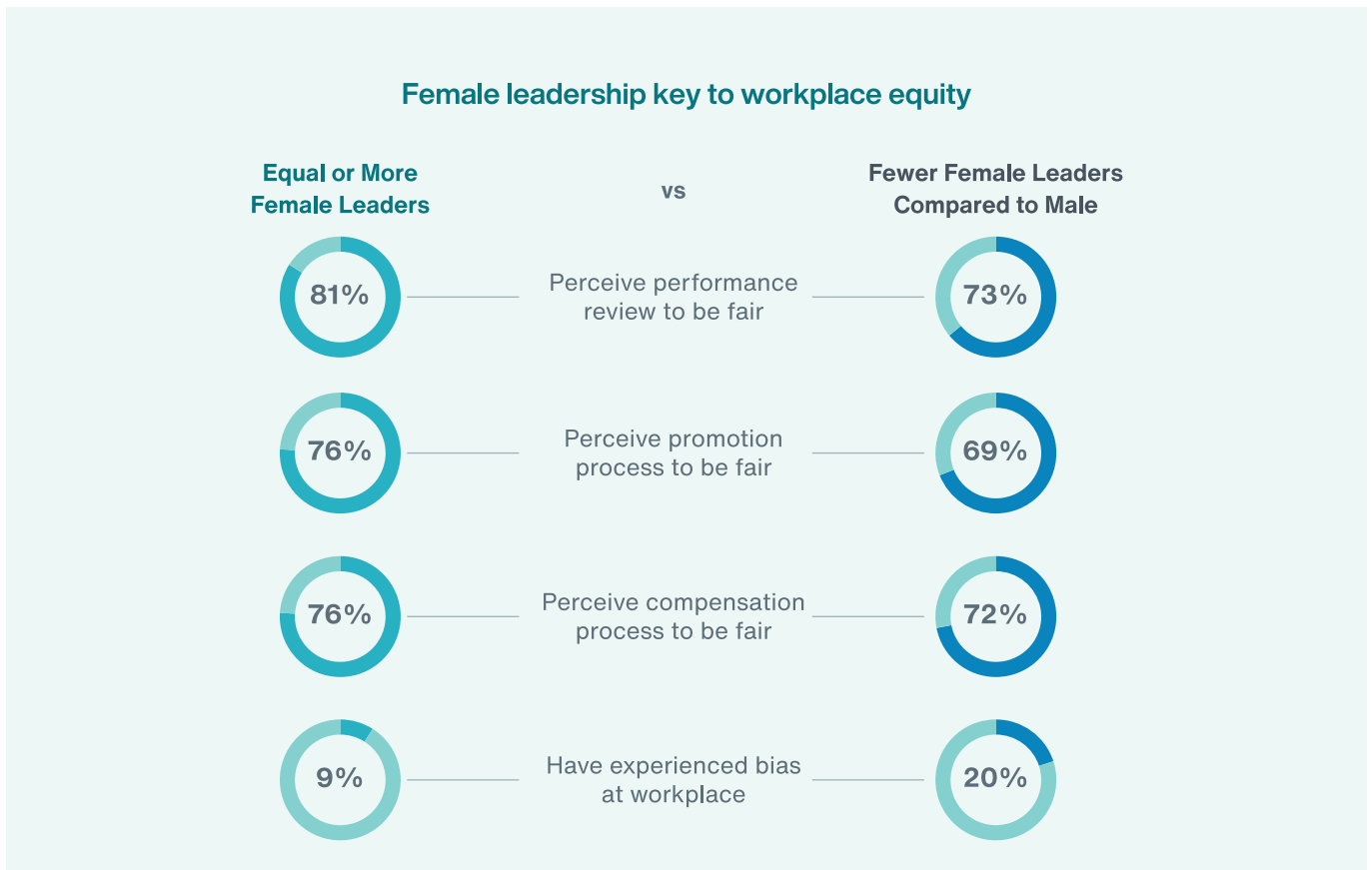
A strategic imperative for organisations to act on is elevating women leaders as mentors. This targeted approach transcends beyond mere representation; it transforms accomplished women into powerful agents of change within the corporate ecosystem, thereby fostering a pipeline of female talent and driving systemic cultural transformation.

Visible female leadership fosters an environment where women feel more supported

Impact of visible female leadership on success enablers

Factors	Visible female leadership	No visible female leadership	Difference in percentage points
Supportive & inclusive manager	59%	49%	+10%
Inclusive organization culture	53%	45%	+8%
Flexi-work option	48%	40%	+8%
Inclusive policies & benefits	52%	46%	+6%
Work-life balance	45%	41%	+4%

Organizations with a higher representation of women in leadership outperformed on key enablers identified by female employees such as flexible work arrangements, supportive management, and inclusive policies and benefits, underscoring the importance of diversity in leadership for driving positive organizational outcomes and creating a more inclusive work environment.



Our findings demonstrate that a company's policies, promotion practices, and operational procedures are perceived to be more inclusive and merit-based when there is greater presence and visibility of female leadership which also enhances the perception of fairness and equity within the organisation.

11

Lessons from
women for
women



The 'Voice of Women' report offers valuable insights drawn from the collective experiences of women in the workplace. By sharing both challenges and successes, it provides a learning opportunity for female professionals. The following recommendations, distilled from the experiences of women across various industries, offer women practical guidance for navigating and thriving in today's corporate landscape.



Speak up against harassment: Break the silence

Data from our report underscores the importance of speaking up against workplace harassment. By breaking the silence, women not only protect themselves but also contribute to creating a safer work environment for all.



Cultivate Professional Confidence: Lean In

Our research reveals that ambition and financial autonomy are key drivers for women's career satisfaction. These drivers encourage women to embrace their ambitions, actively participate in workplace discussions, and challenge biased practices. Confidently put your hands up for challenging assignments and opportunities rather than waiting for them to happen.



Master the Art of Negotiation: Ask for your Worth

Report findings indicate that negotiation yields positive outcomes for women in the workplace, with 62% achieving better offers or meeting their desired employment and pay terms when they negotiate. Next time, ask for a better offer and assert your value to ensure that you are recognised for your worth and rewarded.



Have Career Conversations Before Going on a Maternity Break

Before taking maternity leave or a career break, ask for a career discussion with your manager covering current projects, future goals, and a return plan to help set clear expectations and maintain communication. Data shows that 48% of those who had these discussions successfully mitigated negative impacts on roles, performance ratings, promotions, and pay, emphasizing the importance of proactive communication for a seamless transition and continued career progression.



Female Leaders: Be Visible Role Models

Women in leadership roles play a pivotal role in shaping workplace culture and inspiring future leaders. Survey findings highlight that 1 in 2 women report that women leaders positively influence company culture. Take the initiative to mentor younger women and raise your hand to make yourself visible to more employees in the organization.

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Lessons for
India Inc.



24,000+ women have spoken.

Recognizing and addressing women's workplace experiences is vital for Indian organizations to effectively recruit, support, and empower their female talent. This study provides critical insights into these experiences, forming the basis for actionable recommendations. The following guidelines outline key steps Indian organizations should take to create more inclusive, supportive environments that foster the growth and retention of women in the workforce.



Fix systematic gaps

- Ensure pay equity
- Audit critical processes that impact underrepresented groups (URGs)



Nurture inclusive mindsets

- Tailor unconscious bias training content to life stages
- Develop meaningful scorecards to enable women for success



Build maternity guardrails

- Establish a strong pre and post maternity program
- Prepare managers to be supportive and inclusive towards mothers and expectant mothers



Champion women leaders

- Create long-term development plans to support women's growth at all levels
- Increase visibility and recognition of female leaders and position them as mentors



Enable equitable responsibility

- Implement and monitor flexible work policies and equal parental leave to support work-life balance
- Provide caregiving assistance for child and elder care



A Special Thanks

To all the women who participated in this study and shared their lived experiences with us. We hope that we have accurately represented your voices and encouraged more people to listen.

To the team that spent their days and nights amplifying these voices.

Shilpa Khanna
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About Aon

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Contact Us

Shilpa Khanna
shilpa.khanna2@aon.com

Swetha Joseph
swetha.joseph@aon.com

Shriya Desai
shriya.desai2@aon.com