

# IMPACT OF CHALLENGES ARISING OUT OF COVID-19 ON CAREER ASPIRATIONS AMONG WOMEN PROFESSIONALS

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** Studies show that the novel COVID-19 that first occurred in the year 2019 created an unprecedented situation in almost every sphere of human endeavor. It disrupted the lives of millions of people all across the globe besides exacerbating the existing gender disparities impacting women. In addition to adverse impact on public health, COVID-19 threatened national security. Both, the developed and the developing countries across the globe were unprepared to fight the pandemic due to its sudden and unexpected occurrence. Developed countries and developing countries alike were unprepared to fight the pandemic because of its sudden and unexpected occurrence, and its impacts have been multifaceted in developed, emerging, and developing countries. The purpose of this study is to understand the career outlook of women professionals before the outbreak of the pandemic and examine whether there was a recalibration of such aspirations due to the pandemic.

**Design/Methodology/ approach:** The quantitative study gathered data from a substantial sample of 255 respondents. Data collection employed a structured questionnaire consisting of 13 questions in which five focused on demographic information. The responses yielded valuable insights into the career aspirations of women professionals with the challenges of COVID-19. The analysis aimed to validate hypothesized relationships between respondents' age and their career aspirations before and after pandemic. The findings of this study held significant theoretical and practical implications and shed light on the complexities of working women scenario in the Indian context.

**Findings:** The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant changes in the professional landscape, impacting women's career aspirations in various ways. The economic challenges resulting from the pandemic led some women to prioritize job stability over ambitious career moves. The variations in the industry influenced women professionals to reassess their professional goals. As time progressed after the initial impact of COVID-19 pandemic, women's career paths continue to evolve in response to ongoing societal changes. The resilience displayed during the challenging period of the pandemic has translated into an increased priority on personal and professional development with women actively seeking opportunities to expand their skillsets.

**Practical Implications:** Some of the leading implications of COVID-19 on women professionals were loss of opportunities, salaries not being paid on time. A significant implication of the pandemic and the resulting work from home phenomenon was the blurring of lines between work life and domestic responsibilities

**Originality/Value:** This study, is exploratory in nature as this is a pioneer study on the impact of COVID-19 on the career aspirations and outlook of women professionals.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Working Women Professionals, Career Aspirations, Career Outlook, Recalibration.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is an undisputable fact that COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on women's employment trends. All around the world, women have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. It is believed that the pandemic heightened the existing inequalities that women face

both at home as well as the workplace. Therefore, a major worry about the economic impact of pandemic was the widening gender disparity with respect to the labour market.

It is a documented fact that before Covid-19, women professionals were slowly yet surely making slow progress in the workplace. In fact, during the beginning of 2020, women's representation in corporate America was trending in a positive manner, albeit slowly. Between 2015 and 2019, the number of women in senior management positions increased from 23 to 28% and in the C-suite from 17% to 21%. (McKinsey in partnership with LeanIn.Org, 2020). Though there was a slight progress, the pandemic managed to wreak havoc. In the survey that was carried out by McKinsey since 2015 onwards, the average attrition rate with respect to the workplace especially in America showed higher attrition rate among men rather than women. However, the trend soon changed with Covid-19. The pandemic had a near-immediate impact and resulted in a major setback for women's employment and career prospects.

According to the reports by the International Labour Organization, across the world, female participation in the labour force declined in 2020 by 4.2% in comparison to 2019. In contrast to this, male employment declined by 3% during the same period. Interestingly, the pace of decline varied across the world with it being the highest in America (9.4%) and the lowest in the Asia/ pacific region (3.8%). The decline in the female labour force was considered to be a major setback to efforts made over the past two decades at increasing gender equality. Furthermore, during this period many unfortunate developments like violence against women soared as numerous women found themselves restricted inside their homes with abusive partners. This was due to the lockdowns and social distancing measures inflicted by lock-downs. However, with increased economic activity during the second half of 2020, coupled with a remarkable increase in the scale and pace of vaccinations to combat the pandemic across the world, female employment managed to recover some lost ground.

The fear however, is about the reversal in gains in the fight against the pandemic caused by new variants that could bypass the protection offered by vaccines which in turn may dent the recovery, especially in the domain of hospitality, food services, IT and personal care where the share of women in the total employment is quite relatively on the higher side.

## **1.1. Background of the study**

### **Career Aspirations among women professionals: Global scenario**

Career aspirations among women globally can vary based on cultural, societal, economic, and individual factors. It's important to recognize that women, like men, have diverse career aspirations shaped by their unique experiences and circumstances. However, there are some common trends and evolving patterns that can be observed globally.

**Increased Aspirations for Leadership Roles:** Women around the world are increasingly aspiring to leadership roles in various fields, including business, politics, science, and technology. Efforts to promote gender equality and diversity have contributed to a growing desire among women to break through traditional barriers and occupy positions of influence and decision-making.

**Focus on Education and Professional Development:** Many women aspire to pursue higher education and professional development opportunities to enhance their

skills and qualifications. This is seen as a means to achieve career success and overcome barriers that may exist in certain industries.

**Entrepreneurship and Innovation:** Entrepreneurship is becoming an appealing option for women globally. Many aspire to start their own businesses, contributing to economic development and challenging traditional gender roles. Women entrepreneurs are increasingly visible in various sectors, including technology, healthcare, and social enterprises.

**Advocacy for Work-Life Balance:** Work-life balance is a significant consideration for women globally. Aspirations often include finding roles and workplaces that support a balance between professional and personal responsibilities. This is reflected in the growing demand for flexible work arrangements and family-friendly policies.

**Breaking Stereotypes in STEM:** More women aspire to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Efforts to encourage girls and women to enter these traditionally male-dominated fields are gaining traction, with a focus on breaking gender stereotypes.

**Social Impact and Sustainability:** There is an increasing trend of women aspiring to work in roles that have a positive impact on society and the environment. Careers in social entrepreneurship, nonprofit organizations, and sustainability are gaining popularity among women who want to contribute to meaningful and positive change.

**Global Mobility and Cultural Exchange:** Some women aspire to work in diverse cultural settings and are seeking opportunities for global mobility. This reflects a desire for cross-cultural experiences, professional growth, and exposure to different perspectives.

**Challenges and Barriers:** It is important to note that women may face various challenges and barriers in achieving their career aspirations, including gender bias, discrimination, and limited access to resources. Efforts to address these challenges and promote inclusivity are crucial for realizing the full potential of women in the workforce.

These trends suggest a positive shift in the career aspirations of women globally, but there is still work to be done to eliminate gender disparities and create environments where women can thrive professionally. Ongoing efforts to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion are essential for creating a more equitable and supportive global workforce.

### **Career aspirations among women professionals-The Indian scenario:**

Career aspirations among Indian women professionals have been evolving over the years, reflecting broader societal changes and increasing awareness about gender equality. While individual aspirations vary, some common trends and themes have emerged:

**Education and Skill Development:** Indian women are increasingly prioritizing education and skill development to enhance their career prospects. Many aspire to pursue higher education, professional certifications, and training programs to stay competitive in the job market.

**Career Advancement:** There is a growing ambition among Indian women professionals to climb the corporate ladder and attain leadership positions. This includes aspirations for managerial and executive roles across various industries.

**Entrepreneurship:** A significant number of women in India aspire to become entrepreneurs and start their own businesses. The government and various organizations have been promoting entrepreneurship among women through initiatives and funding opportunities.

**Work-Life Balance:** Achieving a healthy work-life balance is a common aspiration. Many women seek workplaces that offer flexible work hours, remote work options, and supportive policies for family responsibilities.

**Breaking Stereotypes:** Aspirations also involve breaking traditional gender stereotypes in career choices. More women are pursuing careers in traditionally male-dominated fields such as technology, finance, and science.

**Social Impact and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Some women aspire to work for organizations that prioritize social impact and CSR. They seek opportunities to contribute to causes they are passionate about, aligning their career with a sense of purpose.

**Networking and Mentorship:** Building professional networks and seeking mentorship is a common aspiration. Many women recognize the importance of mentorship in career growth and actively seek guidance from experienced professionals.

**Continued Learning and Adaptability:** With the rapidly changing job market and technology landscape, women professionals in India aspire to remain adaptable by continuously learning new skills and staying updated on industry trends.

**Financial Independence:** Achieving financial independence is a key aspiration. Women are increasingly focused on building their own financial portfolios, making informed investment decisions, and ensuring long-term financial security.

**Diversity and Inclusion Advocacy:** Some women aspire to contribute to creating more inclusive workplaces. They aim to actively participate in initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion, both within their organizations and in the broader professional community.

It's essential to note that these aspirations are dynamic and can vary based on factors such as education, socio-economic background, and cultural influences. While progress has been made, challenges such as gender bias, stereotypes, and work culture still impact the career trajectories of many women in India. Efforts to address these challenges and create a more inclusive work environment continue to be crucial.

#### **Challenges posed by the pandemic:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the career aspirations of women professionals worldwide, and India is no exception. Some of the key effects include:

**Remote Work Challenges:** The widespread shift to remote work during the pandemic has posed challenges for women, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities. Balancing work and family life became more complex, potentially influencing career choices and aspirations.

**Disproportionate Impact on Certain Sectors:** Certain sectors that were heavily impacted by the pandemic, such as hospitality, travel, and retail, had a higher percentage of female employees. Women working in these sectors might have had to reassess their career aspirations due to job losses or industry downturns.

**Increased Importance of Work-Life Balance:** The pandemic underscored the importance of work-life balance, leading many women to reconsider their career aspirations. Some may prioritize flexibility and well-being over traditional career advancement, seeking roles that offer a better balance.

**Shifts in Industry Preferences:** The economic impact of COVID-19 has led to shifts in industry preferences. Some women may have reconsidered their career paths, moving towards industries perceived as more stable or pandemic-resistant.

**Skill Development and Upskilling:** The pandemic accelerated digital transformation and increased the demand for certain skills. Women professionals may have adjusted their career aspirations by focusing on acquiring or enhancing skills relevant to the evolving job market.

**Entrepreneurial Pursuits:** Despite economic challenges, the pandemic also witnessed an increase in entrepreneurial aspirations among women. Some professionals, facing uncertainties in traditional employment, explored opportunities to start their own businesses or pursue freelance work.

**Impact on Career Progression:** For some women, the pandemic may have slowed down career progression due to disruptions in normal work routines, reduced networking opportunities, and changes in organizational priorities.

**Mental Health Considerations:** The pandemic has highlighted the importance of mental health, and women may be reevaluating their career aspirations in light of personal well-being. Some may prioritize roles and work environments that prioritize mental health support.

**Advocacy for Gender Equality:** The pandemic brought attention to existing gender disparities, including the disproportionate impact on women in terms of job losses and increased caregiving responsibilities. This has led to increased advocacy for gender equality in the workplace, influencing the career aspirations of women professionals.

**Flexible Work Arrangements:** The rise of remote work during the pandemic has made flexible work arrangements more acceptable. Women may now aspire to roles that offer greater flexibility, allowing them to balance professional and personal responsibilities more effectively.

It's important to recognize that the impact of the pandemic on career aspirations is diverse and influenced by various factors, including industry, socioeconomic status, and personal circumstances. Organizations and policymakers play a crucial role in creating supportive environments that address the unique challenges faced by women professionals during and after the pandemic.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

(Becker, 2021) examined the manner in which the members of Gen Z were impacted by the pandemic, especially with respect to their professional opportunities, work preferences as well as their future outlook. The study found that Gen Z overwhelmingly values interpersonal connections, wants to indulge in zoom as less as possible and



work more in person. The findings of this study helped in anticipating potential professional gaps resulting out of Covid -19. Some of the open ended questions posed in the study revealed the extent of disruptions that Gen Z experienced during the pandemic which in turn adversely impacted their careers and professional development. Despite such setbacks, the Gen Z maintained a cautious optimistic future outlook. The findings of this study had implications for the millennials as they were able to identify where the resources should be invested including strengthening interpersonal communication and providing mentoring opportunities, besides appealing to their financial conservatism to recruit and retain Gen Z employees. The social implication of this study was the display of Gen Z 's optimistic future outlook and their sense of resilience and strength in the face of stress. This generation has managed to find healthier alternatives and maintain optimism in the face of stress.

Several studies have delved into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's careers. (*Kossek, 2021*) explored how women adjusted to disrupted work-life boundaries and identified workplace factors at play. Another study (*Julie A. Hoggrath, 2021*) found concerning results, with many women under 35 experiencing job loss and economic setbacks. (*Kooli, 2022*) interviewed women from various sectors, uncovering challenges and benefits of remote work. Besides, (*Siti Raba'ah Hamzah, 2022*) study focused on women managers, showing that high career aspirations and organizational support positively influenced subjective career success, with self-efficacy playing a mediating role. These studies shed light on the complex landscape of women's careers during the pandemic. In fact, in (*Uddin, 2021*) the thematic research focused on the challenges faced by working women in balancing their professional and personal lives. The findings revealed that many women professionals listed out priorities to integrate work and family commitments.

According to (*Power, 2020*) many women withdrew from their careers due to enormous increase of workload. Such increase in workload emanated as a burden on their already fragile work-life balance. With post pandemic salaries reaching a low ebb, women decided to withdraw from the workforce and shift their focus towards their domestic work. Those who continued to work began to face increased work load. Interestingly, in (*Dorothea Bowyer, 2021*), the research was rooted in a collaborative feminist research practice that encouraged self-reflection and empowerment. (*Sara McPhee Lafkas 1, 2023*) opined that the pandemic adversely impacted women's careers; in fact, their careers began to stagnate post Covid-19. However, (*Bach, 2021*) made an interesting observation. According to the paper, only certain groups of working women professionals suffered due to the pandemic; however, some others managed to stay afloat due to higher designations. According to the study conducted by (*Company, 2021*), as compared to men, more number of women professionals quit due to Pandemic. This was primarily due to the fact that women experienced increased responsibilities on the domestic front due to the non-availability of support system.

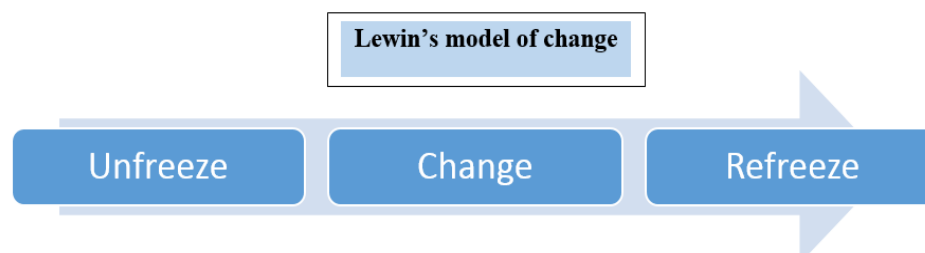
(*Lisa Rosen, 2023*) examined the experiences of working mothers during the first year of the pandemic and assessed their perceptions regarding the types of training opportunities that may help in advancing their careers as they navigated through the challenges posed by Covid-19.

## 2.1. Theoretical Background

Change is a constant phenomenon. There will always be mixed opinions with regard to preparedness to change. Covid-19 pandemic resulted in unexpected changes that

impacted our lives. In fact, the corporate quickly adapted to the new norm i.e. work from home. One of the theories associated with change management is a theory developed by Kurt Lewin known as Lewin's 3-stage model of change. Kurt Lewin explains that there are three types of changes which are unfreeze, change and refreeze. The unfreeze change relates to the existing process and how it can be improved so that everyone affected understands the need for change. This kind of change was suitable when all organizations had to shift to the digital/online technology within a short period of time, due to the outbreak of the pandemic. The organizations guided the employees through this transition. According to the Lewin's model the change concept may take some to be adapted by the employees which in turn entails them to overcome resistance and accept the change. More often than not, it may require suitable and sufficient training.

This in turn will require support from the management. In the unfreeze stage, as the organization and employees gradually but surely adapt to change, what follows is the implementation of change. During this stage, the organizations have to ensure a continuous flow of information with the support of team members, conduct workshops for change management exercises and allow employees to deal with change. The third stage is refreezing where the organizations and employees move to the final refreezing stage. Organizations can collect feedback from their employees with regard to the training given in the unfreeze stage.



*Source: Author's description*

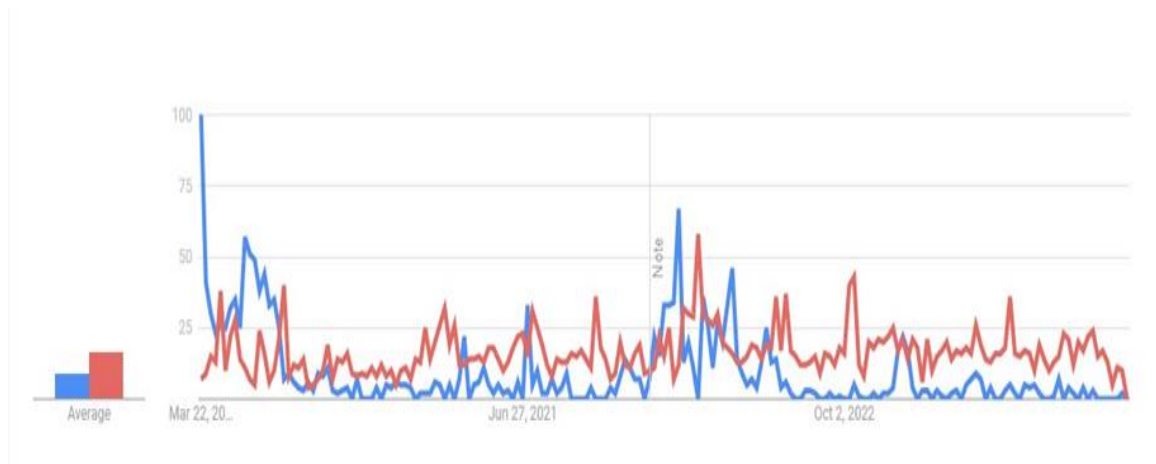
Lewin's change management model can be applied to an organization where the workforce can take up more responsibilities. This helps to have a balanced approach to changing business conditions, all of which will result change in the work culture. To summarize, organizations can effectively accept and prepare for change through the adoption and implementation of new technology which may result in long term viability.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The quantitative study gathered data from a substantial sample of 255 respondents. Data collection employed a structured questionnaire consisting of 13 questions in which five focused on demographic information. The responses yielded valuable insights into the career aspirations of women professionals with the challenges of COVID-19. The analysis aimed to validate hypothesized relationships between respondents' age and their career aspirations before and after pandemic. The findings of this study held significant theoretical and practical implications and shed light on the complexities of working women scenario in the Indian context. Furthermore, the research methodology involved extensive utilization of secondary data from various reputable sources such as published journal articles, research articles and newspapers. These diverse sources not only contributed valuable insights to the

subject matter but also aided in order to identify research gaps within the domain of the study which support to enrich the overall understanding of the career aspirations of women professionals in India.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS



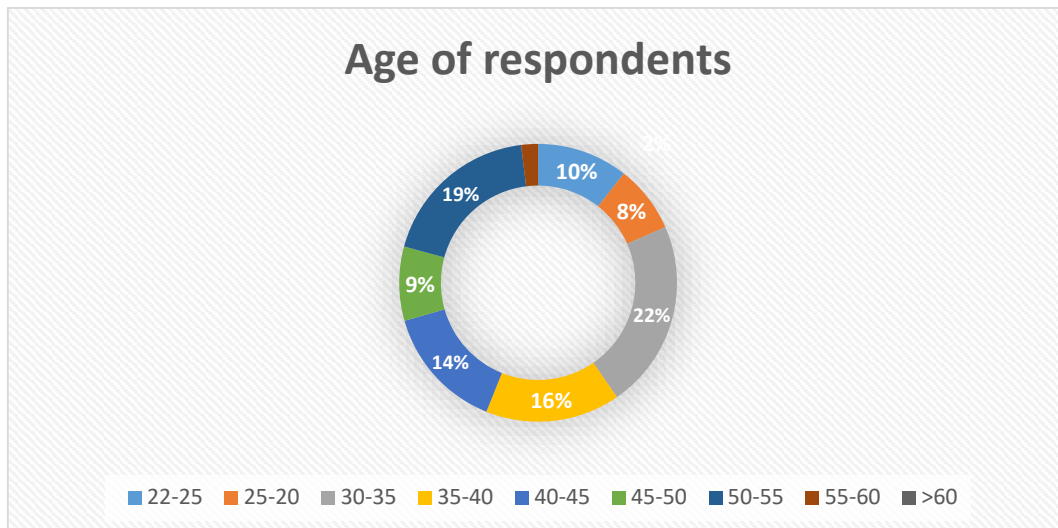
**Figure 1: Trend analysis of COVID-19 in comparison to career aspirations of women professionals**

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant changes in the professional landscape, impacting women's career aspirations in various ways. With the above graph, it can be concluded that economic challenges resulting from the pandemic have led some women to prioritize job stability over ambitious career moves. The variations in the industry have influenced the women making them reassess their professional goals. As time progressed after the initial impact of COVID-19 pandemic, women's career paths continue to evolve in response to ongoing societal changes. The resilience displayed during the challenging period of the pandemic has translated into an increased priority on personal and professional development with women actively seeking opportunities to expand their skillsets. The gradual restoration of normality has allowed women professionals to make practical use of the valuable lessons and experiences gained through the challenges of the pandemic.

### 4.1 Demographic Divisions

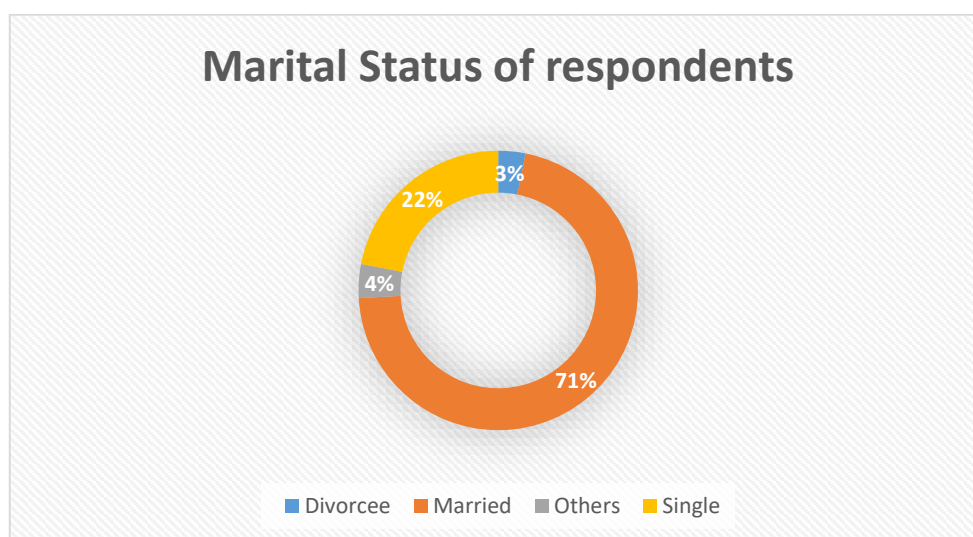
#### 4.1.1. Age of respondents





The age distribution of respondents in this study is detailed in the above chart. The largest age group among the participants falls within the 30-35 years range that comprised 22% of the total respondents, with a substantial count of 56 individuals. The second largest group is in the 50-55 years range that represented 19% of the sample consisting 48 participants. Other age groups have also contributed to the data set making up smaller proportions. The cumulative total of respondents in the study is 255, provided a comprehensive overview of the age demographics within the sample.

#### 4.1.2. Marital Status of respondents



The chart above depicts the marital status of participants. The primary marital group among respondents is the married category, constituting 71% of the total participants. The second- largest group consists of respondents in the single category making up 22%. Other marital status groups have also made contributions to the dataset, though in smaller proportions.

#### 4.2 Testing the hypotheses

The survey method adopted in this study resulted in remarkable findings relating to the career aspirations of women professionals prior to the pandemic and the transformations that it underwent as a result of Covid-19 pandemic.

### *Analysis of Pre- COVID 19*

The test examined the relationship between age and the career outlook of women professionals before COVID-19. The Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) considered for the test was that there was no significant relationship between the age and the career aspirations of women professionals before COVID-19.

| DV & IDV  | P value |
|---|---------|
| Age & Career outlook of women professionals before COVID-19 | .001    |

The P value was .001 which is less than .050; hence it may be inferred that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) that states that there is significant relationship between the age of the woman professional and her career aspiration must be accepted.

### **Analysis of Post- COVID 19**

The Cross tabulation test further was used with the help of SPSS tool to examine the relationship between age and career outlook of women professionals after Covid-19. The objective of using the test was to help us identify the statistical relationship between the independent variable Age and the dependent variable Career outlook.

The null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was that there was no association between age and the career outlook of women professionals after Covid-19. Whereas, the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) was that, there was an association between the two variables after Covid-19.

According to the interpretation, the following were the P values observed for the following variables:

| DV & IDV  | P value |
|---|---------|
| Age and attaining executive position              | .001    |
| Age and owning a business                         | .013    |
| Age and becoming an expert in a particular domain | .007    |
| Age and enjoying socializing with colleagues      | .038    |

Since all the P values are less than .050, it is sufficient ground to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

In a nutshell, it may be safely inferred that there is a significant relationship between age and the career outlook of women professionals after the pandemic leading to the observation that COVID-19 has indeed impacted the career aspirations of women professionals.

### **Analysis of Retention of women talent**

Another test was conducted to examine the relationship between marital status and retention of women talent. The test helped us identify the relationship between the two variables. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) considered was that there was no significant relationship between marital status and the retention of women talent and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) suggested otherwise.

The P values obtained for the following variables were as follows:

| DV & IDV  | P value |
|---|---------|
| Marital Status and work life balance                    | .001    |
| Marital Status and ensuring equal pay for equal work    | .001    |
| Marital Status and transparent procedures for promotion | .001    |

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Marital Status and merit based succession plans      | .003 |
| Marital Status and flexible work options             | .001 |
| Marital Status and adjusting to the work environment | .001 |
| Marital Status and provision of remote work          | .001 |
| Marital Status and emergency time off                | .001 |
| Marital Status and respectful treatment of employees | .001 |
| Marital Status and gender sensitivity training       | .003 |

All the above-mentioned P values are less than .050, it may be inferred that the null hypothesis may be rejected and the alternative hypothesis may be accepted.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Challenges faced by women professionals due to Covid-19: As evident by the above-mentioned findings, women professionals faced some distinct challenges in the pursuit of their career aspirations. Some of the challenges faced by women professionals were as follows:

**Role Overload:** The women professionals had to discharge myriad roles during the pandemic. In addition to their professional responsibilities, they had to discharge numerous roles- that of a mother, teacher to their child/ children, care-giver to the elderly at home and the like.

**Lack of support from their family members:** The women professionals would have managed to perform their roles efficiently if they received support either from the family members or from designated staff. In the absence of any support system, multitasking in myriad role posed a huge challenge for these women professionals.

**Lack of support from the organization:** Lack of support from the organization also posed a huge challenge to women professionals. The onus of re-skilling in case of a career-break was the responsibility of the woman employee. Besides, discriminatory practices, harassment at the workplace, lack of social protection against unemployment were other challenges faced by working women professionals.

**Fear of Covid-19:** In addition to the overwhelming responsibilities that women professionals endured during the pandemic, the fear that they or their respective families would be afflicted by COVID-19 loomed large. The infection had an overwhelming impact on the populace and the fear of getting infected was a deterrent in the pursuit of career aspirations.

In addition to the prevalent job insecurity, reduced pay scales, lack of social protection against unemployment, medical insurance and pension and limited growth opportunities were some of the challenges that are faced by women professionals during the pandemic.

## 6. CONCLUSION

It is undoubtedly true that Covid-19 left a lasting and indelible mark on all our lives irrespective of the nationality, race and gender. Based on the results of the current study, it was realized that COVID-19 dented the career aspirations of working women professionals.

As we add to the body of existing literature regarding the challenges that were faced, we need to pay attention to the experiences of working women. Furthermore, these challenges reflect long-standing gender inequalities (O'Reilly and Green,2021). It is

evident that concerted efforts will be required to address the difficulties faced by working women during the pandemic. It would be appreciated if employers offer flexibility and promote employee health and well-being (Rozman and Tominc,2021).

The impact of COVID-19 on Indian women professionals has been multifaceted, affecting various aspects of their personal and professional lives. As the pandemic unfolded, it brought to light both challenges and opportunities for women in the workforce.

One of the notable challenges has been the disproportionate burden of caregiving responsibilities that fell on women. With the closure of schools and childcare facilities, many women found themselves juggling work and domestic duties, leading to increased stress and potential career setbacks. The lack of a proper work-life balance has raised concerns about the long-term career progression of women professionals.

Additionally, the pandemic underscored existing gender disparities in certain industries. Women, particularly in sectors like hospitality, retail, and services, faced higher job losses and economic uncertainties. The shift to remote work also highlighted the digital divide, affecting women who may not have had equal access to technology or a conducive home working environment.

On the positive side, the pandemic accelerated certain trends that could benefit women in the long run. The increased acceptance of remote work may offer more flexibility, allowing women to better balance their professional and personal responsibilities. Moreover, the digital transformation across industries could create new opportunities for women in technology and other sectors.

To address the challenges faced by Indian women professionals, there is a need for targeted policies and initiatives. This includes efforts to promote gender equality in the workplace, provide support for childcare, and bridge the digital divide. Companies can play a crucial role by implementing flexible work policies, mentoring programs, and diversity and inclusion initiatives.

In conclusion, the impact of COVID-19 on Indian women professionals has been a mixed bag, with both challenges and opportunities. While the pandemic highlighted and exacerbated existing gender disparities, it also opened up new possibilities for a more inclusive and flexible workforce. The post-pandemic recovery should prioritize measures that empower women in the workforce and create a more equitable and resilient economy.

## 7. IMPLICATIONS

Besides, some of the leading implications of COVID-19 on women professionals were loss of opportunities, salaries not being paid on time.

A significant implication of the pandemic and the resulting work from home phenomenon was the blurring of lines between work life and domestic responsibilities. The workforce at large and the women professional in particular was seen to be available both to perform domestic chores (as she was operating from home) as well as fulfilling professional commitments.

All the challenges faced by women professionals resulted in increased mental health disorder, anxiety disorders, depression and addictive behaviour. Furthermore, being restricted to the home resulted in, limited social interactions among women

professionals, which in turn accentuated the risk of anxiety, depression resulting from work overload.

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