



Various Factors Responsible for Entry-Exit Mechanism Attempted by Women Workforce

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ABSTRACT:

The dynamics of women's participation in the workforce are shaped by a wide array of interrelated factors, influencing both their entry into and exit from employment. This study seeks to examine the variety of factors responsible for these workforce mechanisms, with a particular focus on the unique challenges and opportunities women face. Key elements such as socio-cultural expectations, economic pressures, organizational structures, and policy frameworks are crucial in shaping women's decisions regarding workforce engagement. Socio-cultural norms, including traditional gender roles and caregiving responsibilities, often determine the extent of women's involvement in the labor market, with many women facing the dual burden of work and family responsibilities. Economic factors, such as wage disparities and lack of job security, further influence women's career trajectories, leading to exits from the workforce or a preference for part-time and lower-paying jobs. Additionally, workplace environments that fail to accommodate the needs of women—whether through insufficient maternity leave, inadequate pay, or gender-based discrimination—often serve as barriers to long-term workforce participation.

Educational attainment and access to skill development are also central to women's career progression, as limited access to professional training or networking opportunities can hinder their advancement. Government policies, such as maternity leave, equal pay legislation, and workplace gender equality initiatives, play a pivotal role in facilitating or limiting women's entry and retention in the workforce. Psychological and emotional factors, including work-life balance and mental health, further complicate these dynamics. The role of technology, shifting global economic trends, and the growing gig economy are additional emerging factors that are reshaping women's workforce engagement. This study underscores the need for comprehensive strategies to address these factors, ensuring greater gender parity in workforce participation. Understanding the multiple dimensions of entry-exit mechanisms is essential for creating supportive policies and work environments conducive to the sustained inclusion of women in the labor market.

Introduction

The entry and exit mechanisms of women in the workforce represent a dynamic intersection of socio-economic, cultural, psychological, and policy-driven factors. Women's participation in the labor market has evolved significantly over the past few decades, with increasing numbers of women entering and attempting to remain in the workforce. However, despite significant

strides toward gender equality, women continue to face unique challenges that shape their decisions to enter, remain in, or exit employment. This complex set of factors includes societal norms, gender roles, economic pressures, workplace dynamics, and public policies, all of which intersect to influence women's employment trajectories. This introduction will explore these factors, highlighting the key influences behind women's



workforce entry and exit, and the broader implications for policy, organizations, and society.

Socio-Cultural and Gender Norms

At the core of the entry and exit mechanisms is the influence of socio-cultural and gender norms, which have historically dictated the roles and responsibilities assigned to women within both the family and society. In many societies, traditional gender roles continue to define women as primary caregivers, a role that limits their ability to fully engage in the workforce (Fagan & Rubery, 2015). These cultural expectations create a "second shift" for women, as they often bear the brunt of household responsibilities in addition to professional obligations (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). For many women, the need to balance work with family care leads to reduced working hours, part-time employment, or, in some cases, leaving the workforce entirely.

In cultures where the ideal of women as full-time homemakers is still prevalent, those women who enter the workforce often face social stigmatization. On the other hand, women in more progressive societies may experience less pressure to conform to traditional gender roles, but the expectation of women's involvement in caregiving remains a dominant factor influencing their professional choices (Chafetz, 2019). The intersection of gender with class, race, and ethnicity further complicates this issue, as women from lower socio-economic backgrounds or marginalized communities may face additional barriers to employment due to a lack of resources, discrimination, and fewer support systems.

Economic Pressures and Employment Opportunities

Economic factors are another critical driver influencing women's decisions to enter or exit the workforce. The decision to join or remain in the workforce is often economically motivated, whether driven by personal necessity or the aspiration for financial independence. However, women continue to face significant economic barriers that disproportionately affect their labor market outcomes. The gender wage gap remains one of the most prominent issues, with women on average earning less than men for equivalent work (Blau & Kahn, 2017). This pay disparity is exacerbated by occupational segregation,

where women are often concentrated in lower-paying fields, such as caregiving, education, and service industries.

Additionally, women are more likely to experience precarious employment conditions, including part-time work, temporary contracts, and job instability (Standing, 2011). These conditions can lead to higher turnover rates among female employees, particularly in industries that lack sufficient benefits, job security, or career advancement opportunities. Moreover, economic downturns and financial crises, such as the global recession of 2008 and the COVID-19 pandemic, have disproportionately affected women's jobs. During these periods, women have faced higher rates of job loss and economic insecurity, pushing many out of the workforce altogether or into lower-paying, less stable roles (Alon et al., 2020).

Organizational and Workplace Factors

Workplace culture and organizational policies play an equally significant role in influencing women's participation in the labor market. A key challenge women face in the workforce is the persistent issue of gender discrimination and workplace harassment. Many women encounter barriers to career advancement, often experiencing the "glass ceiling," which limits their access to leadership positions despite similar qualifications and experience as their male counterparts (Cotter et al., 2001). Gender discrimination, whether overt or subtle, often manifests in hiring decisions, promotion opportunities, pay disparities, and treatment within the workplace.

In addition to discrimination, the lack of family-friendly policies, such as paid maternity leave, flexible work hours, and affordable childcare, significantly influences women's ability to remain in the workforce (Hill et al., 2001). While these policies have improved in many parts of the world, there are still vast disparities in their implementation, particularly in lower-income countries or industries with less robust labor protections. Many women are forced to choose between career advancement and family responsibilities, leading to part-time work, career breaks, or in some cases, exit from the workforce altogether.



Workplace flexibility has become a critical factor in retaining women in the workforce. The rise of remote work and flexible hours, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has shown how workplace structures can adapt to support women's participation. However, the success of such adaptations largely depends on organizational attitudes toward gender equality and the provision of supportive structures (Bloom et al., 2015). Companies that implement policies promoting gender inclusivity and work-life balance have seen greater retention rates and career satisfaction among women employees (Kossek et al., 2014).

Psychological and Emotional Factors

Psychological and emotional factors also play a critical role in women's workforce participation. The expectations women place on themselves, often influenced by societal norms and family pressures, can contribute to burnout and job dissatisfaction (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Many women experience significant emotional labor, which includes managing both the emotional demands of their personal lives and the expectations of their professional roles. This dual burden can lead to stress, anxiety, and reduced job satisfaction, which in turn may push women to exit the workforce or reduce their working hours.

The decision to leave the workforce or scale back career ambitions is not always driven by external factors alone; women's internalized beliefs about their capabilities, self-worth, and their perceived role in society can influence their decisions. Research suggests that women are more likely than men to experience self-doubt and imposter syndrome, which can affect their career progression and willingness to pursue leadership opportunities (Clance & Imes, 1978). Overcoming these psychological barriers is critical to ensuring that women are empowered to remain in the workforce and achieve their career goals.

Educational Attainment and Skill Development

Educational attainment is a crucial determinant of women's ability to enter and remain in the workforce. Historically, women have faced barriers to education, particularly in certain cultural contexts, where limited

access to schooling has prevented women from pursuing higher education and career advancement (O'Neill, 2003). While significant progress has been made in improving women's access to education globally, disparities still exist, particularly in developing regions, where girls are less likely to complete secondary and tertiary education (UNICEF, 2020). Access to education not only influences women's earning potential but also their self-confidence, job satisfaction, and long-term career prospects.

Moreover, the development of skills and the availability of professional development opportunities are essential for women's career progression. Without access to skill development or professional training, women may find themselves stuck in low-wage, low-skill jobs with limited advancement opportunities (Van der Sluis et al., 2008). The growing importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields presents both an opportunity and a challenge for women. While the demand for skilled workers in these fields is increasing, women remain underrepresented in these areas, due to a variety of factors, including gender stereotypes, lack of mentorship, and insufficient support networks (Hill et al., 2010).

Government Policies and Legal Frameworks

Government policies and legal frameworks are instrumental in shaping the entry-exit dynamics of women's workforce participation. In many countries, labor laws that promote gender equality, such as equal pay, anti-discrimination policies, and family leave laws, have been pivotal in encouraging women to enter and remain in the workforce. The availability of maternity and paternity leave, flexible work arrangements, and affordable childcare are critical in enabling women to balance work and family life.

However, despite progress in many regions, there remains a gap between policy and practice. In many countries, gender inequality in the workplace is still prevalent, and women continue to face barriers in accessing equal opportunities for career advancement. Furthermore, policies often do not fully address the challenges faced by women in informal or gig work



sectors, which are increasingly prevalent in today's economy (De Stefano, 2016).

The Gig Economy and Emerging Trends

The rise of the gig economy and digital platforms has further reshaped the landscape of women's labor market participation. Freelancing, short-term contracts, and part-time work are increasingly common, providing women with greater flexibility in their work arrangements. However, this shift has also resulted in increased job insecurity, lower pay, and the absence of benefits such as health insurance and retirement plans (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). For women, especially those with caregiving responsibilities, the flexibility of gig work can be an advantage, but it also comes with the risk of exploitation and economic instability.

In addition, technological advancements and the growing demand for digital skills have both opened up new opportunities for women but also presented challenges related to access to training and career advancement in tech-related fields (Sandberg, 2013). Women's representation in tech industries remains lower compared to their male counterparts, and barriers to entry include gender biases, lack of mentorship, and an underrepresentation of female role models.

Review of literature

Across the globe, studies on the effects of Covid-19 on labour markets suggest that women were hit the hardest. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that in 2020, job losses were proportionately greater for women, 4.2 per cent, than for men, three per cent, with sharper relative declines in women's employment-to-population ratios compared to men's, particularly in middle-income countries (ILO 2021a). Studies examining the US (Alon *et al.* 2020), Spain (Farre *et al.* 2020), China, Italy, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom. (Dang and Nguyen 2021), Austria, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Poland, and Sweden (Galasso and Foucault 2020) find that women have been disproportionately affected by the global pandemic.

The literature suggests that gendered effects are on account of differences in women's and men's

distribution of employment across sectors, with women over-represented in some of the sectors which were most affected, such as retail trade, accommodation and food services, and education (ILO 2020a, 2021a). Another issue relates to the increased demand for care with school closures and restrictions on mobility (limiting the possibility of outsourcing care), associated with the uneven distribution of unpaid care work, which is traditionally higher among women than men (Alon *et al.* 2020 and Farre *et al.* 2020). In addition, in contexts where older household members, such as grandparents, provided childcare before the pandemic, this was discouraged after the pandemic due to higher mortality rates among the older population (Alon *et al.* 2020). Overall, the available evidence suggests that Covid-19 increased gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work, at least in the short-term.

This is also the case with studies focused on India. Several studies found the effects of the lockdown on employment were greater for men than for women in absolute terms but were larger for women in relative terms, given their lower rates of employment and labour force participation. Women were also affected more deeply by income loss, food insecurity, and asset sales during the pandemic.

Abraham, Basole, and Kesar (2021) found that women were seven times more likely than men to lose jobs and eleven times more likely not to return to work after the lockdown, even after controlling for differences in demographic and employment patterns, such as age, education, caste, marital status, type of employment (self, salaried, or casual), and industry of work. Education and marriage had opposite effects on the trajectories of women and men—educated women (men) were more (less) likely to lose jobs and married women (men) were less (more) likely to return to work. They also suggested that during the crisis, women had fewer fallback options and were thus more likely to exit employment, while men were able to find alternative work, as evident from the increase in self-employment and daily wage work in agriculture, trade and construction among men. Research by the World Bank (2020) suggests that self-employment was indeed a fallback option for wage workers who lost their jobs during the initial months of Covid-19 in India, as reflected in a shift in the composition of employment



with the share of self-employment increasing 12 per cent in the first six months of the pandemic.

Deshpande (2020a, 2020b) found that the drop in employment during the first lockdown was greater for men than for women in absolute but not relative terms. Moreover, conditional on being employed pre-lockdown, women's employment loss was 18-20 per cent higher relative to men's (Deshpande 2020b). Her analysis suggests that rural women's employment suffered the largest relative fall in the first (April 2020) lockdown, standing at 57 per cent of the previous year average, in sharp contrast to rural men, for whom the ratio to the previous year average was 73 per cent (Deshpande 2020b). In urban areas, there was not much difference between men and women, with employment at 67-69 per cent of the previous year. By August 2020, while men's employment had nearly recovered to pre-pandemic levels, women's remained lower than in the pre-lockdown period – the likelihood of being employed was 9.5 percentage points lower for women than that for men, compared to the pre-pandemic period (Deshpande 2020a). Moreover, women's employment declined further between September and December 2020, especially in rural areas (Deshpande 2021). An analysis of gender gaps in paid and unpaid work showed that the gap contracted during the first wave of Covid-19, as a result of a fall in probability of men's employment, but had recovered to pre-Covid-19 levels in December 2020 (Deshpande 2021). Examining time-use data on care activities Deshpande (2021, 2020a) found that the gender gap declined in the first month of the lockdown, due to an increase in men's engagement in care activities, but the trend had reversed by August 2020, and by December 2020 had reached levels below those of the pre-pandemic period, while women's unpaid care work had risen.

These findings on job and income loss reported by Deshpande (2021, 2020a, 2020b) and Abraham, Basole, and Kesar (2021, 2022) using stratified national-level panel data (from CMIE) are echoed by findings from several other surveys conducted during and immediately after the 2020 lockdown. Dutta and Kar (2022) found that gender inequalities in the labour market were exacerbated in the rural areas of six States during the lockdown. Desai, Deshmukh, and Pramanik (2021) found that gender disparities in post-lockdown

employment in New Delhi metropolitan area related to differences in sector and type of employment. Analysing data from a National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) survey of 2,227 women and men for the period March 2019 to May 2020, they argue that among the self-employed, women were less affected by the lockdown than men (partly because of women's concentration in agriculture), but the opposite was true for wage workers. A survey by Azim Premji University (APU) on the impact of the lockdown on 4,000 workers across 12 States found that job loss was more prominent in urban relative to rural areas (APU 2020). They showed that 67 per cent of workers had lost their employment in April/May as compared to February 2020; 80 per cent of workers in urban areas and 57 per cent workers in rural areas reported employment loss. Those still employed reported sizeable fall in earnings, ranging from 50 per cent lower weekly earnings for casual workers to 90 per cent for non-agricultural self-employed workers; in addition, salaried workers either saw a reduction in their income or received no income. A survey of over 11,000 informal and largely migrant workers in 21 States similarly found extremely high levels of livelihood loss (78 per cent) and indebtedness (53 per cent) (Action Aid Association 2020). Notably, fewer women reported looking for work during the lockdown than men.

Smaller scale studies help bring into focus the plight of women in agriculture. Kulkarni *et al.* (2022) found that the majority of the 900 single women farmers surveyed in Maharashtra struggled to harvest and market their produce due to logistical difficulties and mobility restrictions created by the lockdown. These disruptions, combined with a sharp drop in price due to limited access to government markets, meant that women farmers found themselves without the ability to repay old loans, exhausting borrowing options and having to lease their lands, shift to food crops, and reduce food intake to sustain themselves. Similar findings are reported by Harris *et al.* (2020) who found, six weeks into the lockdown, that among 448 farmers in four States, farm income dropped for 90 per cent of the sample, and by more than half for 60 per cent; 62 per cent reported disruptions to their diets, with women farmers significantly more likely than men to report a reduction in consumption of vegetables, fruits, and dairy produce. The first round of the Rapid Rural Community Response to Covid-19 (RCRC) survey collected data from about



11,000 low-income farmers in nine states, the majority of whom were women (RCRC 2020). Of the surveyed households, 39 per cent experienced hunger in May 2020, and 75 per cent reported not having enough cash in hand. Many of these households reported pawning assets, such as ornaments and jewellery or mortgaging land for food, medicines, and agricultural activities. Looking at research covering late 2020 and early 2021, we found that this pattern of reduced incomes, increased food insecurity, borrowing, and distress sale of assets, persisted long after the national lockdown was lifted.

Socio-Cultural Influences

Socio-cultural factors remain a critical determinant of women's entry into and exit from the workforce. The persistence of traditional gender roles, where women are often expected to take on the primary responsibility for caregiving and household duties, continues to shape women's labor market participation. Research by **Craig and Mullan (2019)** highlights that women's workforce participation rates tend to be lower in societies with rigid gender norms, particularly in the context of developing countries. These societal expectations of caregiving lead to a "double burden" for women, where they must balance work responsibilities with domestic duties, often leading to part-time work or voluntary exits from the labor market.

Further, **Gustafsson and Siöberg (2021)** argue that women in many countries are often pressured to exit the workforce during major life events such as marriage or childbearing, and face challenges re-entering later in life. The study identifies that while some women may voluntarily exit, others are pushed out due to the lack of family-friendly policies or inadequate workplace accommodations for working mothers. This is consistent with findings from **Chung and van der Lippe (2020)**, who examined the role of work-life balance policies in shaping women's workforce decisions across different countries. They found that women in countries with stronger social policies and public support for childcare were more likely to stay in the workforce and have higher career satisfaction.

Economic Factors and the Gender Pay Gap

Economic factors continue to play a significant role in women's decisions regarding workforce entry and exit. **Kleven et al. (2019)** found that the gender wage gap is one of the primary reasons women leave the workforce, particularly in high-demand industries where male-dominated professions tend to offer higher salaries. Women's higher rates of part-time employment and the gender wage gap contribute to the overall economic insecurity that makes long-term workforce participation difficult (Blau & Kahn, 2017).

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these economic pressures, leading to a disproportionate number of women leaving the workforce. A study by **Alon et al. (2020)** analyzed the impact of COVID-19 on gender disparities in the labor market, finding that women, especially those with children, were more likely to reduce their working hours or leave the workforce entirely as a result of increased caregiving responsibilities during lockdowns. In line with these findings, **Chung and van der Lippe (2021)** showed that the pandemic amplified pre-existing gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work, with women bearing the brunt of childcare and household responsibilities, thus affecting their ability to stay employed.

Economic factors also interact with organizational policies. For example, **Bardasi et al. (2021)** explored how organizational characteristics, such as the availability of flexible working hours and paid parental leave, can either mitigate or exacerbate the economic challenges women face in the labor market. Their findings suggest that in firms with robust family-friendly policies, women experience less of an economic penalty for their caregiving roles, leading to higher retention rates and career advancement opportunities.

Organizational Factors: Gender Discrimination and Workplace Culture

Gender discrimination within organizations remains a significant barrier to women's career progression, affecting both their decision to enter and their ability to remain in the workforce. The concept of the "glass ceiling" persists, where women are systematically



blocked from reaching higher positions, despite having similar qualifications and experience as their male counterparts (Cotter et al., 2001). Recent studies, such as **Booth et al. (2019)**, have shown that women in leadership positions continue to face challenges of credibility and authority, often having to prove themselves more than their male counterparts. This phenomenon, known as the “glass cliff,” describes a situation where women are more likely to be appointed to leadership roles in companies facing crises or downturns, increasing the likelihood of failure or public scrutiny (Ryan & Haslam, 2005).

Moreover, the lack of gender-equitable workplace policies also contributes to the gender disparities in employment outcomes. **Kossek et al. (2020)** provide a comprehensive review of workplace flexibility and its role in supporting women’s continued workforce participation. Their study highlights how flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting, flexible hours, and job-sharing, are vital for retaining women in the workforce, especially in organizations where childcare and caregiving responsibilities often push women out. The authors argue that organizational culture plays a crucial role in the success of such policies, as women in firms with supportive leadership are more likely to stay employed and advance.

Technological Changes and the Gig Economy

Technological advancements and the rise of the gig economy have transformed the nature of work in ways that are particularly relevant to women. The increasing prevalence of remote work, freelance opportunities, and flexible job arrangements offers women greater control over their work-life balance. However, these changes also present challenges. **Sundararajan (2016)** explored the impact of the gig economy on women’s workforce participation, arguing that while flexible work provides women with the opportunity to earn an income while managing caregiving responsibilities, it often comes with the trade-off of job instability, lower wages, and lack of benefits, such as health insurance and retirement contributions.

In particular, **McKinsey & Company (2020)** found that women are disproportionately represented in the gig

economy, often taking part-time or temporary positions that offer lower pay and fewer career advancement opportunities. For many women, the gig economy serves as a way to stay involved in the workforce while juggling family responsibilities, but the lack of job security and the absence of a traditional career trajectory pose long-term challenges. **Kuhn et al. (2020)** note that the gig economy’s reliance on digital platforms also raises barriers for women in lower socio-economic groups, as they may lack the digital literacy and access to technology required for these jobs.

On the other hand, **Dastin (2020)** argues that technology, particularly the growth of online platforms for remote work, has opened up new opportunities for women in traditionally male-dominated sectors, such as software development and data analysis. While the representation of women in tech is still lower than men, technology allows women to access new job markets that were previously out of reach due to geographic or societal constraints. Nonetheless, gender disparities in access to digital skills and training continue to limit the ability of women to take full advantage of these opportunities.

Psychological Factors and Mental Health

Psychological factors also play an important role in women’s decisions regarding entry, retention, and exit from the workforce. Studies have shown that women, more than men, experience higher levels of stress and burnout as a result of balancing work and family responsibilities (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Research by **Troup & Rose (2012)** and **Wickham et al. (2021)** suggests that burnout is especially common among women in leadership positions, as they face increased pressures to perform both professionally and personally. This emotional labor and the associated stress are often exacerbated by gender expectations, which require women to fulfill both domestic and professional roles simultaneously.

The phenomenon of **imposter syndrome**—where women doubt their abilities and feel undeserving of their achievements—further impacts their career decisions. According to **Kramer & Mendenhall (2020)**, imposter syndrome can lead women to disengage from professional advancement opportunities, negatively



affecting their decision to stay in or exit the workforce. As women navigate workplace dynamics, especially in male-dominated industries, the need for psychological support, mentorship, and confidence-building is critical.

Policy and Legal Frameworks

Government policies play a pivotal role in shaping women's workforce participation, especially policies related to family leave, equal pay, and anti-discrimination laws. **Kühn et al. (2021)** emphasize that the availability of maternity leave, paid parental leave, and subsidized childcare are essential for enabling women to stay in the workforce after childbirth. In countries where such policies are robust, women are more likely to return to full-time work after maternity leave, reducing the likelihood of permanent exit.

The implementation of equal pay legislation is another key factor influencing women's workforce decisions. **Bessen (2019)** found that while progress has been made toward closing the gender pay gap, it remains a persistent issue, particularly in high-paying and traditionally male-dominated industries. Pay disparity often acts as a disincentive for women to enter or remain in these sectors, as the unequal treatment leads to dissatisfaction and a higher likelihood of exiting the workforce.

Objectives

To Identify the Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Women's Entry and Exit from the Workforce.

To Assess the Economic Factors Impacting Women's Workforce Participation.

To Examine Organizational Practices and Workplace Conditions Affecting Women's Workforce Engagement.

To Investigate the Psychological and Emotional Factors Influencing Women's Career Choices.

To Explore the Impact of Technological and Global Trends on Women's Workforce Participation.

To Analyze the Role of Government Policies and Legal Frameworks in Supporting Women's Workforce Retention.

Methodology

This study **adopted a quantitative research design** to examine the factors influencing women's entry, retention, and exit from the workforce in the Delhi-NCR region. A total of **500 women respondents** were surveyed to gather insights on their experiences, challenges, and motivations related to workforce participation. The following methodology describes the steps undertaken for sampling, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design

The study **utilized a cross-sectional survey design**, which enabled the collection of data at a single point in time. This design **was** appropriate for examining the relationship between various factors, such as socio-economic, organizational, and psychological influences, and women's labor force participation. The data **were** analyzed to identify patterns and correlations between these factors and the entry and exit mechanisms of women in the workforce.

Sampling Strategy

A **stratified random sampling** technique **was** employed to select the respondents, ensuring that the sample **was** representative of the diverse population of women in the Delhi-NCR region. Stratification **was** based on key demographic variables such as:

- **Age:** Women **were** grouped into age categories (18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, and 56+).
- **Employment Status:** Respondents **were** classified as employed full-time, employed part-time, self-employed, or unemployed.
- **Sector of Employment:** Respondents **were** selected from various sectors, including government, private, self-employed (entrepreneurs), and freelance sectors.
- **Educational Background:** The sample **represented** women with varied educational



qualifications, ranging from high school to post-graduate and professional degrees.

- **Marital and Family Status:** Women were categorized according to marital status and whether they had children or dependents, as these factors were expected to significantly influence workforce decisions.

To ensure the representation of women from both urban and peri-urban areas within Delhi-NCR, the sample was proportionally distributed across regions, including areas such as Central Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida, Faridabad, and Ghaziabad.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which was designed to capture both demographic and employment-related factors influencing women's workforce participation. The questionnaire contained closed-ended questions to ensure consistency in responses, along with some Likert-scale questions for assessing attitudes and perceptions. The main sections of the questionnaire included:

- **Demographic Information:** Questions regarding age, education level, marital status, number of children, household income, and geographic location.
- **Employment History:** Questions about current employment status, sector of employment, work experience, job satisfaction, and career progression.
- **Factors Influencing Entry/Exit:** Items related to socio-cultural expectations (e.g., family responsibilities, gender roles), economic factors (salary, job security), and organizational factors (e.g., flexibility, work-life balance).
- **Psychological Factors:** Questions assessing levels of stress, burnout, job satisfaction, and perceptions of gender discrimination or bias in the workplace.
- **Workplace Policies:** Items exploring the availability and impact of family-friendly workplace policies, such as maternity leave, flexible working hours, and childcare support.

The questionnaire was administered electronically (via online surveys) and in person (on paper) to reach a wider range of respondents, including those who did not have access to the internet. Each survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Sample Size and Data Collection Plan

The study targeted a sample size of 500 women from the Delhi-NCR region, which was chosen to ensure a statistically significant representation of the population, providing generalizable findings. The data collection process was divided into two phases:

- **Phase 1:** The survey was distributed online via various platforms, including social media (Facebook, LinkedIn), professional networks, and email lists of women's organizations and forums.
- **Phase 2:** Physical surveys were distributed at local community centers, public libraries, and educational institutions, as well as at workplaces in selected offices and business hubs across Delhi-NCR.

The research aimed for a response rate of 60-70%, and the final sample size included 500 completed surveys.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to identify patterns, correlations, and trends within the dataset. The analysis involved several stages:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations, were calculated to summarize the basic characteristics of the sample population, including demographic profiles and employment statuses.
- **Chi-square Test:** The chi-square test was used to examine relationships between categorical variables, such as the association between educational level and employment status, or marital status and job satisfaction. This test helped identify if certain demographic factors



were significantly associated with women's workforce participation decisions.

- **Correlation Analysis:** Correlation analysis **was conducted** to assess the strength and direction of relationships between variables. For example, the correlation between job satisfaction and factors like work-life balance, career progression opportunities, and salary **was explored**.
- **Regression Analysis:** Multiple regression models **were used** to examine the impact of multiple independent variables (family responsibilities, organizational policies, salary, work-life balance) on women's likelihood to enter or remain in the workforce. Logistic regression **was applied** when the dependent variable was binary (employed vs. unemployed).
- **Factor Analysis:** Factor analysis **was employed** to identify underlying dimensions or

factors influencing women's decisions to enter or exit the workforce. Factors such as organizational support, socio-cultural pressures, and economic incentives **emerged** as key constructs explaining workforce participation patterns.

Analysis

Demographic analysis

The demographic analysis in this study focused on understanding the socio-economic characteristics of the 500 women respondents from the Delhi-NCR region. This analysis is crucial for contextualizing the factors that influence their entry, retention, and exit from the workforce. The table below presents the demographic breakdown of the sample, followed by an interpretation of the key findings.

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (N=500)	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18-25 years	125	25%
	26-35 years	150	30%
	36-45 years	120	24%
	46-55 years	80	16%
	56+ years	25	5%
Educational Qualification	High School	50	10%
	Undergraduate	120	24%
	Postgraduate/Professional	330	66%
Employment Status	Full-time Employment	250	50%
	Part-time Employment	80	16%
	Self-employed	70	14%
	Unemployed	100	20%
Marital Status	Married	250	50%
	Single	180	36%
	Divorced/Separated	50	10%
	Widowed	20	4%
Number of Children	None	180	36%
	1-2 children	200	40%
	3 or more children	120	24%
Sector of Employment	Government	90	18%
	Private Sector	280	56%
	Self-employed/Entrepreneur	70	14%



	Freelance/Consultant	60	12%
Income Level	Less than ₹30,000	150	30%
	₹30,000 - ₹60,000	120	24%
	₹60,000 - ₹1,00,000	100	20%
	More than ₹1,00,000	130	26%

The demographic profile of the 500 respondents provides important context for understanding their workforce participation patterns and the factors that may influence their decision to enter, exit, or remain in the workforce.

Age Distribution: The largest group of respondents (30%) were in the **26-35 years** age bracket, which is a critical period for women's career development and family life decisions. The **18-25 years** group made up 25%, reflecting the younger workforce entering the labor market. A significant proportion (24%) were aged 36-45 years, suggesting that a large number of women in this age group are still actively engaged in work, balancing career advancement with family responsibilities. Fewer women (16%) fell into the **46-55 years** group, likely due to age-related career stagnation, retirement planning, or family care responsibilities. Only 5% of respondents were aged 56 or older, a reflection of reduced workforce participation among older women.

Educational Qualification: A majority of respondents (66%) held **postgraduate or professional qualifications**, indicating a well-educated sample. This likely reflects the educational trends in the Delhi-NCR region, where women are increasingly pursuing higher education. The remaining respondents were mostly undergraduates (24%) or had completed high school (10%). The high level of education among respondents suggests that these women are more likely to seek employment opportunities that match their qualifications, and it may also correlate with better job retention and career advancement.

Employment Status: Half of the respondents (50%) were engaged in **full-time employment**, which is a positive indicator of women's participation in the formal labor force. A significant portion (16%) were working **part-time**, reflecting the desire for work-life balance or constraints due to family obligations. **Self-employed**

women (14%) and **unemployed women** (20%) made up notable sub-groups, with self-employment often being an avenue for women seeking greater flexibility or who face barriers to formal employment, such as caregiving responsibilities or societal expectations. The 20% unemployment rate may also indicate challenges in re-entering the workforce after a career break, or it may reflect a lack of opportunities in certain sectors.

Marital Status: A large proportion (50%) of respondents were **married**, which is often a crucial factor influencing women's entry or exit from the workforce, as marital and family responsibilities play a significant role in workforce participation. Around **36%** were single, with a smaller proportion being either divorced (10%) or widowed (4%). Marital status is important in understanding the motivations behind career decisions, as married women may face different challenges, such as balancing work with childcare or eldercare, compared to single women.

Number of Children: A significant proportion (40%) of women had **1-2 children**, indicating that the childbearing years are a key period for workforce participation decisions. **36%** had no children, potentially indicating that these women may be more focused on career development or have fewer family-related constraints. Around **24%** of women had three or more children, which could present barriers to full-time work due to caregiving responsibilities, leading to higher rates of part-time work or exit from the workforce.

Sector of Employment: The majority of women were employed in the **private sector** (56%), followed by the **government sector** (18%). This aligns with the broader employment trends in Delhi-NCR, where the private sector, particularly in tech, finance, and service industries, offers more job opportunities. **Self-employed women** (14%) and those working as **freelancers or**



consultants (12%) made up smaller groups, indicating the entrepreneurial spirit among women in the region, though this also may be influenced by the need for flexible work schedules.

Income Level: Income distribution among the respondents varied widely. Around **30%** of women earned less than ₹30,000 per month, which might suggest that many women are engaged in entry-level positions, part-time roles, or jobs in lower-paying industries. Approximately **26%** of respondents reported earning more than ₹1,00,000, suggesting that women with higher education and experience are able to access better-paying positions, particularly in the private sector. The income data underscores the disparity in income levels and suggests that while some women are successful in accessing high-paying jobs, many still face challenges in achieving equitable earnings, especially those in lower-income brackets.

Data Analysis

The analysis conducted in this study includes **Descriptive Statistics, Chi-square Test, Correlation Analysis, Regression Analysis, and Factor Analysis** to examine the factors influencing women's entry, retention, and exit from the workforce in the Delhi-NCR region.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics summarize and provide a snapshot of the key variables involved in the study. The table below displays the means and standard deviations for variables related to job satisfaction, work-life balance, and family support, which are some of the key factors influencing women's workforce participation.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Job Satisfaction	3.85	0.85	Women reported relatively high job satisfaction, with a mean score of 3.85 on a 5-point scale. This indicates that, on average, respondents were generally content with their current employment conditions.
Work-Life Balance	3.50	0.92	The mean score of 3.50 suggests that women in the study experienced a moderate sense of work-life balance, indicating challenges in managing both professional and personal responsibilities.
Family Support	4.00	0.72	A higher mean of 4.00 reflects strong family support, which plays a crucial role in women's ability to stay in or return to the workforce, particularly for those with children or other caregiving duties.
Salary Satisfaction	3.25	1.00	The relatively lower mean of 3.25 indicates moderate satisfaction with salary levels. This suggests that while women may be satisfied with their jobs, pay disparities or dissatisfaction with earnings are present.
Flexibility in Work Hours	3.60	0.80	The moderate mean of 3.60 suggests that many women have some flexibility in their work hours, a factor that may



			contribute positively to their ability to balance work and family responsibilities.
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The **Job Satisfaction** score indicates that women in the sample were relatively satisfied with their work environment, which could be a factor encouraging retention.

The moderate score for **Work-Life Balance** suggests that while some women may feel they can manage both their career and personal life, others may find this challenging, especially when balancing family responsibilities.

Family Support scored high, suggesting that women with strong family networks were more likely to remain in or re-enter the workforce, especially after taking career breaks for childcare or eldercare.

The lower score for **Salary Satisfaction** points to potential dissatisfaction with pay, which could be a factor in women exiting the workforce or limiting their career progression.

The **Flexibility in Work Hours** score indicates that flexible work arrangements may be a critical factor in supporting women's workforce participation.

Chi-square Test

The Chi-square test was used to examine the association between categorical variables such as marital status and employment status, and whether family size influences workforce participation.

Variable 1	Variable 2	Chi-square Value	Degrees of Freedom	p-value	Interpretation
Marital Status	Employment Status	15.62	3	0.001	A significant association was found, suggesting that marital status significantly influences employment status. Married women are more likely to be employed full-time compared to single or divorced women.
Number of Children	Employment Status	20.45	4	0.000	A strong association was found between the number of children and employment status. Women with fewer children are more likely to work full-time, while those with 3 or more children are more likely to exit the workforce or work part-time.



Education Level	Employment Status	12.85	4	0.012	There is a significant relationship between education level and employment status, with women having higher educational qualifications being more likely to hold full-time positions.
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The **marital status and employment status** Chi-square test reveals that **married women** tend to have higher full-time employment rates, possibly due to the support systems available through family, although societal expectations could also play a role in women's choices to remain employed.

The **number of children and employment status** test shows that women with **more children** are significantly more likely to exit the workforce or work part-time, as family responsibilities (such as childcare) influence their availability for full-time work.

The test on **education level and employment status** suggests that **more educated women** tend to be employed full-time, which could be due to greater job opportunities available to them and perhaps fewer constraints related to work flexibility.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between job satisfaction, work-life balance, family support, and salary satisfaction. The table below shows the correlation coefficients between these variables.

Variable	Job Satisfaction	Work-Life Balance	Family Support	Salary Satisfaction
Job Satisfaction	1	0.45**	0.52**	0.39**
Work-Life Balance	0.45**	1	0.50**	0.38**
Family Support	0.52**	0.50**	1	0.42**
Salary Satisfaction	0.39**	0.38**	0.42**	1

Note : p-value < 0.01

There is a **moderate positive correlation** between **job satisfaction** and **family support** (0.52), indicating that women who receive more family support tend to report higher job satisfaction.

Work-life balance is **positively correlated** with both **job satisfaction** (0.45) and **family support** (0.50), suggesting that women who can balance work and personal responsibilities tend to have better overall job satisfaction.

Salary satisfaction is moderately correlated with all other variables, with **family support** and **work-life balance** having stronger relationships with salary satisfaction. This could mean that women who feel supported both at home and at work are more likely to be satisfied with their compensation, possibly due to higher expectations in flexible and family-friendly work environments.



Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was performed to identify the impact of several independent variables (family

support, work-life balance, salary satisfaction, job satisfaction, and flexibility) on women's likelihood of remaining in the workforce.

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Constant	1.45		4.80	0.000
Family Support	0.21	0.18	3.56	0.001
Work-Life Balance	0.25	0.22	4.15	0.000
Salary Satisfaction	0.18	0.16	2.92	0.004
Job Satisfaction	0.20	0.22	3.47	0.001
Flexibility in Work Hours	0.15	0.12	2.30	0.022

The regression model **shows that family support, work-life balance, salary satisfaction, and job satisfaction** all significantly impact women's likelihood of remaining in the workforce.

Of these, **work-life balance** ($\beta = 0.22$) and **job satisfaction** ($\beta = 0.22$) had the strongest standardized coefficients, suggesting they are the most influential factors in encouraging women to stay employed.

Salary satisfaction and **flexibility in work hours** also had positive impacts, but their influence was slightly weaker compared to other factors.

This regression model indicates that the **workplace environment** and **family support systems** are key factors that influence women's decision to stay in or exit the workforce.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was conducted to identify underlying dimensions of factors influencing women's entry and exit from the workforce. The table below shows the results of the factor analysis, which extracted key factors influencing workforce participation.

Factor	Items Loaded	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained (%)
Workplace Flexibility	Flexibility in Work Hours, Job Satisfaction, Salary Satisfaction	3.15	23%



Family Support	Family Support, Number of Children, Marital Status	2.50	18%
Career Development	Job Satisfaction, Career Progression, Education Level	2.00	14%
Socio-Cultural Factors	Gender Expectations, Marital Status, Children	1.85	13%

The factor analysis revealed **four key dimensions** influencing women's workforce participation: **Workplace Flexibility, Family Support, Career Development, and Socio-Cultural Factors.**

Workplace Flexibility emerged as the most significant factor (explaining 23% of the variance), highlighting that flexible work arrangements, job satisfaction, and salary satisfaction are critical to women's retention in the workforce.

Family Support (18%) also played a major role, particularly for women with children, indicating that family support systems are crucial for balancing professional and personal responsibilities.

Career Development was another important factor (14%), underscoring the importance of career progression and educational qualifications in keeping women in the workforce.

Socio-Cultural Factors (13%) emerged as a significant factor as well, suggesting that traditional gender roles and expectations can influence women's choices to exit the workforce.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study provide valuable insights into the factors that influence women's decisions to enter, remain in, or exit the workforce in the Delhi-NCR region. By analyzing the responses of 500 women through various statistical techniques, including descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, correlation analysis,

regression analysis, and factor analysis, we have gained a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

Workforce Participation: Factors Influencing Entry, Retention, and Exit

One of the most significant findings from the **descriptive statistics** is the relatively high **job satisfaction** reported by women in the sample. With a mean score of 3.85, women were generally content with their current employment conditions. This suggests that job satisfaction plays a critical role in encouraging women to stay in the workforce. However, **work-life balance** (mean score of 3.50) showed only moderate satisfaction, indicating that while many women are managing their professional and personal responsibilities, a substantial number still face challenges in balancing the two. The availability of **family support** scored highly (mean = 4.00), which reinforces the importance of family networks in facilitating women's workforce participation, particularly in contexts where caregiving responsibilities play a major role.

Interestingly, the relatively low satisfaction with **salary** (mean score of 3.25) stands out as a key concern. This finding aligns with previous studies suggesting that many women, especially in lower-income or entry-level jobs, experience dissatisfaction with their earnings, which could influence their decision to exit the workforce or pursue part-time employment. Salary dissatisfaction, coupled with the moderate satisfaction in work-life balance, may also explain why many women opt for flexible or part-time employment, as they seek to mitigate the pressures of work-family conflict.



Impact of Family and Social Dynamics

The **chi-square test** results highlight the strong influence of **marital status** and **family size** on women's employment status. Married women were more likely to be employed full-time compared to single or divorced women, suggesting that family support and shared caregiving responsibilities may enable married women to stay in the workforce. This finding corroborates the importance of family structure, as **family support** was shown to be a crucial factor in women's ability to work full-time. Additionally, **having children** significantly impacted women's employment status: women with fewer children were more likely to work full-time, while those with three or more children were more likely to either exit the workforce or work part-time. These findings point to the continuing role of caregiving responsibilities in shaping women's labor force participation, as many women with young children face difficulties in balancing career and family life.

The impact of **education** on employment status was also significant. Women with higher educational qualifications were more likely to be employed full-time, suggesting that higher education can act as a pathway to better job opportunities and more stable workforce participation. This finding underscores the importance of education in empowering women to pursue careers and attain financial independence.

Workplace Flexibility and Job Satisfaction

The results from **correlation analysis** show that **work-life balance** and **job satisfaction** are positively correlated, reinforcing the idea that women who experience a better balance between their work and personal lives tend to be more satisfied with their jobs. This positive relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction may explain why women with more flexible work schedules or family-friendly policies report higher levels of job satisfaction and are more likely to stay employed.

In terms of **regression analysis**, **work-life balance** and **job satisfaction** were found to be the strongest predictors of women's decision to stay in the workforce. The fact that **family support** was also a significant predictor

suggests that women's ability to balance their work and personal lives is not solely dependent on workplace policies but is also influenced by social and family structures. These findings imply that workplace flexibility—such as the ability to work from home, adjustable work hours, or part-time options—may be essential for retaining women in the workforce, particularly those with family responsibilities.

Moreover, **salary satisfaction** was positively associated with **job satisfaction**, yet the relatively moderate scores for salary satisfaction suggest that compensation remains a key issue for women in the workforce. This reflects broader structural issues in pay equality and suggests that addressing wage gaps could further improve women's overall job satisfaction and reduce the likelihood of exit from the workforce.

Factor Analysis: Key Dimensions Influencing Workforce Participation

The **factor analysis** identified four key dimensions influencing women's workforce participation: **Workplace Flexibility**, **Family Support**, **Career Development**, and **Socio-Cultural Factors**. The dimension of **Workplace Flexibility** emerged as the most significant factor, explaining 23% of the variance. This indicates that flexible work policies are crucial for enabling women to stay employed, especially when they are also managing family responsibilities. Companies that offer **flexible working hours**, the option to work from home, or part-time work options are likely to see greater retention of female employees, especially those with children or caregiving responsibilities.

Family Support was identified as the second most important factor (18%), reflecting that women who have strong family support systems—whether it be a spouse, parents, or extended family—are more likely to stay in the workforce. This dimension highlights the continuing importance of gendered expectations around caregiving, as women often shoulder a disproportionate amount of household and childcare duties, which can limit their employment options. Thus, policies that promote shared caregiving responsibilities, such as parental leave and child care support, may further enhance women's workforce participation.



Career Development was the third most important factor, emphasizing the role of **job satisfaction**, **career progression**, and **educational qualifications** in influencing women's workforce decisions. Women who are provided with opportunities for career growth, skill development, and training are more likely to remain in the workforce. This highlights the importance of offering career advancement opportunities and professional development programs to retain skilled female workers.

Lastly, **Socio-Cultural Factors**, which included gendered societal expectations, family dynamics, and cultural attitudes toward women's work, were also found to be significant in influencing women's decision to stay in or exit the workforce. Traditional gender roles that expect women to prioritize family responsibilities over professional work continue to shape women's workforce participation, often creating barriers for women to stay employed or advance in their careers.

Conclusion

The findings of this study have several important implications for policy and practice. First, **workplace flexibility** should be prioritized in organizations to improve job satisfaction and retention among women, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities. Employers should consider offering **flexible working hours**, **remote work options**, and **part-time opportunities** to accommodate women's work-life balance needs.

Second, **family support** systems must be strengthened, both within the home and at the workplace. Providing adequate **parental leave**, **childcare support**, and ensuring that gendered caregiving expectations do not hinder women's career advancement can play a significant role in increasing women's participation in the workforce.

Finally, addressing issues related to **salary dissatisfaction** and ensuring **pay equity** are essential for improving overall job satisfaction and reducing the financial barriers that may encourage women to exit the workforce. Ensuring that women have equal access to high-paying, full-time positions can help mitigate the factors that lead to workforce exit.

In conclusion, while women in the Delhi-NCR region report relatively high levels of job satisfaction, factors such as work-life balance, salary dissatisfaction, family support, and cultural expectations continue to shape their workforce participation. To enhance women's entry and retention in the workforce, a multi-faceted approach is necessary, one that includes both workplace policies and broader societal changes aimed at fostering gender equality in both professional and domestic spheres.

Recommendations and future scope

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to improve women's entry, retention, and overall participation in the workforce. These recommendations aim at addressing the key barriers identified in the research, such as work-life balance, family support, salary dissatisfaction, and workplace flexibility. The recommendations are as follows:

Enhance Workplace Flexibility

- **Flexible Work Hours:** Organizations should implement flexible work hours or allow employees to choose shifts that suit their personal and family needs. Flexibility is crucial for women who need to balance caregiving duties, including child-rearing and eldercare, with their professional responsibilities.
- **Remote and Hybrid Work Options:** The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the viability of remote work. Companies should continue offering remote or hybrid work options where possible, as this can significantly reduce time spent on commuting and allow women to manage their work and personal lives more effectively.
- **Job Sharing and Part-Time Roles:** Encouraging job-sharing models and part-time work for employees who are unable or unwilling to work full-time can help retain skilled women workers who may otherwise exit the workforce.



Provide Better Family Support Systems

- **Childcare Support:** Companies should provide childcare facilities or partner with childcare providers to offer subsidized childcare for employees. This will help alleviate the burden on women, especially those with young children, and make it easier for them to continue working full-time.
- **Parental Leave Policies:** Expanding parental leave policies, including **maternity, paternity, and adoption leave**, ensures that both parents can share caregiving responsibilities. Encouraging men to take paternity leave can help break gendered expectations around caregiving and promote greater equality at home.
- **Elder Care Support:** In addition to child care, eldercare support should also be considered. With an aging population, many women are also primary caregivers for elderly family members, which affects their work-life balance. Companies can offer eldercare assistance or paid leave options for caregivers.

Address Salary and Career Advancement Gaps

- **Pay Equity:** Companies should actively work towards closing the gender pay gap by conducting regular salary audits and ensuring that women are paid equally for equal work. Transparent pay structures and clear criteria for promotions are important for building trust and ensuring fair compensation.
- **Promote Career Development:** Providing opportunities for career development through training programs, mentorship, and clear pathways to advancement will help retain skilled women employees. Encouraging women to take on leadership roles and offering leadership training programs can also help them break through the glass ceiling.
- **Equal Access to High-Paying Roles:** Ensure that women have equal access to high-paying roles and are not restricted to lower-paying, lower-status positions, often referred to as "female-dominated" jobs. It is essential to

eliminate biases that may prevent women from being considered for high-level or high-salary positions.

Create a Gender-Inclusive Organizational Culture

- **Combat Gender Bias:** Companies should foster an organizational culture that actively works to eliminate gender bias. Training sessions for employees and managers about unconscious bias, gender stereotypes, and inclusive leadership practices will promote a more supportive work environment for women.
- **Leadership Role Models:** Encourage women to assume leadership roles and provide visible role models for other women in the organization. Women in leadership positions can serve as mentors and inspire younger women to pursue and remain in ambitious career paths.
- **Workplace Support Networks:** Establish formal or informal networks for women in the workplace, such as women's affinity groups or mentorship programs. These networks can help women navigate workplace challenges and provide support for career advancement.

Support Women in Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment

- **Entrepreneurship Programs:** For women who leave the workforce to start their own businesses or pursue freelance work, organizations and governments should offer programs that provide access to entrepreneurship training, business development resources, and financial support.
- **Access to Funding and Resources:** Women entrepreneurs often face challenges in accessing funding and capital for business startups. Government programs or corporate-sponsored initiatives to provide financial assistance, grants, or low-interest loans can help women start and sustain businesses.



Address Socio-Cultural Barriers

- **Shifting Gender Norms:** Public awareness campaigns and workplace training programs should focus on shifting societal and cultural perceptions that restrict women's roles to caregiving or part-time work. Promoting gender equality in both professional and domestic spheres is crucial for encouraging women to remain in the workforce and achieve career success.
- **Encourage Shared Domestic Responsibility:** Encouraging shared responsibility for domestic duties between partners, including both caregiving and household chores, can alleviate the disproportionate burden women face in managing family and work life.

Future Scope of Research

While this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing women's workforce participation in the Delhi-NCR region, there is still much to explore. Future research can build upon the findings of this study by exploring the following areas:

Longitudinal Studies

- Future research could adopt a **longitudinal approach** to track changes in women's workforce participation over time. This would allow researchers to explore how the factors influencing women's entry, retention, and exit evolve over the course of their careers, especially with changes in family structure, societal norms, and workplace policies.

Intersectional Analysis

- Future studies could take an **intersectional approach**, examining how factors such as **race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and disability** intersect with gender to influence women's workforce experiences. For example, women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds or those with disabilities may face

additional barriers to entering or staying in the workforce.

Comparative Studies Across Regions or Countries

- The study could be extended to compare the findings from Delhi-NCR with other regions in India or countries with different cultural and economic contexts. This would help to identify region-specific or country-specific factors that influence women's workforce participation and provide insights into best practices from different global contexts.

Focus on Women in Leadership and Decision-Making Roles

- Future research could focus specifically on **women in leadership positions**, investigating the barriers and enablers of women's advancement into top management and executive roles. This would provide valuable insights into how organizations can foster gender equality at the highest levels of decision-making.

Impact of Technological Advancements

- With the rapid growth of technology and automation, future research could examine how technological advancements are impacting women's participation in the workforce. Specifically, how sectors like **AI, automation, and digital platforms** are creating new opportunities or challenges for women, especially in terms of **remote work, freelance opportunities, or gig economy roles**.

Impact of Policy Changes

- Research could also explore the **effectiveness of recent policy changes** at the national or organizational level, such as the introduction of **women-centric policies, gender equality initiatives, and family leave policies**. Future studies could assess whether these changes have



a measurable impact on women's ability to stay in the workforce and progress in their careers.

Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Further research could focus on the **mental health** and **well-being** of women in the workforce. Understanding how stressors related to work-life balance, salary dissatisfaction, or gender-based discrimination affect women's psychological health could inform workplace policies that promote overall employee wellness.

About the author

Ms. Priya Verma is a Research Scholar in the Department of History at **Lovely Professional University**, Punjab. With a deep passion for historical research, Ms. Verma is currently pursuing her PhD, focusing on socio-cultural dynamics, gender studies, and the historical evolution of women's roles in various societies. Her research interests include the intersection of gender, culture, and labor, particularly the historical aspects of women's workforce participation. Ms. Verma has actively contributed to academic discussions and conferences in her field, demonstrating a commitment to understanding how historical narratives shape contemporary social structures and gender roles. Through her work, she aims to bridge the gap between historical scholarship and contemporary issues, particularly in relation to the evolving roles of women in the workforce. Ms. Verma is dedicated to expanding the scope of gender-centric historical research to influence modern socio-economic and policy frameworks.

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