The Future of WORK

Viewport 2014:

Economic Centeredness of Indian Women Professionals

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Executive Summary

The association between Indian women and money is multifaceted; ranging from budgeting and saving to spending for self and family. The last few decades have added a hitherto unseen dimension to this association, their earning prowess resulting from their newly acquired status as 'Indian Women Professionals'. Given this context in which Indian women are increasingly connected with money, a study on how economic centred they are calls for immediate attention. This report is based on a survey of a heterogeneous sample of Indian Women Professionals (IWPs) many of whom are full time employees, some who are flexi workers, others on career breaks, aged 20 to over 50, from diverse parts of the country.

Significant findings that resulted from response analyses showed that to almost 70% of women, young and old, their earnings are very important to their family's well being. This is an essential indicator of the need for women to work and the economic value that they bring to the family whether they are single or married. This has led to the increase in double income families. As for financial independence, over 87% of the women who took this survey agreed to having their own money (over which they held absolute discretion) irrespective of being in a position of formal employment or not. When it came to managing money, however, only 67% stated that they took full responsibility. In spite of the incremental increase in the proportion of women in workforce participation, the relationship which women have towards money is still a tenuous one with more than 70 per cent of respondents saying that they pursued a career for the self identity which it brought them rather than the monetary incentive. With over 50% of the respondents feeling guilty being dependent and spending other people's money, the study points to a significant shift in women becoming a financial provider rather than being just a care giver.

Though many of the findings are indicative of the positive orientation of Indian women of today towards money, much is left to be done to ensure effective economic participation of women in the country. This includes creation of an ecosystem in which women's careers and consequent earnings are sustained and nurtured also changes in conditioning of women to be responsible for the economic progress of the family and the country. With social research substantiating the advantages of greater women participation in the economy like improved living conditions for families, forging of stronger communities and better education of children, the stage for national prosperity can be set if economic centeredness of IWPs were to be bettered collectively.

Keywords:
Economic centeredness,
Economic disparity,
financial independence,
financial literacy,
Indian Women
Professionals
(IWPs)

Introduction

Indian women and money have always shared a salient bond; their ability to manage the household budgets amidst soaring commodity prices, their determination to save every penny possible, to name a few. Post liberalisation and opening up of the economy in 1992, an increased number of women professionals have entered the corporate world witnessing a jump in the workforce participation rate of women from 17% in 1992 to 24% in 2012. This has established a greater connect between women and money.

In the backdrop of an economy hit by inflation and recession, it is imperative to examine the economic centeredness of Indian Women. This study was initiated with this intent and was conducted on a highly diverse sample of Indian Women Professionals (IWPs), who were in forms of employment as different as full time employment to flexible working and those on career breaks, young and old, who belonged to different parts of the country and had distinctly different socio, economic and educational profiles. Their economic centeredness was assessed in three segments namely,

> Intent of the study is to assess the economic centeredness of Indian Women Professionals (IWPs)

a) Significance of earnings and careers thereof
b) Financial Independence
c) Financial Literacy

Significance of Women's Earnings:

With dual earning couples becoming a fairly common phenomenon in the urban segments of our country, it is important to understand how significant women's earnings are to their families. It has been proven that women have a natural tendency to invest their incomes in children's education and health, the result being a healthier and better educated younger generation. The Word Development Report on Gender Equality and Development [1] released by World Bank showed that a woman's income correlated positively with the number of years her children spent in school. Further, the ability to earn significantly impacts the confidence levels of Indian Women. Moreover, women tend to garner greater societal respect by virtue of bringing home pay packets. The urge to earn amongst women is no longer negatively perceived as their money-mindedness and society has recognised this as a direct consequence of their higher educational attainments. It is no surprise then that financial security is one of the top drivers of women's careers.

> Women exhibit greater confidence and get greater societal respect when they earn.

Financial Independence:

The second very important aspect determining economic centeredness of IWPs is their extent of financial independence. The World Economic Forum's Gender

Gap Index, 2012, ranked India 123rd on a total of 135 countries in the disparity between economic participation of the two genders [2]. In such a context, it is vital to understand the distribution of ownership of money earned by Indian women. It is known that the average age at which Indian children leave home is amongst the highest in the world [3]. This implies that irrespective of marital statuses, women are not exactly independent in the Indian socio cultural milieu, economically.

When women have greater autonomy over money, they tend to invest it in well being of their families.

Married women who are active professionals may have accounts jointly with their spouses; single women tend to depend on elders in their families for managing their finances. Their powers of decision making in financial matters are limited and have restricted scopes for growth. Guilt that form a consistent part of women's consciences mar them when they spend money that is not their own. Even when the causes justify their reasons for spending, they continue to feel obliged when they spend money earned by others. For India to achieve true gender equality, it is important that women are allowed complete autonomy over money they earn; power to spend it, to invest it and allocate budgets on it in ways they deem fit, should solely be theirs.

Importance of financial literacy:

If women are to be fully independent financially, it is crucial for them to be adequately financially literate. Only then would their income bring them returns beneficial to the nation's progress. Hence, it was decided that financial literacy of various cohorts of IWPs need to be ascertained to draw conclusions on their economic centeredness; this formed the third segment of this study. Capabilities of IWPs in saving, budgeting and investing their money are tangible measures of their financial literacy. In an era where privatised and nationalised banks and other financial institutions are competing against each other to offer lucrative schemes of saving and investing, the knowledge professional women have on the reliability of each of these help them make informed decisions when needed; secure futures of their earnings is ensured. When women are confident of their abilities to allocate funds to various requirements of their lives, they tend to learn the art of smart budgeting over years; experience lending them experts.

Expertise in saving, budgeting or investing appropriately indicate the financial literacy rates of women.

Economists and social scientists world over agree that financial considerations significantly impact the career decisions of women. With that said, indicators of their economic centeredness could also serve as reflectors of their career aspirations. Just as earning prowess of women have been accepted and even appreciated, multiple dimensions of the money-women relationships should be allowed to grow (which sustainable women's careers can assure) through collective efforts of IWPs' professional and personal ecosystems.

About the Study

The Economic Centeredness of Indian Women Professionals study was conducted by FLEXI Careers India in association with Finscholarz. FLEXI Careers India is a social enterprise that works extensively in the area of gender diversity. The vision of FLEXI Careers India is the creation of sustainable careers for the Indian Woman to harness her potential fully while at the same time allowing for her to manage her family and personal commitments. Finscholarz is a Fee Only Financial Planning and Coaching firm. A social enterprise, Finscholarz aims to empower women by coaching them to take charge of their personal finances.

Research Methodology

The foundation for this research was a questionnaire that required women professionals to share their views on various aspects of their economic centeredness.

The assortment of questions pertained to the three segments quantifying economic centeredness, that were identified. Women belonging to different age groups and based out of cities/towns all over India took the online survey. IWPs who handled vastly different quanta of money (with incomes less than a lakh to incomes over 20 lakhs) were amongst the respondents. There were women working full time, those on career breaks and self employed women too. Married women and single, those from nuclear families and joint were part of the survey. These IWPs also had remarkably different socio, economic and educational profiles which increased the study sample diversity. They were specialised in areas as diverse as IT, accounts, HR etc.

Survey was conducted online by means of a questionnaire that examined the 3 segments of women's economic centeredness namely:
- Significance of earnings
- Financial independence
- Financial literacy

Respondent specifics

A total of 502 Indian women took this survey. 47% of them were aged 30-40 and another 35% were in the age group 20-30. 65% of them were professional women, 10% were entrepreneurs and 27% were homemakers. Almost 50% of them held professional post graduate degrees. As for the type of employment 50% were employed full time, another 13% in part time and flexi time arrangements, 17% were on career breaks. 69% were currently married, 23% were single and 8% previously married. 55% of women who took the survey hailed from South India; 23% from north, 15% and 6% from west and east respectively. Over 28% of IWPs were HR personnel, another 25% in IT, 22% were accountants and the rest were specialised in areas as diverse as marketing, sales, quality control etc.

502 women from all over India took the survey.

The following figure shows the distribution of women based on their personal incomes:

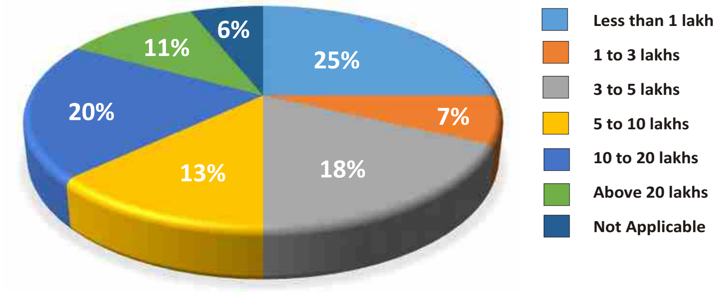


Figure 1: Distribution of women based on their personal incomes

It may be noted that a quarter of the women who underwent this study had no personal income; 20% were in the 5-10 Lakhs income bracket. The number of women in the higher income brackets (10-20 lakhs and over 20 lakhs) were significantly lesser.

Business case for greater economic centeredness for women

According to the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index 2012, India's overall rank was a dismal 105 of the 135 countries with available data. In terms of disparity in the economic participation between both the genders, we were ranked even lower 123 [2]. This could be because of the male-female wage gaps, the falling female labour force participation rate and the society's inherent unwillingness to acknowledge, appreciate and enable the ability of a woman to earn amongst other reasons. Despite the fact that India as a country has been able to largely close the gap between educational attainments of men and women, we have really not succeeded in sustaining a woman's power to earn. Further establishing this truth is the fact that the gender pay gap between urban males and female workers in India is almost Rs.70/day. While average male wage in urban India is Rs. 377.16 / day, that of the urban female is Rs. 308.79/day [4].

There is an average gender wage gap of almost Rs.70 between urban men and women in India, today.

Research shows that investing time and effort in women's employment has a lot of pluses. An increased number of women in the workforce imply that India's GDP could go up by as much as 27%, per capita income could go up by as much as 20% by 2030 [5]. The skill diversity of the workforce is enhanced as also its productivity. As women have a natural tendency to invest their incomes in children's education and health, the economy grows alongside a healthier and better educated younger generation. Family's living conditions improve, stronger communities are forged and the journey to prosperity is set. More women in government could boost economic growth as women are more likely to spend money on improving health, education, infrastructure and poverty [6].

India's GDP could go up by 27% by 2030, if women's workforce participation rate increases.

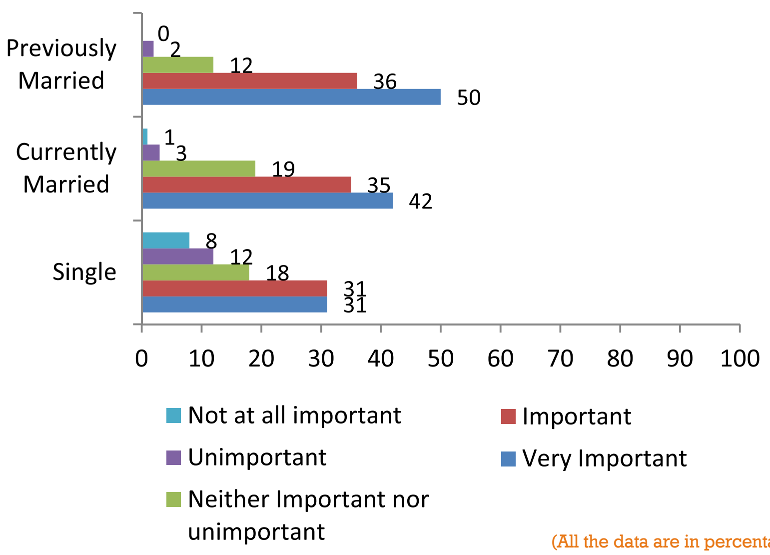
To quote Guinea's president Alpha Condé, **"Giving women better access to micro-credits and therewith enhancing their economic empowerment as a major step towards more economic and social development in Africa",** is ideal anecdotal evidence for the business case.

Key Findings

Significance of earnings (and careers thereof) of IWPs

With a female labour force participation rate of 35% in urban India [7], it is expected that earnings of women professionals is significant to households in a context of sky rocketing 'cost of living(s)'. Research shows that women and men have notably different preferences in household purchases. Numerous studies show that men spend more of their income on items for their own consumption, including alcohol, cigarettes and high-status consumer goods. Women are more likely to purchase goods for their household and specifically for their children, including food, healthcare, education, clothing and personal-care products [8]. In Fig.2 is presented the significance of women's earnings to family well beings, based on the marital statuses of women. It may be noted that to 86% of women, who were previously married, their earnings are important to their families. This could be probably because women who were previously married or separated are singularly responsible for education and care of their children and most of them assume the role of the breadwinner of their families. To 77% of married women, their incomes were important to their families. With families in urban India increasingly embracing the 'dual earning couple's' model, this figure comes as no surprise. Though to 62% of single women's families, their earnings are important or very important, it is interesting that 8% of single women who took this survey opined that their earnings were not at all important to their families. This could mean that such women had complete autonomy over their earnings and that their families did not typically expect unmarried women to contribute to the household expenditure.

Women earnings were most significant to previously married women, next to currently married women and then to single women.



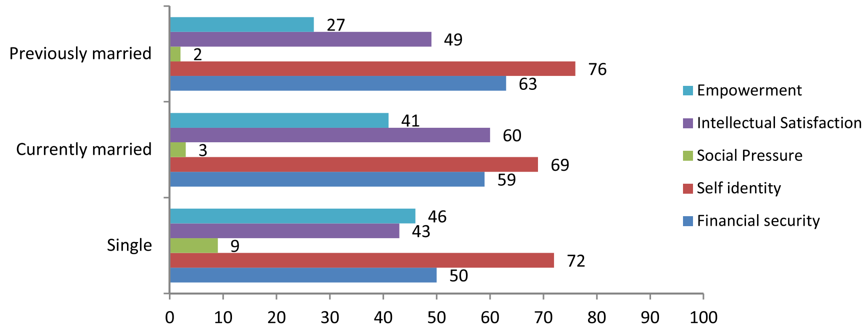
(All the data are in percentages)

Figure 2: Responses to significance of IWP's earnings to family well being based on marital statuses

For any form of sustainable career, the factors of motivation are critical determinants of career success. Women's careers are no exceptions to this trend. Financial security is one of the most important drivers of women's careers. But, the findings also show that careers are also about self identities, intellectual satisfaction and self actualisation. Their professional identities speak of their capabilities and the quests for creating career records provide impetus to the career aspirations of many IWPs. Their educational attainments and their earning prowess have been well noticed, their voices are better heard in financial, administrative and other collective decisions at their homes. This is why empowerment figures as another factor of motivation for women's careers. Last but not the least is social pressure in the list of career drivers of IWPs. Social pressure is an indicator of the society's expectation of women to pursue careers.

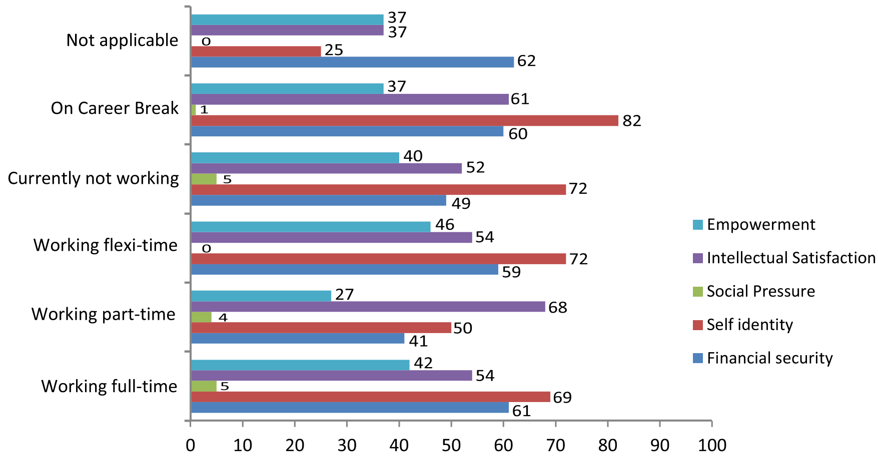
Fig.3 shows the significance of each of these career drivers to IWPs with different marital status. It is impressive to note that self identity is the single most important motivator to women irrespective of their marital statuses (to 76% of previously married women, 69% of currently married women and 72% of single women). Financial security, intellectual satisfaction and empowerment are important to women, in that order. The seemingly lesser importance to empowerment could probably be because women automatically feel empowered when they have unique self identities and are intellectually satisfied. The invisibility of social pressure as a motivator has interesting implications; it indicates that our society still does not necessarily expect women to earn, the stereotypical notion that women are meant to be caretakers dominate the society's psyche and there is no imminent pressure on women to pursue careers. It is only on 9% of single women that this pressure creates an impact, as the chart evidently shows.

Self identity the most impactful career motivator, social pressure the least impactful for women's careers.



(All the data are in percentages)

Figure 3: Responses of IWPs to the factors of motivations for their careers based on marital statuses

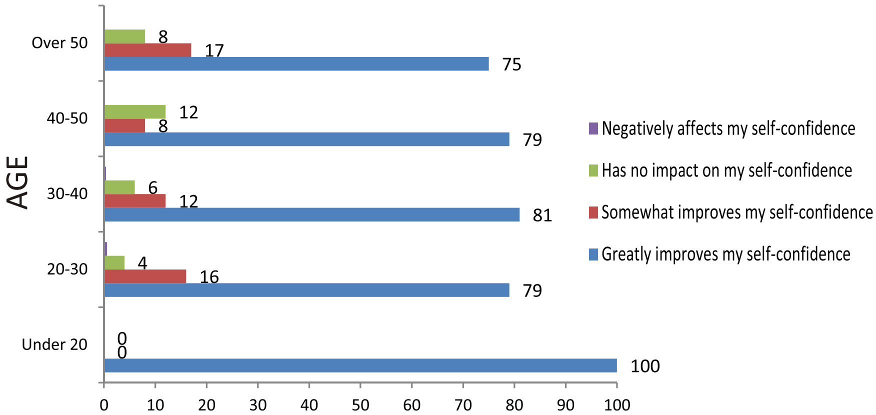


(All the data are in percentages)

Figure 4: Responses of IWPs to the factors of motivations for their careers based on their employment types

In Fig. 4 are shown the relative importance of the career drivers to women engaged in different modes of employment. To most categories of women, whether they were working full time or part time or were on career breaks, creation of self identities was the most significant outcome they sought from careers.

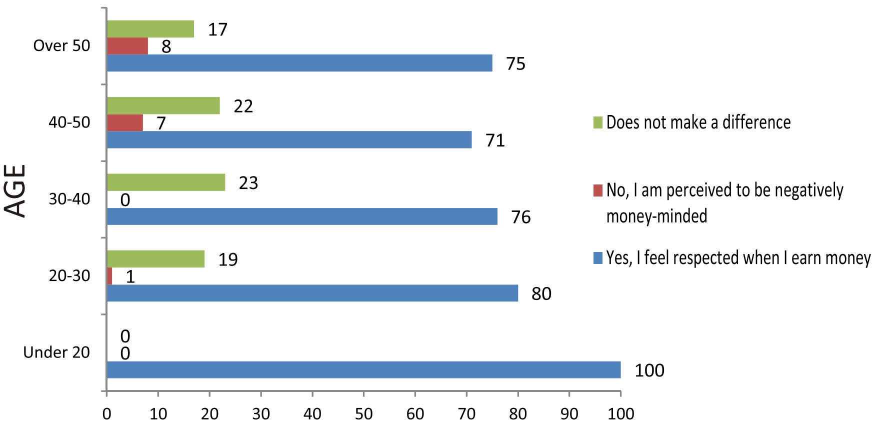
Intellectual satisfaction is most important to women working part time (to 68% of women), interestingly. This indicates that women employed part time (freelancers, consultants) view careers as means of creative engagement rather than financial security. Another important result is that 82% of women on career breaks aspire for a return to careers to resurrect their fading self identities, more than anything else.



(All the data are in percentages)

Figure 5: Responses to impact of having money of your own on your self confidence, based on age brackets

Fig.5 shows the impact of having money on their own on women's confidence levels. The direct proportionality between money and confidence levels is established yet again. When women have money on their own, they are able to invest it in pursuits that appeal to them, consequently boosting their confidences.



(All the data are in percentages)

Figure 6: Responses of IWPs to impact of earnings on societal respect, based on age brackets

As Fig.6 denotes, it is the older women who are perceived to be negatively money minded when they earn money (8% of women over 50 and 7% of women in the age bracket 40-50). This could be because a small segment of the society still expects women of these ages to be complacent with their duties at home and the men of their families to be providers of their expenses.

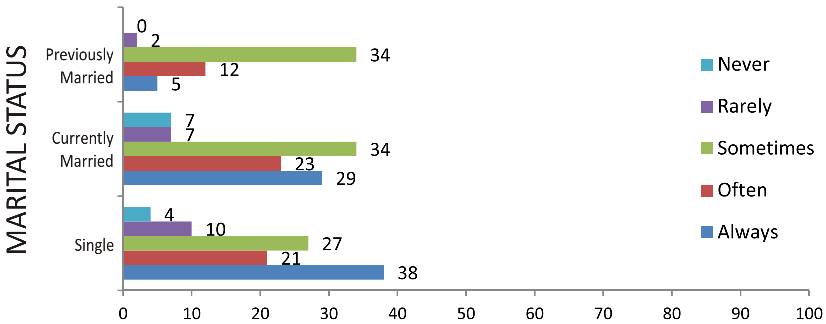
Financial independence of IWPs

Indian women are fast acquiring ownership of money. The society is now acknowledging the need for financial independence of an IWP. A whopping 87.7% of survey respondents said, they had money of their own;

93% of women surveyed had independent bank accounts

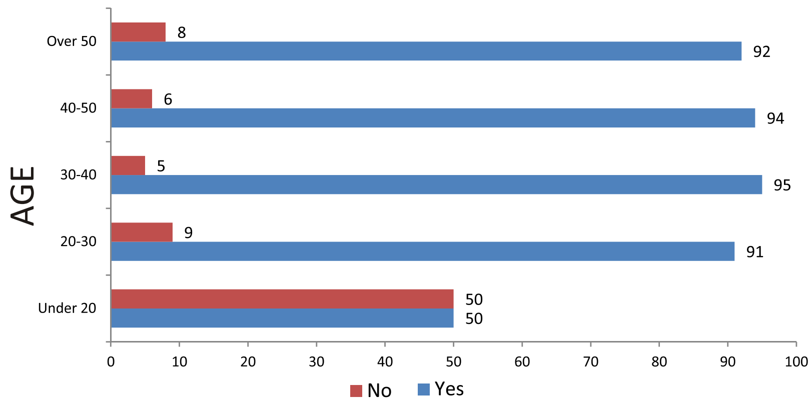
93.1% of respondents had independent bank accounts which is sufficient testimony to this fact. With greater autonomy over the money they earn, they spend it for causes genuine enough, subsequently contributing to the country's social development as illustrated by research studies.

The graph in Fig.7 shows the guilt (frequency) women professionals in India experience when they spend money that is not their own. As one would typically expect, it is the single women who are most marred by guilt (59%) often when they spend other's money. Around 52% of currently married often felt guilty when they spend money earned by others (probably, spouses). Only 17% of the previously married women suffered from some degree of guilt when they used money they didn't earn, indicating that they are on their own fending for themselves without dependence on other people's money. their self respects and greater sense of responsibility made them detest the event of depending on others for money.



(All the data are in percentages)

Figure 7: Responses of IWPs to guilt associated with spending money not owned by them, based on marital statuses



(All the data are in percentages)

Figure 8: Responses of IWPs to a question on having separate bank accounts, based on their age brackets

From fig.8, it is evident that a majority of IWPs of today hold separate bank accounts on which they have complete power of operations. With a majority of professional Indian women being concentrated at entry levels in organisations, one would typically expect them to fall in the 20-30 age group. However 9% of such women who took the survey said, they did not have separate bank accounts. This could primarily be because they do not have control over the money they earn, their ignorance in assuring their financial independence not helping them either.

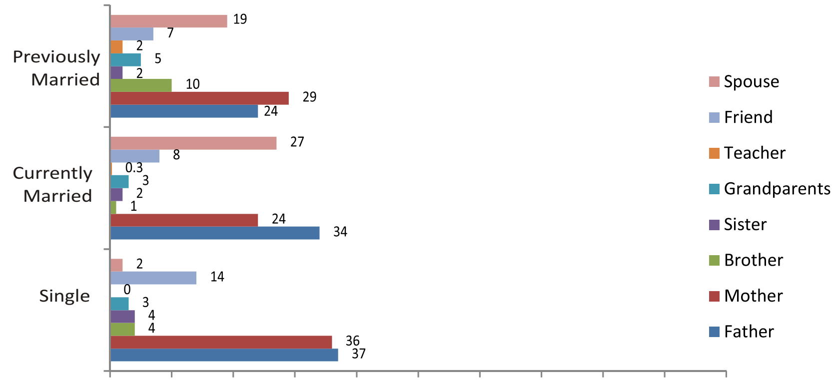
Financial literacy of IWPs

Wikipedia defines financial literacy as *"the ability to understand how money works in the world: how someone manages to earn or make it, how that person manages it, how he/she invests it (turn it into more) and how that person donates it to help others"* [9].

> Fathers were the most favoured role models in money handling for women

This is acquired over years of handling money, some aspects of which are learnt from role models whom one considers experts in financial matters. In an age when, professional advisors for money handling are a few clicks away on the web, their contributions to enhancing IWP's financial literacy can also not be neglected. With women's careers assuming greater significance than in yester years and a majority of them having independent access to money, it is also important to examine how wise women are with their money.

In Fig. 9 are shown the important people in the lives of IWPs whom they idolised for their expertise in money management.

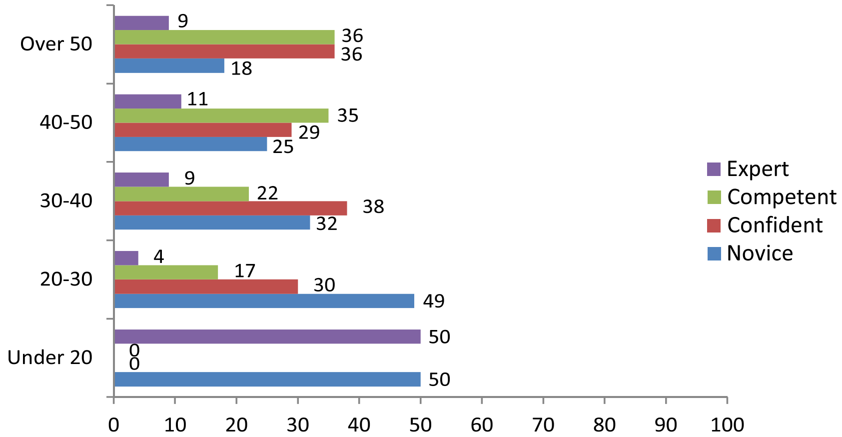


(All the data are in percentages)

Figure 9: Responses of IWPs to a question on who their role models in managing money were, based on marital statuses

While for a majority of women, their fathers were the most favoured role models (for single women and currently married women), mothers were also close in the competition for favour. It may be noted that a slightly larger percentage of currently married women emulated their spouses in financial matters, than their mothers (27% said their husbands were their role models as against 24% of them saying their mothers were their inspiration).

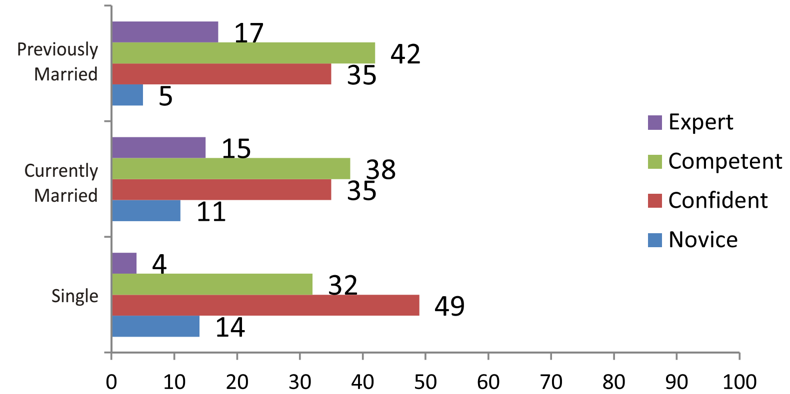
> Currently married women idolised their spouses more than their mothers in expertise in handling money.



(All the data are in percentages)

Figure 10: Responses of IWPs to their expertise in investing, based on age brackets

Fig.10 shows the competence levels of IWPs in investment, on the basis of their ages. The results show that there are fewer novices amongst the older women as against the younger ones (around half of women aged 20-30 were novices; only 18% of women over 50 were novices). This may be because their exposure to and experience in money matters is greater amongst older professional women.



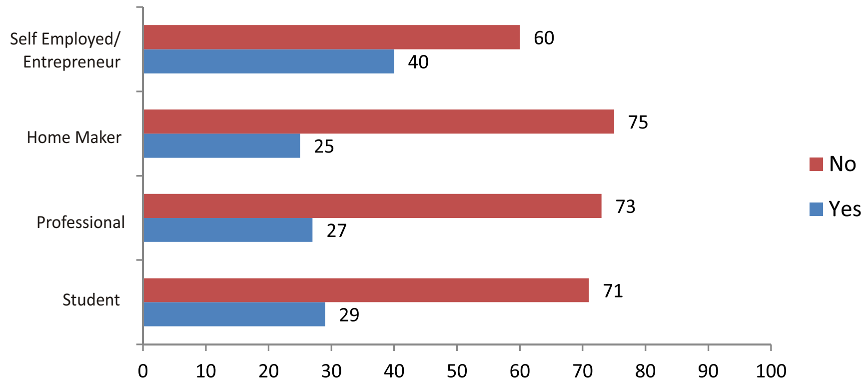
(All the data are in percentages)

Figure 11: Responses of IWPs to their expertise in budgeting, based on marital statuses

From fig.11 it is clear that women who were previously married had the maximum expertise in budgeting. This may be explained by the fact most of these women independently manage their household budgets and are enriched by their experience. It is heartening to note that 49% of single women are confident about their budgeting capabilities proving that they are also responsible enough in money handling and are conscious of their financial futures.

The results also showed that though 73% of women did not currently seek professional guidance in handling money, almost 52% of them were interested in seeking guidance in the future. Amongst women who sought guidance, it was the lot of self employed women who were most inclined to seek help (40% - as is clear from Fig.12) probably because the circumstances under which they needed handholding were more common and recurrent in nature.

> 73% of women never took professional guidance on money management.



(All the data are in percentages)

Figure 12: Responses of IWPs to a question on their inclination to seek professional financial advice, based on employment statuses

Recommendation

For women to stay active participants of the economy, it is important that they are in an environment where their economic centeredness is allowed to thrive. The most important change initiator in this regard would be the Indian Woman Professional herself.

What must Women do?

Women have come a long way from managing household budgets to saving, to making purchase decisions to becoming a bread winner. However, for true economic empowerment, it is important that they not only own money but also own the decisions on this money. Enlisted are a few steps an IWP should necessarily take to improve her economic centeredness:

- *Active participation in the investment decisions of their families:* Women must learn money management early in their life and empower themselves for greater financial security and well being. The first step could be actively involving themselves in the investment decisions of their families (and other communities they are part of) gaining hands on experience in the process.

- *Own your 'financial independence':* Women tend to delegate their finances to significant others in their lives spouses, parents etc. They should let go off any fear that they have of handling money and should learn and master the nuances of money handling to achieve absolute financial independence.

- *Enrol in formal courses on financial planning:* Formal courses give women access to handy tips from experts and they are able to take planned approaches to saving, budgeting or investing money. This is very important for those who are novice at investment and financial planning.

- *Role Clarity:* Over 50% of the respondents felt guilty while spending money not earned by them. While earning money removes the guilt, it is also important for women to have role clarity especially when they are not working. There could be times when women choose not to work or have to take a break or slow down careers to manage family responsibilities; greater role clarity will not give rise to such guilt.

- *Enable and sustain your careers:* Even when domestic responsibilities seem to pull women away from full fledged careers, they can seek options of flexible/part time working to keep the balls rolling. In short, don't leave the workplaces before it is actually required.

To improve their economic centeredness, women should:

- Actively participate in the investment decisions of their families
- Enrol in formal courses on financial planning
- Have role clarity
- Enable and sustain their careers
- Do proactive financial planning for career breaks.

- *Proactive financial planning for career breaks and sabbatical:* Proactive financial planning for career breaks can help women be financially independent even under such circumstances.

What can families do?

Families have a great influence on the cultural conditioning of girls. With their earliest lessons on money being learnt from their families, it is important that young girls are brought up to be smart professionals of tomorrow with greater economic awareness. The following are a few recommendations to families of IWPs to help better their economic centeredness:

- Entrust ownership of money with women: When girls are taught to handle money and are given ownership of money right from their earlier years, they grow up to be more confident of their financial skills. As for wives, when they are granted complete autonomy of money their responsibility over saving, budgeting or investing it increases as also their financial literacy.

- Make participative decision making a norm in households: It is important that decisions financial or otherwise in all households, equally involve the men and women in it. Impressionable young girls learn to actively take part in financial matters and boys are taught that it is important to let women associate themselves with money handling for greater good of the families.

- Encourage creation of separate bank accounts for women

To improve women's economic centeredness, families should:

- Entrust ownership of money with women
- Make participative decision making a norm in households
- Encourage creation of separate bank accounts for women

What can organizations do?

The corporate sector as employers of a vast majority of women professionals need to ensure that women's engagement with money is sustained and their economic awareness is improved over years. While on one hand they have the responsibility of sustaining women's earning powers, it is also important that they provide avenues for bettering financial skills of their female personnel.

- Enable and sustain women careers: The survey clearly shows that women earning and owning money contribute to the well being of the family, an indication that a greater number of women are likely to enter the workforce. Organisations have to ensure that they create a work environment that is inclusive and accommodating to the needs of women. Organisations should ensure that women's careers maintain continuities across life events (marriage, child birth, elder care etc.) through women friendly measures such as flexible work arrangements, formal women networks and provision of child care facilities [10].

- Create progressive work environments: For a whopping (70%) of the respondents, self identity was a clear motivation for career, followed by Financial Security (58%) and Intellectual Satisfaction (55%). Organisations have to ensure that they create a progressive environment

To improve women's economic centeredness, organisations should:

- Enable and sustain women's careers
- Create progressive work environments
- Organise financial skill building programs

that will allow women to grow without barriers, biases and prejudices which could stifle their development. This will ensure that women create successful identities for themselves and stay engaged with the company.

- Organise financial skill building programs: Organise financial skill building programs and economic self awareness programs similar to the wellness programs shall ensure the financial well being of women employees.

Conclusion

Analyses of responses yielded findings that were fairly promising of women's economic empowerment while some were starling enough to provide pointers to areas of necessary improvement. It was a revelation that social pressure was not a significant career motivator for different classes of women.

This implies that our society still does not expect its women to earn. The social pressure is practically inexistent once women are married establishing that the stereotype that their primary responsibility revolves around the 3 C's (cooking, cleaning and caring) still exists. It may also be noted that women voted intellectual satisfaction and creation of self identity as important career motivators, many a times more significant than financial security.

The results also showed that Indian women in large numbers have money of their own, which they manage independently. This is an indication of the fact that women are no longer considered any less competent in money handling than their male counterparts.

> The most important change initiator for greater economic centeredness of women are women themselves; their personal and professional ecosystems should enable their efforts.

Women are increasingly gaining confidence in their financial literacy, but large percentages of them are still to gain expertise in saving, budgeting and investing. However to a question on whether they would like to take formal coaching to learn about money management, there were many IWPs pitching a 'No' proving that Indian women are still not inclined to mould their economic centeredness 'professionally' and prefer to outsource it to men in their lives.

The findings are most important to Indian Women who harbour intentions of making significant career strides and become active participants of the economy. If women were to attain equality in their economic participation, it is important that they make wise decisions on the money they earn and own.

It is equally important that the employers, families and acquaintances of IWPs and the government enable their efforts in this direction which could result in a prospering economy with a gender balanced workforce, in a future that is not very distant.

Reference

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About FLEXI Careers India

FLEXI Careers India (FLEXI), a social enterprise from AVTAR, works extensively in the area of Diversity & Inclusion with a special focus on gender diversity.

FLEXI enables high-growth organizations to focus sharply on an inclusive talent strategy to make the workplace more welcoming for women.

FLEXI services includes placement services for diversity recruitment, workshops and training programs, Diversity Audit & Diagnostic Studies, creating flexi-career tracks through Flexi career solutions and Flexi-working methods.

'AVTAR I-WIN' is a service from FLEXI Careers India for creating sustainable careers fro women professionals.

More than 30000 women professionals are registered members on www.avtariwin.com, a unique portal for creation and fulfillment of work-life integrated careers for women. More than 3000 women have been placed on part-time / flexi-time /full-time jobs with organizations across India. This includes organizations from IT , BPO, FMCG, Banking & Financial services, Retail and other industries.

FLEXI conducts periodical research on women's careers, work-life balance and gender diversity. FLEXI's services are based on the findings of these studies.

- Viewport -2007 : Country wide study on working women professionals
- Viewport - 2009 : Survey covering 283 married Indian Males aged between 25 - 65 to understand male perception of working women professionals Outlook Business AVTAR Career Creators nation-wide survey 2010 on Work-life Balance
- Viewport -2010 : 'Flexible Careers Moment of Truth' Study covering responses of 341 senior women professionals and 45 top organizations
- Viewport - 2012 : The Impact of Career Enablers on Women's Workforce Participation
- Diversity & Inclusion Practices in India -a- state -of -the -nation study

About the Authors

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Dr. Saundarya Rajesh, one of the earliest voices to speak on Diversity & Inclusion in the workplace in India, is a winner of the Standard Chartered SCOPE Woman Exemplar Award 2006, the Yuvashakthi Entrepreneur of the Year award 2007 and the Swadeshi Jagran Manch's Award 2008. The CavinKare Innovation Award for creating India's first flexi-career service for women was presented to her in March 2011. In September 2011, Saundarya won the highly prestigious TiE Stree Shakti Entrepreneur of the year award for her work in building and creating India's first women's careers service. In April 2012, she was awarded the FICCI FLO Woman Entrepreneur of the year award and in January 2013, she was awarded the NEST Entrepreneur of the Year award for 2013.

Founder-President of AVTAR Career Creators and FLEXI Careers India, Saundarya leads tripartite (community-organization-individual) engagements in engaging with diverse talents, Diversity training, Diversity Audits, Sensitization Training and Diversity Recruitment. Under her guidance and mentoring, India has seen the advent of formal Second Career programs for women, initiated by several large organizations. She also anchors research based consulting solutions for organizations in the areas of Flexidizing and Unbundling jobs, Diversity events and Skill-building initiatives for women.

A Phd in Women's Workforce Participation in India, Saundarya has published over a dozen journal articles relating to diversity & inclusion, women's careers and flexibility. She is a regular columnist for The Business Line, Economic Times and other Indian and International HR and business magazines in the areas of women's workforce participation, economic empowerment of women and women's leadership. She is also a leading keynote speaker at both national and international forums, having shared the dais with many luminaries in the areas of business, education, public policy and youth development.

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Karthik Ekambaram, is a Diversity and Inclusion specialist having completed several seminal projects in his area for multiple organizations. He is an MBA with over 15 years of experience in business analysis, talent strategy and workforce diversity consulting.

As a strategist, who has devised flexible working policies and diversity-ready workplaces for several fortune 500 organizations, Karthik brings with him a rich experience of managing a wide range of requirements for creating a futuristic workplace. Managing Diversity recruitment and formulating second career programs are some of Karthik's recent achievements. As one of India's pioneering workers in the field of Second Career programs, Karthik has been a key architect in the re-entry of women into the workplace. He has worked on projects which utilize Diversity & Inclusion as a business driver for organizations by employing it as a talent, CSR and business strategy tool. He has carried out Job Analysis, Time and Motion studies at several client sites for the purpose of Flexidizing and Unbundling of jobs to create flexi-career tracks in organizations interested in implementing flexible working options for their employees.

Karthik has worked on many research studies on Diversity & Inclusion, Second career women, Generations in the workforce, Flexible working and Work-life balance. He has conducted Diversity & Inclusion audits for a number of organisations. Karthik has also co-authored several papers that have been published in Journals such as The International Journal of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Research (2013), Indian Journal of Training & Development (IJTD) (2013) and Journal of Business Management & Economics (JBME) (2013), The Standard International Journals (2013) and International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research Academy (IJMRA).

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Anju Rakesh completed her B.E (Hons.) Computer Science from BITS, Pilani one of the premier institutes of technical education in India. After interning with Yahoo! Research for a brief period of time, she joined the Research Division of Infosys Technologies Limited as a Junior Research Associate. During her stint with Infosys, she was a co-author of four international publications in the fields of Knowledge Engineering and Artificial Intelligence (AI), one of which she went on to present at AAAI, a premier conference in AI in Atlanta (USA) in July 2010.

She is currently a Research Consultant with FLEXI Careers India and has been a part of several women centred studies under the aegis of FLEXI. Anju has contributed to the research and publication of papers on different aspects of women's careers including that of women career returnees and flexible careers in journals of international repute of the likes of Indian Journal of Training & Development (IJTD) and Journal of Business Management & Economics (JBME) The Standard International Journals (2013) and International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research Academy (IJMRA).

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