



Back to the workplace

Women
rejoining work
post-Covid-19



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Women want to rejoin the workforce

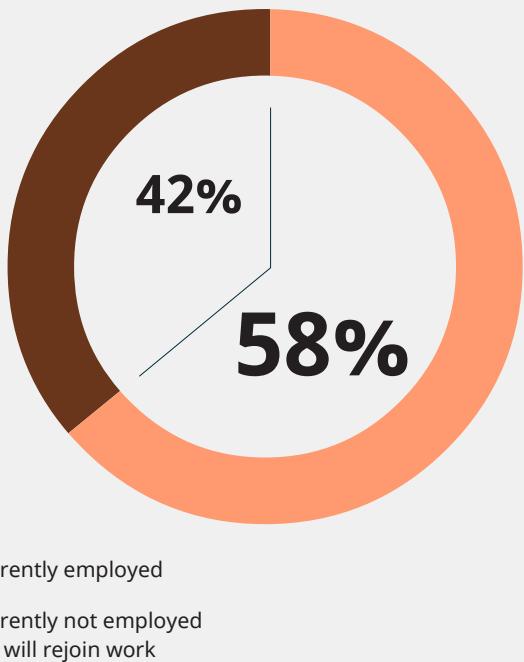


An unprecedented pandemic situation and disruption in work trends have renewed the focus on women's hiring and career progression. It now seems conducive for women, who had quit their jobs for various reasons including the pandemic, to rejoin work. But – how easy or difficult is it for them to rejoin work? And – is India Inc doing enough to engage women in the workforce?

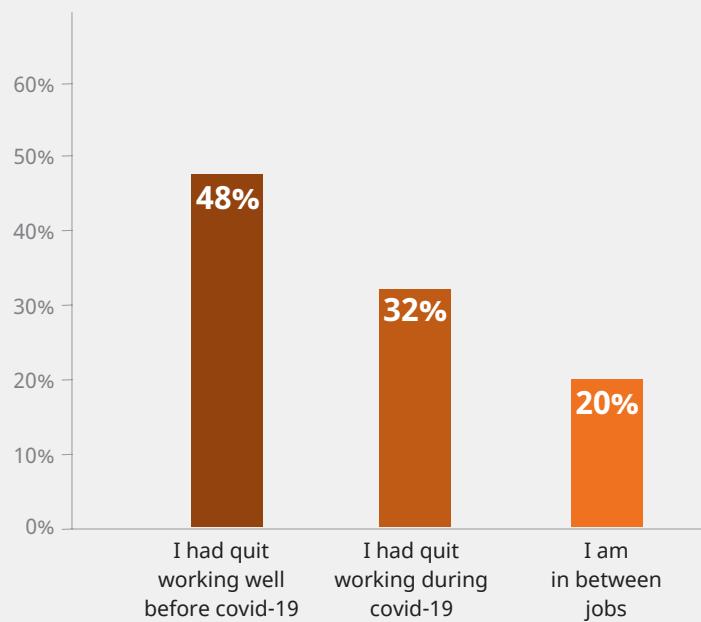
Of the women surveyed, **58%** are in the process of rejoining the workforce. **48%** of these women had quit their jobs before Covid-19, **32%** had quit during Covid-19 and **20%** are currently in between jobs. The top sectors to which these women are returning are Automobile (**71%** rejoining work), Manufacturing (**70%** rejoining work) and Construction and Real Estate (**68%** rejoining work). The least proportion of women returning to work that the sample comprises is **43%** in the Retail sector.



Employees' current employment situation



Which of the following best describes the current status of those rejoining?

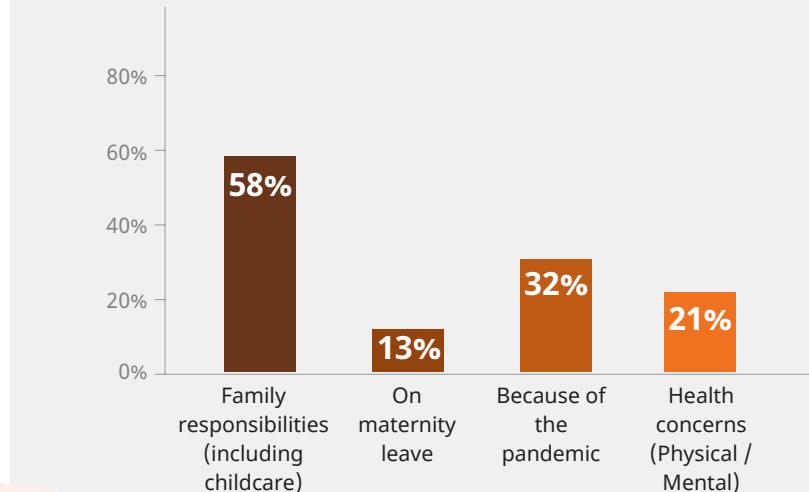


Family responsibilities prompted the quitting

Over the last two years, **58%** of the women respondents believe, female employees had quit their jobs to take care of family responsibilities (including childcare). **32%** of the women believe they quit because of the pandemic, while health concerns (**21%**) and maternity leave (**13%**) are the other reasons women attribute to female employees quitting their jobs.

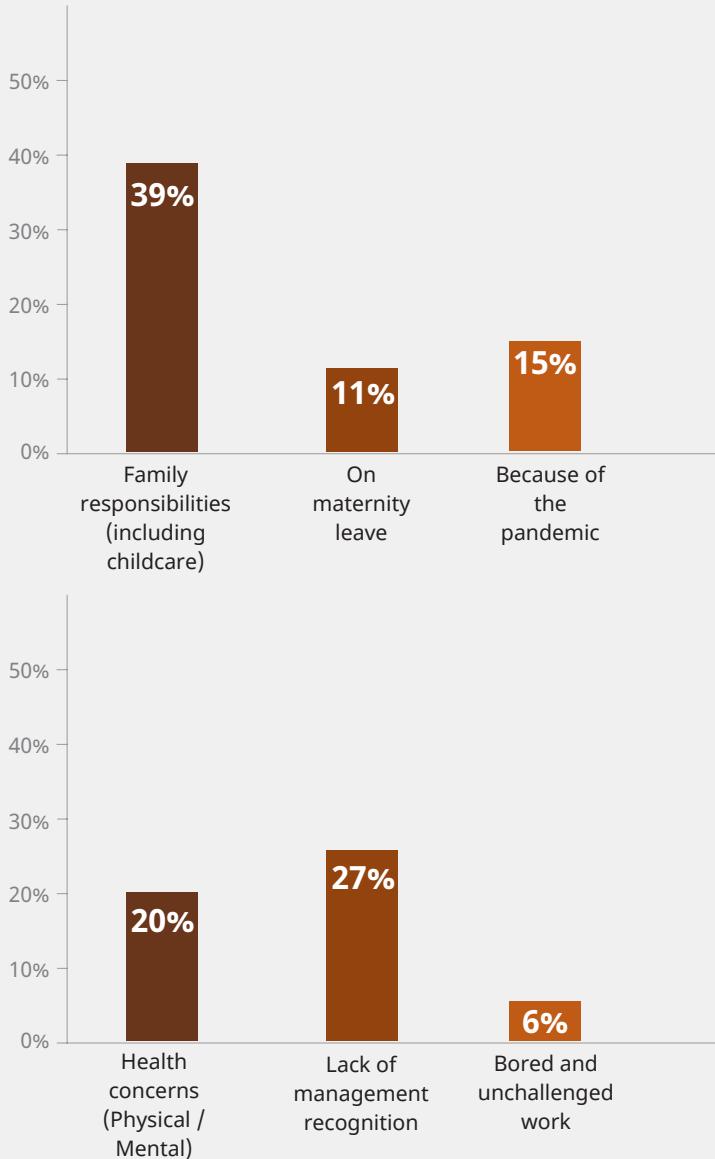
E-commerce (**77%** of all women respondents), Construction & Real Estate and IT/ITeS (both **70%**) are sectors in which an overwhelming proportion of women cite family responsibilities as the major reason for female employees quitting. Retail (**30%**) is one sector where maternity leaves is believed to be the top reason.

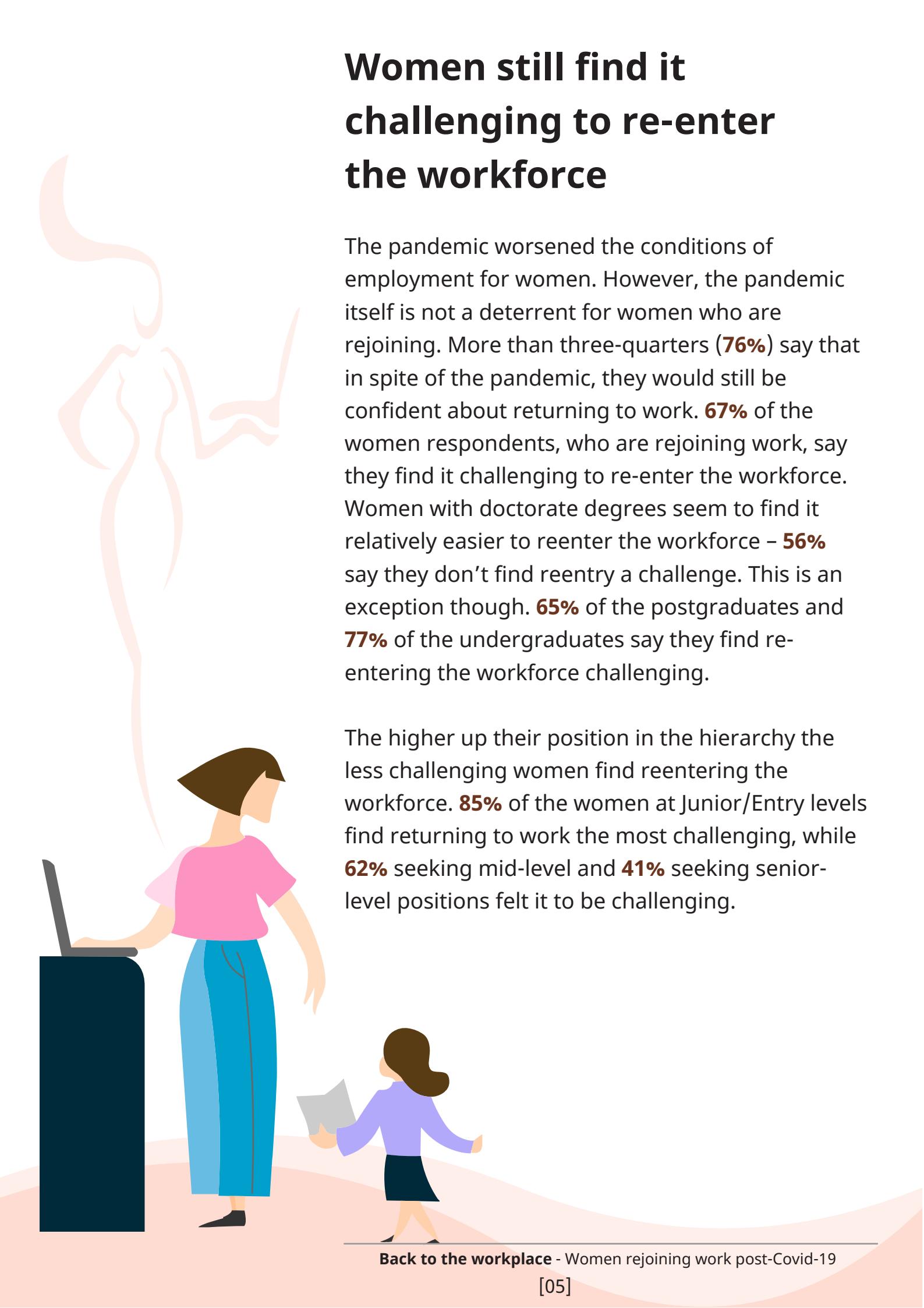
For what reasons have female employees quit their organizations in the last 2 years?



A significant proportion of employers (39%) agree with the view that female employees quit their organizations over the last two years because of family responsibilities. 27% admit that that lack of recognition by the management was a significant factor in causing women to quit, and 20% believe health concerns were the reason.

In the last two years, have female employees quit your organization for any of the below reasons?



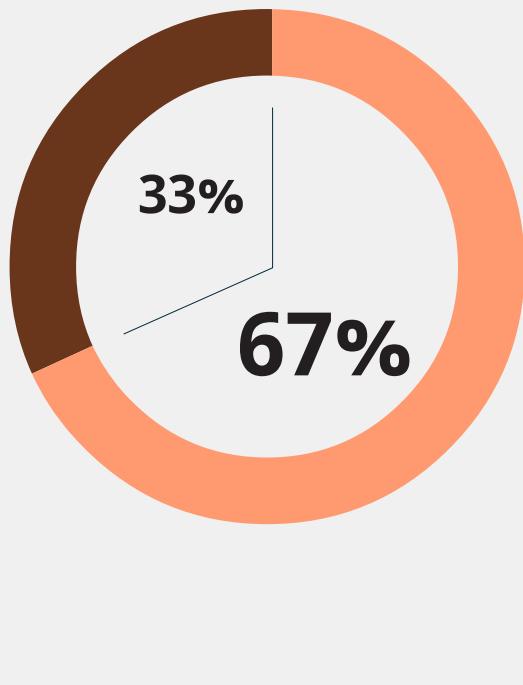


Women still find it challenging to re-enter the workforce

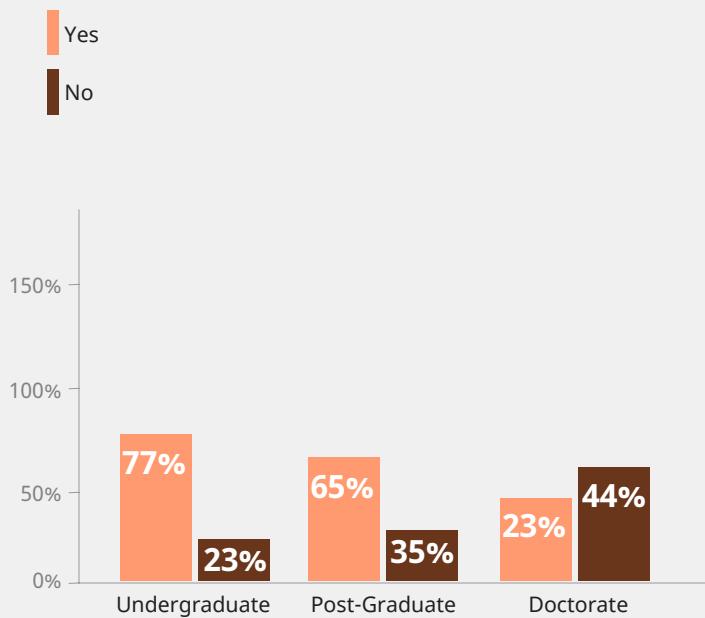
The pandemic worsened the conditions of employment for women. However, the pandemic itself is not a deterrent for women who are rejoining. More than three-quarters (**76%**) say that in spite of the pandemic, they would still be confident about returning to work. **67%** of the women respondents, who are rejoining work, say they find it challenging to re-enter the workforce. Women with doctorate degrees seem to find it relatively easier to reenter the workforce – **56%** say they don't find reentry a challenge. This is an exception though. **65%** of the postgraduates and **77%** of the undergraduates say they find re-entering the workforce challenging.

The higher up their position in the hierarchy the less challenging women find reentering the workforce. **85%** of the women at Junior/Entry levels find returning to work the most challenging, while **62%** seeking mid-level and **41%** seeking senior-level positions felt it to be challenging.

Do those rejoining find it challenging to reenter the workforce?



Do those who rejoin work find it challenging?



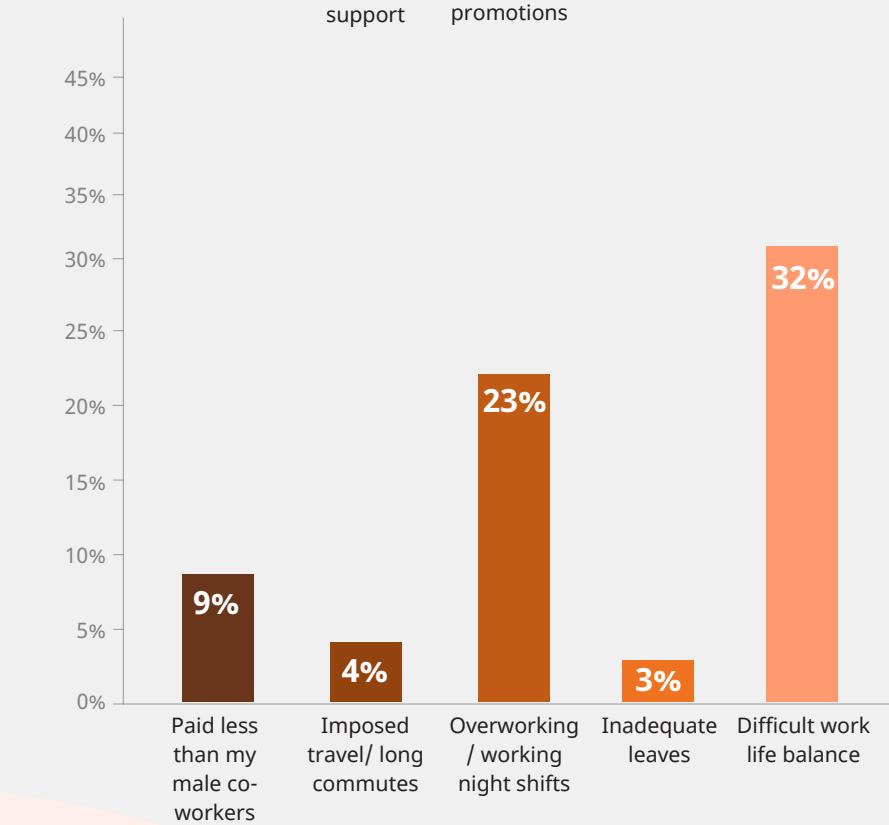
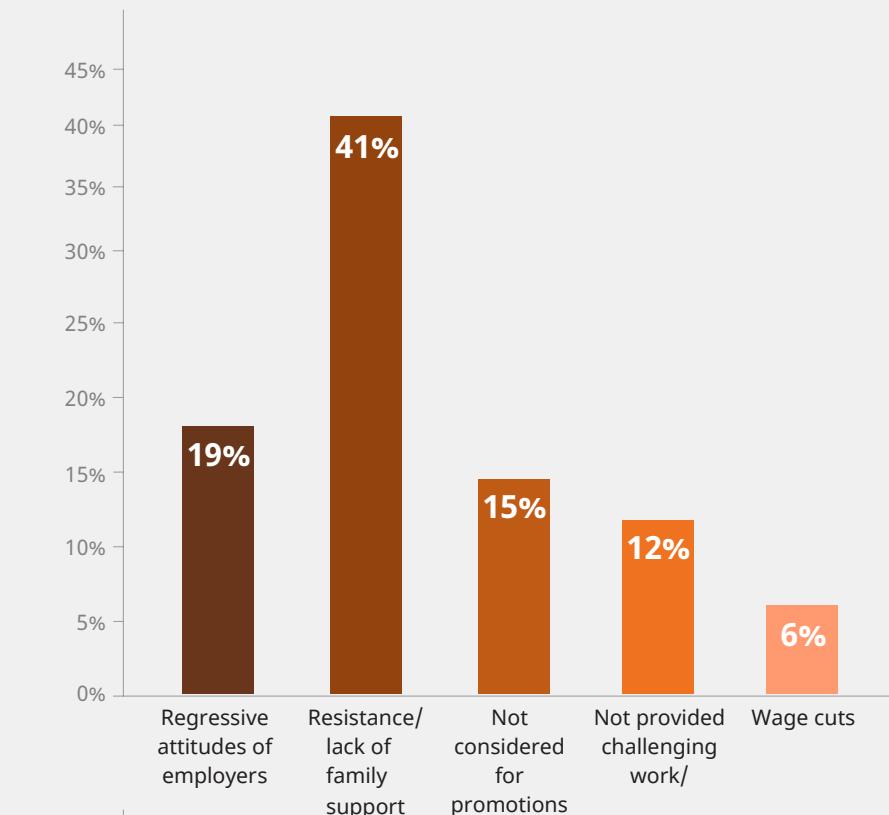


The pandemic is rolling back much of women's progress in the workplace, resulting in challenges for both employed women and women returning to organizations. **41%** of women cite resistance/lack of support from family as the main challenge, followed by **39%** saying they are bound by difficult work-life balance (domestic duties).

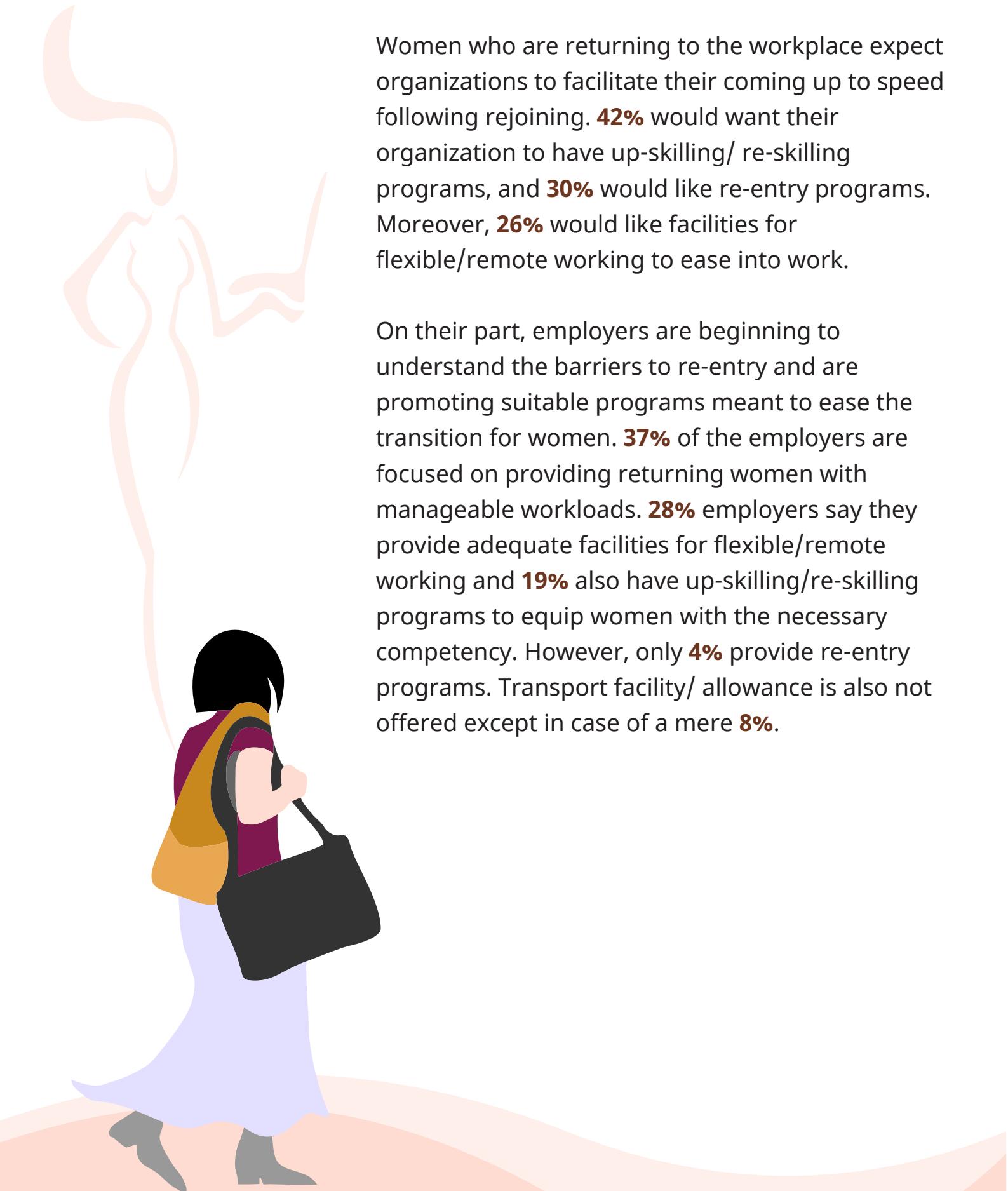
In addition to facing added domestic responsibilities at home due to COVID-19, women continue to face non-inclusive behaviors at work. **23%** say overworking or working night shifts have significantly increased their workload, while **19%** say they face regressive attitudes from employers. **15%** say they are not considered for promotions and **12%** say they are not provided challenging work/responsibilities. On the other hand only **3%** consider inadequate maternity/non-maternity leaves to be a cause of concern.

Employers rate family concerns to be riding highest (**4.2** on a scale of 5) on the minds of women returning to work, even higher than women themselves admit (**3.9** on a scale of 5). While employers rate career progression **3.6** (on a scale of 5) as a concern for women, women say it is not too much of a concern (**1.9** on a scale of 5). Role bias at the workplace is rated to be of similar degree of concern by both employers (**2.9** on a scale of 5) and women (**2.8** on a scale of 5). Salary/wages are rated as a higher concern by women (**3.6** on a scale of 5) than by employers (**3.1** on a scale of 5).

What challenges do women continue to face at work / do they think they will face as they return to work?



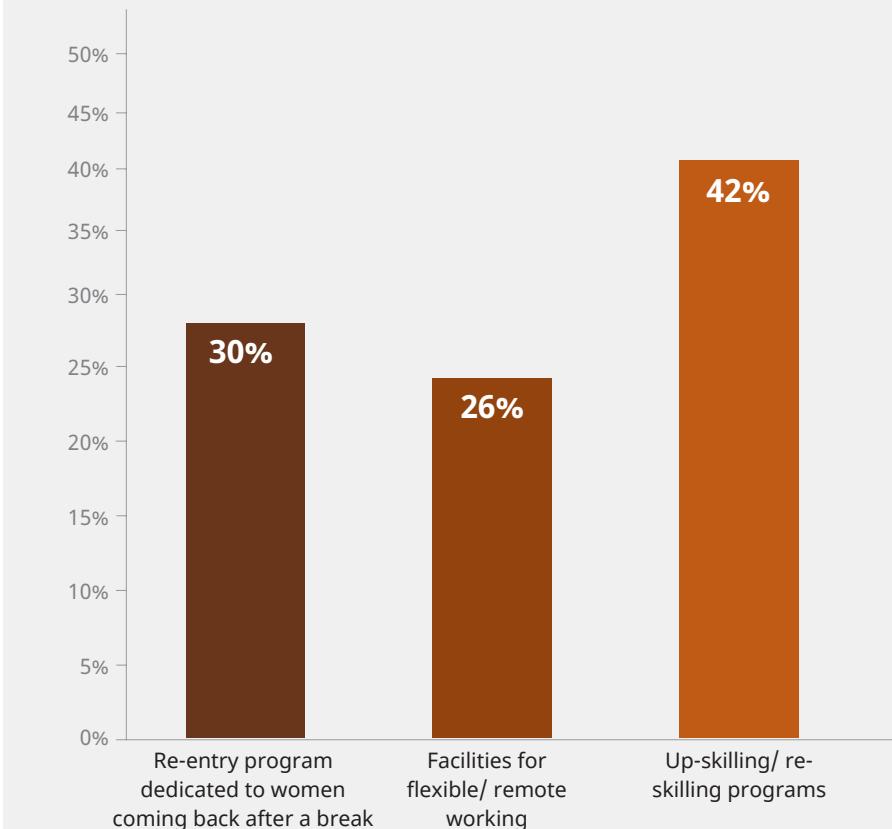
Re-entry programs to ease back to work – a necessity



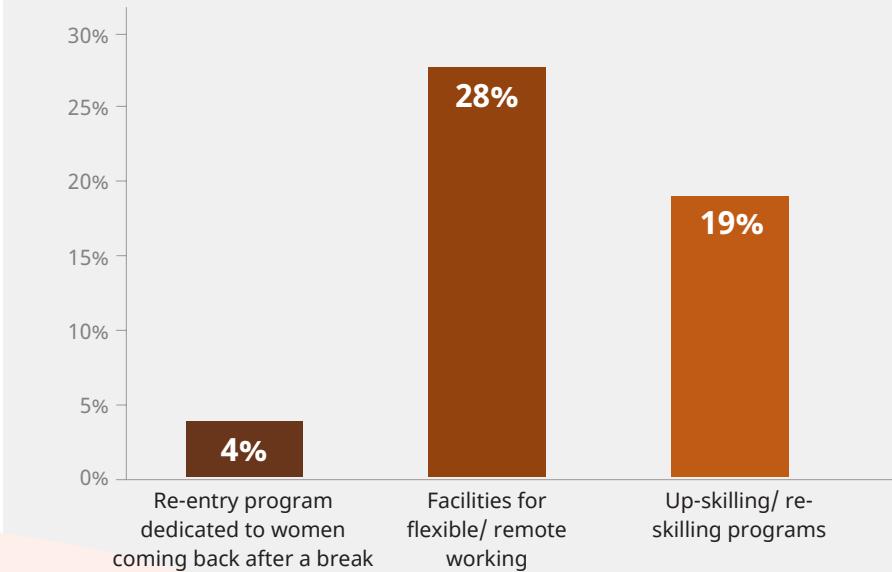
Women who are returning to the workplace expect organizations to facilitate their coming up to speed following rejoining. **42%** would want their organization to have up-skilling/ re-skilling programs, and **30%** would like re-entry programs. Moreover, **26%** would like facilities for flexible/remote working to ease into work.

On their part, employers are beginning to understand the barriers to re-entry and are promoting suitable programs meant to ease the transition for women. **37%** of the employers are focused on providing returning women with manageable workloads. **28%** employers say they provide adequate facilities for flexible/remote working and **19%** also have up-skilling/re-skilling programs to equip women with the necessary competency. However, only **4%** provide re-entry programs. Transport facility/ allowance is also not offered except in case of a mere **8%**.

What steps would women like their organization to take to ensure smooth transition into work?



Which of the following measures has your organization taken to ensure smooth transition of women returning to the workplace?

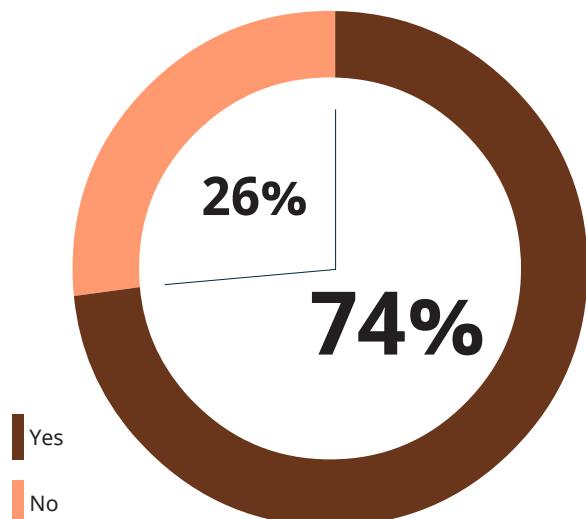


Remote/Hybrid work mode is conducive

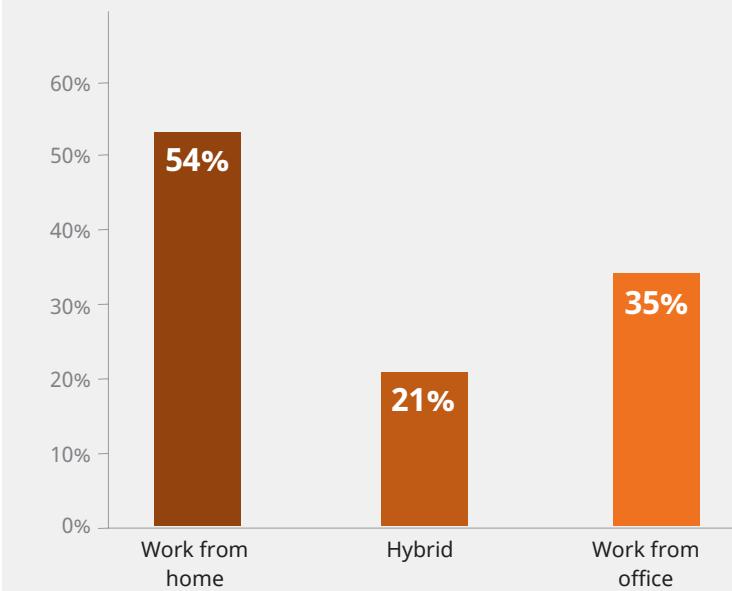
Women reentering the workplace overwhelmingly vote for work-from-home. **62%** of the women surveyed say they prefer work-from-home arrangements, **28%** prefer hybrid mode, and only **10%** seem to favour working from office.

On part of employers, a majority (**54%**) facilitate working from home, while **21%** operate in Hybrid work mode. Employers acknowledge the benefits of such work arrangements - **74%** believe that remote/hybrid work models are conducive for women in India (**38%** in favour of work-from-home and **16%** in favour of hybrid work). When it comes to collaboration and socializing, however, employers (**28%**) believe hybrid work helps women better.

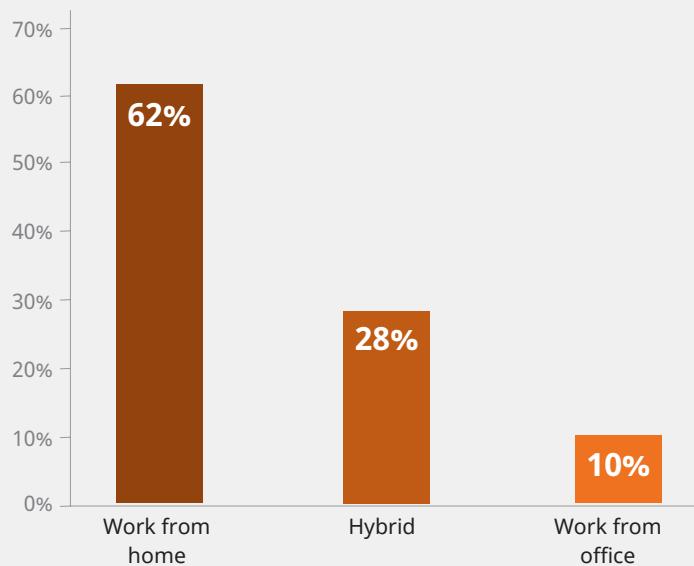
Do employers believe that remote / hybrid work models are conducive for women in India?



What modes of work do employers currently offer women?



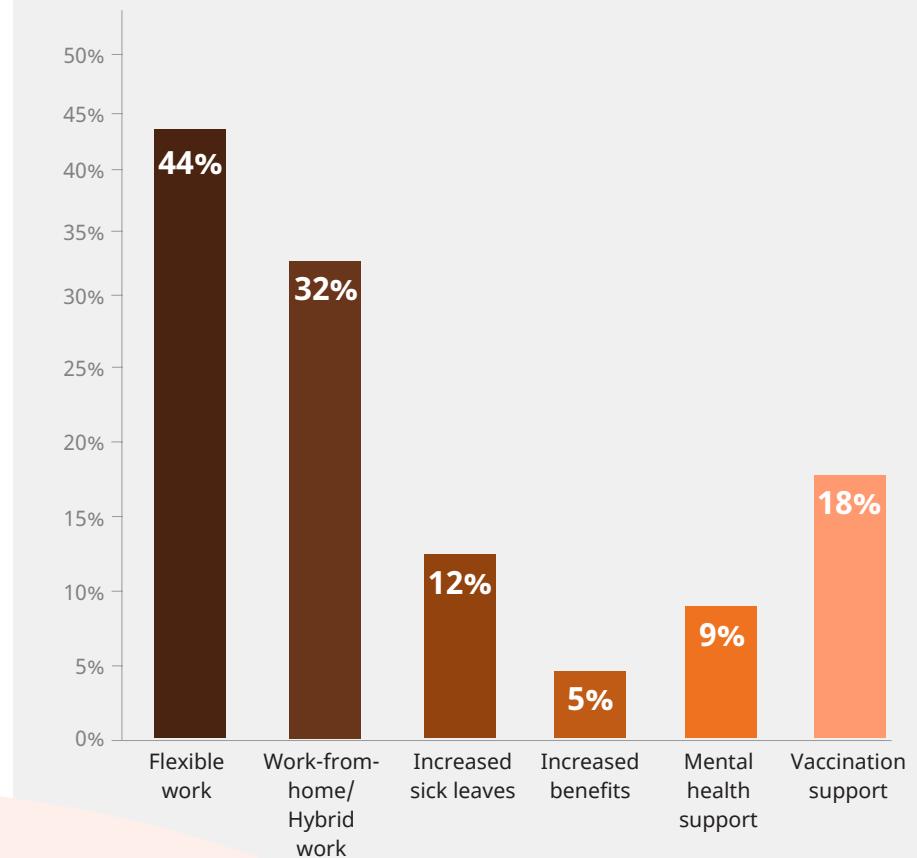
What work modes do women prefer?



The Covid-19 impact – flexible work in the spotlight

Flexible work topped the list of measures to specifically assist women during the pandemic. **44%** of the employers surveyed claimed to have extended flexible work while **32%** provided work from home/ hybrid work arrangements. Other measures received votes from substantially lower proportions of employers.

Which of the following measures has your organization taken during Covid-19 to assist women employees?



Gender parity – an imperative for women and organizations alike

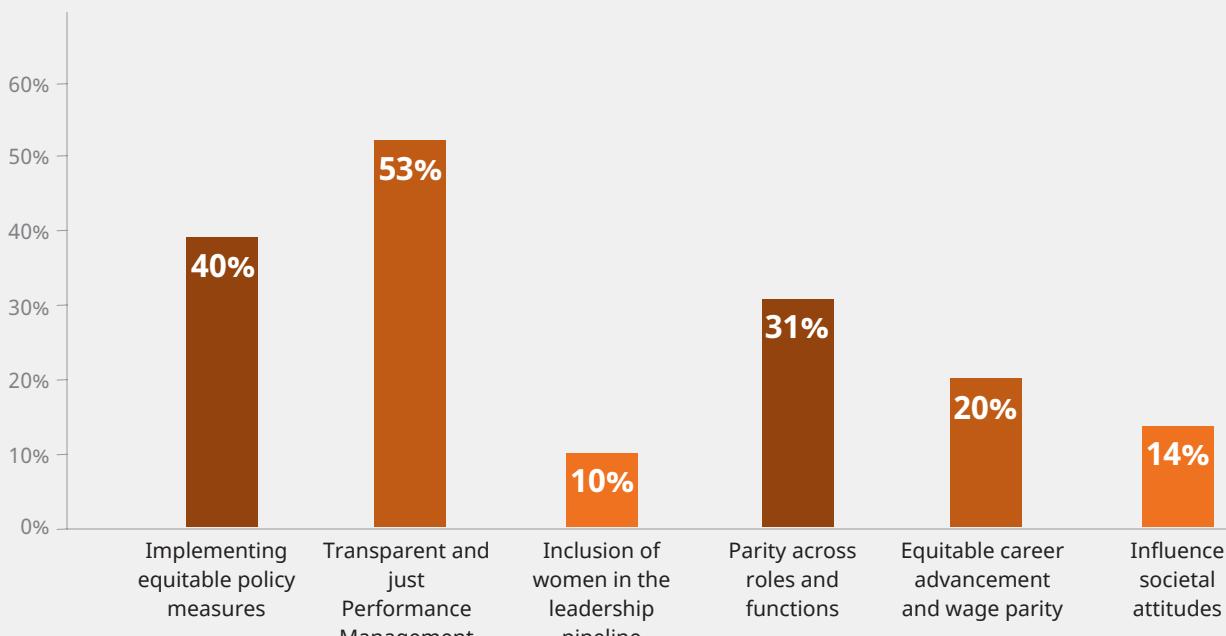


Women want gender parity to be prioritized and implemented by organizations. In this context, **53%** of the women surveyed want their organizations to have transparent and just performance management, and **40%** want their organization to implement equitable policy measures. Given that role bias is a widely prevalent reality, **31%** would like parity across roles and functions. **20%** would also like equitable career advancement and wage parity.

On their part, employers seem to be clued into these expectations and are prioritizing the very measures women have on their wish list. **45%** are implementing equitable policy measures, **31%** are prioritizing transparent and just performance management, and **22%** are prioritizing equitable career advancement and wage parity over the next one year.



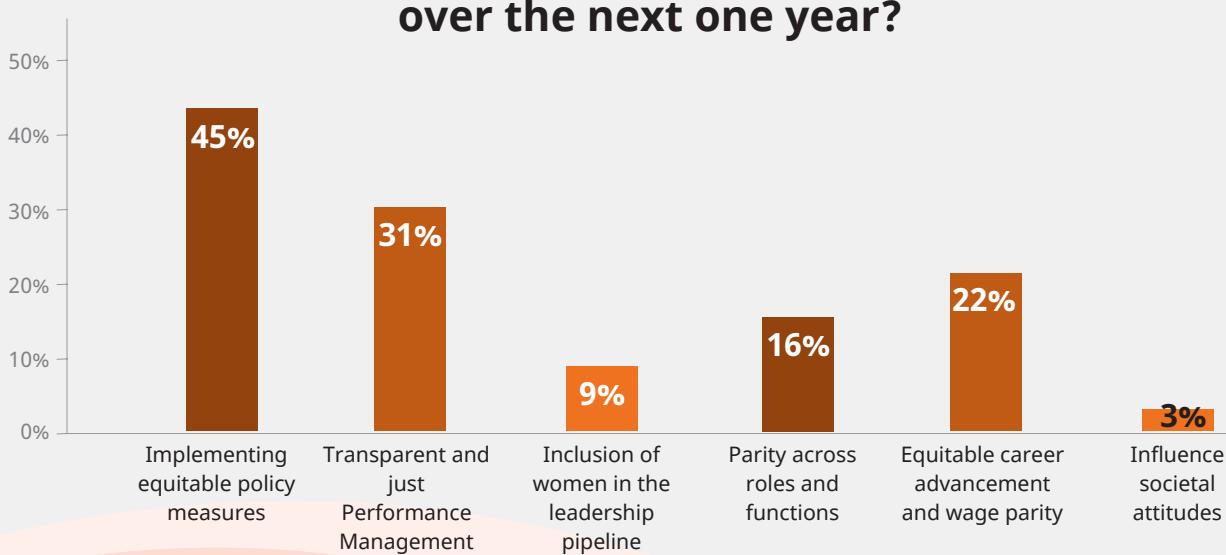
What roles can organization play in establishing parity?



Employers fall behind on a few of the expectations by women though. Only **16%** intend to prioritize establishing parity across roles and functions over the next year. Inclusion of women in the leadership pipeline (**9%**) also does not have the backing of a majority of employers.

Overall, while equitable practices are expected to see a rise in general, creating pathways for leadership, hierarchy, and job roles, seems still some way off.

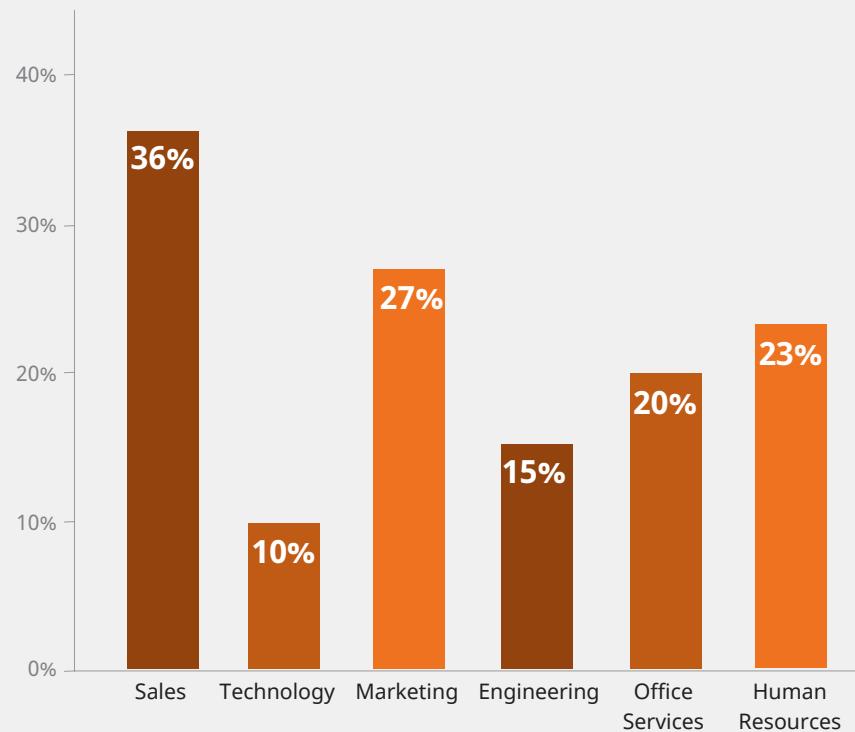
Among the following, what are your organization's priorities over the next one year?



Hindrances remain in role choice and career advancement

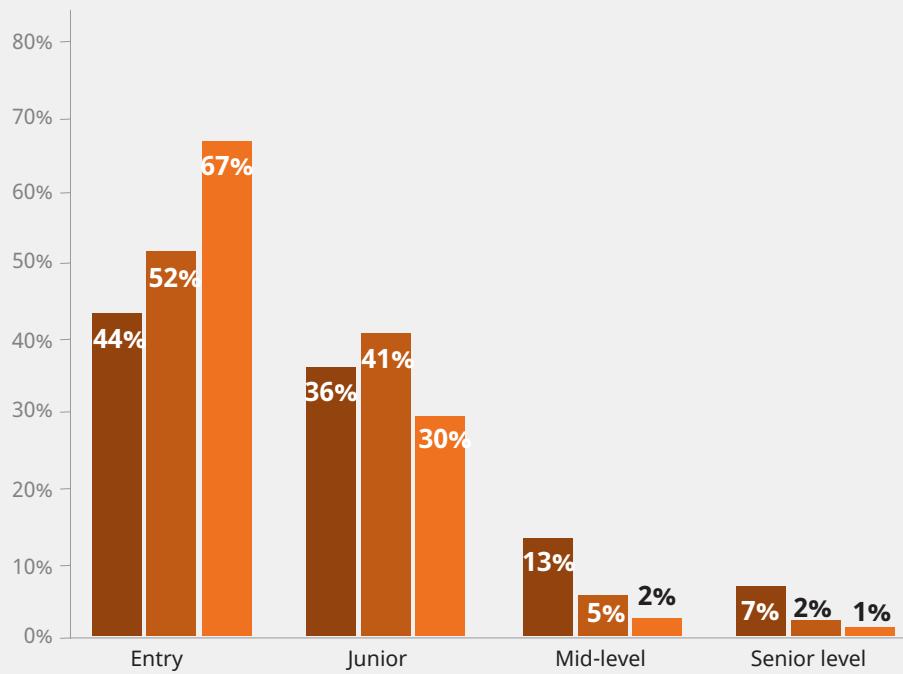
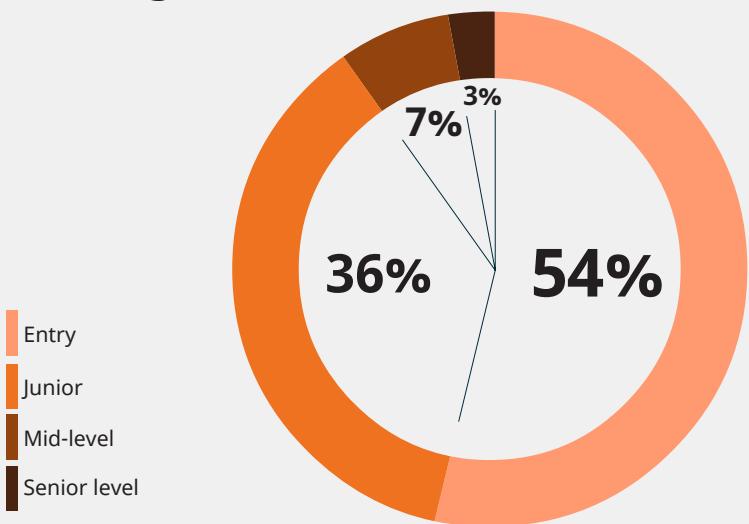
There are not enough women in technology-based jobs and gender disparity in job roles exists in the workplace. As per employees, only **10%** of women in their workforce are in technology roles, and only **15%** occupy engineering roles. The predominant roles that women work in are sales (**36%**), marketing (**27%**), human resources (**23%**), and office services (**20%**).

What proportion of women work in the following functional areas in your organization?



Women also continue to be constrained within lower levels of hierarchy. Across business types, women are poorly represented at mid- and senior-levels of management. Just **3%** of all employers surveyed have women at senior levels in their organization and **7%** have them at mid-levels. On the other hand, **54%** report women holding entry-level jobs and **36%** have women in junior-level jobs.

Approximately what percentage of staff at each of the hierarchical levels in your organization are women?



MNCs Startups MSMEs

Methodology

This survey was conducted by Valuvox on behalf of Indeed among employers, employees and jobseekers between **January-15 – February-15, 2022.**

Sample Design

A total **410** businesses (employers) and **1,207** women respondents were considered in this survey. Women respondents were drawn from preferences/focus across organization size and type, and age groups.



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