Together in Search: Experimental Evidence from Coordinating Travel Among Women Job-Seekers in Urban India *

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Abstract

In many developing countries, barriers like safety concerns and traditional social norms limit women's physical mobility. To navigate these barriers, women typically only travel with companions—which could limit their job search if the companions are unavailable. Coordinating travel with job-seeking women could help, but they may not know each other. We address this constraint in a field experiment in urban India. We match job-seeking women within neighborhoods and randomly vary whether they can coordinate their travel to factory interviews by scheduling them on the same date or on different dates. Matching and coordinating travel increases interview attendance by 85%. The effects are stronger for women who knew fewer women at baseline and reported feeling unsafe when traveling. The treatment also improves job search beyond the interview experiment: women are 78% more likely to visit prospective employers and make twice as many trips. We present evidence showing that the effects on interview attendance and job search are driven by women coordinating their travel with each other and that matching without coordination has no effects.

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1 Introduction

Employment rates for women are significantly lower than those for men in many developing countries. In India, where this study is based, despite significant economic growth and gender parity in educational attainment, women's employment is at 33% compared to 77% for men (The World Bank, 2023). This places India alongside countries in the Middle East and North Africa, which have the lowest rates globally. Barriers like household responsibilities, childcare, and regressive social norms keep many Indian women from working despite an interest in doing so.[1] Indeed a large proportion of Indian women report a willingness to work but do not search for jobs. Even when they do search, they face challenges: they search less intensively than men, have less information on where to look, and are less likely to find their preferred jobs (Fletcher et al., 2017).

A growing body of literature shows that traditional social norms (e.g., norms enforcing female seclusion) and safety concerns (e.g., the threat of harassment in public spaces) can have far-reaching economic consequences for women[2] beyond just restricting their physical mobility[3]. Yet empirical evidence linking women's limited physical mobility to their job search challenges remains scarce. Specifically, little is known about an important aspect of limited mobility —the fact that many women can only travel with companions. In India, 44% of women report that they cannot travel outside their neighborhoods alone (DHS 2019-21). For many, traveling with family members or female friends is a way to navigate traditional norms and feel safer. But, it can also restrict their job search if the companions are unavailable.[4]

In this paper, we hypothesize that for women who rely on companions for traveling, coordinating travel with other job-seeking women can help improve their job search. Coordinating travel with fellow job-seeking women is a viable alternative when their usual companions are unavailable. But, the feasibility of this solution might be limited for women who are socially isolated, and whose networks rarely include women interested in working (Afridi et al., 2023; Anukriti et al., 2022). We test this hypothesis by presenting experimental evidence on an intervention that matches job-seeking women within neighborhoods and randomly varies

[1] e.g., Heath and Mushfiq Mobarak, 2015; McKelway, 2021; Lowe and McKelway, 2019; Baranov et al., 2020; Bjorvatn et al., 2022; Nandi et al., 2020; Hojman and Lopez Boo, 2022; Ho et al., 2023; Field et al., 2021; Afridi et al., 2023; Dean and Jayachandran, 2019; Bernhardt et al., 2018; Jalota and Ho, 2024; Khanna and Pandey, 2020; Agte and Bernhardt, 2023; Jayachandran, 2019

[2] For example, Borker, 2021 shows that female students in India are more likely than male students to choose a lower-quality college to avoid traveling on unsafe routes.

[3] e.g., Kondylis et al., 2020; Christensen and Osman, 2021; Field and Vyborny, 2022; Buchmann et al., 2023

[4] While this study focuses on travel for job search, the need for companions may also impact women's daily commute to work. The need for companions can make job search particularly challenging because it often involves travel to new, unknown locations, which can heighten concerns around safety and social acceptability.

whether they can coordinate their travel to job interviews.

We partnered with five garment factories in North India, located in the suburbs of Delhi —Faridabad and Noida. At the factories, women make up 70% of the total production workforce and primarily work as sewing operators. The experiment was conducted in 106 lower-income neighborhoods near the factories, and the sample consisted of 693 women who satisfied the following criteria: they were not employed outside their homes, they were interested in working at partner factories, and they were skilled in operating sewing machines[5]. We collaborated with the factories to arrange job interviews requiring women from the study sample to show up at the factory gate, in line with the usual hiring policy.

We randomized neighborhoods into two treatment groups and a control group (stratified within the city and distance to the nearest factory). The first treatment is motivated by survey evidence that a woman in India often only travels with companions, and her social networks rarely include other job-seeking women. For example, 60% of women in our study sample reported traveling with companions during their two recent trips in the past week and, on average, reported knowing one woman interested in working at the factories. This suggests that helping job-seeking women coordinate their travel together could improve their job search. We implement this idea in the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment. Within a treated neighborhood, women from the study sample were matched together through group meetings and were invited to attend interviews at the nearest partner factory. Their interviews were scheduled on the same dates so they could coordinate their travel.

The *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment tests the effect of enabling women to coordinate their travel to job interviews. However, another component of the treatment —matching women through group meetings —could also influence attendance. It could shift beliefs about women's work (Bursztyn et al., 2020; Afridi et al., 2023), increase the amenity value of factory jobs (Grosset and Donald, 2024), or improve expectations about workplace safety (Sharma, 2023). To isolate the effects of coordinating travel from the matching component, we implement an *Only Matching* treatment. In this treatment, women within a neighborhood were matched through group meetings (identical to *Matching & Coordinated Travel*), but their interviews were scheduled on different dates to minimize their chances of coordinating travel among them. This design mirrors the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment while excluding the travel coordination component.

We compare interview attendance rates across three groups: the two treatment groups and a *control* group. In the control group, women from the same neighborhood were scheduled for interviews on the same dates but received their invitations through individual, one-

[5]At baseline, one-third of the women in the sample had received formal training in sewing and could operate industrial sewing machines

on-one meetings with enumerators rather than group meetings. Our empirical analysis draws on two data sources: daily attendance records collected at the factories during the interview period and a follow-up survey conducted six weeks after the interviews.

We begin by examining whether the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment increases women's attendance in interviews at the factories. In the control group, 15.4% of women attended interviews; in the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment, the share increases significantly by 13.1 percentage points or 85% (p-value = 0.015). The treatment is significantly more effective for women who, at baseline, reported knowing fewer women living nearby and reported feeling unsafe while traveling: it increases their interview attendance by 17 percentage points (155%) and by 34 percentage points (310%) when compared to the same sub-groups of women from the control group.

To determine whether the effects of the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment stem from matching through group meetings or from travel coordination, we examine two pieces of evidence. First, we verify that women in the treatment actually coordinate their travel to interviews. They are 9.8 percentage points (100%) more likely to travel with other study women to the interviews compared to the control group. 83% of interviewees from the control group traveled with companions, out of which three-fourths did so with study women. Since women in the control group have a lower attendance rate but most of them travel with companions, it suggests that they face constraints in finding available companions on their own.

Second, direct evidence in support of coordinating travel comes from the *Only Matching* treatment. By assigning women to different interview dates while maintaining the group meeting component, this treatment allows us to test the effects of travel coordination experimentally. We verify the effectiveness of the design in reducing travel coordination and find clear evidence that it did: women in the *Only Matching* treatment are 4.5 percentage points less likely to travel with study women relative to the control group. We then examine the effect of the *Only Matching* treatment on interview attendance and find no effect at all. We interpret this as strong evidence that the positive effects of *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment are driven by coordinated travel component rather than by matching women through group meetings.

One simple explanation for the treatment effects of *Matching & Coordinated Travel* on interview attendance is that traveling together may be cheaper due to economies of scale. For example, women could book a private auto rickshaw and split its fare or carpool with women or family members who have personal vehicles (e.g., scooters). To test this, we estimate heterogeneous treatment effects by distance and travel cost from the neighborhoods to the nearest factory and find no variation in the effects.

We next study the effect of the two treatments on women's job search efforts outside the

interview experiment. Because the hiring rate at the factories was low—most women did not clear the interviews —we assess if women in the treatment groups are more likely to actively continue looking for jobs elsewhere. Using follow-up surveys conducted six weeks after the interviews, we estimate the effects on two job search outcomes: if women visited a prospective employer (i.e., made a job search trip) in the past six weeks and the number of trips made. The *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment increases the probability of women making a job search trip by 12.6 percentage points (p-value = 0.009): a 78% increase over the control group mean of 16%. It also more than doubles the average number of job search trips made by women in this treatment. The effect of *Only Matching* treatment is also positive (2.7 percentage points), albeit smaller and statistically insignificant.

To understand why the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment improves women's job search outcomes, we test if it is due to women continuing to coordinate their travel. We present two pieces of evidence: first, women in the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment are 8.9 to 11.1 percentage points (111% to 150%) more likely than those in the *Only Matching* treatment or control group to make job search trips with women from their neighborhoods. Second, while both treatments have similar effects on women knowing and interacting with nearby women, only the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment increases travel coordination with neighbors for non-job-related purposes (by 8.3 percentage points, or 48%). The pattern is revealing: while both treatments equally enhance social connections and interactions, coordinated travel —both for job search and other purposes —increases only in the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment. This points directly to travel coordination as the key mechanism for improved outcomes. If the effects were driven by mechanisms common to both treatments —such as shifting social norms or knowing other job seeking women —we would not expect such a large increase in coordinated travel or significant differences between the groups.

Finally, we examine the effects on women's employment. Six weeks after the interviews, 24% of women from the control group were employed. The *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment increases employment by 8.1 percentage points (p-value = 0.08) and *Only Matching* does so by 5.6 percentage points(p-value = 0.15). To understand these effects, we first investigate whether the treatments shifted norms around women's work. The evidence suggests otherwise: effects are concentrated among women who were already job-searching at baseline —those least likely to be constrained by social norms. Instead, we find suggestive evidence that the increased job search intensity might be driving these effects. The *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment significantly intensifies job search among baseline job-seekers: they are 21.7 percentage points more likely to make job search trips and on average make 0.7 additional trips. For this same group, the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment is 10.5 percentage points more effective at increasing employment than the *Only Matching* treatment.

This difference suggests that the employment effects might be stemming from increased job search efforts rather than mechanisms common to both treatments, such as reduced travel costs or improved perceptions of job amenities.

This paper contributes to the broader literature on barriers to job search in developing countries (e.g., Abebe et al., 2021; Abebe et al., 2023; Franklin, 2018; Caria et al., 2020; Wheeler et al., 2022). A strand within this literature focuses on barriers faced by women. For example, studies show that norms against women's work (Afridi et al., 2023; Bursztyn et al., 2020) and the gender of supervisors (Subramanian, 2024) directly affect women's decision to apply for jobs. It also shows that strong preferences of women for non-wage amenities (Ho et al., 2023; Mahmud and Riley, 2021; Becerra and Guerra, 2021) and employers' gendered preferences (Chaturvedi et al., 2024; Chowdhury et al., 2018; Gentile et al., 2023; Buchmann et al., 2023) indirectly affects their job search by limiting the set of available jobs (Crepon et al., 2024; Chiplunkar and Goldberg, 2021). The closest study to our work is Field and Vyborny, 2022, which shows that providing women with women-only transport to commute daily to work significantly increases their online job applications in Pakistan. Our study differs from their work and other works in its novel, cost-effective approach to improving women's job search - by enabling job-seeking women to coordinate their travel.

We focus on a dimension not yet explored within this literature: decisions about attending in-person interviews and visiting prospective employers. This is particularly important for the manufacturing sector, especially garment factories, where hiring for production workers takes place through in-person visits. Many factories even require workers to visit the job sites to just inquire about openings. Women may miss out on job opportunities if they are unable to visit job sites frequently to inquire and interview for openings. In this paper, we show that matching job-seeking women into groups and enabling them to coordinate their travel can help them make more frequent visits to factories and employers. Our results highlight a policy implication for firms' hiring practices: when in-person interviews are required and cannot be easily replaced by online alternatives, firms can increase their pool of women job applicants by scheduling group interviews and coordinating multiple women candidates to visit on the same days.

Our paper also adds to the growing literature examining women's physical mobility constraints and their economic consequences. Safety concerns and societal norms compel women to adopt coping strategies (Borker, 2024), such as using gender-segregated transportation (Aguilar et al., 2021; Field and Vyborny, 2022), avoiding unsafe routes (Borker, 2021), and not traveling during specific hours (Hsu, 2011)[6]. These strategies limit women's frequency of travel(Biswas,

[6]42% of women in our study sample reported not traveling after sunset compared to 13% who avoided travel during the day.

2023; Chen et al., 2024; Alam et al., 2021), impose additional monetary costs (Kondylis et al., 2020; Christensen and Osman, 2021), and negatively impact their decisions regarding enrollment in educational and skill training programs (Borker, 2021; Muralidharan and Prakash, 2017; Cheema et al., 2022). Our paper contributes to this literature by demonstrating that traveling with companions—another coping strategy used by women —can actually improve their labor market outcomes, specifically their interview attendance, making job search trips, and employment.

This paper also contributes to the literature on the role of peers, especially female peers, in developing countries. Existing studies show that peer networks can improve outcomes in education (Rao, 2019; Duflo et al., 2011), entrepreneurship (Field et al., 2016), family planning (Anukriti et al., 2022) and female autonomy (Kandpal and Baylis, 2019). We contribute by showing that coordinating travel with job-seeking women can increase their job search and employment. It reaffirms the findings of Afridi et al., 2023, which show that friends-based networks improve women's labor market outcomes in urban India. We show that organizing women into groups and encouraging them to rely on each other for travel can increase their trips to employers, in addition to strengthening their social networks and providing a platform for delivering information (Kumar et al., 2019; Díaz-Martin et al., 2023). Recent work by Grosset and Donald, 2024 documents the presence of complementarities in labor supply in a completely different study context. They show that that job seekers are 15 percentage points more likely to accept offers if people in their network are also offered jobs, primarily due to their ability to commute together. Our research builds on this work by showing that such complementarities exist even during job search and attending interviews.

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. We present the study setting and context for the experiment, including details about the partner factories and their hiring in section 2. In section 3, we describe the experiment and the designs of the treatments. In section 4, we describe data collection and empirical strategy. In section 5 we discuss results from the interview experiment and in section 6 we discuss results from follow-up surveys conducted six weeks later. section 7 concludes the paper.

2 Study Setting

This section provides an overview of women's job search and mobility in our study context, followed by details on the partner firm.

2.1 Context: Women's Job Search and Mobility

Despite India's significant economic growth and improvement in educational attainment over the past two decades, the country's female labor force participation rate hasn't increased much[7]. In 2024, only 33% of India's female population was engaged in the labor market, compared to 77% of men (The World Bank, 2023).[8] This puts India among the countries with the lowest female labor force participation rates globally, ahead of only a few nations. While other South Asian countries, such as Bangladesh and Pakistan, also have low female labor force participation rates, they have seen a steady increase over the last decade. India's stagnant and often declining participation rates have presented itself as a puzzle to researchers and policymakers.

The experiment was conducted in 106 lower-income neighborhoods in two cities in Northern India - Faridabad and Noida. Faridabad serves as an industrial hub for the state of Haryana, with garment manufacturing being one of its prominent industries. Noida is a software development and industrial hub in the state of Uttar Pradesh. 21% and 18% of women reported participating in the labor market in Faridabad and Noida in 2019-21 (DHS, 2019-21).

Survey evidence shows that women in our study setting express a desire to work but many do not search for jobs. Even when they do, women face distinct challenges. For example, women report searching for jobs less frequently than men. On average, men spent 10 days searching for jobs, while women spent 5.5 days. Women were also less likely to find their preferred jobs, with only 30% doing so compared to 75% of men. 65% of women reported not knowing where to look for jobs, compared to 35% of men. The challenges are not unique to India. Field and Vyborny, 2022 document that women in Pakistan face similar job search challenges.

In this paper, we argue that women's job search challenges are strongly linked to their physical mobility challenges. In India, 79% of women report experiencing harassment in public spaces, and 95% report feeling unsafe on public transport. Their physical mobility is also subjected to regressive social norms, such as norms promoting female seclusion (Jalota and Ho, 2024). As a result, we find stark mobility differences between men and women in our study setting. For example, women report traveling outside their neighborhoods for an average of 0.37 times in one week and men do so 0.93 times. The gap widens further among those not working: non-working women make as much as six times fewer trips than men. Although men report experiencing more safety issues when traveling, women report avoiding

[7] Between 2000 and 2023, India's GDP grew at an average rate of 4.65%, primary school enrollment rose from 89% to 99%, and secondary school enrollment also increased steeply from 50% to 79% (The World Bank, 2023), reaching parity between boys and girls.

[8] Since the 2000s, the women's employment rate has been steadily declining. However, there has been an upward trend since 2021, with an increase from 26% to 33% (ILOSTAT, 2023), primarily due to a change in the definition of employment in rural areas.

travel due to safety issues. Women reported traveling with friends or family to mitigate safety concerns: 60% of women reported traveling with companions in the past week compared to 18% of men. Beyond traveling with companions, they also report using other strategies to address safety concerns, such as avoiding unsafe areas, refraining from using shared modes of transport, and keeping their phones connected while traveling. These strategies, while necessary for safety, further restricted their mobility and, by extension, their ability to engage in job search.

2.2 Partner Firm

We partner with one of India's largest exporters of ready-made garments and its five factories. Two factories are located in Faridabad, and three factories are located in Noida[9].

At the partner factories, women form about 66% ($\approx 9,800$) of the total production workforce, and they primarily work as sewing operators. The average salary of a worker involved in production ranges from INR 10,500 - INR 13,500 ($128-$160) per month, slightly above the prevailing minimum wage. There is one shift at the factories from Monday to Saturday, 9 am to 5:30 pm. Women in the production workforce, on average, are 35 years old, married, 8th-grade educated, have one child, and have been employed with the factory for three years.

Hiring for the production workforce takes place through walk-in interviews. Job candidates need to show-up at the factory gate by 10 am if they want to be considered for the day's hiring. There are two stages within the interview process: first, the HR department screens the candidates. During the screening process, they check candidates' IDs, engage in a few minutes of conversation to gauge the nature, check for literacy, and enquire about prior work experience and skills training. After passing the screening, on-the-job-trials—performing a series of tasks related to the job —are conducted by production floor supervisors.[10] A trial usually lasts about 30 to 45 minutes. The supervisor determines the outcome of the trial. If a candidate passes the trial, she is offered a salary based on her skill level, and she usually starts working the day after.

The interview experiment follows the same process undertaken by the partner factories with only one difference: women in the study sample were provided with an *interview invitation* letter. In this invitation letter, we included interview dates, the address of the nearest partner factory, and how to get to the factory. It's also important to note that there is no added benefit of the letters at the factories. Even though women were assigned to interview dates and

[9] Figure B1 shows the map of factory locations. The Faridabad factory units, referred to as F1 and F2, are 850 meters apart. The A5 and A7 factory units in Noida are near one another and are 50 meters apart. The distance between E10 and pair A5-A7 is approximately 12 kilometers by road.

[10] For instance, floor supervisors usually ask candidates trying out for helper jobs to iron or fold clothes, and tasks related to stitching are assigned to workers trying out for sewing operator jobs.

factories, they could show up at any date or factory to be considered for jobs without penalty.

3 Experimental Design

We conducted a neighborhood-level randomized controlled trial to evaluate the effects of matching job-seeking women within a neighborhood. We also randomly varied whether they could coordinate their travel to the factory interviews. We assess the impact of the two treatments on their probability of attending interviews. Figure 1 presents the design for the experiment and Table A1 presents the timeline for the experiment. This section includes details on randomization, sample recruitment, treatments, and treatment take-up.

3.1 Neighborhoods and Randomization

The 106 neighborhoods served as catchment areas for screening and enrolling women in the study sample. A team of surveyors defined and mapped neighborhood boundaries prior to the start of the experiment. The boundaries were drawn utilizing existing geographical features such as main roads, highways, parks, and fields. When it was not feasible to create natural boundaries, paved roads, and non-residential buildings were utilized. We created buffer zones between neighborhoods to minimize spillovers between them (see Figure B2)[11]

Randomization was done at the neighborhood level. It was stratified within the city and distance to the nearest factory. For each neighborhood, we calculated the distance from the centroid to the factory and binned the distances into 9 categories[12] The bins have a high correlation with travel cost to the factory using two common modes of transport: shared auto-rickshaws ($corr$ = 0.51) and private auto-rickshaws ($corr$ = 0.42). Within a city-distance bin combination, we randomly assigned neighborhoods to two treatment groups or a control group. Table 1 presents neighborhood characteristics and tests for balance across the three groups. We do not find any significant differences across the three groups.

3.2 Sample Recruitment

Post randomization, starting in February 2024, enumerators went door-to-door to screen and enroll women in the experiment. For screening, random sampling procedures were used. [13]

[11] Whenever possible, we used natural separators such as highways or non-residential buildings

[12] Specifically, the bins were defined as follows: distance bin = 1 if the distance from a neighborhood to the factory (d) $\leq$ 2km. distance bin = 2 if $2 < d \leq 3$; distance bin = 3 if $3 < d \leq 4$; distance bin = 4 if $4 < d \leq 5$; distance bin = 5 if $5 < d \leq 6$; distance bin = 6 if $6 < d \leq 7$; distance bin = 7 if $7 < d \leq 8$; distance bin = 8 if $8 < d \leq 11$ and distance bin = 9 if $11 < d \leq 13$.

[13] Prior to initiating recruitment, we mapped the lanes and entry points for each neighborhood (Figure B4) and selected a random entry point to start the screening process. Following this, they navigated the area using a right-hand rule. This approach ensured that houses closer to main or paved roads did not have a higher likelihood of being surveyed.

The screening criteria included six conditions, and women needed to satisfy all six: (1) be between the ages of 18-40, (2) have a government-issued ID, (3) be able to operate either an industrial or home sewing machine, (4) not engage in full-time or part-time work outside their homes, (5) not have worked with our partner factory in the last 3 months, and (6) be interested in working at the partner factory[14]. Criteria (1)-(3) aligned with the hiring requirements of the partner factories, while criteria (4)-(5) targeted women more likely to face mobility constraints when engaging in paid work outside their homes. Criterion (6) ensured we recruited women who had expressed a willingness to work.

Based on the screening criteria, 693 women across 106 neighborhoods —on average, 7 women per neighborhood —were included in the study sample. Table A2 presents the baseline sample characteristics by the three groups and tests balance. Table A4 tests for balance in balance survey completion across the three groups. We do not find evidence of selection into the sample based on treatment assignment[15].

At baseline, women on average were: 28.7 years old, mostly married, and had 3.5 household members. 11% had worked in the past six months and only 16% reported making a trip outside their homes in search of jobs. 70% reported traveling with friends or family to mitigate safety concerns. A significant proportion (47%) had traveled with companions in the past week, and 60% did so during their most recent trip. 24% women reported that they didn't go outside of their neighborhoods in the past week and 14% reported not even leaving their houses.

3.3 Treatments

3.3.1 Individual & Group Meetings

In the treated neighborhoods, women from the study sample were matched through group meetings. Meetings often took place in a public space on the same day as the baseline surveys. On average, two meetings were held per neighborhood, with four women present in each meeting.[16] In the control neighborhoods, individual (one-to-one) meeting with an enumerator was conducted instead.[17] Female enumerators facilitated all research activities, including screening, surveys, and meetings.

[14] We asked women to express their willingness to work independently of their families' approval or disapproval. Therefore, if a woman indicated she was willing to work but was unsure whether her husband would allow it, she was still considered eligible.

[15] At the time of consent, we explicitly informed women about the three groups and the group they were assigned to.

[16] We piloted conducting one meeting per neighborhood. However, a majority of women refused to attend meetings more than 2-3 minutes walking distance away. Therefore, we decided to conduct multiple meetings per neighborhood (ideally two) to improve take-up.

[17] Table B1 presents key details about the content of the meetings.

During these meetings —individual and group —women were provided with details about the jobs at the partner factories. This included information about the factory, interviews, how to travel to the factory, salaries, work days and timings, and overtime policies. Women were also invited to attend job interviews during the meetings and were provided with an "invitation letter" (see Figure B6 for an example). It included their name, factory's address, interview time, and assigned interview dates. Women were assigned to a 2-day interview window and they could show up on either day.[18]

3.3.2 *Matching & Coordinated Travel* Treatment

If a woman only travels with companions—whether to feel safer, or to navigate social norms, or for convenience —the unavailability of companions could limit her attendance at interviews and visits to prospective employers. It might also lead her to give up working outside her home. A potential solution is to travel with other job-seeking women, but they often do not know each other. In our study context, women tend to be socially isolated, with their networks mostly limited to family members, who may discourage them from working outside (Anukriti et al., 2022; Afridi et al., 2023). The *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment addresses these challenges by matching job-seeking women within neighborhoods and helping them coordinate travel.

In a *Matching & Coordinated Travel* neighborhood, women from the study were invited to attend group meetings - designed to introduce them to each other. During the meetings, enumerators led ice-breaking activities, provided information about interviews and jobs at the nearest partner factory, and explained how to travel there. The main objective was to help women coordinate their travel to the interviews. To facilitate this, women were assigned to the same two-day interview window at the factory. It was meant to nudge them to coordinate their travel with each other instead of relying on family members. We also explicitly encouraged them to coordinate their travel.[19] To improve the coordination, we also created WhatsApp groups for each meeting. 44% of the women from the treatment were part of the WhatsApp groups. At the end of the meetings, women were given time to socialize.

In the control neighborhoods, enumerators conducted individual meetings with women and invited them to interviews. To understand if women face constraints in coordinating their travel and finding travel companions, women within a control neighborhood were assigned to the same two-day interview window at the nearest partner factory, same as the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment. But, they were not matched together. We also did not discuss

[18] If a woman didn't follow her assigned date and showed up on a different date, she was still considered for the job.

[19] Interview windows varied across *Matching and & Coordinated Travel* neighborhoods based on when the baseline surveys were completed for all women within a neighborhood. As a result, interview windows were spread out between March and June 2024.

the idea of coordinating travel or traveling with companions to avoid inducing demand effects. This approach allows us to examine if women do travel with companions to interviews.

3.3.3 *Only Matching* Treatment

The *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment combines two elements: first, it matches women through group meetings, and second, it helps them coordinate their travel to factory interviews. To isolate the effect of coordinated travel from the effects of matching or group meetings, we designed the *Only Matching* treatment. In a *Only Matching* neighborhood, women were invited to attend group meetings, but they were assigned different interview windows to reduce their probability of coordinating travel with other women. Women, in principle, could disregard their assigned dates and attend interviews with other women from the group meetings but we do not find many instances of this happening.

Within each group meeting, women were assigned a unique 2-day interview window to avoid women from having overlapping dates. The dates were assigned randomly on a rolling basis, usually starting one day after the group meeting. For example, if four women attended a meeting on June 20, 2024, one woman was assigned to interview on June 22-23, another to June 24-25, and so on. The group meetings were identical in design and content to those in the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment, except that coordinating travel was not mentioned. This meant that a woman in the *Only Matching* treatment received same interactions with other women as in the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment. We also created WhatsApp groups for each meeting and 57% of women joined the groups.

3.4 Treatment Take-Up

In the two treatment neighborhoods, we scheduled group meetings shortly after completing the baseline surveys to maximize participation. If a woman was unable to attend a scheduled meeting, we rescheduled it for a time when at least one other woman was available. When even this was not feasible, we conducted individual (one-to-one) meetings with her. During the individual meetings, we provided her with an interview invitation letter and assigned an interview window according to the research design. If a woman refused to attend the meetings after completing the baseline surveys, we didn't follow up with her for rescheduling.

By design, meeting participation in the control group was 100%. In Table A5, we present details on the group meetings for the two treatments and check for balance across the two groups. 95% of women from the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* and 93% women from the *Only Matching* treatments attended the group meetings. Only 4% and 2% of women from the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* and *Only Matching* attended the meeting alone. On average, 4.3 women were present per *Matching & Coordinated Travel* group meeting, and 3.8 women were present per *Only Matching* group meeting. The only dimension where there is an im-

balance across the two treatments is the average number of days between the meeting and the start of the interview window: in *Only Matching* treatment, there were 6.5 days compared to 3 and 3.5 days for the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* and control groups. In Table A7 we show that the treatment effects are robust to controlling for the number of days between the meetings and the interviews.

4 Data and Empirical Specification

4.1 Data Collection

The empirical analysis uses the data from two sources: three rounds of survey data and official factory records. Using surveys, we collected data on primary outcomes for the study: interview attendance, job search trips, and number of job search trips. We rely on administrative data from the factories to assess the effects on passing interviews and accepting job offers. Baseline and follow-up surveys were conducted privately inside women's homes with only the enumerator and the respondent present. The surveys at the factory location were administered inside a room in the factory. The study timeline is presented in Table A1.

The first round of surveys were the baseline surveys. We collected data on household demographics, employment history, job search activity such as making trips to employers or places of work, travel patterns, feeling of safety when traveling, gender attitudes, existing social connections, and prevalent household norms. Questions on job search included instances of women traveling outside their homes in search for jobs in the past two weeks, number of employers visited, and number of interviews attended. To measure physical mobility, we collected information on the total number of trips made outside their homes and neighborhoods in the the past week and also elicited details on cost, duration, travel companions, and mode of transport for two most recent trips. We also asked women to identify the number of women they know living nearby and the frequency of interacting and traveling with them.

The second round of surveys were conducted at the partner factories to collect data on interview attendance. Enumerators were present every day all day at the factories to record information on study participants showing up for the interviews. We collected information on cost, duration, travel companions, and mode of transport to the factory.

The third round of surveys are the follow-up surveys that were conducted six weeks after the interviews. We collected same information as the baseline surveys. The completion rate for follow-up surveys is 80%. In Table A4, we test for selective completion across the three groups and find no evidence of the same.

4.2 Empirical Specification

The primary specification estimates the Intent-to-Treat (ITT) effects of being assigned to either *Matching & Coordinated Travel* or *Only Matching* treatments relative to the control group. It implements a comparison of means and estimates:

$$Y_{ins} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Matching \& Coordinated Travel}_n + \beta_2 \text{Only Matching}_n + \gamma_1 X_i + \gamma_2 Z_n + \mu_s + \epsilon_{ins} \quad (1)$$

Y_{ins} is the outcome for women i in neighborhood n in stratum s. *Matching & Coordinated Travel*$_n$ is a binary indicator for whether a neighborhood n was assigned to *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment and *Only Matching*$_n$ is the binary indicator for whether it was assigned to *Only Matching* treatment. X_i is a vector of baseline characteristics of women in Table A2 and Z_n is a vector of neighborhood characteristics such as travel time and cost to the nearest factory in Table 1. μ_s denote strata fixed effects[20]. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level. All regressions include strata-fixed effects. We also test for $\beta_1 = \beta_2$.

We also estimate heterogeneous treatment effects by number of known women nearby and feeling of safety when traveling, measured at the time of baseline surveys. We estimate the regression equation:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{ins} = {} & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Matching \& Coordinated Travel}_n + \beta_2 \text{Only Matching}_n \\ & + \beta_3 \text{Matching \& Coordinated Travel}_n \times \text{Covariate}_{ins} + \beta_4 \text{Only Matching}_n \times \text{Covariate}_{ins} \\ & + \beta_5 \text{Covariate}_{ins} + \gamma_1 X_i + \gamma_2 Z_n + \mu_s + \epsilon_{ins} \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

Number of known women nearby is the total number of women they know in their buildings, and adjacent and opposite housing structures. *Covariate*$_{ins}$ = 1 if number of known women is less than the median for the study sample. To create a measure of women's feeling of safety, we use baseline responses to three questions: How safe do you feel while traveling by the following means - auto, walking, and bus during daytime? Women ranked their responses on a Likert scale - very less, less, neither less or more, more, a lot more. A higher score implies a higher feeling of safety. We take an average of the three responses. *Covariate*$_{ins}$= 1 if the average is less than the median for the study sample.

Outcomes of Interest

There are three primary outcomes of interest. The first primary outcome of interest is interview attendance: a binary indicator for whether a woman i attended interviews at the partner

[20] Strata are city-distance bin combinations, as discussed in subsection 3.1.

factories. The second primary outcome of interest is a binary indicator for whether a woman made a job search trip —i.e., traveled outside her home in search of jobs or to visit a prospective employer —in the past six weeks. The third primary outcome is the number of job search trips made in the past six weeks. Data on job search outcomes were collected during the follow-up surveys and we reminded women to not include the trip made to the interviews as part of the interview experiment when recalling such instances.

We also measure the effect on a range of secondary outcomes. One secondary outcome of interest is whether women coordinated their travel with study women to the interviews. It is a binary indicator for whether a woman traveled to the interviews with study women. We also estimate the effect of the treatments on whether a woman made a job search trip with a woman from her neighborhood. We also measure the effect on employment: whether a woman accepted job at a partner factory and whether she was employed anywhere at the time of the follow-up surveys. Finally, we measure the effects on a woman's connections with other women living nearby. During the follow up surveys, we asked each woman to identify all women they know living in the same building as her and in adjacent and opposite houses. We estimate the effects on the number of known women nearby, if she interacted and discussed household issues with them in the past week and if she traveled outside her home with them in the past week.

5 Results

5.1 Interview Experiment

We begin our empirical analysis by examining the effect of the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment on one of the primary outcomes for the experiment - interview attendance at the partner factories. We show the results in Table 3. Columns 1 and 2 show the effect on women's attendance at interviews; columns 3 and 4 show the effect of coordinating travel with study women to the interviews; and columns 5 and 6 show the effect of traveling with non-study companions to the interviews. Columns 1,3 and 5 include strata-fixed effect, and columns 2,4 and 6 also control for baseline neighborhood and sample characteristics (showing estimates of regression Equation 1).

The *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment led to a large increase in the probability of women attending interviews compared to the control group (columns 1 and 2). 15.4% of women from the control group attended interviews.[21] The *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment increase the share by 11.8 percentage points (p-value = 0.034) or by 76% over the

[21] The attendance is similar to the baseline proportion of women from the control group making a trip to an employer in search of jobs in the past two weeks.

control group mean. After controlling for neighborhood and sample characteristics, the precision of the point estimate improves, and the magnitude increases to 13.1 percentage points (p-value = 0.015). These effects are remarkable. A soft touch intervention that matches job-seeking women in a neighborhood and enables them to coordinate their travel can increase women's probability of attending interviews by as much as 85%.

The point estimates align with previous related research. For example, McKelway, 2021 documents an 11 percentage points increase in women signing for jobs in rural India when their families are provided with information about the jobs and also shown a promotional video on it. Bursztyn et al., 2020 find that informing women in Saudi Arabia that most Saudi men favor women working outside increases their sign-up and show-up for an outside job by 11-15 percentage points. The effects also parallel the results from Grosset and Donald, 2024 —a study set in a completely different context of Côte d'Ivoire. They find that the probability of job-seekers accepting a job increases by 15 percentage points if individuals from their social networks are also offered the job during the same shift.

83% of interviewees from the control group traveled to the factory with companions, and three-fourth (or 63%) did so with study women. This is telling because there was no mention of traveling with companions or coordinating travel with study women during the individual meetings. The two findings —higher interview attendance rates among women from the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment, and the fact that most interviewees traveled to the interviews with study or non-study companions—suggest that women face constraints in coordinating their travel on their own. If there were no such constraints, we would observe similar attendance rates across the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment and the control group or lower instances of women traveling with companions.

In columns 3 and 4 of Table 3, we find that the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment increases the probability of women coordinating their travel to interviews by 9.5-10 percentage points. This is equivalent to a 98%-104% increase over the control group mean of 9.6%. In columns 5 and 6, we report the effects on traveling with non-study companions. There is a 4.3 percentage points difference between *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment and control group, but it is not statistically significant. Conditional on attending the job interview, the percentage of women from the control and *Matching & Coordinated Travel* traveling with companions is similar. This suggests that the majority of the difference is driven by more women from the treatment attending interviews. These results help us understand that the instances of women from *Matching & Coordinated Travel* traveling together to interviews are not driven by creating demand for companions that didn't exist before but by resolving constraints in finding companions.

It's possible that the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment increases the probability of

a woman attending interviews not because she can now coordinate her travel with job-seeking women but because she knows other job-seeking women. Expanding a woman's social networks to include job-seeking women who are also interested in working at the same employer can influence interview attendance through mechanisms other than coordinated travel. First, it can help reduce the pushback from her family by providing them with information about jobs (McKelway, 2021) or by signaling to them about the gendered nature of jobs, (Subramanian, 2024) or by reducing the social costs of her working outside. Second, it can make the factory jobs seem more lucrative to her by having friends and neighbors possibly working with her and traveling with her to work daily (Grosset and Donald, 2024) or by improving expectations about safety at work (Sharma, 2023). Unfortunately, we are not set up to distinguish the effects by each of the mechanisms. But, we can isolate the effect of coordinated travel from other mechanisms. The experiment design ensures that the two treatments differ across only coordinated travel: women in *Only Matching* treatment are 4.1 percentage points less likely to coordinate their travel with study women compared to the control group.

We find no effect of the *Only Matching* treatment on the probability of women attending interviews. In fact, the point estimate is negative. The effects of *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment relative to the *Only Matching* treatment are similar to its effects relative to the control group: 13.7 percentage points (p-value <0.01) or 93% increase over the mean of 14.7%. With this estimate, we can attribute the differences in interview attendance between *Matching & Coordinated Travel* and the control group to women coordinating their travel. In other words, it suggests that group meetings or matching job-seeking women in a neighborhood is not sufficient to improve attendance in interviews if women can't ultimately coordinate their travel to interviews.

5.2 Beyond Interview Experiment

In Table 4, we test whether the two treatments affected women's job search beyond the interview experiment. Since most women who participated in the interviews did not secure jobs at the partner factories (we present details in subsection 6.2), we examine if women in the two treatments were more likely to continue looking for jobs elsewhere. We estimate the effect on three outcome variables. Columns 1 and 2 show the effects of making a job search trip —whether a woman traveled outside her home in search of jobs or to visit a prospective employer —in the past six weeks. Columns 3 and 4 show the effects on making such trips with women from the neighborhood. Columns 5 and 6 show the effects on the number of job search trips made in the past six weeks.

From the control group, 16% of women made a job search trip in the past 6 weeks. The *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment increases the probability by 12.6 percentage points

(column 2, p-value < 0.01). This represents a 78% increase over the control group mean. In columns 5 and 6, we find that women in the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment also make an additional 0.37 trips (column 6, p-value = 0.016) —or more than double the number of trips than women in the control group.

In principle, women from the *Only Matching* treatment could also coordinate their travel to prospective employers outside of the interview experiment. Consequently, it could have a positive effect on women's job search beyond the interview experiment. We find results along this reasoning. The *Only Matching* treatment has a positive but statistically insignificant impact on women's probability of making a job search trip. The magnitude of effect on the number of job search trips is similar (statistically and in magnitude) to the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment. These results suggest that while both treatments matched job-seeking women in a neighborhood, there was an additional benefit of inviting women to attend interviews on the same dates. Perhaps the actual experience of coordinating travel to interviews led women to continue coordinating their travel for future trips.

Columns 3 and 4 provide evidence suggesting that the effects of *Matching & Coordinated Travel* on women's job search are driven by coordinated travel. We find that the treatment has a large and statistically significant effect on a woman making job search trips with women from her neighborhoods. Specifically, a woman from *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment is 10-11 percentage points (135% to 150%, p-value < 0.01) more likely than a woman from the control group to have traveled with women from their neighborhoods in search of jobs. We find limited but similar evidence for the *Only Matching* treatment. Women in *Only Matching* treatment are 2.2 percentage points more likely than women in the control group to make job search trips with women from the neighborhood. However, the difference is not statistically significant. As a result, the difference between the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment and *Only Matching* treatment is large and statistically significant: approximately 9 percentage points (p-value < 0.01).

6 Discussion

6.1 Pathways

In this section, we provide a discussion on different pathways that can help explain the effects of *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment on women's job search.

We begin by documenting evidence supporting our argument in the previous section, that the effects of *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment are driven by women being able to travel with other job-seeking women when looking for jobs. In Table 5, we present the re-

sults on women's interactions with nearby women during the follow-up surveys. In column 1, we look at the effect on the number of known women nearby and find that *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment increases it by 1.08 and *Only Matching* treatment increases it by 0.52. The two-point estimates are not statistically different from each other ($\beta_1 = \beta_2$, p-value = 0.2). Similarly, in column 2, we find that the two treatments also have a similar size effect on a woman discussing general issues with nearby women in the past week: women in *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment are 9.1 percentage points and women in *Only Matching* treatment are 8.6 percentage points more likely to discuss household or general issues with these women.

In contrast, in column 3, we find that women in *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment are significantly more likely (7.8-8.3 percentage points) than women in *Only Matching* treatment (($\beta_1 = \beta_2$, p-value = 0.03) and control group (p-value = 0.052) to have traveled outside with the nearby women in the past week for non-job search related purposes. This shows that the two treatments have similar effects on a woman knowing nearby women and interacting with them, but a woman from *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment is more likely to travel with them for non-job related purposes in the past week.

This set of results reassures us that the nature of group meetings and the effect of the group meetings in both treatments did not differ from each other significantly except for changing how women travel. The experience of coordinating travel to interviews could increase women's job search through multiple mechanisms. It could encourage a woman to continue traveling with other job-seeking women for future job search trips. It could also foster deeper friendships, which may further motivate her to actively seek employment. Consequently, these friendships could also provide her with valuable information about job openings or prospective employers and might even help convince her family to support her job search. The fact that women were more likely to coordinate their travel with others from their neighborhoods for job search (column 4 of Table 4) and for non-job related purposes (column 3, Table 5), while their connections and interactions did not differ across the two treatments —is potentially consistent with the first mechanism. If it were driven by other mechanisms, such as encouraging women to keep looking for jobs or providing information regarding job vacancies, we would not expect to see a large effect on women coordinating their travel when making job-searching trips and even non-job-related trips. These results therefore provide direct evidence that effects are primarily driven by women continuing to coordinate their travel when looking for jobs.

Next, we present results from heterogeneity analysis of effects on interview attendance and job search. In Table 6, we estimate heterogeneous treatment effects on the probability of attending interviews (using regression Equation 2) by three baseline variables: column 1

reports the effects by fewer number of known women nearby (i.e. if the number of nearby known women is less than the sample median), column 2 reports the effects by lower feeling of safety when traveling (i.e. if the feeling of safety is less than the sample median), and column 3 reports the effects by job search at baseline (i.e., if women reported making a job search trip in the past 2 weeks). See subsection 4.2 for more information on the three variables.

In column 1, we find that *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment is significantly more effective in increasing attendance for a woman who knew fewer women nearby than the *Only Matching* treatment. That is, for a woman who knew fewer women: the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment increases her attendance in interviews by 21.8 percentage points ($\beta_1 + \beta_3 = 0$, p-value < 0.01) or by 192% relative to the control group and by 19.1 percentage points ($\beta_1+\beta_3-\beta_2-\beta_4=0$, p-value <0.01) or 160% relative to the *Only Matching* treatment. The effect of *Only* Matching treatment is positive but small (2.7 percentage points) and statistically insignificant. Since the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment has such large effects on a woman with relatively fewer connections in her neighborhood and *Only Matching* treatment has comparatively much smaller effects it suggests that the treatment effects (of *Matching & Coordinated Travel*) are not just driven by matching job seeking women but also through their ability to coordinate their travel.

In column 2 we estimate the heterogeneous treatment effects by women's baseline levels of feeling of safety while traveling. This measure is complicated to interpret as it is subjective and may be influenced by women's experiences with harassment and the frequency of travel. For example, a woman who seldom leaves her house may report feeling safer simply because she doesn't travel enough to experience issues with safety. Conversely, a woman who reports feeling unsafe may be someone who travels more frequently and, therefore, has a higher awareness of the safety challenges associated with traveling. Nevertheless, we find that women who reported feeling unsafe while traveling are more responsive to the treatment. Specifically, for women with a lower reported feeling of safety: the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* intervention increases the interview attendance by 43 percentage points ($\beta_1 + \beta_3 = 0$, p-value < 0.01) relative to the control group and by 27 percentage points ($\beta_1 + \beta_3 - \beta_2 - \beta_4 = 0$, p-value <0.01) relative to the *Only Matching* treatment.

In column 3, we estimate the heterogeneous treatment effects by whether a woman made a job search trip outside her home in the two weeks preceding baseline surveys and find no heterogeneity. From the control group, 32% of women who were searching for jobs at baseline attended the interviews. For this group of women, we do not find any differential effect of the two treatments on women's probability to attend interviews. For instance, women in the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment who were searching at baseline, were 3 percentage points more likely to attend interviews compared to women who were not searching at base-

line ($\beta_3 + \beta_5$).

In Table A9, we replicate the heterogeneity analysis, this time focusing on treatment effects on job search behavior. The results here are somewhat noisy due to a smaller sample size, but we observe patterns consistent with previous findings. For women who knew fewer women in their neighborhoods (column 1), the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment increases their likelihood of making a job search trip by 12.8 percentage points ($\beta_1 + \beta_3$, p-value = 0.02), or 100% relative to the control group, and by 7.9 percentage points ($\beta_1 + \beta_3 - \beta_2 - \beta_4$, p-value = 0.16) relative to the *Only Matching* treatment. The effects on making job search trips with women from the neighborhood are similar (column 4): for women who knew fewer women, *Matching & Coordinated Travel* increases the probability of making a job search trip with neighborhood women by 10.2 percentage points ($\beta_1 + \beta_3$, p-value = 0.018), a 200% increase over the control group, and by 6.1 percentage points ($\beta_1 + \beta_3 - \beta_2 - \beta_4$, p-value = 0.13) relative to the *Only Matching* group. For the effect on the number of job search trip (column 7), the direction of effects are consistent, but the differences are not statistically significant. A plausible explanation for the smaller differences between *Matching & Coordinated Travel* and *Only Matching* for women with fewer known connections (compared to Table 6) is that for job search beyond the interview experiment, women in the *Only Matching* treatment could also now coordinate their travel together to pursue job opportunities.

In columns 2, 5, and 8, we find no significant heterogeneity in treatment effects based on women's reported feelings of safety. However, women who reported feeling less safe in *Matching & Coordinated Travel* and *Only Matching* treatments are more likely to look for jobs than those in the control group with similar levels of feelings of safety. Next, we examine effects by baseline job search, and find that the effects on job search are markedly larger for *Matching & Coordinated Travel* among women who were already searching at baseline (column 3). Specifically, among these women, *Matching & Coordinated Travel* increases the probability of making a job search trip by 20.7 percentage points over the control and by 25.4 percentage points over *Only Matching*. It also increases their probability of traveling with neighborhood women (column 6) for job search but we do not find significant differences for the effects on number of trips (column 9).

Overall, these findings suggest that the treatments were especially effective for women with fewer known connections nearby. By helping them expand their networks to include other job-seeking women, the treatments likely provided these women with travel companions who could travel with them during their job search trips. The larger impact on job search for women who were already searching indicates that the treatment intensified their job-seeking efforts. Since there are no significant differences in interview attendance by whether a woman was searching for jobs at baseline, suggests that her outside job search may have also been

constrained by other barriers such as limited information about employers or jobs - which was less of a barrier for factory interviews as job vacancies and interview locations were clearly communicated to all participants.

One simple explanation for the treatment effects of *Matching & Coordinated Travel* on interview attendance is that traveling together may be cheaper due to economies of scale. For example, women could split travel expenses by booking a private vehicle or using cheaper shared options, such as carpooling with other women or family members or sharing an autorickshaw. To test whether reduced travel costs explain the treatment effects, we estimate heterogeneous effects by distance and travel cost in Table A10. In column 1, we estimate the effect by distance to the nearest partner factory. The distances were measured using Google Maps from the center of a neighborhood to the nearest partner factory gate. In Column 2, we estimate the effect of attending interviews by travel cost to the factory using a private autorickshaw - a commonly used mode of transport. We find no variation in effects of *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment by distance ($\beta_3 + \beta_5 = 0.352$) or cost to the factory ($\beta_3 + \beta_5 = 0.128$). These findings provide suggestive evidence that the treatment effects are less likely to be driven by reducing travel costs.

6.2 What about Employment?

This paper centers around the effects of coordinated travel on women's job search, however, in this section, we also examine the effects on employment as a downstream outcome. We look at the effects of the treatments on accepting jobs at the partner factories and being employed six weeks after the interviews.

In Table 7, column 1, we study the effects on women passing interviews at the factories. In column 2, we study the effects on women accepting job at the factories and in column 3, we study the effects on women working at the six week mark. Before getting into the results, it is important to acknowledge that the majority (80%) of women who attended the interviews did not pass them. This outcome was unexpected. Qualitative surveys with factory supervisors and study participants suggest that this is in part driven by some women not being qualified for manufacturing jobs and in part by hiring policies of the factories that favor candidates with prior work experience —something relatively uncommon in our sample.

Nevertheless, we find a positive effect on the probability of women attending and passing interviews. 2% of women from the control group passed them. The *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment increases the share by 2.7 percentage points from 2% to 4.7%. This is roughly proportional to the increase in interview attendance, suggesting that the marginal women who attended interviews as a result of the treatment are not much different from those in the control group. Women in the *Only Matching* treatment are 2.1 percentage points more likely

to pass the interviews compared to the control group. The differences across the three groups are not statistically significant.

Similarly, in Column 2, we find a positive effect on women accepting jobs at the partner factories. *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment increases the share of women accepting jobs by 2.4 percentage points, and *Only Matching* treatment does so by 1.2 percentage points. It's important to note that the lack of significant effects of *Matching & Coordinated Travel* on employment at partner factories is not driven by women declining job offers but rather, as noted before, by women not passing interviews. In fact, most of the women who were offered jobs accepted them.

In column 3, we present results on whether a woman was working for income at the time of the follow-up of the surveys. Six weeks after the interviews, 24% of women from the control group were employed. The *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment increases a woman's probability of being employed by 8.2 percentage points or 33% (p-value = 0.09). The effect of *Only Matching* treatment is 5.6 percentage points (or 23%), but the effect is not statistically significant.

To identify the mechanisms driving employment effects, we examine heterogeneous treatment effects by baseline characteristics: the number of known women nearby, feelings of safety while traveling, and prior job search status (Table 8). Since our interventions organized multiple job-seeking women within neighborhoods into groups, they could potentially influence norms around women's work. If norm changes drive the effects, we would expect the largest benefits among women not searching at baseline—those most likely constrained by social norms. However, we find the opposite: employment effects for both treatments are concentrated among women who were already searching at baseline.

Instead, the evidence suggests that increased job search intensity might be driving the employment gains. The *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment significantly increases job search activity among baseline job-seekers during the six weeks following interviews (Table A9, column 3, $\beta_1 + \beta_3$). These women are 21.7 percentage points more likely to make job search trips and on average, conduct an additional 0.7 trips. For this same group, the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment outperforms the *Only Matching* treatment in employment gains by 10.5 percentage points (column 3, Table 8, p-value < 0.01). Supporting this pattern, women who knew fewer women at baseline —another group more likely to engage in job search (Table A9, column 1, $\beta_1 + \beta_3$) —also show significantly higher employment levels.

These findings argue against mechanisms common to both treatments, such as improved perceptions of job amenities or reduced daily commuting costs. If such shared mechanisms were primary drivers, we would not observe differential employment effects between treatments among baseline job-seekers. Together, these results provide suggestive evidence that

the employment effects are at least in part driven by increasing women's job search.

Threats to Validity

A potential threat to the validity of results discussed in this section is that the negative point estimate of the *Only Matching* treatment is driven by a larger number of days between its group meetings and the start of the interview window. As previously shown in Table A5, the average number of days between its meetings and interview window was 6.5 days. In contrast, it was 3 and 3.5 days for *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment and control group. A larger number of days could negatively affect the momentum of women when seeking jobs where they are more enthusiastic to attend interview three days later rather than a week. It could also be that while waiting for interview dates, they secure jobs elsewhere. And, it could also be that the women who attended interviews earlier dissuaded others from attending by sharing negative information about the interviews or the job.

We address these concerns, in Table A7, by including fixed effects for the number of days between the group meeting and the first day of assigned interview window. We also include interview date fixed effects. The treatment effects are robust to the inclusion of these controls. Within an *Only Matching* group meeting, women were assigned to the dates randomly, thereby addressing concerns about the effects being confounded by other variables. In Table A8, we present results from regression Equation 2. In this table, *Covariate = 1* if the number of days between the meeting and interview window is less than the sample median. We find that for *Only Matching* treatment, there are no differences in treatment effects across the two subgroups.

The results are also robust to randomization inference (Table A12), thereby alleviating any concerns regarding the small sample size and neighborhood-level randomization.

7 Conclusion

Restrictive social norms and safety concerns often limit women's ability to travel freely and impose additional restrictions on their mobility, especially in developing countries. This lack of freedom of movement can have significant consequences for women's lives. In this paper, we focus on an unexplored and important consequence of social norms and safety concerns: many Indian women only travel with companions. We show that in contexts where women are socially isolated, and their social networks rarely include job-seeking women, matching them together and enabling them to coordinate their travel to interviews and prospective employers can improve their job search and, consequently, employment.

Our findings reveal that an intervention that matches job-seeking women within a neighborhood and makes it likely for them to coordinate their travel to factory interviews by invit-

ing them to interviews on the same days can significantly increase their interview attendance. Compared to women who were invited individually, this intervention increased their attendance by 85%. We experimentally isolate the effects of matching from coordinated travel and show that the increase is driven by an increased ability to coordinate travel rather than by simply knowing more job-seeking women: matching and coordinated travel increases interview attendance by 93% relative to only matching. We also find that the matching and coordinated travel treatment was significantly more effective for women who reported knowing fewer women nearby and those who reported feeling unsafe while traveling

Outside the interview experiment, we find that the matching & coordinated travel treatment resulted in a 78% increase in women traveling outside their homes in search of jobs. It also doubled the number of trips made by women to employers relative to the control group. We also document strong evidence that these effects on job search are driven by a majority of women continuing to rely on each other when looking for jobs and were twice as likely to have made these trips with them compared to other treatment groups and the control group.

Despite significant improvements in interview participation and job search engagement, the intervention did not lead to substantial increases in women's employment at the partner factories, primarily due to low passing rates in the interviews. Nevertheless we find that the treatment significantly improved women's employment by 8.1 percentage points at other employers six weeks after the interviews. We provide suggestive evidence that this increase in employment is, in some part, driven by women's increased job search.

Together, our study contributes to a deeper understanding of why women may not actively seek job opportunities, particularly in contexts where women face mobility constraints. This paper introduces a practical and cost-effective intervention leveraging women's reliance on travel companions to help overcome these barriers and improve women's access to jobs. Our results carry important policy implications. One such implication is that they can inform hiring policies for firms, especially in sectors where in-person interviews are required, such as garment manufacturing. In industries where on-the-job trials are part of the hiring process and cannot easily be replaced by online alternatives, our results demonstrate that inviting women in groups on the same dates rather than individually or on different dates can increase the number of women attending interviews and also improve overall job acceptance rates.

To get a better understanding of how our intervention places alongside interventions that subsidize women's travel costs to search for jobs, we use results from our pilot experiment and compare the effects of *Matching & Coordinated Travel treatment* with an intervention that covers women's travel costs of commuting to the factory for the interviews. We conducted a neighborhood-level RCT in Selaqui, India, during the summer of 2022 in partnership with another apparel manufacturing firm, which has two units, both located in Selaqui. The sam-

ple consisted of 15 neighborhoods and 139 women. We randomly assigned neighborhoods to one of the three groups - *Matching & Coordinated Travel*, *No Travel Cost*, and Control. In the *No Travel Cost* treatment, women were invited to participate in the walk-in interviews via individual one-to-one meetings, same as the control group. In addition, we covered women's round-trip costs of traveling to the partner factories. We present these results in Table C1. We find that the *No Travel Cost* treatment increased participation in interviews by 7-9 percentage points relative to the control group. The effect is almost half that of the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment which was 18 percentage points.

These results, along with our results from the main experiment, highlight the need to study the strategies women use to navigate safety concerns and restrictive social norms while traveling, as well as the costs and benefits of these behaviors, to inform transport systems and policies better. It shows that if women prefer to travel with other women but face constraints, providing free public transport alone (as done in Delhi) may not suffice (Dasgupta and Datta, 2023; Chen et al., 2024), but bundling it with intervention like ours could significantly enhance women's mobility and job access.

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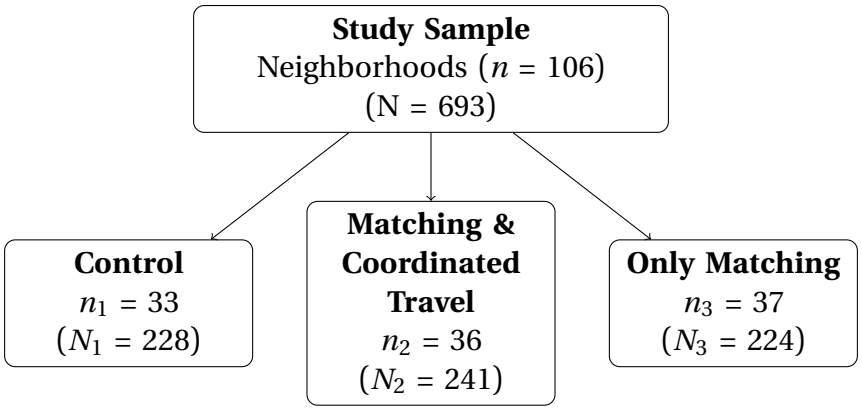
8 Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Experimental Design



	Interview Invite	Group Meeting	Same Interview Dates
Matching & Coordinated Travel	Yes	Yes	Yes
Only Matching	Yes	Yes	No - Different to all
Control	Yes	No	Yes

Table 1: Neighborhood Characteristics and Balance

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)-(2)	(1)-(3)	(2)-(3)
	Control	Coordinated Travel & Matching	Only Matching	Pairwise t-test		
Variables	Mean/(SD)	Mean/(SD)	Mean/(SD)	P-value	P-value	P-value
Number of women enrolled to the study	6.91	6.69	6.05	0.78	0.17	0.41
	(0.45)	(0.64)	(0.43)			
Approximate number of households	200.61	201.67	198.92	0.90	0.83	0.79
	(4.13)	(7.72)	(6.85)			
= 1 if metro station nearby	0.45	0.36	0.38	0.44	0.53	0.88
	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.08)			
= 1 if bus stop within neighborhood boundary	0.03	0.00	0.03	0.32	0.94	0.32
	(0.03)	(0.00)	(0.03)			
One-way trip to closest partner factory:						
Cost of private auto (USD) to factory	1.30	1.43	1.93	0.36	0.19	0.30
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.47)			
Cost of shared auto (USD) to factory	0.37	0.29	0.29	0.24	0.23	0.97
	(0.06)	(0.02)	(0.02)			
Distance to factory (Kms)	4.50	4.60	5.37	0.88	0.23	0.27
	(0.48)	(0.45)	(0.53)			
Minutes to factory	15.94	16.86	16.51	0.49	0.67	0.80
	(0.93)	(0.94)	(0.96)			
Number of neighborhoods	33	36	37	69	70	73

Notes: This table presents the average values for neighborhood characteristics and tests for balance across the three groups - control, *Matching & Coordinated Travel*, and *Only Matching*. A unit of observation is a neighborhood. The last 3 columns show the p-values from the pairwise t-tests checking for equality of two means. Standard errors are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Table 2: Detailed Information on Group Meetings

	Matching & Coordinated Travel	Only Matching
	Mean(SD)	Mean(SD)
=1 if attended meeting	0.95	0.93
	(0.21)	(0.25)
=1 if attended alone	0.04	0.02
	(0.19)	(0.15)
=1 if attended with 1 other woman	0.11	0.13
	(0.31)	(0.34)
Total women present in the meeting	4.28	3.87
	(1.97)	(1.73)
=1 if joined meetings' WhatsApp group	0.44	0.57
	(0.50)	(0.50)
Number of women known prior to the meeting	1.35	1.22
	(1.50)	(1.35)
Observations	241	224
Neighborhoods	36	37

Notes: This table presents the details of the group meetings for the two treatment groups - *Matching & Coordinated Travel* and *Only Matching*. A total of 122 group meetings were conducted across 73 neighborhoods.

Table 3: Effects on Attending Interviews

			=1 if traveled to the interviews with			
	= 1 if participated in interviews		Study women		Non-study companion	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Matching & Coordinated Travel (β_1)	0.118**	0.131**	0.095*	0.099*	0.043	0.043
	(0.055)	(0.053)	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.030)	(0.030)
Only Matching (β_2)	-0.017	-0.006	-0.041	-0.041	0.044	0.048*
	(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.028)	(0.029)
p-value: $\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.015**	0.007***	0.007***	0.002***	0.975	0.885
Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Control Mean	0.154	0.154	0.096	0.096	0.035	0.035
Neighborhoods	106	106	106	106	106	106
Observations	693	693	693	693	693	693

Notes: This table presents treatment effects on women's probability of attending interviews at the partner factories (columns 1 and 2) and whether the women traveled to the factories with study women or non-study companions (Columns 3-6). Each column represents a separate regression. All regressions include strata-fixed effects. Controls include baseline values of variables in Table 1 and Table A2. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Table 4: Effects on Job Search 6 weeks after Factory Interviews

	= 1 if made job search trips		= 1 if made job search trips with women from neighborhood		Number of job search trips	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Matching & Coordinated Travel (β_1)	0.120***	0.126***	0.106***	0.111***	0.349**	0.369**
	(0.045)	(0.047)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.143)	(0.150)
Only Matching (β_2)	0.031	0.027	0.025	0.022	0.252	0.206
	(0.045)	(0.047)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.188)	(0.197)
p-value: $\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.024**	0.007***	0.007***	0.002***	0.591	0.339
Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Control Mean	0.160	0.160	0.074	0.074	0.330	0.330
Neighborhoods	104	104	104	104	104	104
Observations	560	560	560	560	560	560

Notes: This table presents treatment effects on women's job search trips outside the interview experiment as reported by women during follow-up surveys 6 weeks after the interviews. The number of observations is less than N = 693 because it only includes women that we were able to follow up with during these surveys. The reference period for the three outcomes is six weeks after the interviews at the partner factories and does not include interviews at the partner factories. In Columns (1)-(2), *=1 if made job search trips* is the indicator variable for making a trip outside the home in search of jobs or to prospective employers. In Columns (3)-(4), *=1 if made job search trips with women from neighborhood* is the indicator variable of making any job search trip with other women from their neighborhoods. In Columns (5)-(6), *number of job search trips* is the total number of trips made to the employers. If a woman visited multiple employers in one trip, it's counted as one trip. All regressions include strata-fixed effects. Controls include baseline values of variables in Table 1 and Table A2. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Table 5: Effects on Connections with Women Living Nearby

	Nearby known women (#)	Discussed issues w/ nearby women (=1)	Traveled w/ nearby women (=1)
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Matching & Coordinated Travel (β_1)	1.085***	0.091*	0.083*
	(0.407)	(0.047)	(0.042)
Only Matching (β_2)	0.520	0.086	0.005
	(0.504)	(0.055)	(0.043)
p-value: $\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.20	0.91	0.03**
Control Mean	4.16	0.37	0.17
Neighborhoods	104	104	104
Observations	560	560	560

Notes: This table presents treatment effects on women's connections with other women living nearby as reported by them during Follow-up Surveys. The number of observations is less than N = 693 because it only includes women that we were able to follow up with during these surveys. Each column is a separate regression. In column 1, *Nearby women known* is the total number of women study participants knew living nearby. We define living nearby as living in the same housing structure and in adjacent and opposite houses. In column 2, *=1 if discussed household issues with peers* is the indicator variable for discussing household or general issues with nearby women in the past week. In column 3, *=1 if traveled with peers* is the indicator variable for traveling with nearby women outside in the past week. All regressions include strata fixed effects and controls in Table 1 and Table A2. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Table 6: Heterogeneous Treatment Effects on Attending Interviews, by Nearby Women Known, Feeling of Safety, and Job Search at Baseline

	Fewer nearby known (#) (1)	Lesser feeling of safety (2)	Job search at baseline (3)
Matching & Coordinated Travel (β_1)	0.046	0.089	0.151***
	(0.068)	(0.056)	(0.056)
Matching & Coordinated Travel × Covariate (β_3)	0.172**	0.342**	-0.128
	(0.073)	(0.133)	(0.132)
Only Matching (β_2)	-0.030	-0.024	0.022
	(0.053)	(0.045)	(0.044)
Only Matching × Covariate (β_4)	0.057	0.159	-0.147
	(0.063)	(0.107)	(0.116)
Covariate (β_5)	-0.110**	-0.103	0.157
	(0.043)	(0.078)	(0.096)
p-value:			
$\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.224	0.042**	0.020**
$\beta_1 + \beta_3 = 0$	0.000***	0.001***	0.850
$\beta_1 + \beta_3 - \beta_2 - \beta_4 = 0$	0.003***	0.025**	0.165
Control Mean	0.154	0.154	0.154
Control Mean if Covariate = 1	0.113	0.114	0.324
Neighborhoods	106	106	106
Observations	693	693	693

Notes: This table presents treatment effects on the interview participation at factories by women's baseline levels of number of nearby women known, feeling of safety and job search at baseline. *Nearby women known* is the total number of women study participants knew living nearby. We define living nearby as living in the same housing structure and in adjacent and opposite houses. For column 1, *Covariate* = 1 if the number of known women is less than the median of the sample. Women's feeling of safety is the average of responses to the question: *How safe do you feel while traveling by the following means (auto, walk, bus) during the daytime?* A higher score implies a higher feeling of safety. *Covariate* = 1 if the average of the three responses is less than the median of the sample. In column 3, *Covariate* = 1 if women reported traveling outside their homes in search of jobs two weeks preceding the baseline surveys. Each column is a separate regression. All regressions include strata fixed effects and controls in Table 1 and Table A2. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Table 7: Effects on Employment

	Passed Interview	Accepted Offer	Employed at 6 weeks
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Travel Buddy	0.027	0.024	0.082*
	(0.024)	(0.021)	(0.048)
Peer Effect	0.021	0.012	0.056
	(0.027)	(0.021)	(0.051)
p-value: $\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.816	0.606	0.606
Control Mean	0.02	0.01	0.24
Neighborhoods	106	106	104
Observations	693	693	560

Notes: This table presents treatment effects on the interview passing rates, job take-up at the factory, and employment at the time of follow-up surveys. The data for columns 1 and 2 comes from factory administration. In column 3, the number of observations is less than N = 693 because it only includes women that we were able to follow up with during these surveys. Each column is a separate regression. Controls include baseline values of variables in Table 1 and Table A2. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Table 8: Heterogeneous Treatment Effects on Employment by Nearby Women Known, Feeling of Safety, and Job Search at Baseline

	Fewer nearby known (#) (1)	Lesser feeling of safety (2)	Job search at baseline (3)
Matching & Coordinated Travel (β_1)	0.045	0.063	0.044
	(0.058)	(0.056)	(0.048)
Matching & Coordinated Travel × Covariate (β_3)	0.153**	0.008	0.219***
	(0.071)	(0.151)	(0.079)
Only Matching (β_2)	-0.022	0.054	0.033
	(0.060)	(0.050)	(0.053)
Only Matching × Covariate (β_4)	0.041	-0.031	0.120
	(0.071)	(0.094)	(0.080)
p-value:			
$\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.280	0.860	0.823
$\beta_1 + \beta_3 = 0$	0.027	0.589	0.005
$\beta_1 + \beta_3 - \beta_2 - \beta_4 = 0$	0.039	0.938	0.009
Control Mean	0.245	0.245	0.245
Control Mean if Covariate = 1	0.269	0.286	0.387
Neighborhoods	104	104	104
Observations	560	560	560

Notes: This table presents treatment effects on employment during follow-up surveys by women's baseline levels of number of nearby women known, feeling of safety, and job search at baseline. *Nearby women known* is the total number of women study participants knew living nearby. We define living nearby as living in the same housing structure and in adjacent and opposite houses. For column 1, *Covariate* = 1 if the number of known women is less than the median of the sample. Women's feeling of safety is the average of responses to the question: *How safe do you feel while traveling by the following means (auto, walk, bus) during the daytime?* A higher score implies a higher feeling of safety. *Covariate* = 1 if the average of the three responses is less than the median of the sample. In column 3, *Covariate* = 1 if women reported traveling outside their homes in search of jobs two weeks preceding the baseline surveys. Each column is a separate regression. All regressions include strata fixed effects and controls in Table 1 and Table A2. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

A Supplementary Tables and Figures

Table A1: Study Timeline

Summer 2022	Pilot study in Selaqui, India	
September 2023	Finalizing study areas in Faridabad and Noida	
November 2023	Creating boundaries for neighborhoods	
January 2024	Randomization	
March 2024	Start of baseline surveys and intervention meetings	Rolling interview dates, and collection of interview attendance data
June 2024	Start of Follow-up Surveys	
August 2024	End of Fieldwork	

Notes: This table presents the timeline for the experiment and data collection. Baseline surveys and intervention meetings were held on a rolling basis from March 2024 to June 2024. During this time, we assigned women with 2-day windows beginning one day after the group meetings were completed. The data on interview attendance was collected daily at the partner factories. The follow-up surveys began by the end of May 2024 and were conducted 6 weeks after the interviews.

Table A2: Baseline Characteristics of Women and Balance

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)-(2)	(1)-(3)	(2)-(3)
	Control	Coordinated Travel & Matching	Only Matching	Pairwise t-test		
Variable	Mean/(SD)	Mean/(SD)	Mean/(SD)	P-value	P-value	P-value
Age	28.79	28.53	29.04	0.65	0.65	0.38
	(0.39)	(0.42)	(0.39)			
Married	0.79	0.79	0.82	0.98	0.71	0.65
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)			
Household size	3.31	3.53	3.68	0.44	0.21	0.52
	(0.24)	(0.16)	(0.18)			
Literate	0.84	0.87	0.79	0.62	0.44	0.11
	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.04)			
Monthly household income (USD)	202.57	202.86	206.26	0.99	0.83	0.81
	(13.44)	(9.34)	(10.24)			
Owns phone	0.68	0.77	0.71	0.09*	0.49	0.22
	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.03)			
Rented house	0.74	0.70	0.66	0.66	0.35	0.57
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)			
Worked in last 6 months	0.10	0.12	0.16	0.55	0.12	0.32
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)			
=1 if made a job search trip in past 2 weeks	0.16	0.17	0.22	0.92	0.22	0.22
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.04)			
= 1 if didn't leave the house	0.14	0.16	0.21	0.55	0.08*	0.21
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)			
Number of trips within immediate vicinity	5.89	5.68	5.64	0.79	0.72	0.96
	(0.54)	(0.57)	(0.44)			
= 1 if didn't leave neighborhood	0.24	0.28	0.32	0.25	0.07*	0.37
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)			
Number of trips outside of neighborhoods	1.26	1.44	1.13	0.41	0.53	0.13
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.14)			
=1 if belongs to lower caste	0.22	0.20	0.20	0.67	0.67	0.95
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)			
Number of observations	228	241	224	469	452	465
Number of neighborhoods	33	36	37	69	70	73

Notes: This table presents the average values for women's baseline characteristics tests for balance across the three groups - control, *Matching & Coordinated Travel*, and *Only Matching*. The last 3 columns show the p-values from the pairwise t-tests checking for equality of two means. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Table A3: Number of Women Screened and Study Sample

	Number of women that satisfied the criteria
	(1)
Between ages of 18-40 years	6647
Available for screening	5800
Screening Criteria:	
Government Issued ID	4028
Can operate sewing machines	1665
Not working outside	1287
Not worked with partner factory in last 3 months	1268
Interest in working	772
Interest in working at partner factory	708
Participated in Baseline Survey **(Study Sample)**	**693**

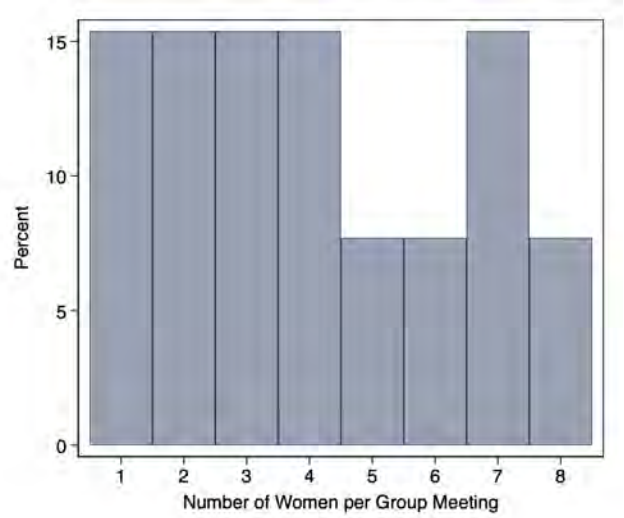
Table A4: Survey Completion and Treatment Status

	Baseline	Follow-up
	(1)	(2)
Matching & Coordinated Travel (β_1)	0.001	-0.025
	(0.022)	(0.038)
Only Matching (β_2)	0.011	-0.008
	(0.014)	(0.045)
p-value: $\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.587	0.673
Control Mean	0.979	0.825
Neighborhoods	107	106
Observations	708	693

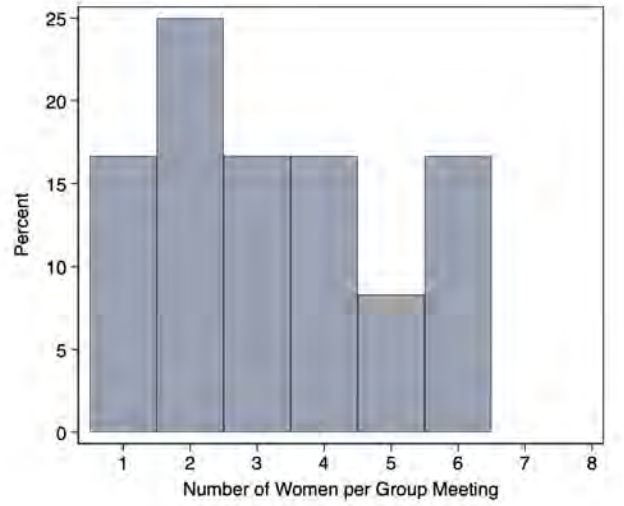
Notes: This table presents completion levels of Baseline and Follow-up surveys and tests for balance across the three groups. All regressions include strata-fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Figure A1: Distribution of Meeting Attendance

(a) Matching & Coordinated Travel Treatment



(b) Only Matching Treatment



Notes: This figure plots the distribution of the number of women present per group meeting. Panel (a) presents the distribution for *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment, and panel (b) presents the distribution for *Only Matching* treatment. The cases where only one woman attended a meeting are the instances where a woman couldn't attend the meeting she was initially assigned to.

Table A5: Group Meeting Attendance

	Attended meeting	Attended alone	Total women present	Days b/w meeting & interview
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Matching & Coordinated Travel	0.034	0.009	0.444	-3.603***
	(0.024)	(0.020)	(0.312)	(0.360)
Only Matching Mean	0.93	0.02	3.87	6.47
Neighborhoods	73	73	73	73
Observations	465	465	465	465

Notes: This table is restricted to include observations in *Matching & Coordinated Travel* and *Only Matching* treatments. *Attended meeting* is an indicator variable = 1 if a woman attended a meeting (columns 1-2). *Attended alone* is an indicator variable = 1 if the women attended the meeting alone with no other women present (columns 3-4). *Total women present* is the total number of women present in the meeting attended by a woman. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Table A6: Number of Women's Travel Companions to Interviews

	Total Adults	Study Women	Non-study Women	Non-study Men
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Matching & Coordinated Travel (β_1)	0.189*	0.137*	0.033	0.024
	(0.104)	(0.081)	(0.023)	(0.021)
Only Matching (β_2)	-0.004	-0.060	0.010	0.032
	(0.078)	(0.060)	(0.013)	(0.026)
p-value: $\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.034**	0.004***	0.221	0.763
Control Mean	0.175	0.140	0.004	0.140
Clusters	106	106	106	106
Observations	693	693	693	693

Notes: This table presents treatment effects on the number of adults by composition of travel companions of women who attended the interviews. Controls include baseline values of variables in Table 1 and Table A2. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Table A7: Effects on Attending Interviews Controlling for Number of Days between Meetings and Interview

			=1 if traveled to the interviews with			
	= 1 if participated in interviews		Study women		Non-study companion	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Matching & Coordinated Travel (β_1)	0.139**	0.159**	0.099*	0.110**	0.048	0.082**
	(0.054)	(0.068)	(0.051)	(0.048)	(0.030)	(0.034)
Only Matching (β_2)	-0.024	-0.041	-0.055	-0.077*	0.037	0.063*
	(0.047)	(0.054)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.029)	(0.034)
p-value: $\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.005***	0.000***	0.002***	0.000***	0.737	0.608
Interview Gap	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Interview Date FE	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Control Mean	0.154	0.154	0.096	0.096	0.035	0.035
Neighborhoods	106	106	106	106	106	106
Observations	693	693	693	693	693	693

Notes: This table presents treatment effects on the probability of attending the interviews. All regressions include controls in Table 1 and Table A2. *Interview Gap* controls for the number of days between meetings and the start of the interview window. *Interview Date Fixed Effects* control for the 2-day interview window assigned to women. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Table A8: Heterogeneous Treatment Effects on Attending Interviews by Number of Days between Meetings and Interview

		=1 if traveled to the interviews with	
	= 1 if participated in interviews	Study women	Non-study companion
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Matching & Coordinated Travel (β_1)	0.139**	0.122**	0.042
	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.032)
Matching & Coordinated Travel × Covariate (β_3)	0.026	-0.065	0.013
	(0.136)	(0.114)	(0.075)
Only Matching (β_2)	-0.020	-0.033	0.030
	(0.055)	(0.045)	(0.034)
Only Matching × Covariate (β_4)	-0.000	-0.060	0.028
	(0.077)	(0.075)	(0.048)
Covariate (β_5)	0.047	0.094	-0.000
	(0.061)	(0.068)	(0.040)
p-value:			
$\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.008***	0.001***	0.722
$\beta_1 + \beta_3 = 0$	0.231	0.595	0.426
$\beta_1 + \beta_3 - \beta_2 - \beta_4 = 0$	0.155	0.120	0.973
Control Mean	0.154	0.096	0.035
Control Mean if Covariate = 1	0.192	0.164	0.041
Neighborhoods	106	106	106
Observations	693	693	693

Notes: This table presents heterogeneous treatment effects on the probability of attending the interviews. by the gap between meetings and the start of the interview window. ***Covariate = 1*** if the number of days between the meeting and the start of the interview window is less than the median for the study sample. All regressions include controls in Table 1 and Table A2. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Table A9: Heterogeneous Treatment Effects on Job Search Beyond Interview Experiment, by Nearby Women Known, Feeling of Safety, and Job Search at Baseline

	= 1 if made job search trips			= 1 if made job search trips with women from neighborhood			Number of job search trips		
	Fewer nearby known (#)	Lesser feeling of safety	Job search at baseline	Fewer nearby known (#)	Lesser feeling of safety	Job search at baseline	Fewer nearby known (#)	Lesser feeling of safety	Job search at baseline
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Matching & Coordinated Travel (β_1)	0.083	0.109**	0.133**	0.087**	0.100***	0.103***	0.323	0.355**	0.429
	(0.067)	(0.050)	(0.051)	(0.039)	(0.033)	(0.038)	(0.253)	(0.179)	(0.261)
Matching & Coordinated Travel × Covariate (β_3)	0.045	-0.004	0.074	0.015	-0.024	0.082	-0.020	-0.181	0.265
	(0.080)	(0.134)	(0.132)	(0.052)	(0.081)	(0.094)	(0.331)	(0.314)	(0.480)
Only Matching (β_2)	-0.024	0.028	0.089*	-0.004	0.012	0.041	-0.055	0.183	0.298
	(0.066)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.040)	(0.034)	(0.039)	(0.218)	(0.219)	(0.250)
Only Matching × Covariate (β_4)	0.073	-0.044	-0.136	0.045	0.076	0.017	0.494	0.236	0.417
	(0.084)	(0.117)	(0.115)	(0.057)	(0.073)	(0.094)	(0.300)	(0.355)	(0.754)
Covariate (β_5)	-0.049	-0.015	0.150*	-0.009	-0.033	0.034	-0.084	-0.103	0.434*
	(0.053)	(0.089)	(0.084)	(0.035)	(0.054)	(0.067)	(0.164)	(0.241)	(0.230)
p-value:									
$\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.071*	0.071*	0.291	0.019**	0.009***	0.053*	0.079*	0.357	0.350
$\beta_1 + \beta_3 = 0$	0.022**	0.386	0.099*	0.018*	0.305	0.035**	0.166	0.565	0.105
$\beta_1 + \beta_3 - \beta_2 - \beta_4 = 0$	0.163	0.303	0.027**	0.137	0.874	0.128	0.694	0.548	0.980
Control Mean	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.330	0.330	0.330
Control Mean if Covariate = 1	0.129	0.107	0.323	0.052	0.029	0.108	0.258	0.107	0.742
Neighborhoods	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104	104
Observations	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560

Notes: This table presents treatment effects on job search beyond the interview experiment. The number of observations is less than N = 693 because it only includes women that we were able to follow up with during these surveys. The reference period for the three outcomes is six weeks after the interviews at the partner factories and does not include interviews at the partner factories. In Columns (1)-(3), *=1 if made job search trips* is the indicator variable for making a trip outside the home in search of jobs or to prospective employers. In Columns (4)-(6), *=1 if made job search trips with women from neighborhood* is the indicator variable of making any job search trip with other women from their neighborhoods. In Columns (7)-(9), *number of job search trips* is the total number of trips made to the employers. If a woman visited multiple employers in one trip, it's counted as one trip. Columns 1, 4 and 7 present the heterogeneous treatment effects by fewer nearby women known. *Nearby women known* is the total number of women study participants knew living nearby. We define living nearby as living in the same housing structure and in adjacent and opposite houses. For column 1, *Covariate* = 1 if the number of known women is less than the median of the sample. Columns 2, 5 and 8 present the heterogeneous treatment effects by lesser feeling of safety. Women's feeling of safety is the average of responses to the question: *How safe do you feel while traveling by the following means (auto, walk, bus) during the daytime?* A higher score implies a higher feeling of safety. *Covariate* = 1 if the average of the three responses is less than the median of the sample. Columns 3, 6, and 9 present effects by job search at baseline. *Covariate* = 1 if women reported traveling outside their homes in search of jobs two weeks preceding the baseline surveys. Each column is a separate regression. All regressions include strata fixed effects and controls in Table 1 and Table A2. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Table A10: Heterogeneous Treatment Effects on Attending Interviews By Distance and Travel Cost to Factories

	Covariate	
	Distance to factory (in Kms)	Travel cost to factory (in USD)
	(1)	(2)
Matching & Coordinated Travel (β_1)	0.232*	0.141
	(0.125)	(0.165)
Matching & Coordinated Travel × Covariate (β_3)	-0.031	-0.035
	(0.026)	(0.108)
Only Matching (β_2)	-0.085	-0.105
	(0.118)	(0.124)
Only Matching × Covariate (β_4)	0.002	0.046
	(0.025)	(0.088)
Covariate (β_5)	0.009	-0.089
	(0.026)	(0.089)
p-value:		
$\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.001***	0.066*
$\beta_1 + \beta_3 = 0$	0.050*	0.144
$\beta_3 + \beta_5 = 0$	0.352	0.128
$\beta_1 + \beta_3 - \beta_2 - \beta_4 = 0$	0.001***	0.012**
Control Mean	0.154	0.154
Clusters	106	106
Observations	693	693

Notes: This table presents treatment effects on the probability of attending interviews by distance and travel cost to the nearest partner factory. In column 1, *Covariate* = distance to factory (in Kms), and in column 2, *Covariate* = travel cost to factory (in USD). Both variables take one value per neighborhood and are for a one-way trip. Distance to the factory is measured using Google Maps from the centroid of a neighborhood to the nearest factory gate in kilometers. Travel cost to the factory is measured by surveying private auto rickshaw drivers in a neighborhood for an estimate of the cost of travel. All regressions include city and area fixed effects. Controls include baseline values of variables in Table A2. Standard errors are clustered at the neighborhood level and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

Table A11: Effects on Attending Interviews - Randomization Inference

			=1 if traveled to the interviews with			
	= 1 if participated in inteviews		Study women		Non-study companion	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Matching & Coordinated Travel (β_1)	0.118*	0.124*	0.087*	0.093*	0.043	0.048
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.10)	(0.20)	(0.17)
Only Matching (β_2)	-0.017	-0.003	-0.042	-0.037	0.044	0.052*
	(0.66)	(0.95)	(0.31)	(0.39)	(0.15)	(0.09)
p-value: $\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.02**	0.05*	0.03**	0.04**	0.47	0.54
Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Control Mean	0.154	0.154	0.096	0.096	0.035	0.035
Neighborhoods	106	106	106	106	106	106
Observations	693	693	693	693	693	693

Notes: This table presents treatment effects on women's probability of attending interviews at the partner factories (columns 1 and 2) and whether the women traveled to the factories with study women or non-study companions (Columns 3-6). Each column represents a separate regression. All regressions include strata-fixed effects. Controls include baseline values of variables in Table 1 and Table A2. Randomization inference p-values are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

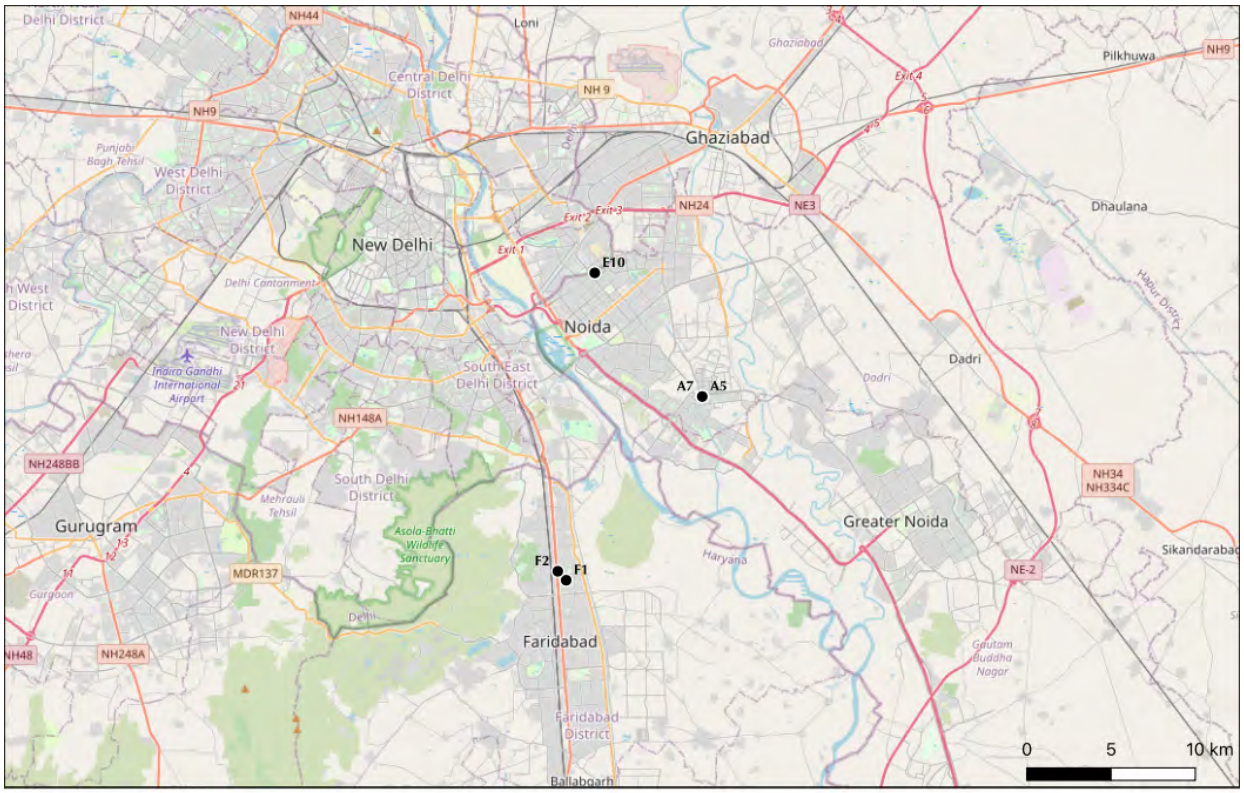
Table A12: Effects on Job Search 6 weeks after Factory Interviews - Randomization Inference

	= 1 if made job search trips		Number of job search trips		= 1 if made job search trips with women from neighborhood	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Matching & Coordinated Travel (β_1)	0.120**	0.121**	0.349**	0.337**	0.106***	0.112***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Only Matching (β_2)	0.031	0.032	0.252	0.227	0.025	0.030
	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.20)	(0.21)	(0.39)	(0.36)
p-value: $\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.05*	0.05*	0.39	0.34	0.02**	0.01**
Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Control Mean	0.160	0.160	0.330	0.330	0.330	0.330
Neighborhoods	104	104	104	104	104	104
Observations	560	560	560	560	560	560

Notes: This table presents treatment effects on women's job search trips outside the interview experiment as reported by women during follow-up surveys 6 weeks after the interviews. The number of observations is less than N = 693 because it only includes women that we were able to follow up with during these surveys. The reference period for the three outcomes is six weeks after the interviews at the partner factories and does not include interviews at the partner factories. In Columns (1)-(2), *=1 if made job search trips* is the indicator variable for making a trip outside the home in search of jobs or to prospective employers. In Columns (3)-(4), *=1 if made job search trips with women from neighborhood* is the indicator variable of making any job search trip with other women from their neighborhoods. In Columns (5)-(6), *number of job search trips* is the total number of trips made to the employers. If a woman visited multiple employers in one trip, it's counted as one trip. All regressions include strata-fixed effects. Controls include baseline values of variables in Table 1 and Table A2. Randomization inference p-values are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

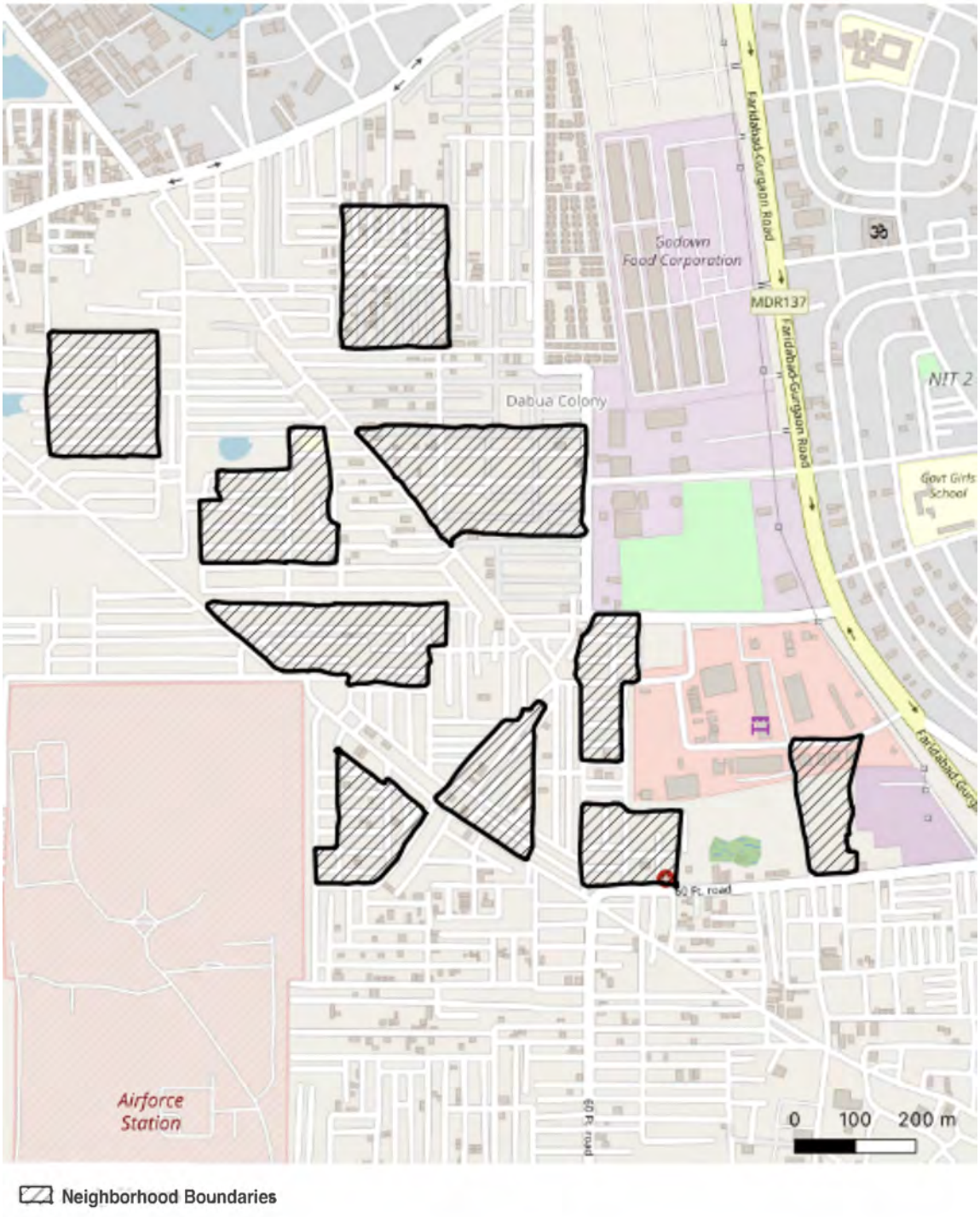
B Experimental Design

Figure B1: Locations of Partner Factories



Notes: This figure shows the locations of our 5 partner factories in Faridabad and Noida.

Figure B2: Map of Selected Neighborhoods

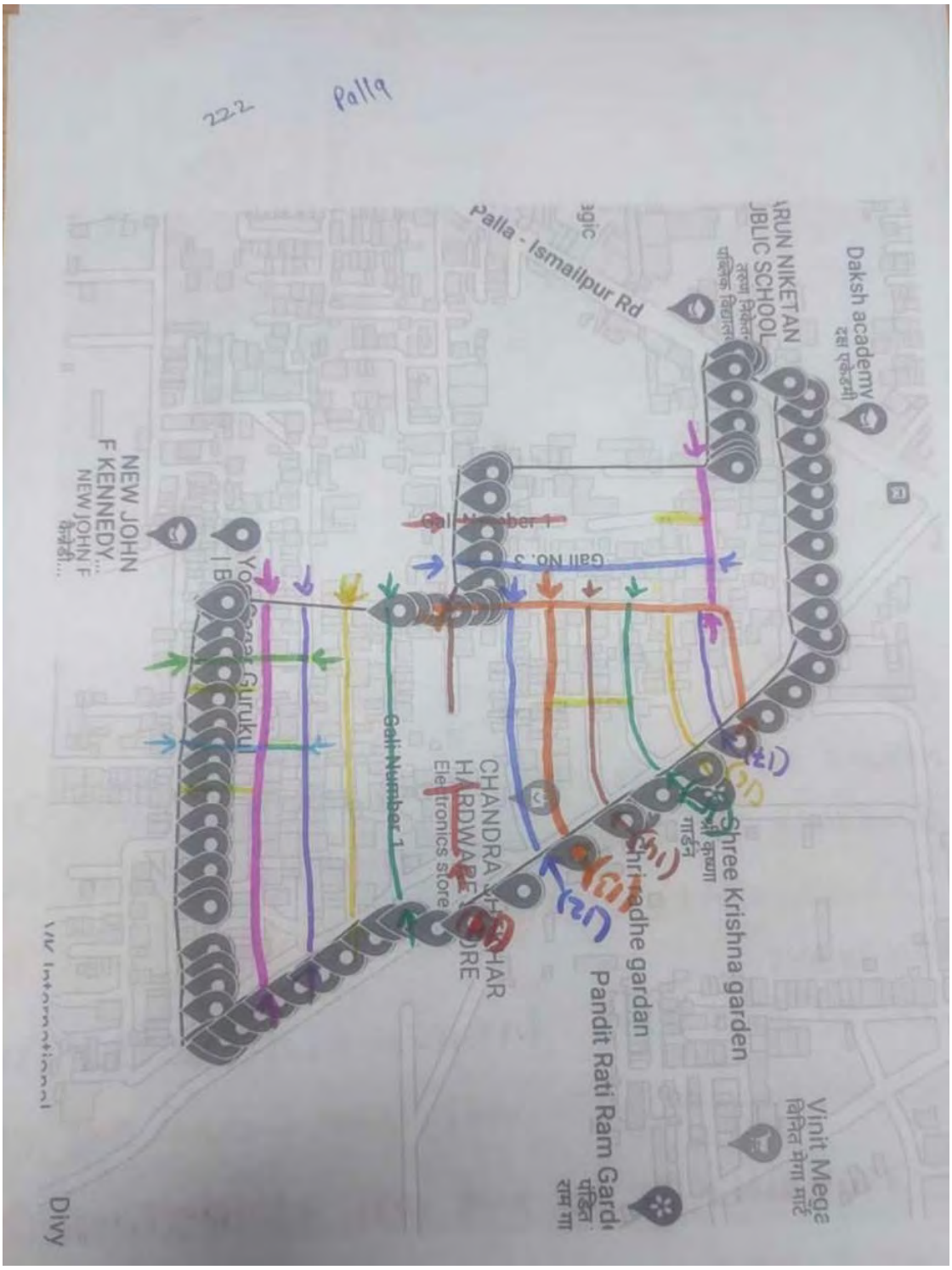


Notes: This figure shows zoomed-in neighborhoods and their boundaries in Faridabad

Figure B3: Snapshot of Neighborhoods

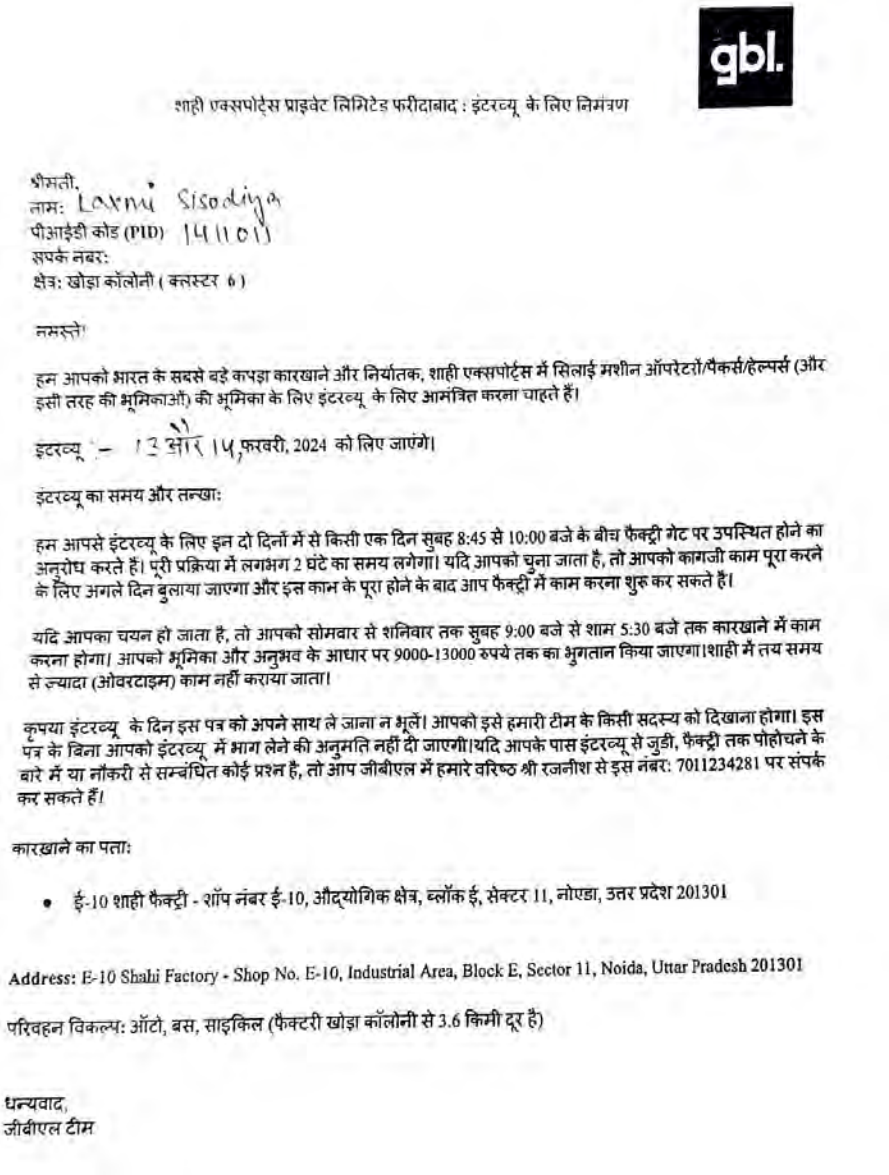
Notes: This picture shows a snapshot of a study neighborhood.

Figure B4: Random Sampling Process within Neighborhoods



Notes: This figure shows a map consisting of identified housing lanes and entry points of a neighborhood.

Figure B5: Interview Invitation Letter



शाही एक्सपोर्ट्स प्राइवेट लिमिटेड फरीदाबाद : इंटरव्यू के लिए निमंत्रण

श्रीमती,
नाम: Laxmi Sisodiya
पीआईडी कोड (PID) 141101
संपर्क नंबर:
क्षेत्र: खोड़ा कॉलोनी (क्लस्टर 6)

नमस्ते!

हम आपको भारत के सबसे बड़े कपड़ा कारखाने और निर्यातक, शाही एक्सपोर्ट्स में सिलाई मशीन ऑपरेटरों/पैकर्स/हेल्पर्स (और इसी तरह की भूमिकाओं) की भूमिका के लिए इंटरव्यू के लिए आमंत्रित करना चाहते हैं।

इंटरव्यू - 12 और 14 फ़रवरी, 2024 को लिए जाएंगे।

इंटरव्यू का समय और तन्खा:

हम आपसे इंटरव्यू के लिए इन दो दिनों में से किसी एक दिन सुबह 8:45 से 10:00 बजे के बीच फैक्ट्री गेट पर उपस्थित होने का अनुरोध करते हैं। पूरी प्रक्रिया में लगभग 2 घंटे का समय लगेगा। यदि आपको चुना जाता है, तो आपको कागजी काम पूरा करने के लिए अगले दिन बुलाया जाएगा और इस काम के पूरा होने के बाद आप फैक्ट्री में काम करना शुरू कर सकते हैं।

यदि आपका चयन हो जाता है, तो आपको सोमवार से शनिवार तक सुबह 9:00 बजे से शाम 5:30 बजे तक कारखाने में काम करना होगा। आपको भूमिका और अनुभव के आधार पर 9000-13000 रुपये तक का भुगतान किया जाएगा।शाही में तय समय से ज़्यादा (ओवरटाइम) काम नहीं कराया जाता।

कृपया इंटरव्यू के दिन इस पत्र को अपने साथ ले जाना न भूलें। आपको इसे हमारी टीम के किसी सदस्य को दिखाना होगा। इस पत्र के बिना आपको इंटरव्यू में भाग लेने की अनुमति नहीं दी जाएगी।यदि आपके पास इंटरव्यू से जुड़ी, फैक्ट्री तक पोहोचने के बारे में या नौकरी से सम्बंधित कोई प्रश्न है, तो आप जीबीएल में हमारे वरिष्ठ श्री रजनीश से इस नंबर: 7011234281 पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।

कारखाने का पता:

- ई-10 शाही फैक्ट्री - शॉप नंबर ई-10, औद्योगिक क्षेत्र, ब्लॉक ई, सेक्टर 11, नोएडा, उत्तर प्रदेश 201301

Address: E-10 Shahi Factory - Shop No. E-10, Industrial Area, Block E, Sector 11, Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201301

परिवहन विकल्प: ऑटो, बस, साइकिल (फैक्टरी खोड़ा कॉलोनी से 3.6 किमी दूर है)

धन्यवाद,
जीबीएल टीम

Notes: This figure shows an example of an interview intervention letter provided to a woman. The letter contains the name of the woman, the ID assigned to the woman, the dates of the interview, and the partner factory's name and address. It also contains the phone number of field team members for the woman to reach out to if she has any questions or concerns. Women were asked to bring this letter along on the day of the interview to help us identify study women at the factory gate. However, in case women didn't bring this letter, we used their phone numbers to distinguish study women from the non study women.

Figure B6: Group Meetings

Notes: This picture shows a snapshot of one of the group meetings taking place. Please note that the faces visible are those of enumerators who have consented for this picture to be shared.

Table B1: Content of Intervention Meetings

	Matching & Coordinated Travel	*Only Matching*	Control
Content of meetings			
Introduction of enumerator	✓	✓	✓
Women's introduction	✓	✓	✗
Introduction about factory	✓	✓	✓
Details about job & trial	✓	✓	✓
About coordinating their travel	✓	✗	✗
How to reach to the factory	✓	✓	✓
Time for women to socialize	✓	✓	✗
Whatsapp group	✓	✓	✗

Notes: This table lists the content of meetings for intervention meetings across the three groups.

C Pilot Experiment

In the summer of 2022, we conducted a pilot experiment in Selaqui, India, in partnership with an apparel manufacturing firm with two factories in Selaqui. Similar to the main experiment, the hiring for the two factories in Selaqui also takes place through walk-in interviews held at the factory gate. We stratified 15 neighborhoods by residential areas and randomly assigned them to one of the three groups - *Matching & Coordinated Travel*, *No Travel Cost*, and Control. Following the screening criteria listed in subsection 3.2, we screened and included 139 women from the 15 neighborhoods in the pilot experiment.

The design for the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* and control groups was similar to the main experiment[22]. In the *No Travel Cost* treatment, women were invited to participate in the walk-in interviews via individual one-to-one meetings, same as the control group. In addition, we covered women's entire round-trip costs to the partner factories for the interviews. They were provided with a one-time payment of INR 50 (or $0.625), which could be redeemed at the factory gate on the days of the interviews. On average, the one-side travel cost from the neighborhoods to the factory was INR 20. Therefore, the travel cost payment equaled an amount slightly (1 US cent) more than the round trip cost.

Table C1 presents the results from the pilot experiment. We find results similar to our results from the main experiment. 80% of the women who attended interviews traveled to the factories with companions. 27% of women from the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* group participated in the walk-in interviews, almost three times the control group (9% mean). The *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment led to a 13-16 percentage point increase in women's interview participation over the control mean of 10%.

To get a better understanding of how our intervention places alongside interventions that subsidize women's travel costs to search for jobs, we turn our attention to the comparison between the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* and *No Travel Cost* treatment. The *No Travel Cost* treatment increased the participation in interviews by 7-9 percentage points relative to the control groups. The effect is almost half that of the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment, but the two effects are not statistically different. While this evidence is only suggestive due to the small sample size of the pilot experiment and noisy point estimates, nonetheless, the results show that covering women's cost of travel to the factory does improve their show-up rates but not as much as inviting women together in groups without any monetary compensation. This suggests that bundling public policies like providing free public transport (as done in Delhi) with an intervention like ours could significantly enhance women's mobility and job

[22] There were three differences between the *Matching & Coordinated Travel* treatment design in the main and pilot experiment. During the pilot: 1) women were not added to group meeting's WhatsApp groups; 2) we did not share details on how to reach the factory; 3) there was no time provided for women to socialize with one another.

access.

Table C1: Results from Pilot Experiment

	= 1 if participated in interviews		=1 if traveled to the interviews with			
			Study women		Non-study companion	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Matching & Coordinated Travel (β_1)	0.13*	0.16**	0.11	0.13*	0.02	0.01
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.02)	(0.03)
No Travel Cost (β_2)	0.09	0.07	-0.01	-0.01	0.10*	0.09*
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)
p-value: $\beta_1 = \beta_2$	0.636	0.402	0.102	0.063	0.137	0.180
Controls	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Control Mean	0.098	0.098	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000
Neighborhoods	15	15	15	15	15	15
Observations	139	139	139	139	139	139

Notes: This table presents treatment effects on women's probability of attending interviews (columns 1 and 2) and whether the women traveled to the factories with study women or non-study companions (Columns 3-6) during the pilot experiment. Each column represents a separate regression. All regressions include area fixed effects. Controls include women's baseline characteristics Table A2. Standard errors are calculated using the bootstrapping procedure and are in parentheses. ***, **, and * represent significance at 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.