



Childcare and Corporate Policies in India: An Analysis of Their Effect on Working Mothers' and Their Productivity

A research study for KLAY Centres for Child Development and Care by The Mavericks

This survey has been conducted with the aim to understand the challenges working mothers face while balancing childcare and productivity at the workplace. Our insights are focused on working mothers of young children, wherein we look at evolving working modes in a post-pandemic scenario and its repercussions on childcare. Alongside, we also studied their preferred options of childcare and models of working to maintain a balance between the two.

Survey Methodology

A total of 782 responses were collected via an online survey tool and key findings were generated based on consideration of the unfiltered sample dataset, as well as through filtering data by gender, age bracket, and occupation. Additionally, secondary research helped us arrive at comprehensive insights which were used to supplement and enhance our data insights.

How was the survey administered - SurveyMonkey

Number of respondents - 782 working mothers

Time period - 8th to 22nd March 2023

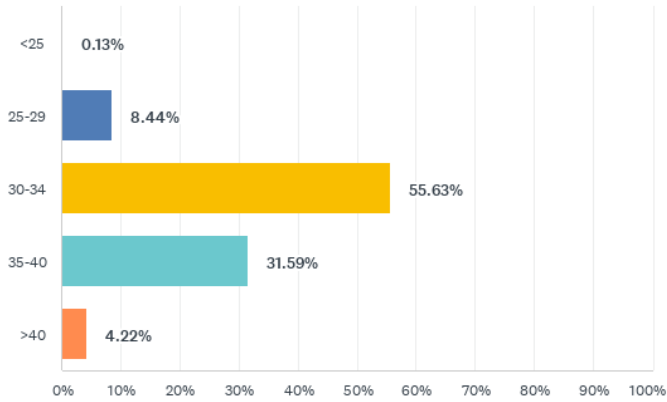
Respondent Profile

The survey 'Childcare and Corporate Policies in India: An Analysis of Their Effect on Working Mothers' and Their Productivity' studied working mothers between the ages of <25 to >40 who have children between the ages of <2 to >7. 56% of working mothers belonged to the age group 30-34 with children aged between 2-3 years (49%) having the highest share of responses amongst all age groups.

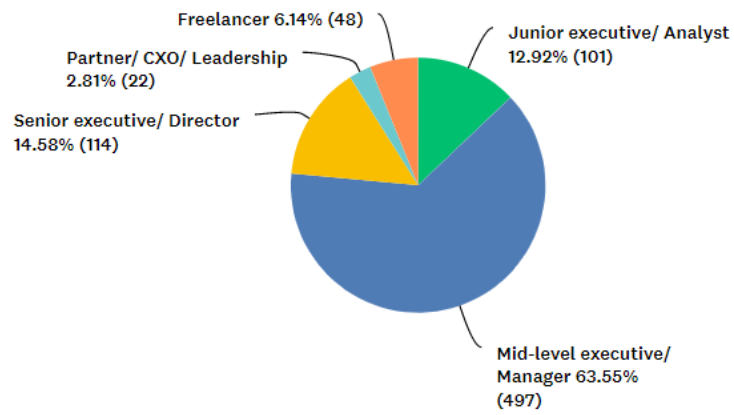
We administered the survey across key cities Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Pune, Hyderabad etc. Almost 45% of our respondents were from Bangalore. Mothers across the corporate hierarchy, from Junior Executives/Analysts till Partner/CXO/Leadership shared their thoughts with us about childcare and productivity.

Working across sectors such as IT, Banking and Financial Services, Retail, Public Sector, Energy & Mining, Manufacturing etc. more than half of the respondents (58%) worked from home during the majority of the pandemic, with the hybrid mode of work being the next most followed method (27%).

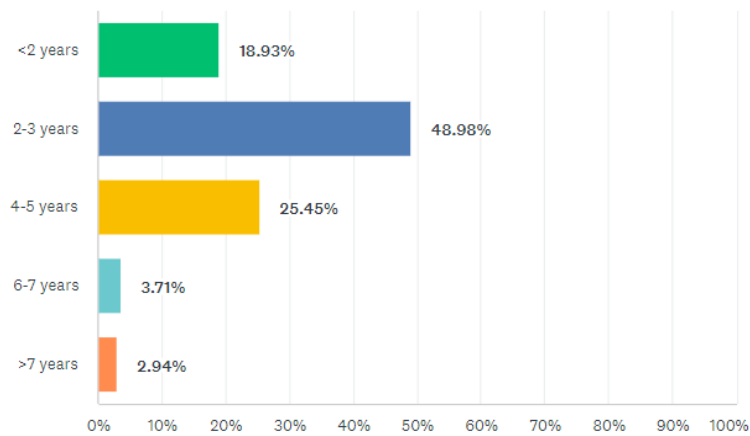
Age group of respondents



Occupation level



Age group of respondent's child

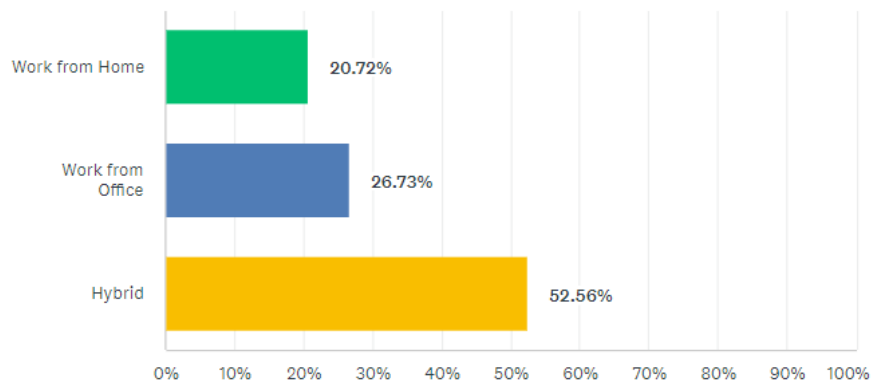


Chapter I - The Balancing Act

Most women who work hybrid model have children between the ages of 2-3

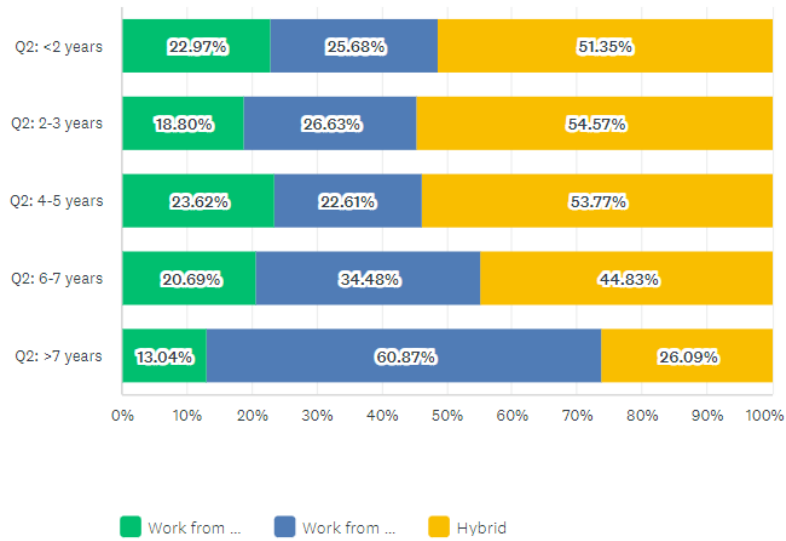
Analysing the current mode of work that all mothers have undertaken, the insights revealed that little more than half of respondents (53%) are currently working in a hybrid setup. 27% of respondents have returned to work from office full time while 20% continue to work exclusively from home.

What is your current mode of working?



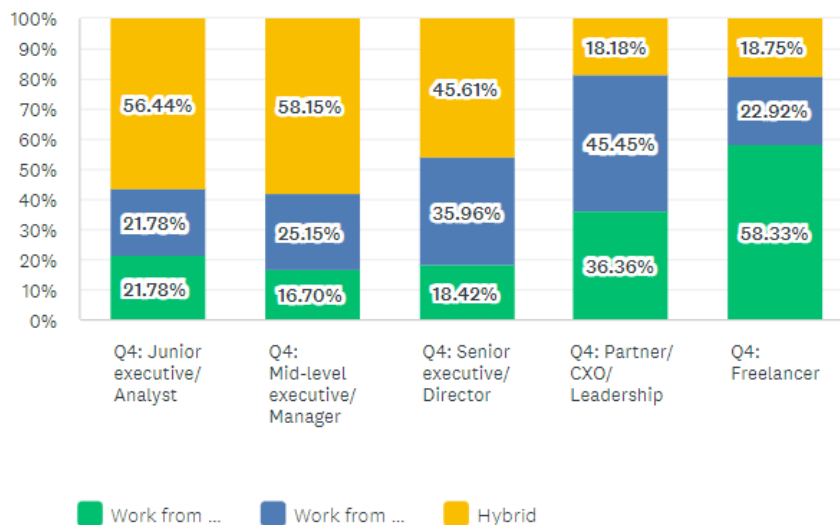
However, many working women (1 out of 4) are forced to choose between childcare and their career due to relatively inflexible policies at work when compared to men (1 out of 10). From our survey, it is noted that a majority of mothers follow a hybrid mode of work and have children between the ages of 2-3 years, as it offers them the flexibility to split their focus on work and childcare.

*What is your current mode of work?
(Filtered basis age of child)*



Women at the Partner/CXO/Leadership level roles adopted work from the office the most. Most mothers who work from office have children above the age of 7 (61%). Mid-level executives/managers made up the largest cohort working in a hybrid setup (58%).

*What is your current mode of work?
(Filtered basis level of seniority)*

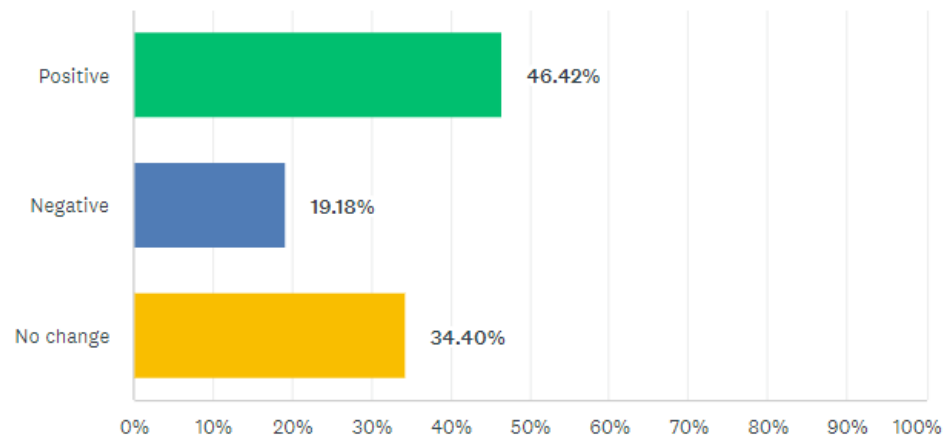


A positive change was observed in the relationship between mothers and children post the pandemic as compared to during the pandemic

As per the survey, "Women rejoining work post-COVID-19", conducted by Indeed, 62% of women prefer flexibility while working, however, only 28% employers have such provisions. The need for flexibility stems from the necessity to balance work and childcare.

From our survey, almost half of working mothers (46%) feel that their current mode of work, which for most is hybrid, has had a positive impact on their relationship with their children as compared to during the pandemic. On the flipside, only 34% of respondents feel there has been no change in their relationship with their children.

How has the current mode of work impacted the relationship between you and your child, as compared to the pandemic?



Mothers with children of the age of <2 years report the most positive impact in their relationship with their child. This could again boil down to their availability to tend to childcare needs which the hybrid mode allows, rather than returning to office full time, which tends to be a higher likelihood among mothers whose child is older than 5 years.

How has the current mode of work impacted the relationship between you and your child, as compared to the pandemic?

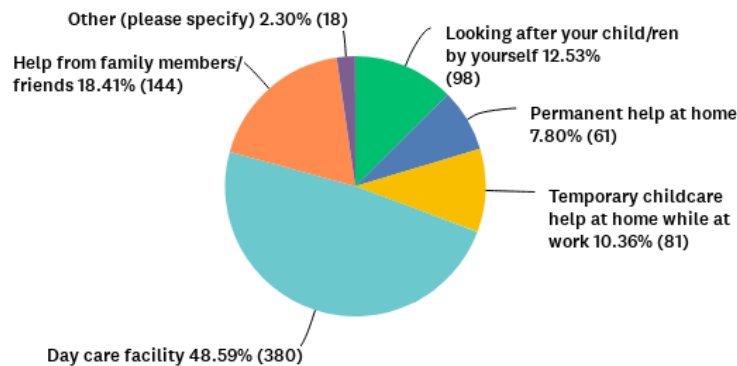
(Filtered basis age of child)



Working mothers can navigate childcare challenges better with daycare facilities and help from family and friends

Many mothers have to choose either between their careers or childcare. In order to balance both, most working mothers rely on childcare support systems to ensure their child's development is on track while they continue to pursue their career. Almost half the working mothers studied under our survey use a daycare facility as their current primary childcare arrangement.

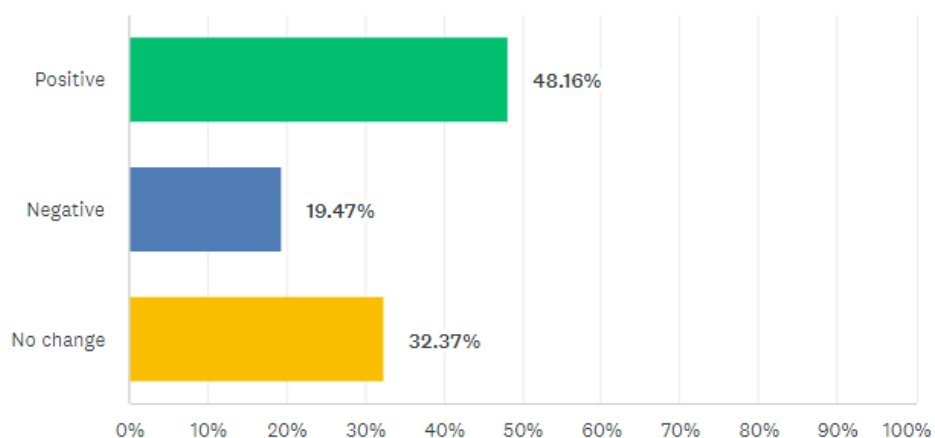
What is your primary childcare arrangement?



Daycare facilities are the most common arrangement for children aged between 2-3 years (53%), followed by children aged between 4-5 years (50%), and for less than 2 (50%). The childcare arrangement changes to help from family members/friends when children are

aged 6-7 (41%) and above 7 years (39%). Post the age of 5, children cross development milestones in terms of communication and speech, cognition, social and emotional, gaining independence and discovering the world in and around them. This also becomes a comfortable stage for mothers as their child transitions from a toddler to a school-going kid.

How has the current mode of work impacted the relationship between you and your child, as compared to the pandemic?



Daycares have also proved to be beneficial in boosting mother-child relationships with 48.16% of respondents reporting a positive change compared to the pandemic. Hence, daycares can be said to be a supportive pillar when it comes to mothers aiming to enhance their productivity and their relationship with their children.

We did a deeper analysis of how childcare can be improved under the current model of work. Better flexibility during work hours continues to be a pressing issue for many women. Additionally, many working mothers highlighted that an option to work from home should be available in case of a childcare emergency. Having at-home caregivers that can look after children late in the day would be beneficial and ease the pressure of having to take care of one's child during working hours. Further if the childcare centre is within the proximity of the office, there is more scope for working mothers to drop by at childcare centres at any time to check in on their child. Curating and promoting groups of working mothers inside organisations aids in voicing out concerns and helps create a sense of belonging among all women. Such initiatives were also highlighted to better help working mothers navigate childcare.

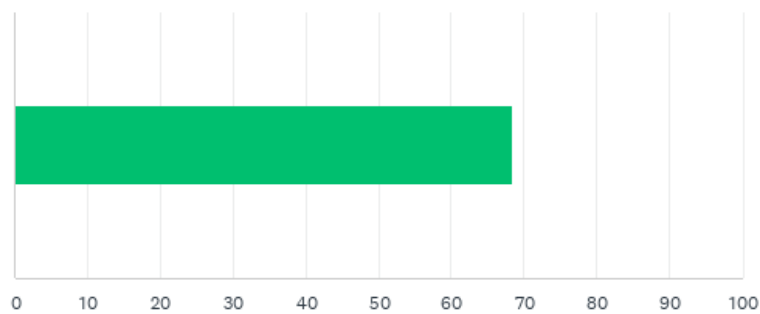
In the next chapter, we explore the correlation between a mother's childcare arrangements and workplace productivity, and explore the impact on output for working mothers due to lack of alternative childcare arrangements.

Chapter II - The Productivity Puzzle

Productivity is on the rise among mothers who have childcare systems in place

Working mothers who use daycare facilities as their primary childcare arrangement feel most productive at work with an average productivity score of 7.5. Interestingly this is far better than the average productivity score of all respondents which is 6.8 on a scale of 1-10, irrespective of the form of childcare support.

In your current childcare system, how productive do you feel at work? [1: Least Productive - 10: Most Productive]



Additionally, comparing the productivity scores between women who use daycare facilities and those who utilise other forms of childcare arrangements, it has been observed that the former showed better levels of productivity regardless of the mode of working.

Mode of working	With other childcare arrangements	With daycares
Work from office	7.4	7.8
Work from home	6.3	7.3
Hybrid	6.7	7.3

Productivity scores changed from 7.4 to 7.8 for mothers that work from office and 6.7 to 7.3 for those that work hybrid. Interestingly, the most significant impact in productivity was seen in mothers working from home, whose productivity scores changed from 6.3 to 7.3.

Industries	With other childcare arrangements	With daycares
IT	6.2	7.3

BFSI	6.8	8.0
Healthcare	5.8	7.3

Studying this across industry sectors, IT witnessed a change from 6.2 to 7.3 in scores of productivity. Mothers in the BFSI sector also saw contrast in productivity scores from 6.8 to 8.0 and the Healthcare sector also saw a positive change from 5.8 to 7.3. This demonstrates that daycare facilities are enabling working mother's to enhance their productivity, across industries.

Interestingly, as the age of the child increases, mothers feel more productive at work, with mothers aged over 40 having an average productivity score of 7.4 having children above 4. Mothers with children aged less than 2 years feel the least productive at work, with an average productivity score of 6.1, considering they have to devote more time to childcare. Studies have shown that men and women fair differently when it comes to their mode of working. As pointed out by a McKinsey study, "in the COVID19 pandemic world, women are seen doing more than one task at a time. They are seen attending a corporate meeting while cooking in the kitchen. Also, women are observed doing household chores as well as conducting a zoom conference meeting at the same time."

It has also been highlighted that working from an office with no specific childcare support/ arrangement tends to result in burnout and stress for almost all working mothers, particularly mothers to kids under the age of 7 years. This is where mothers feel the need for unique childcare support policies from companies. It is no surprise then, that organisations that have a specific focus on helping mothers navigate their childcare duties are preferred by prospective female employees.

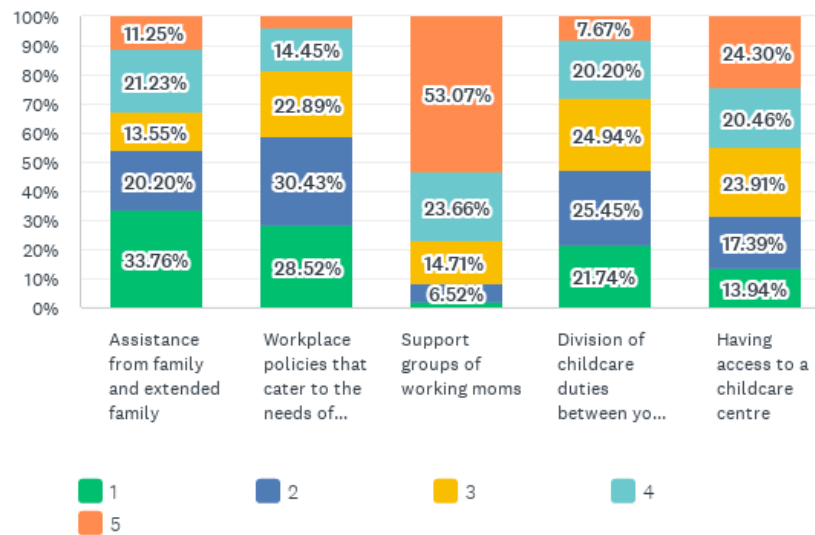
In the next chapter, we explore how organisational support and providing benefits such as maternity leaves, flexible working, daycare facilities etc. to working mothers works wonders in helping them maintain a balance between their work responsibilities and childcare duties. We also examine how the absence of this support results in a challenging work environment otherwise.

Chapter III - Corporate Support

Workplace policies ranks first among other factors that constitute a childcare support system

Most of the respondents in our survey feel that workplace policies that cater to the needs of working mothers are the biggest contributing factor towards constituting a support system for childcare. This is particularly more significant in the post-Covid era, where multiple companies have laid down policies for making the 'return to office' process smoother for all of their female employees. A number of studies have been conducted around this subject, and it's been observed that companies are trying to lessen the burden of returning to office for working mothers by offering complete or partial funding for daycare support to their employees. Some other organisations offer childcare benefits to employees irrespective of their gender.

What according to you is the biggest contributing factor towards constituting a support for childcare? [1: most important; 5: the least important]



An interesting learning from our study shows that mothers who have children aged more than 7 years strongly feel that assistance from family and extended family is the biggest contributing factor towards constituting a support system for childcare.

75% of respondents have received benefits such as maternity policies and leaves, yet 60% of them believe organisations can do more

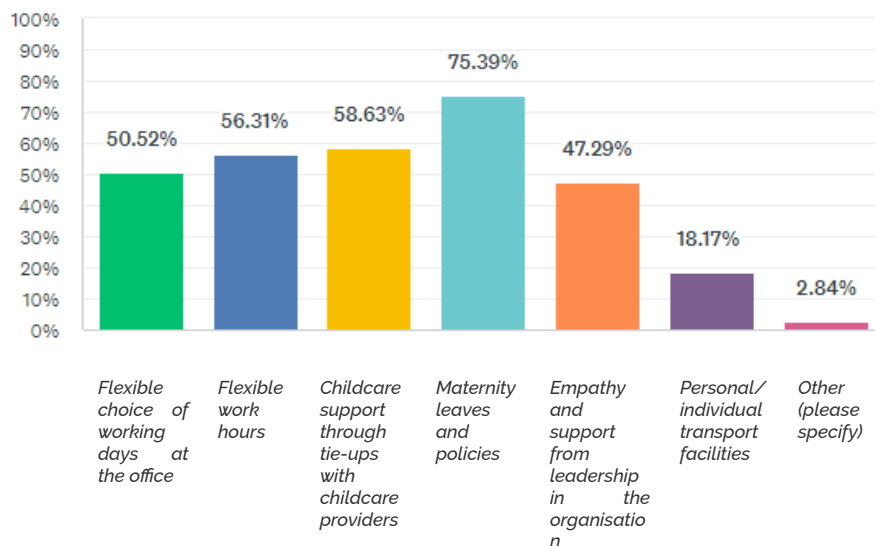
In terms of childcare and support, over 75% of working mothers studied in this survey acknowledged that companies have provided maternity policies and leaves to ease their childcare burden. Corporate tie-ups with childcare providers emerged as the second most

common factor, with 59% of respondents stating that it helps mothers leave their children at development centres or daycares that have been approved by their company.

Other than this, 56% of working mothers highlighted that their companies support flexible working hours, and over 50% mentioned that flexible choice of working days at the office helps them look after their child and maintain a balance between work and childcare. Apart from existing policies in place, about 47% of respondents highlighted that their leadership team was empathetic and supportive to their situation which helped them navigate their childcare duties better.

In terms of industry and sector distribution, mothers from IT (82%) and Banking and Financial Services (80%) industry reported to have the most support from their organisation in terms of maternity leaves. Flexible choice of working days at the office and flexible work hours was found to be the lowest among mothers who worked in the Public Sector (11.76%) and Education (23.40%, 27.66% respectively). Childcare support through tie-ups with childcare providers was the highest among women in Banking and Financial Services (70%) and IT (67%).

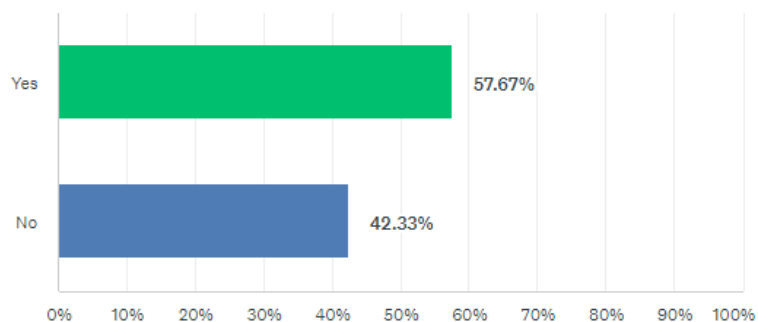
Does your company/organisation support the following: [select all that apply]



Having said that, almost 58% of working mothers in total said that there is more that can be done to help balance work and childcare. For instance, when asked about personal transport facilities, a meagre 18% said that they have provisions for the same.

When asked about the other steps organisations could potentially take to support working mothers, childcare facilities for women working in shifts, granting leaves or hybrid mode of working when there is a childcare emergency, and providing transport facilities for both the mother and the child, were the most frequently suggested steps in most responses.

Do you think your organisation/company needs to do more to help you balance work and childcare?



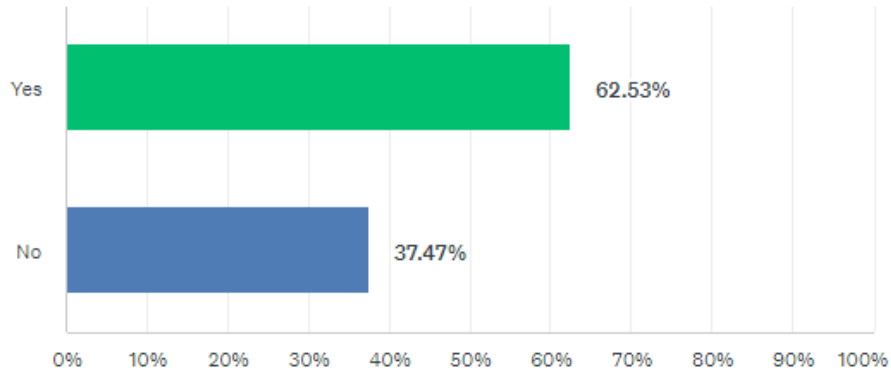
In terms of age cohorts, younger mothers between the ages of 25-29 (64%) and 30-34 (60%) believed the support garnered from their organisation was not enough when compared with other age cohorts. On analysing the responses on the basis of the industry/ sector, mothers employed in the Retail, Public Sector and Manufacturing sectors felt strongly about receiving more support than the mothers who worked in other sectors.

Working mothers believe hybrid is the best way forward to navigate productivity and childcare

Despite numerous childcare facilities being offered to working mothers by their companies, they face multiple problems with balancing work and childcare. Meetings, shift timings and unprecedented tasks often clash with quality time with their children, dropping them off to childcare and taking care of them when they're sick. In order to find a solution to this, most mothers preferred working from office 2-3 days a week, as they believe that a hybrid mode helps strike a healthy balance between life at work and at home.

When inquired about a scenario where organizations make work from office compulsory, over 62% of working mothers stated that they would look for new jobs or roles as they prefer flexibility when it comes to managing childcare.

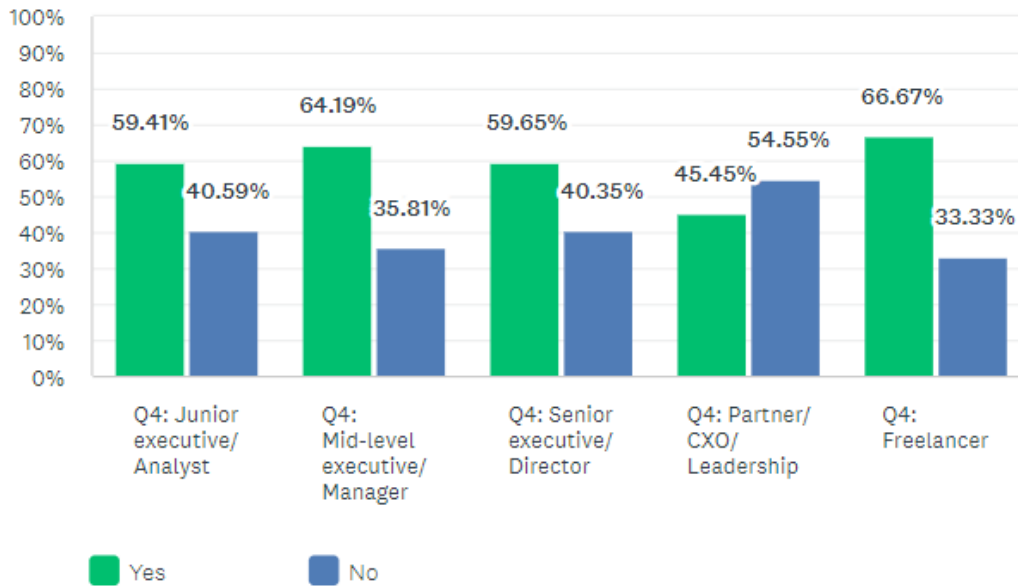
If your organization makes work from office compulsory/ it already is compulsory, would you be willing to change your current role/ job to have more flexibility when it comes to working models?



When filtered as per the level of seniority/ job role, it is observed that working mothers in the position of a Freelancer (67 %), Mid-level executive/Manager (64%) and Senior executive/Director (60%) would be more likely to leave their jobs or look for new roles in case work from office becomes compulsory. In terms of industry, mothers from Banking and Financial Services (68%), Professional services (67%) and IT (64%) would be more likely to switch or leave their jobs than mothers in other sectors.

If your organisation makes working from office compulsory/ it already is compulsory, would you be willing to change your current role/job to have more flexibility when it comes to working models?

(Filtered basis level of seniority)



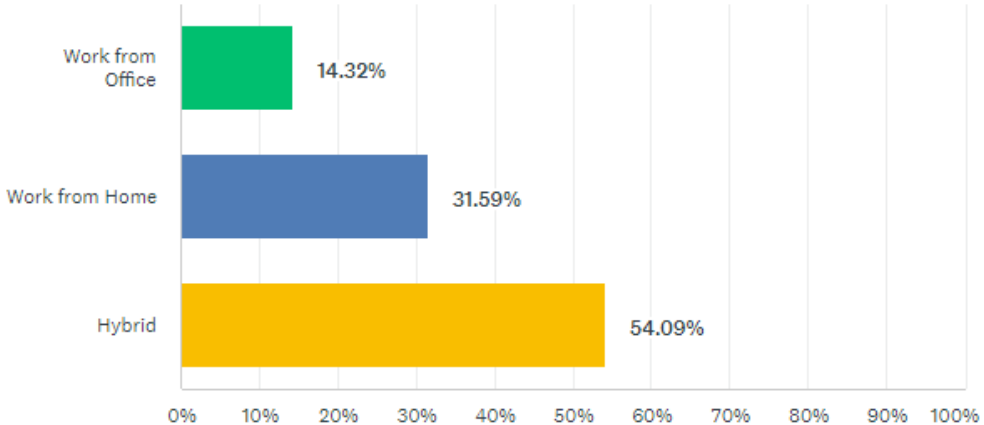
With the pandemic almost permanently altering the ways of working, we tried to understand how mothers transitioned through this period and what were the key challenges they faced in managing their work and child(ren). To this, most working mothers responded saying that juggling childcare remains a top challenge. Further, most mothers

worry that their quality time with children such as taking care of them, teaching them, playing with them and so on is often missed out on.

When a child falls sick, mothers are often torn between meetings and looking after their child which takes a toll on their physical and mental well-being. Multiple other studies in the market have reflected the importance of flexibility at work, with one report stating that 70% of women are considering quitting the workforce, due to lack of flexible policies after the pandemic. Most women (83%) want to work flexibly which leads to many women (72%) rejecting roles that does not allow them to do so.

Considering all of these challenges, we tried to understand what working mothers in India would prefer to balance work and childcare. Over 54% chose a hybrid model of work as they believe it is the most effective way to manage the two. Further, most mothers prefer working from office 2-3 days a week, as they believe that helps strike a healthy balance between life at work and at home.

Considering a period of the next 2 years, what would be the best possible model for you to balance work and childcare?



Comparing age groups, we observed that 50% of younger mothers, particularly those aged between 25-29, believe that working from home would be the most effective way to take care of their child. When analysed across industries/ sectors, women in Banking and Financial Services (58%), Professional services (58%), and IT (56%) chose hybrid models of work to manage work and childcare.

Conclusion

Majority of our respondents highlighted the need for flexibility in terms of workplace policies to balance childcare and productivity at work. Working mothers believe this is a suitable way to navigate their current childcare duties and juggle work. Support from organisations in terms of daycares or childcare providers, has seen a significant improvement in mother's productivity, therefore, having a reliable childcare support system will be key in relieving them of their worries at one end, while enabling them to become more focused at work. This would in turn help them strike a balance between their personal and professional commitments thereby, helping them achieve success at work as well as build strong, healthy and meaningful relationships with their children.

About KLAY Centers for Child Development and Care

[KLAY Centers for Child Development and Care](#) is India's largest non-franchised chain of child development and care centres, recognized for world-class child care and development enabled by a passionate set of early years' facilitators and caregivers. The KLAY community encompasses 50,000+ parents across India, spanning 150+ retail centres spread across Bengaluru, Gurgaon, Noida, Pune, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai. As a childcare provider for more than 400+ organisations, KLAY helps them build family friendly workplaces and help children achieve their developmental milestones.

About The Mavericks

[The Mavericks](#) is a pure-play Reputation Management Advisory, with a unique proposition of being an exclusive consultancy and an extended team, rolled into one. A services portfolio focused on building, sustaining and protecting the reputation of organisations, is delivered through a team of strategists, technologists, researchers, designers, digital specialists, and thoroughbred communicators. With an audience focussed approach, we ideate, strategize, and craft campaigns that deliver a long-term value rather than an immediate attention-grabbing noise.

Since our founding in 2018, we've strived to provide a deeper impact for brands by placing them well ahead of the curve and through meaningful engagement with the consumers. Clients are the reason we exist, and we ensure that whatever we do is done with the objective of making them win. Helping them navigate the always-on conversational world and equipping them to make their stories relevant to their stakeholders.

The Research wing at The Mavericks was launched in July 2019 and has grown significantly since. We believe that our team members with a background in economics, management, marketing, and consulting, possess the analytical mindset and ability to study consumer behaviour and market trends, as well as draw out comprehensive insights through both primary and secondary research. This, in turn, provides us with a contextual setting that enables us to understand our clients, their industrial landscape, and their target audiences better.