

India & her **woman** in Blue-collar

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From our
Desk



India and her woman in Blue-collar

In the 21st century, women have smashed glass ceilings worldwide, yet when it comes to the blue-collar segment, they are grossly underrepresented. The gig economy promises more gender inclusivity in the workforce, due to flexible work policies that can allow them to fulfil their household commitments. Over **61% of gig workers** work less than 8 hours a day, a fact that has the potential to make it viable for women to re-enter the workforce in large and meaningful ways. However, the reality has been starkly different.



A 2018 World Bank report found that Indian companies prefer men over women in various job roles. Over **36% of employment ads** preferred male candidates over females, especially in roles like garment work, machine maintenance, delivery collectors, and more. As of 2021, norms around “appropriate work” continue to impact opportunities for women. In major food delivery and grocery delivery platforms, an overwhelming percentage of workers are men, but when it comes to salon gigs, over **50% of workers are women**.

As long as such gender-biased roles are encouraged, we cannot expect India to rise to its fullest potential. Even a nominal **10% increase of women in blue-collar jobs can add \$770 billion to the country's GDP by 2025-26.**

Unfavourable Conditions for Women in Workforce and Broader Society

Female labour force participation depends on various structural and socioeconomic factors. Issues like household responsibilities, early marriage, motherhood, male household heads, religion, and lack of benefits at the workplace have been responsible for reducing the probability of women joining the workforce.

India has one of the lowest female labour participation rates in the world at **21%, as of 2019**. The pandemic further dealt a major blow to this number, as female labour rate participation declined to **16.1% during Q3 2020**, one of the lowest in major economies. The second wave in 2021, further washed away **5.7 million jobs for women** in rural India in April.

Again, societal norms meant that women had to sacrifice their jobs to take up the heavy burden of unpaid care work at homes during lockdowns. Women were disproportionately impacted. Many women lost their jobs and incomes across the world, even

with flexible “work from home policies”. In rural India, lockdown conditions meant that women were unable to travel to cities or small towns for work such as daily wage labourers, and domestic workers. Many returned to their villages from cities. A few sectors with women-intensive employment which were already suffering saw a collapse of demand in the second wave of the pandemic. These included textiles, handicrafts, and others.

The pandemic outbreak revived the discussion around how the gig economy, and the “WFH set up” can allow female workers to strike a balance between paid work and unpaid care work. However, as good as it sounds, the platform-based economy might have exacerbated issues already prevailing like the gender pay gap, gender-based stereotypes, and digital divide. Only **21% of women in India** were found to be mobile internet users in a 2020 study.

A holistic approach must be taken by the government and companies to encourage women's participation in blue-collar jobs. Moreover, there is a whole culture change that needs to come at the organisational level.

Government Initiatives to Encourage Women Participation



To promote gender equality and women empowerment the Government of India has taken several steps in recent years. Some **initiatives taken** by The Ministry of Women and Child Development include:

- Support to Training and Employment Program for Women (STEP) to create employment opportunities for rural and urban poor women in India
- Microfinance initiatives like Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)
- Extension of maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks, under the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961
- Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme, for kids of working mothers (including single mothers) in low-income families, to avail daycare facilities in the age group of 0 to 6 years.
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, covers all women in all sectors, regardless of age or employment status, whether in the organised or unorganised sector.
- Women Training under Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship. Several programs like Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS), tailor-made courses as per industry demand have been provided to women under this scheme. National Skill Training Institutes for Women (**NSTIs for Women**) had been set up at 11 places, and further 8 new institutes were added in 2019-20.

A Cultural Shift is Needed in Organisations

Gender-based stereotypes have dominated the women in blue-collar work for decades. Women are thought of as unwilling or unable to do physical work. With the huge number of cases of gender-based violence grabbing headlines every year, women and their families are often apprehensive to work in such male-dominated workplaces. There is now a need for companies to create the required infrastructure and policies to make their workplaces safe for women.

Some organisations are stepping up to this. For instance, Daimler India Commercial Vehicles recently announced its plan to increase the percentage of female workers in its factories to **20% by 2022**. To do this, the company has introduced a range of changes, like dedicated medical professionals for women, crèche facilities, hygienic washrooms, and changing rooms, gender sensitisation training, setting up of POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) committee.

Zomato wants to increase the percentage of women in its delivery fleet up to **10% by the end of 2021**. To ensure their safety, the company now makes it mandatory for female drivers to obtain self-defence training. Partner restaurants are being encouraged to

set up clean washrooms for female drivers, which can be rated by the women workers based on the working conditions. Plus, a 24/7 helpline with an SOS button on the delivery app, will let the women delivery partners reach help in emergencies.

These are small steps, but slowly corporate India led by young executives is waking up to the need for gender inclusivity in their workplaces. **Research shows** that gender diversity in companies leads to financial outperformance.

Women have excelled in white-collar jobs, and through progressive government and company policies, we might see an increase in their participation in the blue-collar segment too.



Sector in Focus : Electronics & Hardware



About

The Electronics Sector Skills Council of India (ESSCI) is a Not-for-Profit Organization, registered under the Indian Companies Act, 1956. The Council has been promoted by six Associations i.e. CEAMA, ELCINA, IESA (formerly ISA), IPCA, MAIT and ELCOMA, with financial support from National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). ESSCI has been setup to provide skilled workforce for the electronics industry.

Vision

Electronics Sector Skills Council of India envisions to enable a world class electronics manufacturing industry with an ecosystem for skill development and enhance employability of the large number of Indian human resource.

Mission

To establish a structured mechanism wherein ESSCI will facilitate and collaborate with NSDC in strengthening the existing vocational education system for skills development in electronics sector and upgrade vocational training system for the industry to achieve global standards in manpower productivity.



Sector Stats

Demand

(By State/ UT) Top 5

MAHARASHTRA

10226

TAMIL NADU

7286

ANDHRA PRADESH

4611

KARNATAKA

3860

HARYANA

3328

Demand

(By Job Role) Top 5

SALES EXECUTIVE

6731

ASSEMBLY LINE OPERATOR

4050

ELECTRICAL TECHNICIAN

4040

MASKING MACHINE OPERATOR

3600

BOX ASSEMBLY OPERATOR

2000

Supply

(By State/ UT) Top 5

UTTAR PRADESH

170607

MAHARASHTRA

78510

RAJASTHAN

65325

MADHYA PRADESH

64241

HARYANA

51665

Supply

(By Job Role) Top 5

FIELD TECHNICIAN: OTHER HOME APPLIANCES

239469

FIELD TECHNICIAN-COMPUTER AND PERIPHERALS

231285

MOBILE PHONE HARDWARE REPAIR TECHNICIAN

83726

FIELD TECHNICIAN NETWORKING AND STORAGE

60712

CCTV INSTALLATION TECHNICIAN

51429

Talent Pool Snapshot

Job Available



KARNATAKA

State with Highest Demand

LOGISTICS

Sector with Highest Demand

COURIER DELIVERY EXECUTIVE

Job Role with Highest Demand

Candidates Supply



UTTAR PRADESH

State with Highest Supply

CONSTRUCTION

Sector with Highest Supply

MASON GENERAL

Job Role with Highest Supply

Supply

CANDIDATES

Sector



CONSTRUCTION

1155246



ELECTRONICS & HARDWARE

933415



APPAREL

904894



AGRICULTURE

622871



LOGISTICS

596656

CANDIDATES

Job Role



MASON GENERAL

567759



SELF EMPLOYED TAILOR

427382



ASSISTANT ELECTRICIAN

381036



RETAIL SALES ASSOCIATE

330575



COURIER DELIVERY EXECUTIVE

322703

CANDIDATES

State



UTTAR PRADESH

2470327



MAHARASHTRA

1259719



RAJASTHAN

1204680



MADHYA PRADESH

992212



BIHAR

915987

Demand

CANDIDATES

Sector



LOGISTICS

378664



DOMESTIC WORKERS

148871



APPAREL

145280



TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

113827



RETAIL

87388

CANDIDATES

Job Role



COURIER DELIVERY EXECUTIVE

174059

CUSTOMER CARE EXECUTIVE
(CALL CENTRE)

28964



RETAIL SALES ASSOCIATE

28717

MACHINE MAINTENANCE
MECHANIC (SEWING MACHINE)

27791



SELF EMPLOYED TAILOR

26124

CANDIDATES

State



KARNATAKA

313249



TAMIL NADU

224122



MAHARASHTRA

160846



DELHI

154268



UTTAR PRADESH

70510

The gig workforce is growing but female participation remains low

When gig economy companies such as Swiggy, Zomato, Urban Company started in India, they were expected to increase female labour participation in the country because of the freelance/flexible nature of work. But the number of women in the gig workforce has stayed low.

[Read Article](#)

Is the Gig Economy in India As 'Flexible' As Advertised by Platforms?

This sector is booming in India with a report by ASSOCHAM, which is a non-govt trade association and advocacy group, stating that over 130 million people are working for these platforms and that this industry will grow to \$455 billion by 2024.

[Read Article](#)

e-Shram registration is a stepping stone towards protection of informal workers

As per the second quarter GDP estimate, the Indian economy is nearing its pre-pandemic level which is undoubtedly comforting news. But this has to be tempered by the fact that the recovery is far from complete for informal workers, including circular migrants, who form the vast majority of the workforce.

[Read Article](#)

Work From Home: Indian workers find remote working more productive

Nearly half of the hybrid workers in India consider themselves more productive while working remotely, the Economic Times mentioned in a report citing a survey by Gartner. According to these employees, choice of location and flexible work hours are top enablers of productivity in a hybrid work landscape.

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Blogs



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BetterPlace in News

Money Control

MC Interview: We are planning for IPO but before that we shall achieve certain size: Pravin Agarwala of BetterPlace

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Funding and acquisitions in the Indian HR tech and work space: Oct-Dec 2021

How did the HR tech and work tech space fare in terms of fund raisings and investments in the third quarter of this year? Take a look.

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