

## Women are overworked, underpaid, and more stressed: Deloitte study



Earlier this year, the CMIE report showed that pandemic had worsened the gender inequity in India regarding employment. While urban female employment was declining even before the pandemic, data indicates that Covid-19 accelerated this trend.

India wasn't the only country where the pandemic had made an impact. In the US, data from the labour bureau shows that Covid-19 had reversed hard-earned gains towards female employment achieved in recent years.

Female unemployment in the country rose to 9.1 per cent in 2020, compared to 3.8 per cent in 2019. In contrast, male unemployment was a much lower 8.3 per cent and had declined from 3.9 per cent in 2019.

A new [Deloitte](#) study, “Women@Work”, states that Indian women are working in worse conditions than their global counterparts. A survey of 5,000 women across ten nations, 500 of whom were from India, finds that not only are women in India more overworked and stressed, they may be on the verge of dropping out from the workforce.

For a country that already has a low female labour force participation rate, this certainly does not bode well.

“Women professionals have made it clear that the pandemic has stretched them to their limits, compromising their motivation, well-being, and job satisfaction. While they agree that many organisations have introduced helpful initiatives – this section of the workforce needs on-ground actions that match those promises. Otherwise, we risk losing out on critical diversity of thought as women consider leaving the workforce in increasing numbers,” said Mohinish Sinha, partner and diversity & inclusion leader, [Deloitte](#) India.

The [Deloitte](#) study finds that productivity has worsened for most women, work-life balance has completely gone for a toss.

This is why 57 per cent of those surveyed between November 2020 and March 2021 felt that their career was not progressing as fast, as compared to 42 per cent globally. Fewer women in India—less than a third—felt that their organisation was committed to supporting women, as compared to 39 per cent globally.

Nearly a quarter of Indian women were considering leaving the workforce altogether compared to 23 per cent worldwide. The report highlights that increase in workload and an uneven share of caregiving responsibilities was the reason for the worsening condition.

Seventy-eight per cent of Indian women complained about having greater responsibility for chores and household management than 66 per cent globally. A study conducted by the Right to Education Forum last year had arrived at a similar conclusion, where girls were studying less than boys as they were more involved in household chores.

While the perception of Indian employers was generally better in terms of checking in with employees and supporting mental health, and providing additional financial support, they performed much worse than their global counterparts in the flexibility of working hours and providing a work-life balance.

When surveyed, a significantly greater proportion of Indian women wanted organisations to offer development opportunities, sponsorship programmes and flexible working.

What the [Deloitte](#) report fails to capture is the extent of government intervention in ensuring gender equity. This would reflect how big a role government policies can play in ensuring gender justice.

[Deloitte](#)