

Problems of Women Workers in Urban India: An Empirical Study of Constitutional and Labour Law Safeguards

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Abstract

Labour laws and constitutional provisions designed to protect female workers from workplace discrimination by ensuring equal wages, preventing workplace harassment, providing job security, and making legal redress easy. Still, women workers in the cities of India face various kinds of workplace discrimination. These challenges are not just individual problems, but they also question the practical applicability of our legally and institutionally designed safeguards. This study tries to assess the extent to which constitutional provisions, laws, and other legal protections have been effective in eliminating workplace challenges facing female workers in India's urban centres. The study explores how women's knowledge of their legal rights is a factor that links these protections to actual benefits, and it also looks into how institutional factors influence this kind of link. The research is conducted in combination of a qualitative descriptive survey, a quantitative empirical analysis, and a legal doctrinal approach. In all, 400 women were interviewed with the help of a standardized questionnaire on their work experiences in formal and informal employment in six major metropolitan cities in India. But the secondary data were taken from constitutional provisions, labor laws, verdicts of the courts, official documents, and other literature. Results showed that legal protection provided through the constitution and labor laws significantly reduced the number of workplace challenges. Women having knowledge of their rights acted as a bridge linking laws and their practical effect on women. Also, institutional support was instrumental in reinforcing the effectiveness of legal protection. The study conclude that in-depth enforcement of labor laws, better availability of information on laws, and stronger institutional support would greatly help in ensuring the protection of the safety, rights, and well-being of female workers, which at the same time is very well aligned with policy prescriptions for lawmakers, employers, and organizations concerned with employment relations.

Keywords: Constitutional safeguards; Institutional support; Labour law safeguards; Legal awareness; Women workers.

1. Introduction

Women's engagement in the labour force has become essential for the country's economic growth and social development. Economic growth and urbanization in India have expanded employment opportunities for women in both organized and unorganized sectors. Over the years, women have become more or less household heads of the family as they contribute to household incomes and also the national productivity. Women's share of labor participation and productivity is still restricted by different forms of constraints, such as social ones, institutional ones, and structural ones. For instance, the female labor force participation of the least developed countries is affected by these factors: economic opportunities, socio-cultural norms, conditions of the labor market, institutional support, and labor policies (Klasen et al., 2020).

Women's greater involvement in urban labour markets enhances their contribution to economic growth in India and reinforces the requirement of appropriate legal protections for women workers in India. The constitution guarantees equality and non-discrimination, while Indian labour laws have been adopted in terms of equal pay, maternity benefits, physical conditions at work, etc. The interventions that increase women's control over economic assets are associated with an increased level of autonomy and enhanced female labour force participation (Heath & Tan, 2020). However, these safeguards did not prevent women from being the sufferers of disadvantage in their workplace, which includes wage discrimination. There is a wage gap by gender that occurs among different occupations, classes, and social strata that may result from differences in opportunities and in the structural conditions of the labour market (Pandoh & Singh, 2025).

Sexual harassment, verbal and psychological abuse, and pressure of all forms are the everyday reality for many women workers in labour-intensive industries such as garment export factories. Dutta (2021) showed that garment export sector pointed out pervasive gendered mistreatment, forced compliance, forced labour, excessive pressure, and coercion with regard to working conditions and performance that challenge the enforcement and adequacy of existing legal rights. Job insecurity for women workers is also a key factor, especially concerning informal sector workers and those with precarious employment without formal labour contracts and social protections (Abraham et al., 2021).

Women's situation is additionally hampered by challenges linked to maternity protection as well as to work-family balance. Though labour law provisions guarantee maternity advantages, it still have limited reach, especially in informal economies, demonstrating the need for social security measures (Agarwal, 2021).

Occupational segregation further confines women to low-paid, insecure employment positions with insufficient possibilities for progression. Traditional norms and bargaining position impact on occupation preferences, with enhanced controlling power for ladies translating into higher labour participation (Field et al, 2021). Furthermore, lack of physical safety and mobility limits ladies' access to work chances because fear of brutality and bad transportation may decrease workforce contribution, hence illustrating the interdependence involving public security and girls' involvement in the workforce (Siddique, 2020).

The problems of income inequality, harassment in the workplace, job security risks, insufficient maternity protection measures, occupation-based segregation, and widespread informal work make people think about why constitutional and Labour Rights Laws have been so weak in protecting Women as their Rights holders. That's why this research will look at how far legal rights improve working conditions for Women workers in urban India through these objectives:

- i. "To examine the effect of constitutional and labour law safeguards on the problems faced by women workers in urban India."
- ii. "To analyze the mediating effect of awareness of legal rights on the relationship between constitutional and labour law safeguards and the problems faced by women workers."
- iii. "To examine the moderating role of institutional support in the relationship between constitutional and labour law safeguards and the problems faced by women workers."
- iv. "To analyse the labour law framework governing the rights and welfare of women workers in urban India."

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical and Legal Framework

- a. **Constitutional Safeguards for Women Workers:** The Constitution of India offers a robust set of provisions aimed at safeguarding female employees and gender equality in employment. Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees the right to equality before the law, Articles 15 and 15(3) prohibit the state from discriminating between any citizen on grounds of sex and allow for making special provisions for women and children. Article 16 guarantees equality of opportunity in matters of public employment, and Article 21 guarantees protection of the right to life with dignity. Similarly, Directive principles enshrined in the Constitution support the protection of women through various policies concerning, inter alia, the right to an equal livelihood, equal pay for equal work, just and humane working conditions, and maternity relief, in a modern urban setting (Yadav, 2025; Anamika, 2025; Thakur, 2025).
- b. **Labour Law Safeguards:** India's legislative ecosystem extends considerable security to women labourers through regulations about parity, health, the workplace, and social protection. The Code for Wages, 2019, focuses on fair remittances and prohibits pay disparities (Bais & Nagar, 2021); similarly, the Profession Safety, Wellness, and Operating Conditions Code, 2020, intends to ensure safe and salubrious work environments for employees (Choudhary, 2023). The Social Security Encrypt, 2020 coverage "includes all employee perks, such as insurance and maternity aids for working women" (Raman et al., 2021). Furthermore, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, and the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, also ensure against victimisation in the workplace, together with maternity benefits, as well as strengthen women's position in workforce participation (Gethe & Pandey, 2023).

2.2 Thematic Review

2.2.1 Constitutional and Labour Law Safeguards, Legal Awareness, and Problems Faced by Women Workers

Constitutional and labour rights laws provided significant protections against discrimination, exploitation, unhealthy and hazardous work environments, and unfair labour practices for women workers. Research reviews indicated that various laws offered protections regarding equality, maternity benefits, working conditions (including safety at work), and social security, and addressed harassment. Still, they were not always effective due to fragmented and often piecemeal laws, lack of effective enforcement, and weak accountability systems (Pereira-Kotze et al., 2022). "International standards such as ILO Convention 189 emphasized the rights of domestic workers to safe working environments, fair working hours, social security, and protection from abuse" (Liem et al., 2024). Similarly, legal measures that addressed workplace protection and domestic violence expanded employer responsibilities in certain jurisdictions (Weatherall et al., 2021). "However, important gaps in the legal provision negatively impacted vulnerable workers such as migrant workers and transgender" workers as they confronted obstacles in getting access to justice and workplace security (Mishra & Negi, 2021; Yimer et al, 2025). Women workers, particularly those who fall into the marginalized category, have been identified as lacking adequate information on labour security and thus were unable to dispute abuses and to seek effective remedies (Munezero et al., 2025; Pereira-Kotze et al., 2022).

Various issues encountered by women workers in different sectors and different types of employment. Women have remained over-represented in low-paying and unstable informal employment, which confines the level of economic independence (Menon & Nath, 2022; Biswas & Banu, 2023). Challenges at the workplace were harassment, violence, poor and unsafe infrastructure facilities, occupational segregation, restriction of movement, etc. (Hutchings et al., 2020; Dutta, 2021; Goel, 2023). Women victims of harassment reported poor productivity and satisfaction with their jobs, retention, lack of formal support, and challenges in seeking justice (Reguera & García-Izquierdo, 2021). Workplace harassment also led to greater obstacles for migrant women and health workers who had to overcome obstacles to report abuse and feared retaliation from their employers. Due to economic instability, employment instability made women more susceptible to abuse, and barriers hindered participation throughout the labour market (Agarwal, 2021; Chattopadhyay et al., 2022).

H1: There is a significant effect of constitutional and labour law safeguards on the problems faced by women workers in urban India.

H2: There is a significant mediating effect of awareness of legal rights on the relationship between constitutional and “labour law safeguards and the problems faced by women workers in urban India.”

2.2.2 Labour Law Framework and Institutional Support for the Protection of Women Workers

The labour law framework for women workers included provisions for maternity benefits, occupational safety, non-discrimination, social security, and protection from harassment and violence. Previous work suggested that the recognition of existing legal protections for women was pervasive, though not effectively implemented, especially among informal or non-traditional female workers (Pereira-Kotze et al., 2022). Several fragmented provisions addressing maternity and child protection and protection of employment were found to hamper access to justice and enforcement of laws (Kebede & Seifu, 2021; Pereira-Kotze et al., 2022). Similarly, ILO Convention 189 emphasized that standards should include the application of labour protection measures and social security benefits, as well as access to justice, to informal domestic workers who continued to be ignored under conventional labour regulations (Liem et al., 2024). For vulnerable women such as commercial sex workers and previously incarcerated women, their lack of representation in legislative acts and procedures means that access to law remained elusive, given pervasive stigmas, discrimination, and limited protection mechanisms despite nominal legal recognition (Lyons et al., 2020). In addition, a lack of knowledge about labour rights was observed to be detrimental to the functional applicability of labour rights to women workers. (Munezero et al., 2025).

The effective institutional mechanisms encompass workplace management, policies, and complaint systems, such as mechanisms to report workplace harassment and a process of an independent investigation, which builds trust in the systems (Evagora-Campbell et al., 2024). Mentoring and sponsorship programs were identified as a key institutional factor to support women’s promotion and leadership opportunities in male-dominated sectors (Saville et al., 2024). However, the studies had demonstrated that institutional support was generally shallow and ineffective, as the implementation and monitoring were often inadequate, and female workers lacked protection, despite having a legal labour framework (Baker et al., 2025; Pereira-Kotze et al., 2022).

H3: There is a significant moderating effect of institutional support on the relationship between constitutional and “labour law safeguards and the problems faced by women workers in urban India.”

H4: There is a significant relationship between the labour law framework governing “the rights and welfare of women workers and the protection of women workers in urban India.”

2.3 Research Gap

Existing studies have extensively examined constitutional safeguards, labour law protections, legal awareness, institutional support, and the problems faced by women workers. However, most research has investigated these factors independently rather than exploring their interrelationships within a comprehensive framework. Limited empirical evidence is available on how constitutional and labour law safeguards influence the problems experienced by women workers through the mediating role of awareness of legal rights. Similarly, the moderating effect of institutional support on the relationship between legal safeguards and workplace problems remains underexplored, particularly in the context of urban India. Furthermore, despite recent labour law reforms, there is a lack of empirical studies assessing the effectiveness of the labour law framework in protecting the rights and welfare of women workers. This study seeks to address these gaps through an integrated analysis of legal, institutional, and awareness-related dimensions.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts an explanatory and doctrinal research design. The explanatory research design is to analyse the association between constitutional law and labour law protection and challenges faced by women workers; to analyse the mediating impact of consciousness about legal rights on challenges faced by women workers, and to analyse the moderating impact of institutional support. While doctrinal research design requires a systematic study of constitutional, labour law, labour codes, judgments, and policy documents concerning women workers' rights and welfare.

3.2 Research Approach

The study uses a mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods. A combination of Quantitative and qualitative approaches allows for a holistic analysis of the problems faced by women workers in Urban India, and the effectiveness of constitutional and labour law safeguards to them. Through Quantitative methodology, it is possible to provide empirical evidence to verify hypotheses made in the chapter, whereas with the Qualitative method, the Legal Framework related to the protection of women workers' rights and welfare can be studied more exhaustively.

3.3 Study Area

The study is located in these leading metropolitan centers in India that cover different conditions in the economy, industry, and employment: Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kolkata. All these areas have been chosen since they contain large numbers of women workers in organized and informal economy sectors that play an important role in the city's labour force.

3.4 Population of the Study

The target population includes both those who work within the organised and unorganised sectors. These are all women workers in urban India. It includes women employed across diverse occupations and industries, such as manufacturing, services, retail and trade, domestic work, information technology, healthcare, and education. By covering workers from both formal and informal employment, the study seeks to capture the diverse working conditions, legal protections, and challenges experienced by women workers in urban India.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The study employs stratified random sampling to ensure adequate representation of women workers from different sectors, occupations, and geographical locations. Stratification enhances the representativeness of the sample and minimizes sampling bias.

3.6 Sample Size

The sample size is calculated on the basis of the Cochran formula, which is applied to a large population. Under the Cochran Formula, the least Sample Size comes out to be 385 Respondents. To ensure reliability due to possible non-response and invalid responses, 430 questionnaires were distributed, and 400 responses were analyzed after filtering invalid responses.

3.7 Data Collection

The study uses both primary and secondary sources of data are adopted by the study. Through the questionnaire, which is a five-point Likert scale tool in a structured format, the primary data are obtained from women workers who are subjected to the questionnaire covering constitutional and labour law safeguards, legal awareness, institutional support, workplace challenges, and demographic and occupational characteristics. Secondary data have been drawn from various reporting government agencies, the Labour Bureau, the NSSO and the PLFS Reports, the MOLE documents, court judgments, labor law and labor standards code, and the relevant texts, journals, scientific studies, and policy documents to provide the foundation of both the legal and empirical aspects of the study.

3.8 Statistical Tools and Techniques

The data will be processed with the help of three programs: Microsoft Excel, SPSS, and SmartPLS. Excel will be used for data coding, while the descriptive statistics, reliability, and regression analyses will be made using SPSS. SmartPLS will be first and foremost used to test the Structural Equation Model of the relationships between variables, including the mediating effect of legal rights awareness and the moderating effect of institutional support. Besides, there will also be doctrinal research of related constitutional matters, labour laws, and judgments.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Participation is entirely voluntary, and consent is provided before each questionnaire or survey response is submitted. All information gathered is held strictly confidential, and respondents' details will not be disclosed. The information gathered is used only for research purposes and adheres to all guidelines for academic and legal research.

4. Result

This section contains the findings of the study, supported mainly by research objectives and hypotheses. The results are described in several parts based on the respondents' characteristics, using statistical tables as well as a few simple narrative explanations to emphasize the relevance and support of the study results.

Table 1: Reliability and Validity Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	KMO and Bartlett's value	Sig. value
Constitutional And Labour Law Safeguards	.900	8	.922	.000
Awareness Of Legal Rights	.890	6	.908	.000
Institutional Support	.890	6	.898	.000
Problems Faced By Women Workers	.830	6	.863	.000
Protection Of Women Workers	.801	6	.828	.000

Table 1 shows that all variables of the study exhibit high levels of reliability and sampling adequacy. Cronbach's Alpha results (0.801-0.900) suggest excellent internal consistency, whereas KMO (0.828, 0.922) values prove that the sample's adequacy for factor analysis meets the requirements. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yields statistically significant results (0.000, p-value) for all constructs, showing that the variables are sufficiently correlated to each other. In short, the results support the reliability of the measurement scales as well as the appropriateness of factor analysis with them.

4.1 Result Based on demographics

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Sr. no.	Demographic characteristics	Category	N	%
1.	Age	18–25 years	61	15.3
		26–35 years	101	25.3
		36–45 years	103	25.8
		46–55 years	76	19.0
		Above 55 years	59	14.8
2.	Highest Educational Qualification	Diploma/ITI	61	15.3
		Graduate	67	16.8
		Higher Secondary	60	15.0
		No Formal Education	34	8.5
		Postgraduate & Above	49	12.3
		Primary	45	11.3
		Secondary	84	21.0
3.	City	Bangalore	67	16.8
		Chennai	66	16.5
		Delhi NCR	67	16.8

		Hyderabad	68	17.0
		Kolkata	67	16.8
		Mumbai	65	16.3
4.	Employment Sector	Organised	200	50.0
		Unorganised	200	50.0
5.	Monthly Income	₹10,001–₹20,000	77	19.3
		₹20,001–₹30,000	164	41.0
		₹30,001–₹50,000	71	17.8
		Above ₹50,000	64	16.0
		Below ₹10,000	24	6.0
6.	Occupation	Domestic Work	13	3.3
		Education	61	15.3
		Healthcare	69	17.3
		Hospitality	46	11.5
		Information Technology (IT/ITES)	58	14.5
		Manufacturing	75	18.8
		Other Services	44	11.0
		Retail & Trade	34	8.5

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the 400 respondents categorized by age, educational attainment, urbanicity, economic sector, monthly salary, and type of work profession. The majority of the respondents fell in the 26- 45 age range and had at least a secondary education. The participants were spread across six big cities fairly, and their employment types were evenly split between the formal and informal sectors, with almost half of them in the formal sector. Most respondents' income was that of the lower-middle and middle classes. The major occupational areas in which the respondents were engaged included manufacturing, healthcare, education, and information technology. So, considering the heterogeneity of the sample and the balanced representation, these characteristics have greatly contributed to the validity of the research results.

4.2 Results Based on Hypothesis

➤ Common Method Bias Test

Table 1: Common Method Bias Test

Factor	Total Variance Explained					
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	12.257	43.774	43.774	11.998	42.852	42.852
2	3.625	12.946	56.720	3.354	11.979	54.831
3	2.513	8.976	65.696	2.194	7.836	62.667
4	1.910	6.820	72.516	1.639	5.853	68.521
5	1.480	5.287	77.803	1.276	4.556	73.076

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Table 3 outlines Harman's single-factor test results for checking common method bias. That a large portion of the variance in all the data variables is accounted for by the one common factor, so the first factor. The initial factor accounts for 43.774%, whereas the factor after extraction accounts for 42.852. Both percentages are less than 50%. Because of this, it can be safely deduced that common method bias is not an issue, the data gathered can be used for further work, and there is a high probability that results drawn from the same would be correct.

➤ **Dropped Items** - Items CLS3 CLS6 IS1 and ALR6 were excluded after the data screening for item reliability and validity of the measurement model. Items CLS3, CLS6, and IS1 had very high item loadings. Item ALR6,

however, had a low item loading, suggesting that it did not add much to its underlying construct. Henceforth, they were not included in the calculation of the reliability and the validity.

➤ **Factor Analysis**

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix and Communalities

Rotated Component Matrix						
	Component				Communalities	
	1	2	3	4	Initial	Extraction
CLS1		0.790			1.000	0.771
CLS2		0.799			1.000	0.739
CLS4		0.799			1.000	0.749
CLS5		0.763			1.000	0.733
CLS7		0.774			1.000	0.724
CLS8		0.795			1.000	0.752
ALR1				0.813	1.000	0.848
ALR2				0.821	1.000	0.860
ALR3				0.829	1.000	0.864
ALR4				0.802	1.000	0.821
ALR5				0.811	1.000	0.861
IS1					1.000	0.853
IS3					1.000	0.809
IS4					1.000	0.849
IS5					1.000	0.834
IS6					1.000	0.793
PFW1			0.815		1.000	0.754
PFW2			0.790		1.000	0.719
PFW3			0.767		1.000	0.693
PFW4			0.803		1.000	0.730
PFW5			0.808		1.000	0.732
PFW6			0.803		1.000	0.709
PWW1	0.854				1.000	0.782
PWW2	0.854				1.000	0.779
PWW3	0.835				1.000	0.731
PWW4	0.846				1.000	0.782
PWW5	0.831				1.000	0.759
PWW6	0.837				1.000	0.755
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization						
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.						

Table 4 reports the outcomes of Principal Component Analysis performed with Varimax rotation. All retained items exhibited factor loadings exceeding the recommended 0.50 threshold. This means that the factor loads of retained items are A lot and strongly related to their corresponding constructions. The factor loadings extracted range from 0.693 to 0.864. The figure of factor communalities (0.40), which is taken as an acceptable level, was exceeded by these extracted communalities. Because of this, it was confirmed that the extracted factors explain a large part of the variance. Generally, the findings show a good level of construct validity, meaning that all the retained factors adequately covered the areas (five constructs) of the study.

➤ **Constructs Validity and Reliability**

Table 5: Convergent Validity of the Constructs

Sr. no.	Construct	Items	Standardized Loadings	Collinearity (VIF)	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
1.	Constitutional And Labour Law Safeguards	CLS1	0.878	3.026	0.93	0.931	0.741
		CLS2	0.854	2.658			
		CLS4	0.858	2.741			
		CLS5	0.858	2.659			
		CLS7	0.85	2.598			
		CLS8	0.866	2.834			
2.	Awareness Of Legal Rights	ALR1	0.922	4.274	0.956	0.957	0.851
		ALR2	0.928	4.67			
		ALR3	0.927	4.682			
		ALR4	0.907	3.793			
		ALR5	0.928	4.602			
3.	Institutional Support	IS1	0.907	3.995	0.945	0.946	0.82
		IS3	0.893	3.281			
		IS4	0.926	4.563			
		IS5	0.92	4.23			
		IS6	0.882	3.072			
4	Problems Faced By Women Workers	PFW1	0.869	2.886	0.922	0.923	0.719
		PFW2	0.85	2.636			
		PFW3	0.84	2.419			
		PFW4	0.853	2.593			
		PFW5	0.845	2.593			
		PFW6	0.831	2.405			
5	Protection Of Women Workers	PWW1	0.879	3.155	0.937	0.94	
		PWW2	0.883	3.147			
		PWW3	0.846	2.613			
		PWW4	0.891	3.217			
		PWW5	0.867	2.833			
		PWW6	0.86	2.817			

Table 5 contains the results of a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) covering several indicators: item loadings (i.e., how items explain latent constructs; factor scores), collinearity check via VIF scores, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). These were examined for constitutional and labor law safeguards (CLS), awareness of legal rights (ALR), institutional support (IS), problems faced by women workers (PFW), and protection of women workers (PWW). The standardized loadings of 0.831-0.928 support item reliability, as all exceed the 0.70 cutoff value (i.e., Cheung et al. 2024) suggested for good model fit. The VIF scores from 2.405 to 4.682 are below the critical value of the threshold at 5. Because of this, all variables are not collinear. The variables were free from collinearity (e.g., multicollinearity). (OBrien, 2007). Making Constitutional and Labour Law Safeguards (C & L), ALR, and IS are the three strongest in item internal consistency (0.930, 0.956, 0.945), and PFW (0.922) and PW (0.937) are the others; they were all above Bland and Altman's threshold of good reliability (1997). The values of composite reliability ranged from 0.923 to 0.957, while the AVE values were in the range of 0.719 to 0.851. Both were beyond acceptable levels. (Cheung et al., 2024) recommended

thresholds for measurement quality: composite reliability of 0.70 and the average variance extracted of 0.50. Closer examination showed that ALR had the highest measurement reliability (0.956) and convergent validity (CR 0.957, AVE 0.858) of items; next in line was Institutional Support (0.945, CR 0.946, AVE 0.820), Protection of Women Workers (0.937, CR 0.940, AVE 0.771), Constitutional and Labour Law Safeguards (0.930, CR 0.931, AVE 0.741), and last was Problems Faced by Women Workers (CR AVE at 0.922, 0.923, and 0.719, in that order). They were all highly reliable indicators. Summarized, the outcomes suggest that the constructs not only were internally consistent measures (i.e. their items worked in unison to produce the construct that they represented) but also showed sufficient convergent and discriminant validity through loadings, AVE, and the other measures. So, the model may proceed to the structural analysis or path modelling.

Table 6: Discriminant Validity Table

	ALR	CLS	IS	PFW	PWW
ALR	0.922				
CLS	0.585	0.861			
IS	0.654	0.583	0.906		
PFW	0.454	0.436	0.452	0.848	
PWW	0.299	0.339	0.325	0.384	0.871

Table 6 shows the discriminant validity assessment outputs that demonstrate through Fennel-Larcker the criterion that no study construct is overly correlated with another and that the measures maintain a sufficient level of separateness from one another. The square root of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) shown on the table diagonal surpasses all inter-construct correlation coefficients, thereby satisfying the standards (Cheung et al., 2024). The square root of AVE value of Awareness of Legal Rights (ALR) is equal to 0.922, which is greater than its correlation coefficients with, for instance, Constitutional and Labour Law Safeguards (CLS) (0.585) or Institutional Support (IS) (0.654) or Problems Faced by Women Workers (PFW) (0.454) or Protection of Women Workers (PWW) (0.299). For example, Constitutional and Labour Law Safeguards (CLS), the square root of AVE value of 0.861 surpasses its correlations with, e. g., Institutional Support (0.583), Problems Faced by Women Workers (0.436), and Protection of Women Workers (0.339). The square root of the AVE value of Institutional Support (IS) is equal to 0.906, and That's why it exceeds its correlations with the other two variables, i. e. Problems Faced by Women Workers (0.452) and Protection of Women Workers (0.325); and if we take into account, for example, Problems Faced by Women Workers (PFW), it has a square root of AVE (0.848), which outperforms its correlation with Protection of Women Workers (0.384). Protection of Women Workers (PWW) is no different since it has a square root of AVE of about 0.871 that reveals a strong level of discriminant validity. Altogether, these outcomes indicate that each concept's own variability is larger than that of other concepts; because of this, they establish discriminant validity and give support to the measurement model's robustness.

Table 7: Goodness of Model Fit Indices

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.035	0.098
d_ ULS	0.484	3.908
d_ G	0.435	0.508
Chi-square	1010.577	1115.621
NFI	0.905	0.895

Table 7 presents the model fit indices, which refer to both the saturated and the estimated model. These data confirm that the measurement model meets the minimum requirements. The SRMR of the saturated model is 0.035 at the estimated model 0.098, and both of these values being below the recommended threshold of 0.10 mean that both models exhibit an acceptable level of fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). In the model comparison between the empirical correlation matrix and the model-implied correlation matrix, d_ ULS (0.484; 3.908) and d_ G (0.435; 0.508) represent the deviations. These are usually presented in PLS-SEM as model approximation measures (Hair et al., 2022). The high Chi-square values (1010.577 for the saturated model and 1115.621 for the estimated one) result from large samples and complex models in structural equation modeling. The chi-square statistic is famously a sensitive measure heavily dependent on sample size (Kline, 2016). The NFI scores for the saturated models are 0.905 and 0.895 for the estimated models. The latter model, being so close to the cutoff value of 0.90, suggests that it has an acceptable comparative fit (Hooper et al., 2008; Nervilia, 2024). The whole bunch of these fit indices clearly points to the fact that the measurement model is good and very stable, which supports

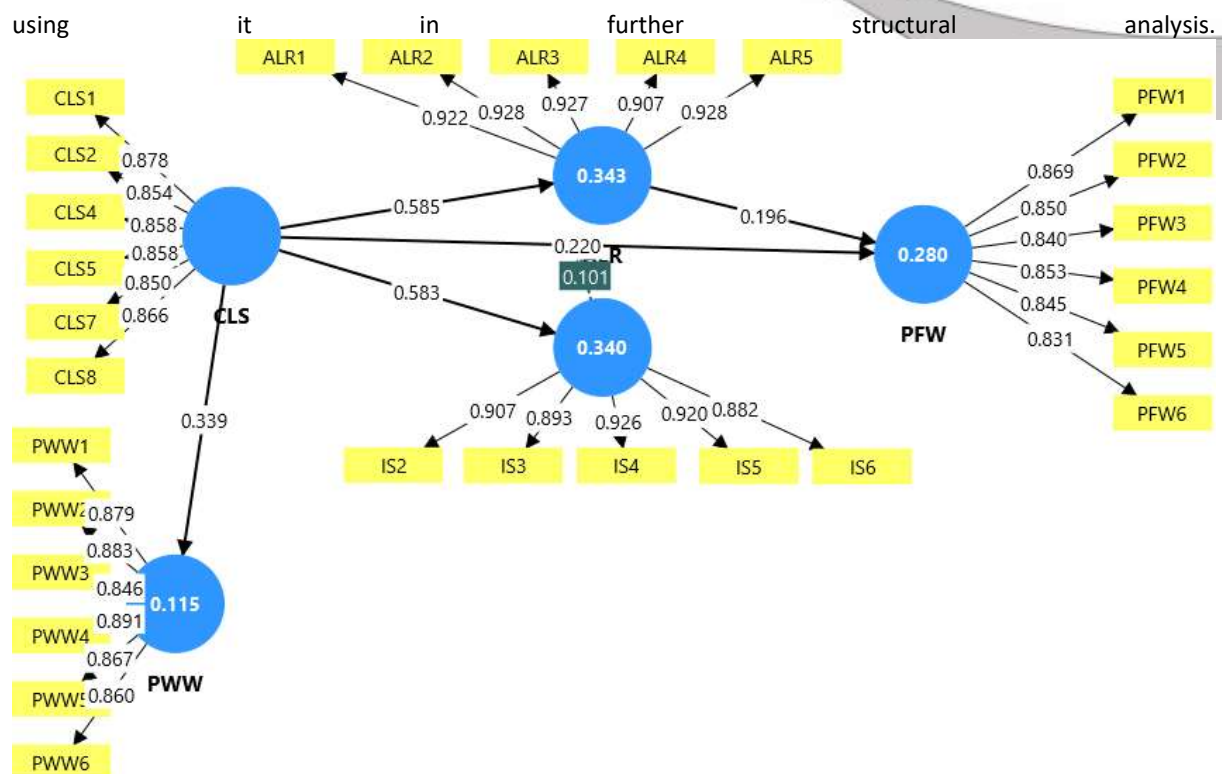


Figure 1 SEM Model

Figure 1 shows the structural model explaining how Constitutional and Labour Law Safeguards (CLS), Awareness of Legal Rights (ALR), Institutional Support (IS), Protection of Women Workers (PWW), and Problems Faced by Women Workers (PFW) are interrelated. It was a major finding that Constitutional and Labour Law Safeguards (CLS) has a lot of influence (positively and strongly) on Awareness of Legal Rights (= 0.585) and Institutional Support (= 0.583). CLS, in turn, directly positively affects Problems Faced by Women Workers (= 0.220) and Protection of Women Workers (= 0.339). Further, the variable 'Awareness of Legal Rights' is a very important predictor of 'Problems Faced by Women Workers' (= 0.196). The model explains.

Table 8: Hypothesis Testing Table

Hypothesis	Predicted Relationship	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values	Decision
H1	CLS -> PFW	0.220	0.222	0.061	3.597	0.000	Supported
H2	CLS -> ALR -> PFW	0.115	0.114	0.039	2.974	0.003	Supported
H3	IS x CLS -> PFW	0.101	0.101	0.050	2.030	0.042	Supported
H4	CLS -> PWW	0.339	0.340	0.046	7.391	0.000	Supported

Table 8 presents the output of hypothesis testing via bootstrapping the structural model. Significance of a hypothesis is achieved if its t-value remains above 1.96 while the p-value stands under 0.05 (Hair et al. 2021). Results indicate that the proposed hypotheses from H1 to H4 are all statistically sound and that the research model is valid. H1 shows that Constitutional and Labour Law Safeguards (CLS), as an independent factor, quite a bit increase the level of Problems Faced by Women Workers (PFW). The results show that the original sample is 0.220; the t-statistic is 3.597, and the p-value is 0.000. H2 reveals a mediating effect of the Awareness of Legal

Rights (ALR) on the relationship between Constitutional and Labour Law Safeguards (CLS) and Problems Faced by Women Workers (PFW). The indirect effect of ALR is 0.115 (beta = 0.115, t-statistic = 2.974 and p-value = 0.003) That's why suggesting that awareness of legal rights Quite a bit mediates the relationship between the factors and problems faced H3 investigates the effect of the variable Institutional Support (IS) as a moderating variable on the relationship between Constitutional and Labour Law Safeguards (CLS) and the Problems Faced by Women Workers (PFW). It demonstrates that institutional support has a significant moderating effect on the CLS-PFW relationship with a coefficient of 0.101 (beta = 0.101, t-statistic = 2.030, p-value = 0.042). H4 illustrates the effect of the Constitutional and Labour Law Safeguards (CLS) variable as an independent variable to the Protection of Women Workers (PWW) dependent variable at a very high statistically significant level (original sample=0.33; t-statistic=7.391; p-value=0.000). It is the only hypothesized relationship of the four which reaches the highest level of significance and is supported at $p < 0.001$. As a result, the findings support all the four research hypotheses. Overall, the findings shows that the constitutionality and labour law provisions are major determinants of the working women's problems and protection levels while, the awareness of legal rights of workers is the mediating and the institutional support is the moderating variables of these relationships thereby, supporting all four hypotheses of the model.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrated the strong connections among Constitutional Labour Law Safeguards (CLS), Awareness of Legal Rights (ALR), Institutional Support (IS), Protecting Women Workers (PWW), and Protection of Women Workers (PFW). Through the structural model, the study explained 34.3% of the variance for ALR, 34.0% for IS, 11.5% for PWW, and 28.0% for PFW, demonstrating satisfactory explanatory power. As distinct from numerous earlier studies that examined either labour laws or workplace discrimination, the paper took into account empirically constitutional safeguards, legal awareness, institutional support, workplace challenges, and worker protection all within one analytical system. Such an integrated approach provided a far-reaching insight into the ways that legal regulations affected the life conditions of women workers in Indian city areas.

The results indicated that having stronger Constitutional and Labour law protections led to more knowledge about legal rights, better institutional support, stronger forms of protection, and higher reports of the problems employees faced in the workplace (Hidayah et al., 2021). This indicated that legal rights and protections did not lead to a higher level of discrimination in the workplace. Instead, it showed a higher level of knowledge of their legal rights by women and men, enabling them to notice and report different aspects of workplace violations like discrimination, harassment, wage inequalities, and unsafe working conditions (Evagora-Campbell et al. 2024). They also made similar observations, pointing out the mismatch between legal provisions and their practical implementation in the workplace. While earlier research mainly pointed out implementation failures, our research demonstrated with figures how the knowledge of law and the assistance by institutions made the Constitution and Labour Law safeguards more effective (Xu et al., 2025).

The results further suggested that employees faced various problems at the workplace. Laws were not very effective in addressing women's grievances in the workplace. Women remained over-represented in those occupations where jobs, incomes, and positions were precarious, where they faced unequal pay, harassment, and, at the same time, were seldom promoted. This, among other things, served as evidence in the paper (Menon & Nath, 2022). This study went beyond the already published studies. The researchers demonstrated that the problems in the workplace were not only due to a lack of legal protections. On the contrary, they resulted from a complex interplay involving legal protection, the women's knowledge about their rights, and the ability of the institutions to safeguard those rights. Such viewpoints, if not entirely neglected, received scant empirical consideration, particularly in urban Indian labour research (Goel, 2023). This multidimensional approach was the case in our country, mostly because there were limited empirical investigations from such a perspective.

This study's main contribution was the identification of Awareness of Legal Rights as an important mediating factor. An earlier study indicated that limited knowledge of law made it harder for women to obtain justice and employment benefits (Kebede & Seifu, 2021), but only a few of them conducted a structural-equation modelling study to examine the mediating effect of legal literacy. Our results indicated that legal awareness was more than an effect of legal protection; it served as a major mechanism through which constitutional and labour law protective provisions transformed into real workplace protections. This discovery underscored that legal literacy should have been considered as one of the possible ways of improving a woman's working environment and not just as a recommendation of a supportive policy (Munezero et al., 2025).

Similarly, Institutional Support emerged as a significant moderator, indicating that the effectiveness of legal safeguards depended substantially on the responsiveness of employers, labour departments, grievance redressal mechanisms, internal complaint committees, trade unions, and civil society organisations (Weatherall et al., 2021). Previous studies acknowledged the importance of institutional accountability and grievance mechanisms in protecting women's workplace rights (Bilan et al., 2020). However, the previous study advanced this understanding by empirically demonstrating that institutional support strengthened the relationship between legal safeguards and workplace protection. This finding provided statistical evidence that effective institutions amplified the practical impact of constitutional and labour law provisions (Saville et al., 2024). The findings of this study generally aligned with prior research that pointed out that while constitutional protection and labour laws were essential for protecting women workers' rights, they frequently resulted in failures due to ineffective enforcement coupled with the lack of institutional capacity (Hidayah et al. 2021; Evagora-Campbell et al., 2024). As in previous studies, the result of the current study demonstrated that, like workplace discrimination, harassment, wage inequality, and job insecurity, continued to happen even when the law allowed the use of full rights (Menon & Nath, 2022; Goel, 2023). Yet, this study broadened the earlier knowledge body by empirically exploring the mentioned relationships based on a unified concept that simultaneously embraced labour law and constitutional protections, rights knowledge, institutional assistance, workplace issues, and workplace protection. Unlike most studies that had relied on descriptive or doctrinal approaches, this paper provided empirical evidence with the help of Structural Equation. This technique was applied for the purposes of explaining how legal awareness mediated and institutional support moderated the effectiveness of legal protection. With this, the study not only added to what had been found by earlier studies but also presented new findings that showed the channels through which constitutional and labour law protections resulted in the real working protection of women workers in urban India.

6. Implications of the Study

➤ Theoretical Implications

This study deepens the understanding of women workers' vulnerability theoretically by revealing that constitution and labour law protections only perform to an extent in isolation, whereas the overall effectiveness of these rights depends on legal consciousness and support from agencies or bodies to the greatest extent possible. These revelations go beyond rights-based theories and theories focusing on implementation by showing that, to minimize problems in workplaces, a mere legal equality is not sufficient, but it should be transformed into workplace culture change and institutional responsiveness. That substantial legal rights knowledge acts as a mediator is consistent with the view that rights will only become effective when the laborers are able to recognize, understand, and exercise them. In reality, legal rights are also moderated by organizational factors, like institutional support, which further underlines the view that legal setups operate via organizational and administrative structures. Through linking the concepts of constitutional protection, legal literacy, and workplace organization into one system, the study adds to the field of Labour Law studies. Further, it gives new ideas to the gender and labour scholarship for explaining why legally protected women in the city still undergo harassment, insecurity, and inequalities.

➤ Practical Implications

The findings have direct practical relevance for policymakers, employers, trade unions, and labour institutions. First, the study shows that legal safeguards alone are insufficient unless women workers are made aware of their rights through targeted legal literacy programmes, workplace orientation, and community-based awareness campaigns. Second, institutions must strengthen complaint mechanisms, harassment committees, grievance redress systems, and monitoring arrangements so that constitutional and labour law protections are actually enforceable in both organised and unorganised sectors. Third, special attention is needed for informal, low-paid, and precarious workers, who are often least able to access legal remedies despite being most exposed to abuse and insecurity. Fourth, the findings support stronger coordination among employers, labour departments, NGOs, and worker collectives to ensure that maternity protection, safety, non-discrimination, and wage equality are implemented in practice. Overall, the study suggests that improving women workers' conditions in urban India requires not only better laws but also better communication, enforcement, and institutional accountability.

7. Conclusion

The study concluded that constitutional and labor law rights are very important, although their influence on the problems of women workers in urban India is limited. The analysis made it clear that merely having legal provisions is not enough to guarantee the eradication of gender-based harassment, wage differentiation, job insecurity, and other forms of workplace inequality. Their power and utility are mostly reliant upon factors like workers' level of knowledge of their legal rights, availability of institutional support channels. The study discovered a strong role of right awareness as a mediator between legal protections and workplace problem situations. The result also indicated that women's rights under the law are realized effectively when they are aware of their rights and know exactly how to claim them. Support at the institutional level too was found to make a difference - workplace protection increases when there is active enforcement of legal norms by employers, grievance bodies, and support systems through the various legal protection mechanisms. The study also found that women workers' protection is generally correlated positively with constitutional and labor law rights safeguards, except that execution is very inconsistent across sectors of the economy, mostly in the informal and precarious employment settings. In general, what the studies show is that while the legal setup in India is definitely a step in the right direction, to be effective, legal provisions have to go hand in hand with knowledge among workers, enforcement, and support institutions.

Limitations of the Study

This study has some limitations, one being that it is limited to three selected urban areas, and the results, although useful for those areas, probably cannot reflect the complex reality of India's women workers in different regions fully. Besides, the sample contains both formal sector and informal sector workers, yet possible variation on sector basis may not be fully covered by this research. And, the research is semi-dependent on self-reported questionnaire responses, which may get affected by perception & response biases of individuals. Last, the study covers only main legal and institutional aspects while overlooking family responsibilities caste migrant status, and employer size as significant factors.

Future Recommendations

The future research should not only focus on large cities but also include smaller towns and semi-urban locations to get a better idea of the whole situation. Cross-sector comparisons, Most of all manufacturing services domestic work, and gig work, would be very useful also. It is imperative that the researchers also take a closer look at how factors such as caste migration class, and marital status are intertwined with the way women workers get legal protection. A longitudinal study might help see whether legal awareness and institutional support lead to better outcomes eventually. Future research should equally draw upon the views of employers, labour officials, and union representatives to better comprehend the enforcement gaps and real reforms needed.

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