

## Work Motivation in India: A Gendered Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

With regard to work motivation and job satisfaction, gender, owing to its presence in society inadvertently plays a part in bringing up specific issues to the organisational workplace in terms of discrimination, societal judgement, stereotypes, especially towards women, who were traditionally seemed as subordinates to men. Patriarchy has caused certain professions to be gendered and led to men and women being actively discouraged/encouraged to go into a field that is traditionally seen as 'made for them'. Working mothers and women bear the brunt of the discrimination given the low pay, the glass ceiling effect and the judgement that entails both from men and women in an organisational workplace. They are over scrutinised and often scorned as if they do not balance their personal and professional life more so than men and this in turn affects their work life balance as well as their mental health, leading to burnout, adopting a masculine attitude to fit in, and lowering their productivity. The objective of this research was to understand do gender specific factors in the modern day and age still affect work motivation amongst men and women as well as looking into the discrepancies of their experience at work. A survey was conducted amongst working men and women and upon analysing the data it was found that there are gender specific varying factors that affect employee work motivation as well as employee work life balance in light of the current pandemic.

**Keywords:** *Mental Health, Workplace, Gender, Stereotypes, Wage Gap, Impact Of Gender On Workplace, Motivation, Discrimination, Biases, Work Motivation, Organisational Behavior*

In a world filled with binary opposition and conventional distribution roles, organisational settings, especially in India, irrevocably suffer the consequences of gender roles that are in place since time immemorial, owing to patriarchy. Aside from the gender-based discrimination and the stereotypes men and women face at a workplace. Work motivation and the role of gender has been observed to play a part in furthering dividing the gender binary at a professional level.

Employee motivation is crucial in an organisational setting and is determined by the social and physical environment associated with the work performed. (Sharlyn, 2005; Ramlall, 2004; Srivastava et al., 2008). With women entering the workforce and occupying domains wherein men have the majority, they face gender specific struggles such as balancing motherhood, household and office work, which affects their work life balance more than

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their male colleagues. Women are put under more scrutiny and general perception of female managers, bosses, CEO's face a unique set of perceptual adjective based prejudices. For instance, if a man does something, it's strategic and clever, yet when a woman does something, it's calculative and cunning, the latter holding a negative connotation in contrast to the former. Moreover, they are subjected to phenomena like the glass ceiling effect that keeps them from advancing in their career, less pay than their male counterparts, and societal judgement for their field of work.

This study aims at understanding the different reasons of working in an organizational setting from a gendered perspective and the discrepancies that arise from it. It seeks to analyze how role distribution, and work-life balance are impacted by the present gender norms in society in the Indian context as well as studying the result of the pandemic on work-life balance on both genders, and whether or not differences in work motivation are still affected by gender.

### **Background**

**How conventional role distribution affects work:** Motivation has been primarily understood as the ability or readiness exhibited by an individual to achieve a goal. In contemporary society motivation in an organisational workplace is understood as the employee's degree of initiative, guidance and persistence towards completing a goal and maintaining said persistence over a period of time [Rahimic, 2010]. this drive to achieve could be internal, such as an innate drive stemming from passion to achieve something or external in terms of validation from friends, family or authority figures.

Work motivation works in tandem with productivity in an organizational setting. It is commonly assumed that. Work motivation originates within and beyond the individual to initiate and determine work-related behavior. It is affected by a plethora of factors amongst individuals, however upon inspection, it is evident that gender differences posits an inherent bias towards the worklines of individuals as well as expectations and stereotypes that arise from it. The adjectives when it comes to defining a man and a woman play a role in this. Masculine traits are expected to be independence-oriented, longing for power and authority, self-assertion, popularity, success. Active, dynamic, conscious, logical and concentrated. While feminine traits include passivity, staticism, intuitive, abstract, demure and being family oriented. This supposed binary opposition of the masculine and feminine play a significant part in conventional gendered role distribution culturally and professionally.

**Gender differences to motivation at work:** Gender divide can and has led to a difference in work motivation in between a man and a woman. Men could be motivated with the need for getting money, economic success, autonomy and achievement and be seen as driven, ambitious and on the go. According to the gender stereotypical model, women should be able to fulfill her family needs and tend to their family life. Thus, for women interpersonal relationships, security, social benefit. should be more important and serve as motivators. (Kepuladze, 2010) While women may be more motivated if given the chance to advance and establish more of a balance between work and family life, should they pursue these qualities are termed as unfeminine, wanting to prove a point and power hungry. (Horner, 2005, p. 207]

While the conventional role distribution is slowly chipping away, it is still prevalent across industries. For instance, women dominate the field of psychology, teaching, secretarial, nursing and the fine arts while men are often found to be in engineering, entrepreneurship,

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technicians. (ILOSAT, 2020). Of course, women and men do tend to be found in either fields, but it has been noted that the stereotypical outlook towards what kind of a job is for a man and women still persist in the minds of people. This set of biases work in tandem with the expectations and the stereotypes both genders face. Men getting called 'soft' and being discouraged into going to fields like psychology that is 'a women's field.' This is evident by the dearth of co-ed colleges in India offering psychology as an undergraduate course as well.

For women especially, entering a job comes with a share of biases and prejudices from co-workers, society and authority figures. Women are held back from being promoted after a certain stage while less qualified men co-workers get the job, the glass ceiling effect is unique to women. Women are three times more likely to quit a job after reaching motherhood than men. Amidst the 2020 pandemic it was reported that women had a harder time balancing work and household responsibilities in contrast to their male counterparts. (S&P Global/AARP survey, 2020)

Women, according to Hofstede (2001) value friendly environments, prestige, task significance, professional growth, cooperation and job security while men usually value financial aspects, promotions and responsibility. Men are viewed to be more financially motivated than women (Gooderman et al. (2004). Women at work may have an unconscious bias pertaining to the need to prove themselves over and over, working twice as much, despite their expertise and competence to feel on par with their male colleagues. They might walk on a tightrope and feel the need to adopt 'masculine' behavioral traits to be taken seriously by their male colleagues. Another phenomenon that occurs with working mothers is the maternal wall. Women with children are denied access to opportunities women without children get. They get scrutinised, their commitment and competence to work questioned and are constantly berated for not managing work and home properly.

However on the contrary, it was also noted in a study by Pearson and Chatterjee (2002) that work motivation in male and female employees show no stark differences. The results of the study indicated that there was minimal difference between employee motivation. Both genders shared the same motivators of salary, opportunity, skills, promotions and responsibility. It was also noted that gender differences do not go beyond 10% and depend on situations. (Basow, S.A., 1986; Hyde, J.S., 1991; Spence, J.T., 1993).

### ***Work motivation and women: An Unfair Situation in India***

Only 20.3% of the Indian workforce comprises women (The World Bank Databank, 2020) and earn 65.5% in comparison to their male colleagues for doing the same work (The Global Gender Gap Report 2020). Societal judgements and gender stereotypes keep women out of fields like engineering which have only a mere 12.7% of women. In addition, while there are laws in place to keep discrimination at work in check, gender based stereotypes can still cause a multitude of effects in women such as decreased productivity, low self-esteem, feelings of frustration, anger, or paranoia, feeling unsafe or fearful, isolation from other coworkers, tension between yourself and the perpetrator of the discrimination (e.g. coworkers, supervisor, company), mental health, substance abuse issues, and workplace conflict. Such responsibilities can increase stress levels that work in tandem with, compromising a woman's physical and emotional health, entailing work burnout and decreased productivity.

Hence, this study seeks to examine whether in the Indian context gender specific factors motivate work performance and motivation within an organization.

## RESEARCH METHOD

A research was conducted on a sample group of 150 people, out of which 110 responded to the survey. After weeding out the incomplete forms, there were 100 forms filled in an equal pool of 50 men and 50 women between the ages of 25-35 from the private sector. Two anonymous surveys with identical questions were sent out to separate groups of working men and women. They were required to respond to a survey that was aimed at assessing whether gender played a role in employee work motivation in comparison to their male counterparts. The responses were collected and analyzed keeping in mind the relevance of the findings as contributors to our knowledge of the present scenario of working during the pandemic and the need to broaden the scope of organisational psychology. The research was considered necessary to understand the extent and nature of the prejudices and stereotypes that come with working in an organisational setting and to assess the impact of these preexisting work norms through insight into lived experiences.

### Research findings

A comparative look at the survey's finding reveal that there is a stark difference in the factors that motivate men and women to work, figure 1 points that the opportunity of higher earning (76%), followed by career advancement (58%) and then job security (54%) is the order of priority for men whilst stability/job security (78%), cooperation/environment (62%) and pursuit of passions (60%) is more important to women. Following, it was found that over 58% of men agree they are paid fairly at work as compared to 46% of women who stated they did not feel their pay was fair (figure 2). Ironically, in the following figure 3, 52% of men felt that gender disparity prevalent at their workplace while 48% women agreed strongly, and 36% acknowledged the presence of gender inequality at work.

Both men and women (58% and 60% respectively) were affected by the pandemic with regard to their work life balance (figure 4), however- interestingly, 52% of men felt their gender did not play a role in disrupting their work life balance, while 52% of women felt their gender played an extensive role in affecting their work life balance (figure 5). 52% of men reported their work life balance to be a 7 on a scale of 1-10 (1 being abysmal, and 10 being perfect) while the same share of women reported it to be a 3 (figure 6). Other relevant findings included that 66% of men did not believe in the existence of the glass ceiling effect while 62% of women believed the effect existed and 22% of them noted to be a victim of it as seen in figure 7.

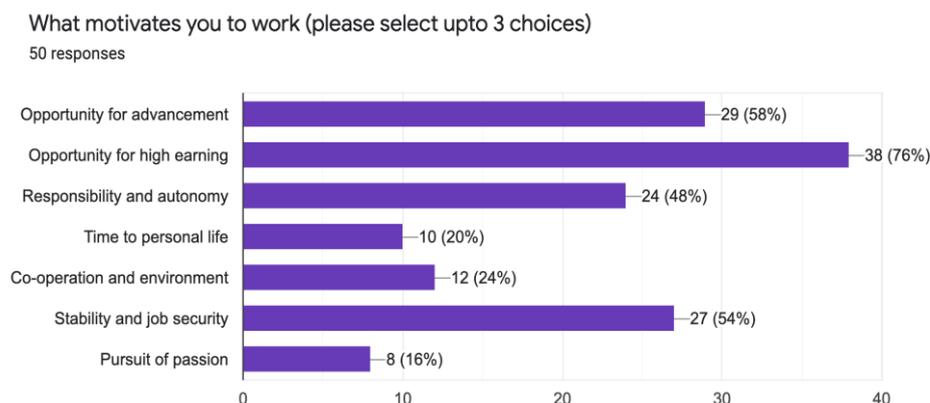
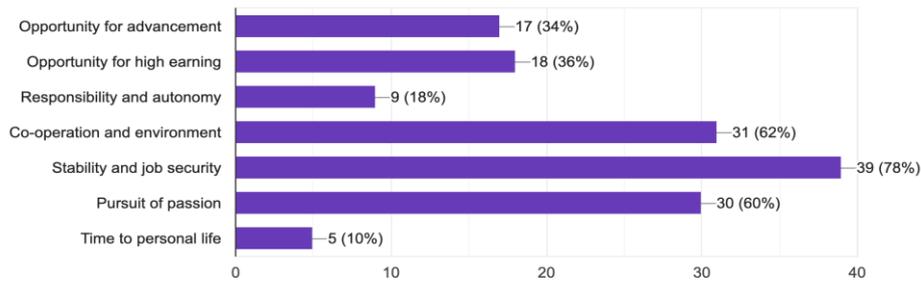


Figure 1 A: Work motivation survey sent to male workers

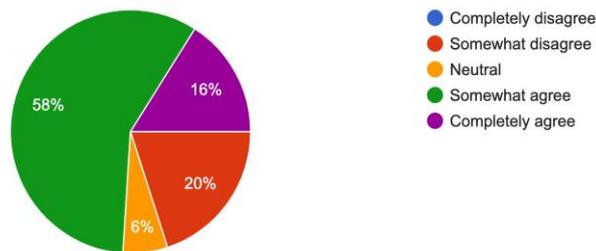
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What motivates you to work (please select upto 3 choices)  
50 responses



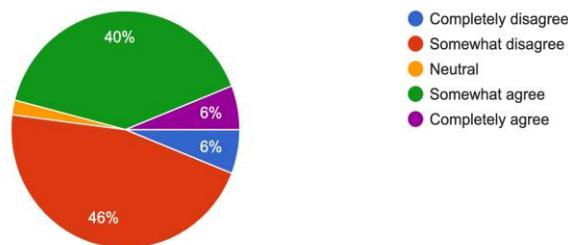
**Figure 1 B: Work motivation survey sent to female workers**

My pay is fair with regard to my performance and contribution to the organization's results  
50 responses



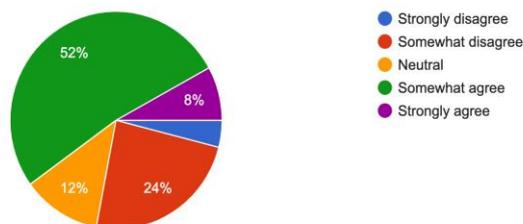
**Figure 2 A: Work motivation survey sent to male workers**

My pay is fair with regard to my performance and contribution to the organization's results  
50 responses



**Figure 2 B: Work motivation survey sent to female workers**

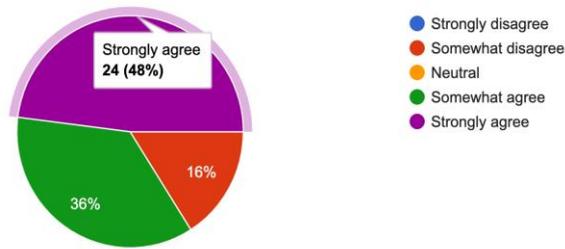
Gender inequality is alive at my workplace  
50 responses



**Figure 3 A: Work motivation survey sent to male workers**

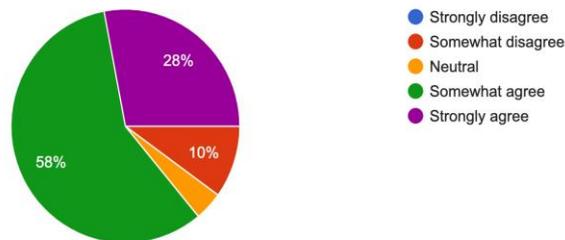
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Gender inequality is alive at my workplace  
50 responses



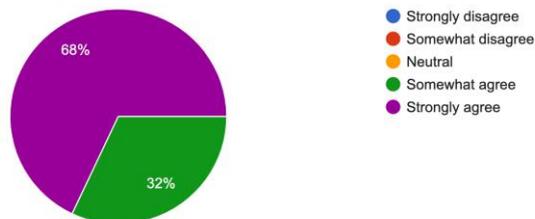
**Figure 3 B: Work motivation survey sent to female workers**

The pandemic has affected my work productivity and disrupted my work-life balance  
50 responses



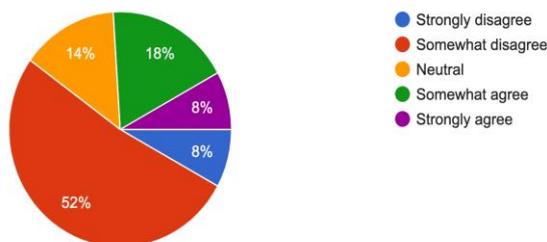
**Figure 4 A: Work motivation survey sent to male workers**

The pandemic has affected my work productivity and disrupted my work-life balance  
50 responses



**Figure 4 B: Work motivation survey sent to female workers**

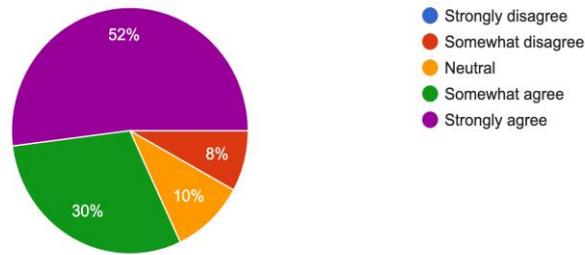
My gender plays a role in affecting my work life balance  
50 responses



**Figure 5 B: Work motivation survey sent to female workers**

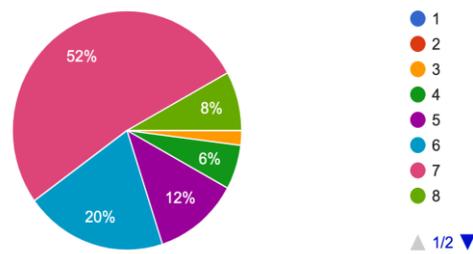
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My gender plays a role in affecting my work life balance  
50 responses



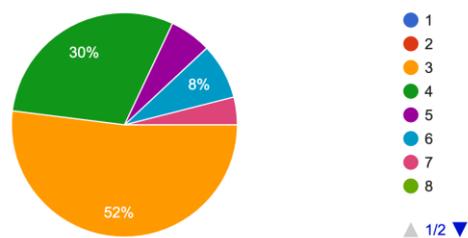
**Figure 5 B: Work motivation survey sent to female workers**

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your work-life balance, 1 being absolutely disproportionate and 10 being perfect  
50 responses



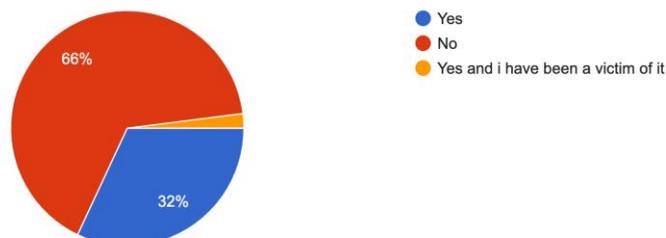
**Figure 6 A: Work motivation survey sent to male workers**

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your work-life balance, 1 being absolutely disproportionate and 10 being perfect  
50 responses



**Figure 6 B: Work motivation survey sent to female workers**

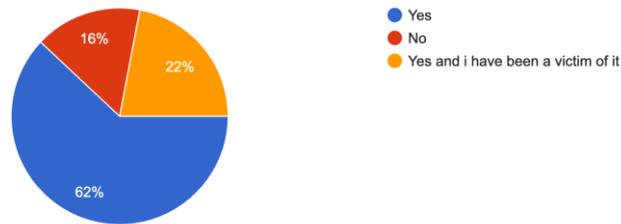
Do you believe the glass ceiling effect exists?  
50 responses



**Figure 7 A: Work motivation survey sent to male workers**

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Do you believe the glass ceiling effect exists?  
50 responses



*Figure 7 B: Work motivation survey sent to female workers*

### DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to assess and analyse the different reasons of working in an organizational setting from a gendered perspective and the discrepancies that arise from it. It seeks to analyze how role distribution, and work-life balance are impacted by the present gender norms in society in the Indian context as well as studying the result of the pandemic on work-life balance on both genders, and whether or not differences in work motivation are still affected by gender. The administration for the same was conducted via survey on a sample size of 100, the sample size was split into two equal groups and two identical surveys were sent to the group consisting of women workers and the other to a group of men workers. The results of the two surveys were then compared and analysed.

Despite legal provisions like the equal remuneration act of 1976 and wage gap reduction policies, gender discrimination in the form of the glass ceiling effect, stereotypes, wage gap and targeted discriminatory practices persist across the private sector in India. Through the research findings it was found that there was a significant difference in the factors that affect work motivation amongst men and women.

The survey findings indicated that women on an average valued job security, cooperation, environment and pursuit of personal passions more while men focused more on the opportunity for advancement, higher pay, autonomy and responsibility as their prime work motivators. This trend could be attributed to the stereotypical way of thinking that men should go and find a job that earns a lot to feed his family. Men in India are encouraged from childhood to go into the fields of engineering, law, or climb the corporate ladder in turn of getting economic prosperity and are in general, more free to chase success. Women on the other hand are encouraged from childhood to go into 'softer' fields wherein the job security, safety and environment is higher in contrast. While this trend is slowly chipping away and men and women are seen breaking out of 'stereotypical' gendered work fields, from the current research it can be seen that this trend is still existent.

Only 40% of women felt that their pay was fair with regard to my performance and contribution to the organization's results while 58% of men believed their salary was fair with regard to their work performance. 48% of men and a cumulative of 84% of women believed that gender inequality was alive at their workplace. Over 62% of the female respondents agreed and 22% were a part of the glass ceiling effect while only 32% of men felt that the effect exists. 62% of women reported that the pandemic had affected my work productivity and disrupted their work-life balance as compared to 58% reported by men. 52% of women believed that their gender plays a role in affecting their work life balance as compared to the 52% reported by men who do not believe their gender dictates their work

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life balance, additionally, women on an average reported a score of 3 out of 10 in terms of the quality of work-life balance (1 being abysmal and 10 being perfect) as compared to an average of 7 reported by men.

This poses the question on the ineffectiveness of government policies and the role of socio-cultural factors, patriarchy, societal judgements that predate the modern era. It was evident in the findings that women valued 'feminine traits' of security, pursuing personal passions and a friendly environment more than men who displayed a preference for 'masculine' traits such as responsibility, high earning, career growth. It was seen that while a majority of men believed that their pay was fair in regard to the position they held, they still believed that gender inequality is present at their workplace, and more so, a large part of them did not believe in the idea of the glass ceiling effect. This could be attributed to either ignorance on their part of the phenomena since historically, the term has been used to address women being held back from promotions rather than men, or due to a lack of women at their workplace speaking up against this practice.

### CONCLUSION

The result of the surveys showcased that there was a definitive difference between work motivations and they differed on the basis of gender, with women reporting a tilt towards factors such as job security, cooperation and pursuit of personal passions in contrast to men who focused more on salary, advancement and career opportunities. The results were also indicative of the gender-based issues faced at the participant workplace with women reporting higher dissatisfaction with their salary, unequal work recognition, the presence of gender inequality, being victim to the glass ceiling effect and impaired work life balance based on their gender in contrast to men with special reference to the pandemic. Thus, in conclusion, from the survey findings it is evident that gender roles do play a part in determining work motivation amongst men and women in an organisational setting.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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