

"A man is
great by
deeds, not by
birth"
-Chanakya
Welcome to IIMK



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT KOZHIKODE



Working Paper

IIMK/WPS/684/OBHR/2026/03

March 2026

Reimagining the Relationship between Motherhood and Professional Work

Chandana Chandran ¹

Ankur Jain ²

©

All rights belong to their respective authors.

Please contact the corresponding authors, if you would like to access the full paper.

¹ Independent Researcher

² Assistant Professor, Organizational Behaviour and Human Resources Area, Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, IIMK Campus PO, Kunnamangalam, Kozhikode, Kerala 673 570, India; Email - ankurjain@iimk.ac.in, Phone Number - 0495-2809639.

Reimagining the Relationship between Motherhood and Professional Work

Abstract:

Motherhood is still viewed as a professional hurdle even as women's participation in the workforce has increased substantially. Although this tension has attracted increasing scholarly attention, the literature at the intersection of motherhood and professional work remains fragmented and underdeveloped. To address this gap, we conducted a qualitative review of existing research, organizing our findings around three key themes: barriers to work, reimagining motherhood, and policy considerations. The first theme explores how motherhood is frequently viewed as a hindrance to career advancement, reinforcing workplace biases and limiting women's leadership opportunities. The second theme offers a contrasting perspective, highlighting the often-overlooked benefits of motherhood—such as the development of emotional intelligence, time management, adaptability, and resilience—and how these skills can be effectively transferred to the workplace. The third theme examines policy efforts aimed at promoting fairness and support for working mothers. By challenging deficit-based narratives, this study positions motherhood as a potential source of professional strength. Our findings provide practical insights for building inclusive organizational cultures and designing policies that recognize and support the dual roles of working mothers.



भारतीय प्रबंध संस्थान कोषिककोड
Indian Institute Management Kozhikode
Globalizing Indian Thought

Research Office
Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode
IIMK Campus P. O.,
Kozhikode, Kerala, India,
PIN - 673 570
Phone: +91-495-2809237/ 238
Email: research@iimk.ac.in
Web: <https://iimk.ac.in/publications>

