

Women at Work

Instituting Gender Audit at Workplace



Expanding Horizons. Enriching Lives.

IPE Global Centre for Knowledge & Development

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Women at Work: **Instituting Gender Audit at Workplace**

An initiative of IPE Global Centre for Knowledge & Development



Foreword



It is a paradox that while women are venerated as divine symbols, their real progress in this world is weighed down by significant constraints. That this stark contrast persists and continues even now shows how this inequality has been tolerated - even normalised - in society.

Women face discrimination at almost every stage and place of their life - starting from the womb; in schools, at the workplace, in public places and even at home. Social and economic barriers limit the realisation of their full creative potential and aspiration. Not only does this shackle their growth, it hinders the nation's development and threatens to create a social divide based on blind biases.

Fortunately, voices of women are now welling up across the world, articulating their experience, protesting against injustice, demanding fairness and their rightful place under the sun. These are well supported by research - not only about the gaps but also the missed chances due to gender inequality. Evidence shows that literate women raise educated children; women's economic participation boosts the nation's economy and their involvement in corporate management often leads to greater efficiency and innovation.

Despite various efforts - from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to National and State Acts, policies, schemes and corporate efforts, women make up only 29 percent of the labour force in India. The mere economic impact of achieving gender equality in India is estimated at an additional US\$700 billion of GDP by 2025! This high cost of gender disparity should be a wake-up call for all of us.

We need to move, and move fast. Even as new policies and programs are debated, we need concerted and informed action on the ground and tools like gender audit are essential for this. It is towards this that 'IPE Global Centre of Knowledge and Development' (IPE CKD) has turned its attention. IPE CKD is the non-profit arm of IPE Global Limited, an international development consultancy group providing expert technical assistance to developing countries.

Committed to gender equality in its programmes and work culture, IPE CKD has developed and piloted a gender audit methodology to provide organisations and employers a quantitative and qualitative assessment of how gender equal their workplaces are. These experience and insights are presented in this report.

This is part of IPE CKD's effort to evolve, simple, practical tools for complex issues that beset our workplace and culture and could be a useful start for reviewing gender parity in government departments, public sector undertakings and corporates. I hope this report will nudge us towards introspection - to an honest review of the safety, dignity and professional development environment for women - and eventually to transform our workplaces to sites of women empowerment and sustainable, inclusive growth.



Ashwajit Singh
Managing Director
IPE Global Limited

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Introduction

Approach and Perspective

Human rights and gender equality are the cornerstones of the United Nations (UN) 2030 agenda for sustainable development.¹ As long as women are economically and socially disempowered in the world of work, in their homes and communities, growth will not be inclusive.² Gender equality is an intrinsic value as well as a powerful force for delivering multiple development goals in ways that leave no one behind. Despite significant progress made towards achieving gender equality in all spheres, manifold challenges remain to be surmounted. While at the conceptual level, gender equality is indivisible, at the implementation level, actions tend to be compartmentalised and sequestered. Systematic monitoring of gender equality outcomes, policies and processes requires regularly updated, reliable data. Monitoring mechanisms exist, but gender-responsive data remains elusive. Addressing gender equality, thus, requires a multi-pronged, multi-layered approach; with short, medium and long-term perspectives, evolving out of experience & analysis, reflection and review, re-envisioning and re-defining norms, policies and systemic issues.

Moving towards normatively defined gender equality goals is possible through continuous self-reflexive action. Concrete pragmatic steps at the local level acquire strategic significance as they allow the realism of grounded, situational processes - measurable through granular data, as well as, detailed observations and qualitative interactions, to generate analytical insights that can be steered towards remedial actions.

What has proved useful, has been the selection of an entry point with a clear locus of action and onus of responsibility, and a well-defined context, and to use it to lens wider angles of gender equality. One such entry point is 'women at work.' Evidence highlights the impact of women's employment

¹ Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. (2015). United Nations.

² Ibid

and access to decent work not only on their agency³ and well-being, but also, on the well-being of the organisations they work in, their families and the society, as a whole. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #8, which promotes “inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work”, is to be perceived as an integral component of the overall goal of achieving gender equality. Empowering women through work must recognise women’s agency as producers and consumers. This raises the issue of gender equality above one of just distributive equity and situates it firmly in a discussion of the quality of life and human rights. The practical implication of this is a steadfast focus on processes that consciously forge reciprocal relationships between building capacity, equitable access to resources and opportunities, working conditions, the nature of production and products developed. This necessitates attention to several factors, viz. education & skills, cultural values, health and family responsibilities, infrastructure and opportunities.

Gender audits focus on the ways in which policies, programmes and institutions mainstream gender equality. Gender audit yields gender disaggregated data, statistics and analysis that is critical to organisations to understand their culture and working in terms of gender equality goals, to hold stakeholders accountable and to induce necessary reforms.

Over the years, various agencies have attempted gender audit, depending on the needs and purposes. Governments have posited gender audits with gender budgets. Gender audits have also sought to understand and analyse policy postulates, programme designs and outcomes; as well as behavioural interactions to generate gender disaggregated data and analytics. Clearly, gender audits encompass a complex spectrum of factors, ranging from the easily quantifiable and objectively verifiable issues like budgets allocated, wages paid, workforce participation ratios, to the more subjective, subtle and less visible issues like cultural values and biases.

With this perspective, IPE Global Centre for Knowledge and Development (IPE CKD), formulated a gender audit methodology and initiated gender audits as process for assessment and analysis, review and introspection and incremental improvements by organisations – both in public and private sectors. Acknowledging the complexity of the task, IPE CKD started with a focus on the working environment of women, within their work place to delineate clear,

³ Agency means an individual’s (or group’s) ability to make effective choices and to transform those choices into desired outcomes. Agency can be understood as the process through which women and men use their endowments and take advantage of economic opportunities to achieve desired outcomes – World Development Report 2012, The World Bank.

definable and comparable contexts. Policies governing working conditions have a profound influence on encouraging or discouraging women's participation in work. Notwithstanding the requisite qualifications, employment policies and the work place culture can either exclude or include women from work. Though social and cultural values take a while to change, structured interventions at the workplace can broaden women's freedom and choices in work, which in return can strengthen their agency in societal and personal spheres. Worksites can be seen as microcosmic spaces where the formal-informal behaviours, personal-professional spheres, social and economic interests strongly intersect in multiple interactions in subtle and complex ways. Studying these interactions yields contextually relevant information as well as comparable, generalisable insights, relevant to wider contexts. Gender audit of women at work can be done in participatory, non-threatening ways, prompting gender responsive actions that have the potential to transform the workplace into a site for women's empowerment.

This report situates the experience of gender audit done by IPE CKD within the larger contemporary discourse of gender equality and the learnings drawn from global studies. It hopes to contribute to and learn from the existing efforts at gender audit as ways of lensing the concepts, norms and policies of gender equality through the practice on the ground.

The report is divided in two parts. The first part etches the conceptual discourse on gender equality. It provides a brief snapshot of the global norms and nationally set goals, highlighting the progress we have made so far, in terms of our successes and failures, thereby, setting a benchmark for gender audit. The second part shares insights from IPE CKD's gender audit and relates its findings to the insights from recent global evaluations and assessments of gender equality for women at work.

Part One

Gender Audit in the Conceptual Framework of Gender Equality

This section briefly recapitulates key conceptual underpinnings of gender to etch the framework within which the gender audit was undertaken. Gender refers to the roles, behaviour, activities, and attributes that a society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. It also refers to the relations between women and men. These characteristics, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and learned through socialisation processes. As such, gender roles are neither biologically predetermined nor fixed forever, but are contextually and historically contingent and changeable.⁴ Social conditioning generates gender stereotypes that are basic assumptions about the differences between women and men, and their respective roles. Stereotypes are often used to justify gender discrimination more broadly and can be reflected and reinforced by traditional and modern theories, laws and institutional practices. Messages reinforcing gender stereotypes come in a variety of "packages" – from advertising to traditional proverbs; from cultural practices to market products.

Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of sustainable, people-centred development. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that they will have equal conditions for realising their full human rights potential and for contributing to, and benefiting from economic, social, cultural and political development. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage women as well as men.

⁴ UN Women. OSAGI Gender Mainstreaming - Concepts and Definitions. Available from: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm> [Accessed 4th March 2019]

Since gender equity is associated with social justice and is often determined by the prevailing social customs that may be unfair to women, the gender audit approach adopted here emphasises on gender equality, and not gender equity, following the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee in its General Recommendation 28, which says, States parties are called upon to use exclusively the concepts of equality of women and men or gender equality and not to use the concept of gender equity in implementing their obligations under the Convention.⁵

Women at Work: Where do We Stand?

Gender inequalities manifest as gaps or disparities between women and men's condition or position in the society. Gender gaps can be found in the four pillars that the World Economic Forum (WEF) uses to calculate its Gender Gap Index, namely: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment⁶.

Global overview

As discussed above, SDG #8 calls for "full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men." For this to happen, global gender gap averaging 32% needs to be closed.

Global Gender Gap Index⁷

No.	Index	Data (%)
1	Political Empowerment (largest gender disparity)	77.1
2	Economic Participation and Opportunity (second-largest)	41.9
3	Educational Attainment (significantly low)	4.4
4	Health and Survival (significantly low)	4.6

Projecting current trends into the future, the report states that:

- The overall global gender gap will close in 108 years across the 106 countries covered since the first edition of the report published in 2006.
- The most challenging gender gaps to close are the economic and political empowerment dimensions, which will take 202 and 107 years, respectively, to close.

⁵ Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. (2010). United Nations.

⁶ The Global Gender Gap Report. (2018). World Economic Forum.

⁷ Ibid

A significant manifestation of gender disparity or gender gap is in the way in which society divides work among women and men, according to what is considered suitable or appropriate to each gender. While women account for half of the world population, a gap of 26 percentage points separates women and men in labour force participation; the gaps are much wider in some parts of the world. Labour force participation rate for women aged 25-54 years is 63% compared to 94% for men.⁸ This disparity is driven by low participation rates of women in Southern Asia (28%), Northern Africa (23%) and the Arab states (21%). In 2017, global unemployment rates for women and men stood at 6.2% and 5.5%, respectively. This is projected to remain relatively unchanged through 2021. Women's family and caregiving responsibilities make it challenging to balance unpaid care and paid work.

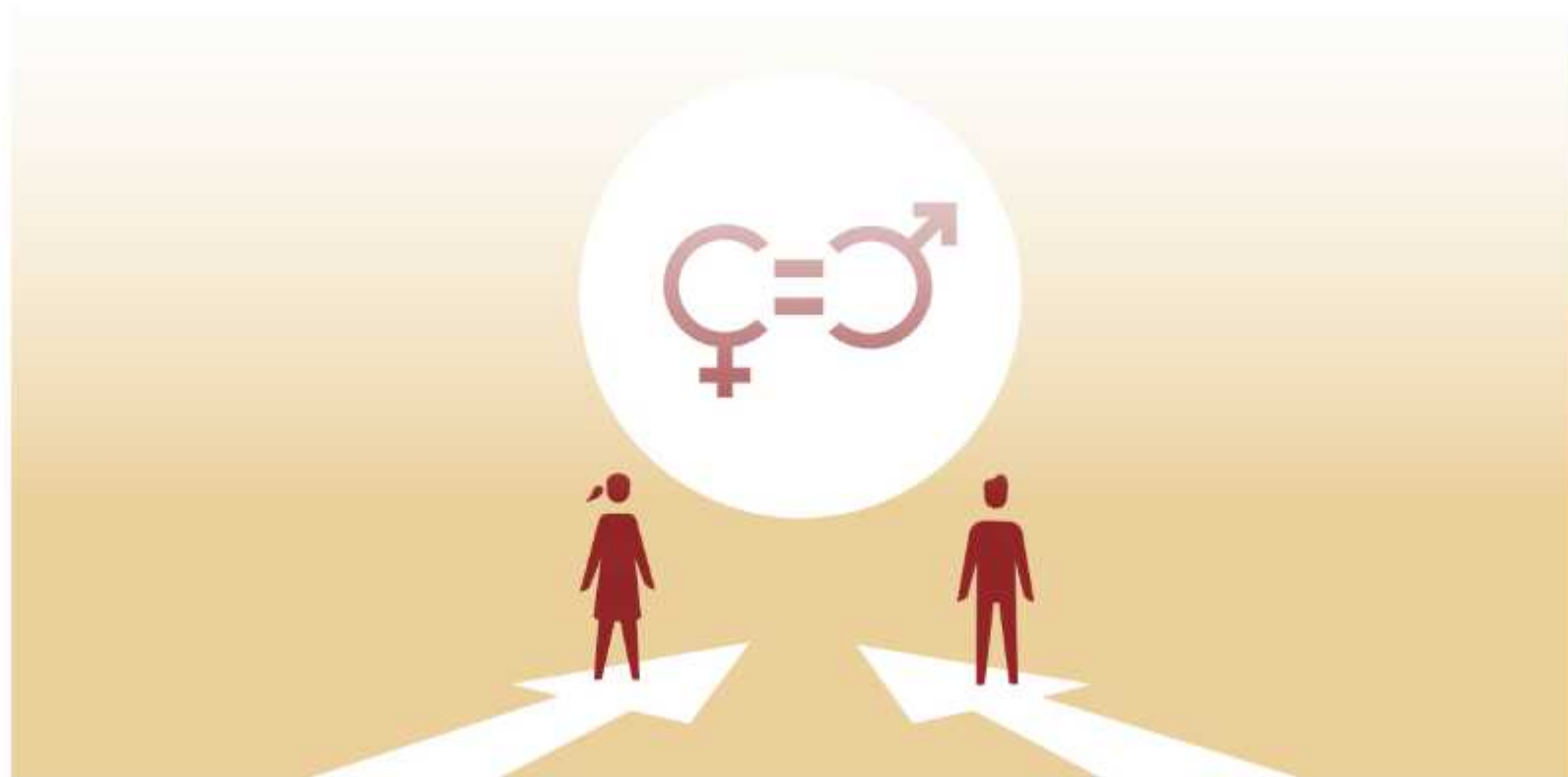
The quality of employment remains a challenge for women, worldwide. Their work also remains undervalued. While globally, slightly more women were in waged and salaried work in 2016, at 55%, in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, the share of women was particularly low, at 18 and 23%, respectively.⁹ The gender pay gap stood at 23% globally.¹⁰ Gender-based occupational segregation, existing both horizontally and vertically, at different levels, grades or positions of seniority has pushed women towards lower paid, more vulnerable jobs, and is chiefly responsible for the gender pay gap. Though, it is notable that over the last two decades, there has been a slight decline in the extent of occupational segregation, with more women moving into mixed-gender sectors.

⁸ Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality In The 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development. (2018). UN Women.

⁹ Towards A Better Future for Women and Work: Voices of Women and Men. (2017). ILO -Gallup.

¹⁰ Turning Promises op.cit.

Although more women are taking up salaried work, they are subject to several distinct disadvantages in turning entrepreneurs. In 40% of the economies, women's early stage entrepreneurial activity is half or less than that of men. Women are constrained from achieving the highest leadership positions. Only 5% of the CEOs of Fortune 500 companies are women.¹¹ Violence and harassment at workplace affect women regardless of their age, location, income or social status. The annual economic costs – a reflection of the human and social costs – to the global economy of discriminatory social institutions and violence against women is estimated to be approximately USD 12 trillion.¹² The fact that half of women worldwide are out of the labour force when 58% of them would prefer to have paid jobs is a strong indication that there are significant challenges restricting their capabilities and freedom to participate.¹³



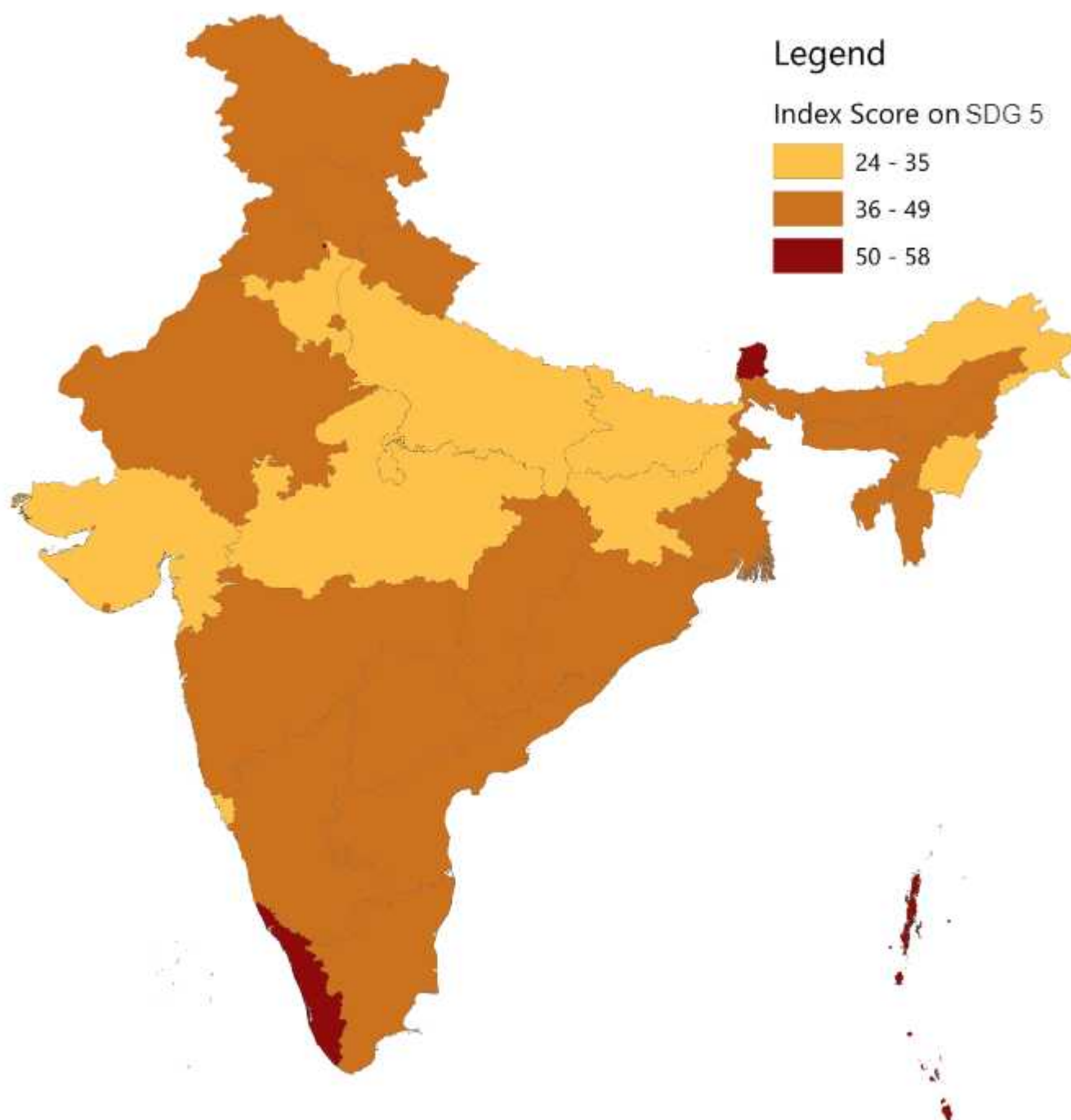
¹¹The Share of Female CEOs in the Fortune 500 Dropped by 25% in 2018. (2018). Available from: <http://fortune.com/2018/05/21/women-fortune-500-2018/> [Accessed 4th March 2019]

¹²The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality Can Add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth. (2015). McKinsey Global Institute

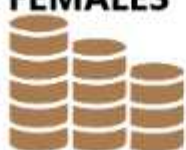
¹³ World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends for Women. (2017). ILO.

The Indian Scenario

The NITI Aayog's report ¹⁴ on SDG #5, depicts a depressing picture of gender equality in the country as shown in the map below:



EARNINGS OF FEMALES
70%
 That of Males



**Women Labour
 Force Participation
 Rate**
32%
 That of Males

¹⁴ A premier think-tank of the Government of India, NITI Aayog provides critical knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurial support to the country.

State wise variations of Female Work Force Participation¹⁵

S. No	State/ UT	Average female to male ratio of average wages/ salaries received per day by regular wage/ salaried employees of age 15-59 for rural and urban	Ratio of female labour force participation rate to male labour force participation rate
1	Nagaland	0.80	0.76
2	Mizoram	0.81	0.73
3	Chhattisgarh	0.66	0.67
4	Meghalaya	0.82	0.62
5	Telangana	Null	0.62
6	Andhra Pradesh	0.73	0.60
7	Arunachal Pradesh	0.83	0.53
8	Tamil Nadu	0.69	0.52
9	Maharashtra	0.77	0.46
10	Kerala	0.72	0.43
11	Sikkim	0.86	0.43
12	Karnataka	0.70	0.42
13	Andaman & Nikobar Islands	1.00	0.41
14	Manipur	0.93	0.40
15	Puducherry	0.47	0.40
16	Tripura	0.71	0.39
17	Goa	0.82	0.33
18	Rajasthan	0.77	0.29
19	Lakshadweep	0.63	0.29
20	Uttarakhand	0.93	0.28
21	Assam	0.72	0.27
22	Jharkhand	0.61	0.26
23	Gujarat	0.74	0.25
24	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1.01	0.25
25	Himachal Pradesh	0.65	0.24
26	Madhya Pradesh	0.55	0.24
27	Odisha	0.77	0.24
28	West Bengal	0.56	0.23
29	Haryana	0.84	0.21
30	Daman & Diu	1.01	0.19
31	Bihar	0.65	0.18
32	Delhi	0.97	0.18
33	Jammu & Kashmir	0.73	0.16
34	Punjab	0.83	0.16
35	Uttar Pradesh	0.67	0.15
36	Chandigarh	0.88	0.13
	INDIA	0.70	0.32

¹⁵ SDG Index, Baseline Report (2018), NITI Aayog, Govt of India.

WEF's Global Gender Gap Report 2018 ranked India at 108 out of 149 countries with a score of 0.665.¹⁶

Global Gender Gap (India's Score & Rank, comparison 2006 and 2018) (WEF 2018)

	2006		2018	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Global Gender Gap Score (Indicators)	98	0.61	108	0.665
Economic Participation & Opportunity	110	0.397	142	0.385
Educational Attainment	102	0.819	114	0.953
Health & Survival	103	0.962	147	0.940
Political Empowerment	20	0.227	19	0.382

WEF Gender gap report

Workforce Participation	Female	Male	Value
Non-discrimination laws, hiring women			Yes
Youth not in employment or education	49.3	8.0	6.19
Unemployed adults	7.7	4.1	1.88
Discouraged job seekers	-	-	-
Workers in informal employment	70.3	75.7	0.93
High-skilled share of labour force	1.8	8.1	0.23
Contributing family workers	31.5	10.3	3.05
Own-account workers	51.2	67.8	0.75
Work, minutes per day	536.6	442.3	1.21
Proportion of unpaid work per day	65.6	11.7	5.60
Economic Leadership	Female	Male	Value
Law mandates equal pay			No
Advancement of women to leadership roles			0.64
Boards of publicly traded companies	11.4	88.6	0.13
Firms with female (co)-owners			0.12
Firms with female top managers			0.10
Employers	0.5	10.3	0.05
R&D personnel	14.7	85.3	0.17

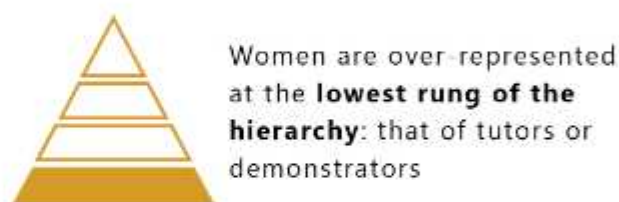
The narrowing gender gaps in educational attainments in India are not translating into more or better jobs. To cite the examples from just two work spheres - the academic and the corporate worlds.

¹⁶ The Global Gender Gap Report, (2018), World Economic Forum.

In the academic world, at the very top, women hold only a fourth of professorial positions. All India Survey for Higher Education (AISHE) data for 2016-17 shows that only 17% of vice-chancellor, pro-vice-chancellor and director positions across the universities in India are held by women, i.e. 1 woman for every 5 men.¹⁷ Further, in no state the share of women professors is more than 40%. Interestingly, women are over-represented at the lowest rung of the hierarchy, that of tutors or demonstrators (teaching assistants).



According to All India Survey for Higher Education (AISHE) data for 2016-17



Women in academia: Glass ceilings and sticky floors? ¹⁸

Top: Professor or Equivalent



Bottom: Tutor or Demonstrators



Also, due to conventional thinking, both students and teachers are straitjacketed into specific disciplines - humanities, teaching & nursing for women, engineering and law for men; B.Ed. for women and MBA for men. Gendered disciplinary boundaries limit women's skills and bargaining power in the workforce and lead to their occupational segregation by gender. Inadequate exposure to jobs in the formal sector restricts their behaviour and language skills, and limits their ability to migrate to better jobs.

Not surprisingly, the representation of women in the corporate world reflects a

¹⁷ All India Survey on Higher Education (2016-17), Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education, New Delhi, 2017

¹⁸ Annual Report, (2016-17), UGC, Govt of India.

similar bottom heavy - top thin syndrome. Several surveys have underscored the fact that India continues to rank low in the proportion of business leadership roles held by women.

An analysis of **132 Companies** in India (2017)¹⁸ showed that women held



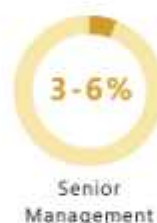
Another survey²⁰ of **5,500 businesses** in **36 economies** finds that in India,



Common roles held by women in India



Leadership Gender Gap in India



WOMEN

¹⁸ Women in the Boardroom: A Global Perspective Fifth Edition: (2017). Deloitte.

²⁰ WomenIn Business , New Perspectives on Risk and Reward, (2017). Grant Thornton.

The Business Case for Gender Equality

Available evidence clearly highlights that when more women work, economies and businesses grow. The ILO report titled, "World Employment and Social Outlook Trends for Women 2017", estimates that around US\$5.8 trillion could be added to the world economy by reducing the gap in participation rates between women and men by 25%, by the year 2025. This could also unlock large potential of tax revenues, particularly in the countries of North Africa, Arab states and Southern Asia regions. The McKinsey Global Institute forecasted that reaching global gender parity would add as much as US\$28 trillion annually to the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2025. In 2016, the Credit Suisse Research Institute issued a report²¹ that looked at the impact of both board and executive diversity in over 3,000 companies globally, where women occupied 50% or more of the leadership positions, and found clear evidence that having more women on boards and in senior management generated higher returns on equity, sales growth, earnings per share growth, and return on assets were all higher while still having more conservative balance sheets and lower debt/equity levels than for the broad universe of companies. The report also finds that the market is willing to pay a 19 percent premium price-to-book multiple for the top 50% of companies with female CEOs. These companies show returns on equity (ROE) that are 19% higher on average and provide a 9 percent higher dividend pay-out.

Conversely, non-working women or those working in exploitative conditions negatively impact the economy. The overall economic cost of discrimination and harassment, though unknown, is likely to be substantial - with reports of figures like 80% of women who have been harassed leaving their jobs within two years.²² A report on the impact of gender bias in society on GDP growth globally concluded that societies that have more gender bias have lower per capita GDP.²³

The contribution of women to India's GDP is 18 percent, one of the lowest proportions in the world. India has one of the largest opportunities in the world to boost GDP by advancing women's equality. According to McKinsey's report, a mere 10% increase of women in the workforce could add US\$770 billion to India's GDP by the year 2025.²⁴

But this would require making comprehensive changes in the regulatory environment.

²¹ CS Gender 3000: Progress in the Boardroom. (2016). Credit Suisse Research Institute.

²² Merchant, N. (2017). 'The Insidious Economic Impact of Sexual Harassment'. Harvard Business Review.

²³ Bandyopadhyay, D. (2017). 'Gender Biased Institutions and the Wealth of Nations'. Social Science Research Network.

²⁴ The Power of Parity op.cit

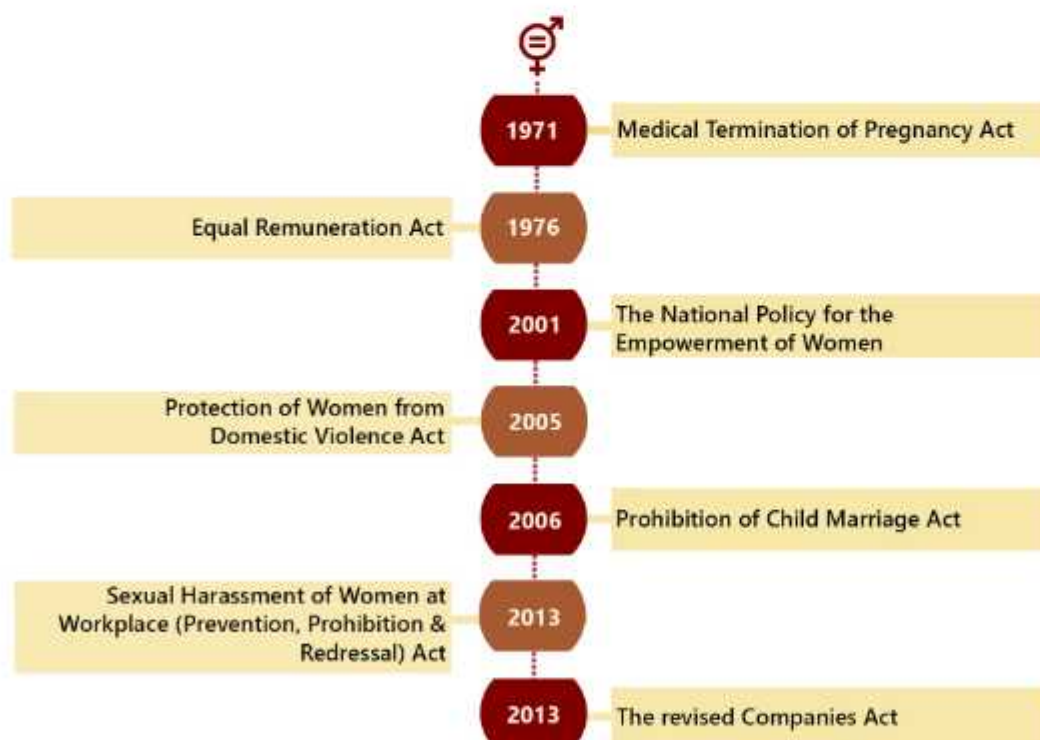
The Policy Trajectory in India

In India, the policy basis for gender equality is embedded in several Articles of the Constitution. The Constitution of India guarantees equality and equal protection in law for men and women (Article 14). It prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste and sex or place of birth (Article 15) and discrimination at work place (Article 16). Article 15(3) empowers the State to adopt special measures for women and children; Article 16(4) empowers the State to make provisions/reservation in employment for any backward class citizens who are not adequately represented in the services. It also provides for special measures to achieve equality; Article 39(a) lays down the duty to provide adequate means of livelihood equally for men and women; Article 39(d) mandates a policy providing equal pay for equal work for both men and women; Article 39(e) requires that State policy be geared to protect the health of men, women and child workers. Article 39-A directs the State to secure a legal system promoting justice on the basis of equal opportunity and to provide free legal aid for securing justice for its citizens. Article 41 ensures right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age and sickness, and in other cases of underserved needs. Article 42 provides for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief; Article 43 mandates that the State shall secure to all workers a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities and Article 51A (e) casts a duty on the State to renounce practices that are derogatory to the dignity and status of women.

Article 14 Equality and Equal Protection		Article 39(d) Equal pay for Equal work	
Article 15 Prohibits Discrimination		Article 39(e) Health and Strength of men, women and child	
Article 16 Discrimination at Work Place		Article 39 A Equal Opportunity	
Article 15(3) Special Measures for Women & Children		Article 41 Right to work, to education and to public assistance	
Article 16(4) Provision/Reservation in Employment		Article 42 Provision for securing just & humane conditions for work & maternity relief	
Article 39(a) Provide adequate means of livelihood equally		Article 43 Living wage and employment generation for workers	

Translating constitutional mandates into opportunities requires policies and programmes to alleviate the constraints that women face in choosing to enter the labour market and address the barriers they are confronted with, once they are in the workplace. The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001, views empowerment as an enabling process that must lead to their economic as well as social transformation. The Government of India has sought to operationalise this approach through programmatic interventions as well as by mainstreaming gender into the development planning process by undertaking reforms to ensure equal opportunities and dignity of life for women, as is evident from the following statutes: Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005; Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013; Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006; Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971; and the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.

Government of India has also passed a legislation to introduce quota to improve women's representation on the companies' Board of Directors. The Companies Act, 2013 mandates the boards of all listed companies and other large public limited companies to appoint at least one woman director. The number of women appointed on boards in India increased by 4.7% in the past two years, from 7.7% to 12.4%. This has helped India close its gap with the global average, which stands at roughly 15%.



Part Two

Gender Audit: What does it do?

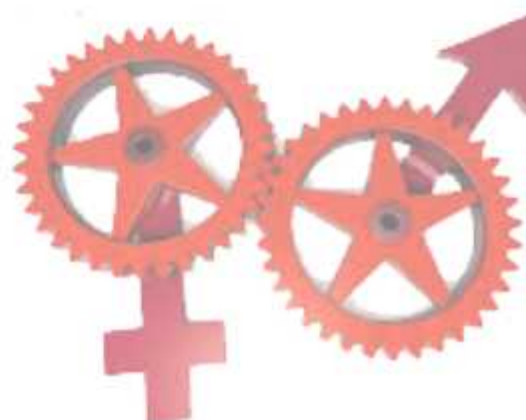
To assess the effectiveness of laws and policies in gender mainstreaming, one needs to see whether they reinforce existing gender inequalities (Gender Neutral), redress existing gender inequalities (Gender Sensitive), re-define women and men's gender roles and relations (Gender Positive/ Transformative/ Empowering). Gender audits provide feedback loops that can help in evolving empowering policies.

To strengthen the accountability for gender equality commitments at the global, regional and local levels, a gender audit proves usefull. It assesses the extent to which gender equality is effectively institutionalised in the policies, programmes, organisational structures and proceedings (including decision-making processes) and in the corresponding budgets.

A gender audit establishes a baseline; identifies critical gaps and challenges; and recommends ways of addressing them, suggesting possible improvements and innovations. It documents good practices towards the achievement of gender equality. It monitors and assesses the relative progress made in gender mainstreaming and helps to build collective capacity and organisational ownership for gender equality initiatives and sharpens organisational learning on gender. It can be the basis for certifying organisations/policies/programmes in terms of gender equality.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan emphasised Gender Budgeting and Gender Outcome Assessment and underlined the importance of Gender Audits of public expenditure, programmes and policies at national, state and district levels. Ministries/Departments were encouraged to undertake gender audits of major programmes, schemes and policies. It was recognised that if a gender perspective was incorporated within the Expenditure and Performance audits conducted by Comptroller and Auditor-General (CAG), it would make a 'quantum leap' in gender mainstreaming. Undertaking gender audits, however, it was conceded, required greater technical expertise.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), Government of India brought forth the Gender Budgeting Handbook in October 2015, that aligned gender audit with gender budget. The handbook's discussion of gender audit does indicate that gender audits are concerned not just with the allocation of financial resources but "with gender-sensitive formulation of legislation, policies, plans, programmes and schemes; allocation and collection of resources; implementation and execution; monitoring, review, audit and impact assessment". This comprehensive purview of the gender budget enfolding the entire sweep of action from law and policy to programme implementation and impact clearly underscores the fact that gender budget is conceived as a tool for planning, tracking and analysing gender mainstreaming. This understanding has led to gender audits by some state governments, for example, Government of Karnataka and Government of Kerala, though these have been related to the gender budgets or specific programmes.



Gender Audit: The IPE CKD initiative

In IPE CKD's perspective, gender audits include gender budgets; they are not a sub-set of it. A gender audit cuts across diverse issues and examines gender equality not just through policies, mandates, and budgets, but also, through behavioural aspects, gender responsiveness and sensitiveness of key stakeholders in specific situations. What it does is disclose not just the compliance with or deviation from specific mandates, but also the beliefs, reasons and attitudes, motives and incentives-disincentives for actions - organisational as well as individual. For example, if an organisation complies with a prescribed 'quota' or allocation, it may satisfy a particular criterion, but if the reason for doing so is 'policy pressure' rather than conviction, it is likely that the impact of such compliance will be a 'token' gesture and not a genuinely progressive act.

With this perspective, IPE CKD developed a gender audit methodology and piloted it in a select sample of privately owned Indian companies in the service sector with headquarters in Delhi. The gender audit covered offices in urban areas mainly in Delhi and some field offices. Cutting across organisation levels, close to 1,000 staff members of the companies that participated in the gender audit responded to the issues raised. The audit was undertaken from October to December 2018.

Objectives

The objectives of the gender audit included:

1. Evaluating and benchmarking the extent to which the organisation ensures gender equality in its human resource (HR) policies and practices, in its culture and working environment. The audit specifically took into account work place safeguards from sexual harassment and compliance of the requirements of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) policy.
2. Using the Gender Audit results to enable analysis by the organisation of its policies for gender mainstreaming
3. Enabling organisations to strengthen mechanisms and processes for gender equality and work place safeguards against sexual harassment

PARAMETERS

Quantitative

includes the collection and analysis of gender- disaggregated information



Distribution of women and men in the workplace at different organisational levels



Share in benefits



Continuity in employment



Similar quantifiable indicators

Qualitative



Quality of working conditions, prospects for personal development.



Concerns, perceptions, attitudes, norms, values and ideals affecting the ability of women and men to influence in the workplace



Perception at different levels, especially by the women themselves and whether women had a sense of freedom, equity, security and dignity

Considerations



What **opportunities** were offered to **participate** in decisions?



How did the organisational leadership respond to the **aspirations of workers, specially women**?



How did it support them to **balance their professional and personal lives**?



Were there **opportunities for training and learning** so women and men could equally develop their skills and further their careers as well as better contribute to their work places?

Scope of the Audit

The gender audit focused on the following issues:

- Measures taken to ensure that the workplace is free of sexual harassment.²⁵ Compliance of the national statute, Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013, mandates the prevention and redressal of sexual harassment in workplace.
- Equal employment opportunities with respect to the statutory requirements, national/state policies and good practices followed by corporates, in terms of equal opportunities for recruitment, and promotion and pay;
- Equal opportunities for professional development, training and mentoring;
- Proportion of women in decision making positions;
- Support for work-life balance;
- Supportive Infrastructure and facilities;
- Awareness among management and employees of gender equality and diversity issues;
- Capacity development initiatives for gender sensitisation;
- System for oversight to ensure gender equality.

Methodology

The methodology was guided by the following principles²⁶:

- Participation
- Disaggregation
- Self-identification
- Transparency
- Privacy
- Accountability.

The audit included both an anonymous quantitative survey, as well as follow up qualitative interviews to explore the views of employees further.

²⁵ Sexual Harassment as defined in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, includes implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in her employment or threat of detrimental treatment in her employment at present or in future, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment or humiliating treatment likely to affect a woman's health or safety.

²⁶ A Manual For Gender Audit Facilitators. (2012). The ILO Participatory Gender Audit methodology. ILO.

THE PROCESS

Preparing for the Gender Audit



Discussion with top management and HR departments



Developing and presenting the **Audit methodology** (key questions related to the audit parameters) and finalising it



Communication by HR departments to all staff the purpose of the audit and how to participate

Conducting the Gender Audit



Desk Audit of HR Policies, documents and data (of last two years)



Online Survey



Interviews



Consolidation and analysis of the survey results, along with data made available



Report preparation and presentation of findings

Online Survey

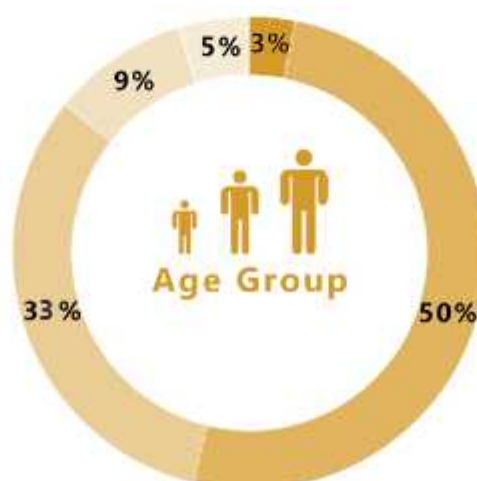
About a 1000 staff members participated in the online survey that maintained the anonymity of the participants. The following sections discuss the result of the online survey. Most of the questions sought to elicit whether men and women perceived that the policies governing their employment and the work culture were conducive to the goals of gender equality.



64%
Male
Participants



36%
Female
Participants



18-24 years old
25-34 years old
35-44 years old
45-54 years old
55-64 years old



Majority of responses were from associate directors, managers and executives.

Were the Organisations Equal Opportunity Employers ?

Key Findings

Broadly, the responses of men and women were similar on all issues, at all levels. This suggests that the beliefs and attitudes towards gender equality reflect a shared value. Men were as concerned about the facilities and opportunities for women as were the women themselves. This also shows that the organisations encouraged gender equality as an explicit value. Key responses are discussed in the following sections.

Recruitment

The recruitment policy, in all cases stipulated a rigorous selection process based on evaluations of educational qualifications, experience and interviews. The staff response corroborated the stated policy that their organisation has a fair process of selection across all positions.

Organisation Positions

All organisations had a larger pool of men than women. Looking to the data of 2018, on an average, the personnel pool of all organisations assessed, had 70% men and 30% women. The start - up point had a lower number of women compared to men. This inequality remained all through the organisational spectrum. On an average, the distribution of women and men across various organisational levels showed that the gender gap was the narrowest at the base level, but increased towards the top management. The top management was, in all cases, male dominated. All organisations had men as Chairmen and Managing Directors.

As observed in all the organisations surveyed, broadly, the position of women at various levels in the office hierarchy could be represented in the following manner:

Women at various levels of organisational hierarchy



Grant Thornton shows a strong link between gender diversity in corporate decision-making and the growth prospects of businesses. They examined companies in the U.S., UK and India, and concluded that companies with women on boards and in executive management had better returns on assets in all three markets. Overall, the opportunity cost, or potential value sacrificed by companies with no women in leadership ranks, totalled \$655 billion in all three markets. (Francesca Lagerberg, Grant Thornton, "The value of diversity," September 29, 2015.)

In all instances, the department heads to whom the staff had to report were men. Unsurprisingly, men's perception of their roles as compared to the women's is as 'senior managers', decision makers', 'team leaders'.

Among the online survey participants, 66.18% felt that there was a good balance of women and men in decision-making positions in their office. Of these participants 62% were men and 38% were women. 26.55 % disagreed with this. 7.27% did not know. Women who disagreed felt that there were men in 'dominance,' as the top officials were men. "It is a bit top heavy with men at director level" and "not well balanced". In most instances, it was also felt that at mid-level the balance was good, but not at senior management and few women were part of decision making. It was felt that project teams had balance in their composition, but few women headed units or projects. A singularly cynical observation by a male staffer was that the organisation had "male decision makers who preferred to work with women under the guise of women empowerment, unknowingly converting women empowerment into gender bias against men"

No organisation had consciously set targets for gender representation.



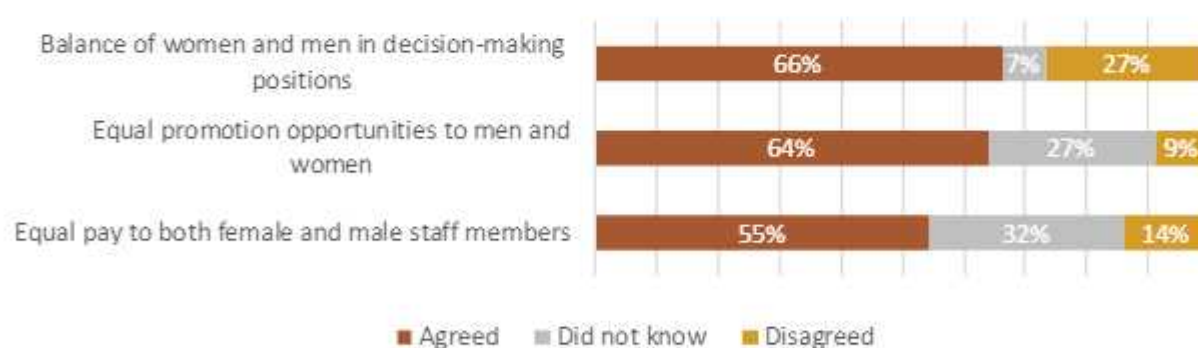
Investing in gender diversity at the workplace is profitable for both companies and investors. A more female workforce is correlated with higher average returns. Over a six-year period, companies with more gender diversity enjoyed a one-year return on equity that was 1.1% better than companies with low female representation. Evidence has linked gender diversity to lower return-on-equity volatility, too. (An Investor's Guide to Gender Diversity, 2017, Morgan Stanley).

Remuneration

Of the respondents to the online survey, 52.74% persons did not know how their grades compared with those of others. This included an equal number women and men.

However, 54.55% of respondents believed that their organisation offered equal pay to both female and male staff members for the same job/ grade against 13.82% of respondents who disagreed. 31.63 % of the respondents were not aware of the gender parity in wages. The reason cited for this was "a lack of transparency around wage policy, in general". Both male and female staff members were of view that transparency around wage policy was desirable and would surely be helpful from a motivational perspective (in terms of career progression).

Equal Opportunity Employer



Promotion

The most significant fact that emerged, from the analysis of HR records, was that the number of promotions as a percentage against those hired, stood at 6.72% for women, double that of men that stood at 3.07%. Discussions corroborated policies on staff selection as being focussed on merit and performance, free from gender bias. The on-line survey results also supported this view. 64% believed that their organisations offered equal promotion opportunities to men and women. 9% disagreed. 27% could not decide. Top management in all the organisations stated that they encouraged women employees to take up leadership roles. However, they admitted that the top levels had a limited number of women employees as leaders or part of senior management team. To remedy this, some organisations had launched special capacity building programmes to encourage women employees who were qualified to take up senior roles in the organisation.



Attrition

The attrition data, as revealed by the HR records of organisations surveyed, was 16.48%, on an average. This was 19.73% for women and 15.24% for men. 9.86 % women had left voluntarily. The reasons recorded with the organisations were mainly alternative job opportunities or pursuit of further studies. This was nearly on par with the 9.09 % men leaving their organisations. The percentage of women whose services were discontinued (against the number hired) by the organisations was 9% compared to 6.15% men.

Awareness about gender diversity policies

76% of the respondents were aware of the documented Gender and Inclusion policy. Most agreed that it should be more prominently displayed at places such as cafeteria, near the reception area and on each floor. Quite a few male staff members who agreed admitted that although they had read the policy, they were sure many of their colleagues had not read it. As one staff member quoted that they had simply signed the contract during the hiring process, thereby 'agreeing' to the terms & conditions just as they do while installing a software.

The responses suggested that greater effort was needed to publicise the gender equality policies as well as ensure that it was an important part of the trainings.

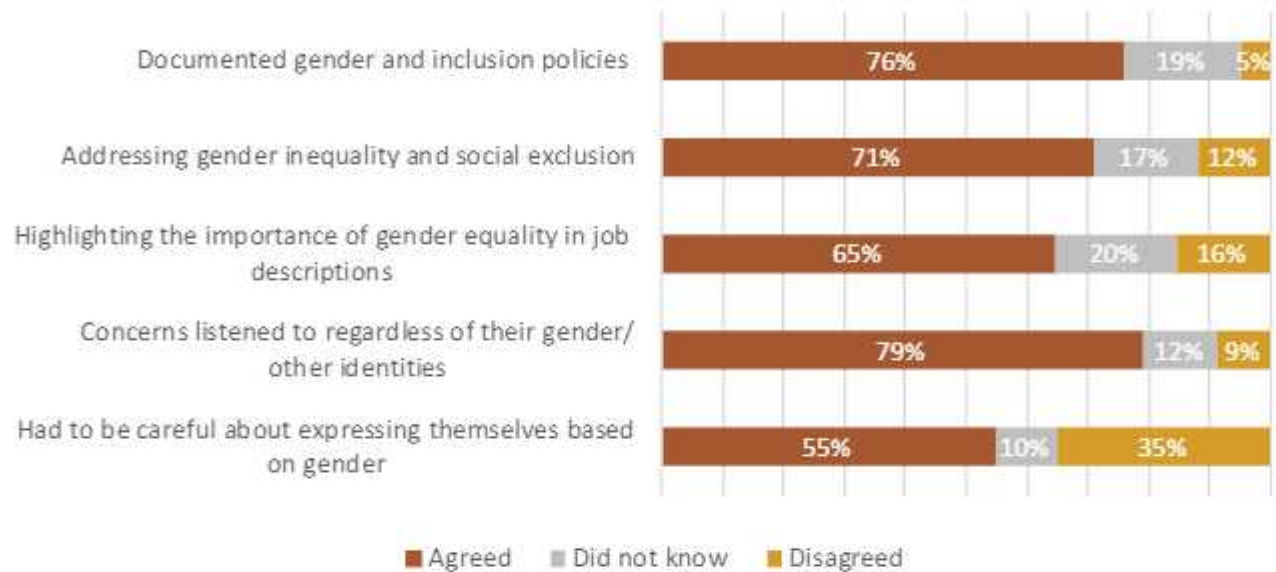
Furthermore, 71% believed that their organisation was actively seeking to address gender inequality and social exclusion in the office. 12% disagreed with this. 17% said they did not know. It was also reported that the offices in metropolitan cities were more equal than the site offices where the gender equality issues tended to become more marginal. However, some interesting and 'telling' observations were made by those who disagreed as well as those who otherwise said they did not know. These were elicited through survey as well as one to one interactions that allowed the personnel to express themselves with confidence and confidentiality. Both men and women shared their sense of discrepancy between the policy ideals and practice. Some conveyed the sense of suppressed grievance and irony and acceptance of an unfair situation. For example, in one instance, a woman confided

“

I heard one staff member say he didn't want to be accused of only recruiting men and that he hoped everyone recognised that he was actually interested in recruiting the 'best man for the job'. Slip of the tongue?

”

Awareness about Gender Diversity Policies



Some women were specific as to why they disagreed

“ I ticked ‘disagree’ with respect specifically to maternity pay policy, which only sits just slightly above statutory/the law. Also I am not 100% sure the extent to which there may or may not be a gender pay gap. More transparency on salaries would be a good start in this respect. However, I do not feel specifically excluded within the office on a day-to-day basis ”

Most of those who disagreed said they were not sure that the company's aspirations in this area were translated into a concrete action plan which is taken forward by senior staff. They had not seen no evidence of specific actions to address this. As one staffer (male) said

“ I do not see any buzz on this at all ”

Some were frankly dismissive

“ Talking big things alone doesn't matter ”

Some however, differentiated between their personal convictions and organisational demonstration of its policies



*I can believe this, but do not have sight of any activities/
evidence in the wider group to confirm*



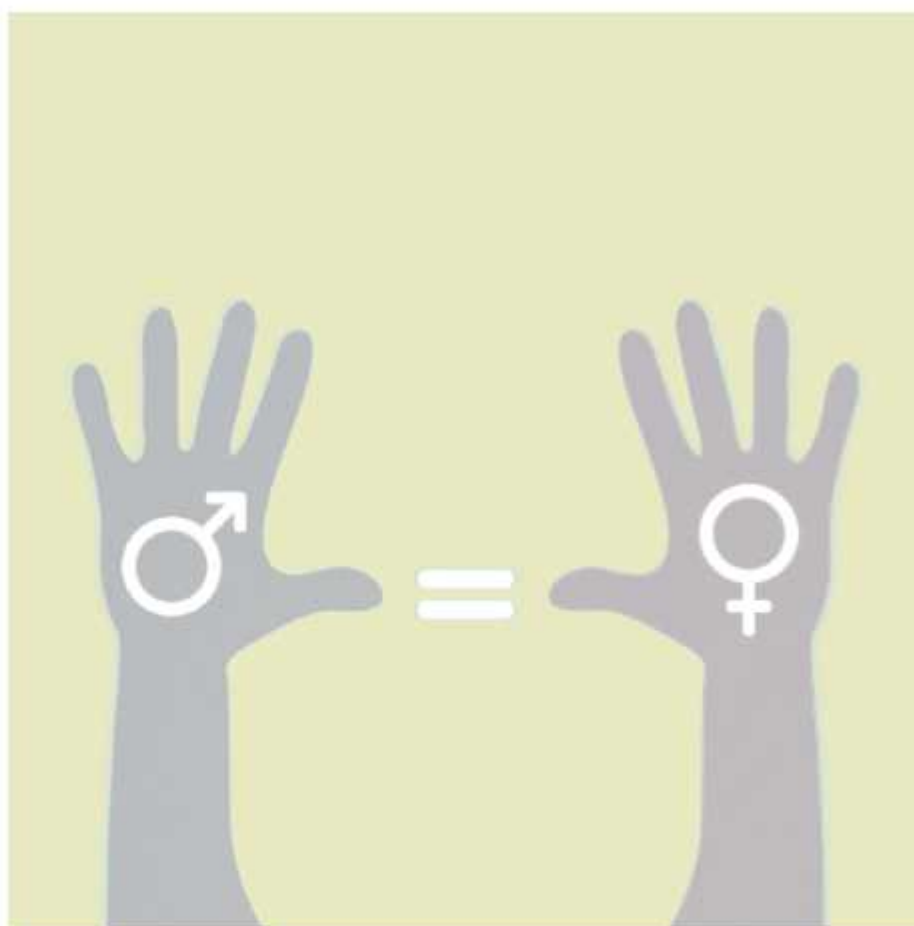
Some men, interestingly, felt aggrieved that there were specific instances of gender bias towards women in specific departments (to their disadvantage). Most (who agreed or disagreed or preferred to say they did not know) felt this was for the first time such surveys were being done and this was a good step.

It was noted that 65% of the respondents stated that the job descriptions highlighted the importance of gender equality and social inclusion in the organisation and in work. 15% did not agree and 20% did not know. Most of those who agreed felt that this was an area that needed improvement. It was also not enough to just put this issue into the job description. The orientation that the new recruits received should include this issue, along with all other safeguarding policies and codes of conduct. This could be made more explicit.

The online survey further showed that 79% of the respondents felt that their concerns were listened to regardless of their gender/ other identities. 9% felt their concerns were rarely listened to. Some felt that even if they were listened to, required action was not taken and that “was quite demotivating.” 12% did not know.

Regarding the manner in which people expressed themselves, 55% of the respondents felt that they needed to be careful about how they expressed themselves on the basis of their gender/other identities. 35% did not and 10% did not know. In some instances, women felt that had been judged over their appearance and even “the selection of formals wears.” Surprisingly, some men felt that in “political correctness” as they called it “hindered freedom of speech”. There was considerable debate over this issue, suggesting a greater need for trainings and gender sensitisation of employees.

In June 2017, the Harvard Business Review reported on an innovative study examining the role of gender bias in the venture capital industry. Using linguistic analysis of a series of pitch meetings held between entrepreneurs and venture capitalists, the researchers found that the venture capitalists, regardless of gender, tended to ask [male entrepreneurs] about the potential for gains and [female entrepreneurs] about the potential for losses. Using statistical analysis, they found that the bias in these questions fully explained the relationship between the amount of funding an entrepreneur received and his or her gender. (Dana Kanze, Laura Huang, Mark Conley, and E. Tory Higgins, “Male and Female Entrepreneurs Get Asked Different Questions by VCs — and It Affects How Much Funding They Get,” Harvard Business Review, June 27, 2017).



Supportive systems for balancing office - work and family responsibilities

On the issue whether organisations had supportive work arrangements, 69% of the respondents felt that they could avail of facilities such as flexible working hours and working from home. 21% disagreed as they said they never saw flexibility in this regard and did not have work from home opportunities. 10% did not know. Those who did not agree felt this was permitted only selectively to some people.

Women who did not agree felt that there should be stronger and more equally accessible opportunities of flexible work condition to women who were single home managers, or had family responsibilities like children or elderly parents to support. Allowing 'work from home, should make us guilt free', as one woman staffer said.

Almost all respondents said that if policies of flexible work conditions could be clearly stated, it would lessen the feeling that such facility was like granting favors to some. Women who worked in projects on the field said that flexible time may be possible at head office but they had no flexible time, on account of the contract conditions of clients.

Regarding maternity and paternity leave policy, 68% of the respondents said their organisations had policies that were compliant with standard norms for the country. 3% disagreed with this. 29% did not know. However, even the ones who agreed, wanted a shared parental leave package that was higher than the statutory offer.

Further more, 79% of the respondents felt it was culturally acceptable for employees to take maternity and paternity leave. 4% did not agree and felt that other companies had better packages for maternity leave. 17% could not offer any views on it.

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd.

Dr Reddys has several policies to support women returning after maternity to empower them to return to work without any bias or discrimination. They provide maternity counselling services to women along with access to a "buddy mothers" program wherein soon to be mothers can reach out to "buddies" within the company who help them tide their pregnancy. They offer six months of paid maternity leave much before the maternity bill was passed, followed by three months of extended leave and the option to extend the leave further. Post maternity, women are exempted from the bell curve appraisal, and are eligible for reduced work hours for a period of one year. To be inclusive of men, they also provide 15 days of paternity leave and reduced workhours for a period of six months, as well an option to avail family care leave. The company also reaches out to returning mothers externally through comeback career for women's platform, where it provides career opportunities to women on career breaks.

In terms of infrastructure, 55% said there were sufficient bathrooms for men and women and bathrooms were accessible for the specially abled. 35% disagreed. In some offices the men felt disadvantaged compared to women, as one male staffer said "men - we have 1 washroom for 25 men and 1 washroom for 3 women!!!!". Most field offices felt neglected, as their office space did not have a sufficient number of clean toilet facilities. But this was an infrastructural deficiency, and not the result of gender bias.

No organisation had child care facility. 71% said childcare space was needed in the office. 12% did not feel this indeed. 17% - did not know. The general opinion was that this would help in retaining good people. It would be specially useful for women who returned to work whilst breastfeeding. As one woman staffer said it was



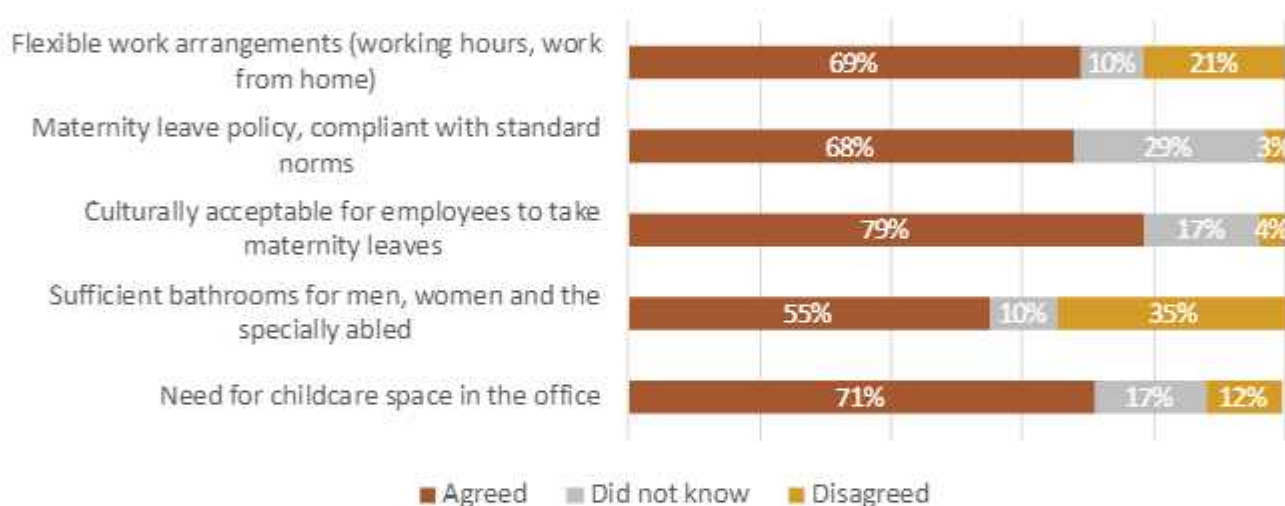
not particularly pleasant to have to use a bathroom (that is for both men and women) to express breast milk



Male and female employees both felt that most of them wasted “bandwidth” in the ‘to and fro’ from office to home / school for child pick and care. If there were such facilities in the office itself, they would optimise time work and efficiency and also take away the tension of balancing family and work responsibilities. As one male staffer put succinctly,

“ *this would help reduce attrition and also minimise the quantum of leave which the staff particularly (Females) has to take* ”

Supportive Systems for Balancing Office Work and Family



WORK LIFE



Prevention of sexual harassment at workplace

Prevention of sexual harassment at work place was a serious issue on which the survey had a number of questions. 80% of the respondents believed that their organisation had zero tolerance policy towards sexual harassment and bullying and complaints were taken seriously and followed up. 5% disagreed with this view. 15% did not know. Interestingly, some who agreed that their organisation had a policy for sexual harassment and bullying, felt the culture was not always one of zero tolerance. Some also felt that there was no scrutiny of the conduct (language and actions) of managers towards those reporting to them. Feedback often came in harsh demeaning words. However, a majority of respondents – men and women – did discriminate between professional ‘harshness’ and what would be sexual harassment. All agreed that a culture of mentoring and accountability would greatly improve the working environment.

Further, 84% of the respondents agreed that their organisations had a clearly formulated policy for the prohibition, prevention and redressal of sexual harassment. 5% disagreed and 11% did not know. Most however, said that though there was a policy they were not clear to what extent it was disseminated. Most suggested that it should reiterated with clear guidelines. Some suggested that atleast a week should be devoted in each department for orientation on POSH and discussion on its implications for everyone. Field office personnel were not aware of the POSH.

On the issue whether organisations treated sexual harassment as a misconduct under their HR rules, 79% of the respondents agreed that this was the case. 4% disagreed. 17% did not know. Those who disagreed did so not on the basis of their experience, but recalling cases (about 4-5 years back) where despite provisions in the HR Rules such complaints were not taken seriously and the women who complained left the Job. No one said that they had had current personal experience that was negative.

Regarding whether employees felt safe at their work place, 88% of the respondents said that their organisation provided a safe working environment at the workplace, which included safety from the persons coming into contact at the workplace. 5% disagreed. 7% did not know. Some representative responses suggested that their organisations needed to look into the safety aspects during the official tours and travels by the employees. Most employees (male and female) said that there were no facilities for female colleagues working late in office, such as drop facilities & other infrastructure facilities.

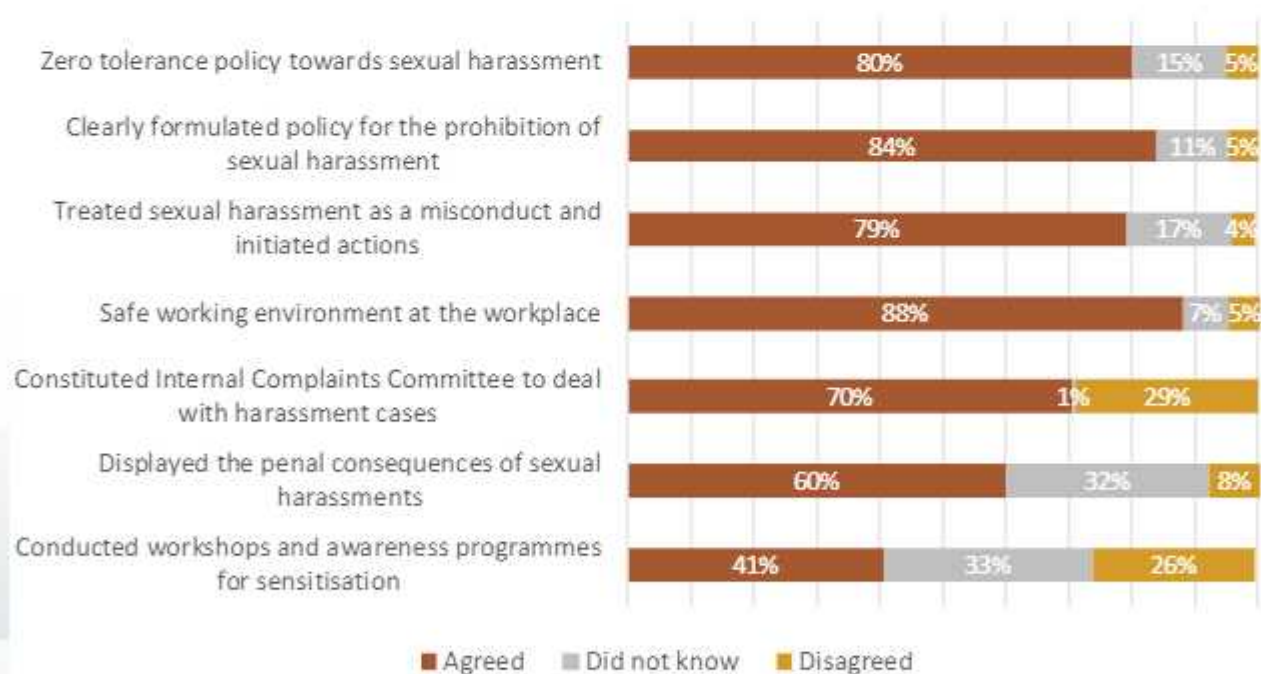
With reference to the provisions in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal) Act, 2013, 70% of the respondents said their organisations had constituted an Internal Complaints Committee to deal with all cases of sexual harassment and ensured that the aggrieved could file their complaints and seek redressal. 29% did not agree.

Most said that the names of the members of the complaint committee should be listed with complete contact details in each department. No one was aware of the frequency of committee meeting. Some said that they knew it was constituted but new recruits were not aware of it and their induction training should include it.

Furthermore, 60% said that their offices displayed the order constituting the Internal Complaints Committee and the penal consequences of sexual harassments at a conspicuous place in all its offices and workplaces. 8% disagreed. 32% did not know. Most said that the head quarters displayed this but not the project offices and it should be more universally and visibly displayed everywhere.

Of the respondents, 41% said that their organisations conducted workshops and awareness programmes at regular intervals for sensitising the employees with the provisions of the Act and orientation programmes for the members of the Internal Complaints Committee. 26% disagreed. 33% did not know. Most however, said that the awareness programmes were not conducted at branch and project offices.

Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH)



Insights

For all participating organisations, this was the first time a gender audit had been undertaken. The gender audit process was an opportunity for the organisation to self-reflect, and critically review its own policies and practices, and plan for more progressive change based on the feedback of its staff members. All the staff members were unanimous that the balance between participation and objectivity and between confidentiality and sharing made the gender audit a participative, non-threatening process. The gender audit process affirmed the commitment to fair hiring policies and criteria for promotions, need for staff sensitisation, caution about gender biases in performance reviews, and following non-discriminatory practices in the workplace.

There was an interest in scouting for global best practices related, *inter alia*, to innovative solutions such as flexibility through technology-enabled work models. There was an interest in inter-organisational sharing of the experience of changing from just an efficient, profit-driven organisation to becoming a gender equal workplace that balanced human rights and greater returns on investments. In addition, there was a demand for regular periodical gender audits to benchmark, assess and evaluate results of gender equality measures, both in terms of women's empowerment and empowered business.

Despite gender gaps on several fronts, it was observed that the top management was aware of issues involved and efforts were being devised to bridge the gap.

Women's perception of themselves was one of self-worth and as professional persons rather than as women versus men. Men shared this perception. This is why there was no difference in the ways in which men and women viewed an issue. This finding resonated very well with the survey done by ILO²⁷. The ILO report observed:

“ the results suggest that women might find support in their quest for productive employment and decent work coming from a rather unexpected source: men it also appears men and women are not always as far apart in their attitudes as conventional wisdom might lead them – and governments and employers and workers' organisations – to assume

”

This was encouraging as it suggested a progressive inter-face between men and women, free from the bias of conventionally defined roles.

²⁷ Towards A Better Future For Women op.cit.

Fewer women were hired at senior manager-level jobs. Though the number of women being promoted was higher than or equal to men, the space for their promotion to higher levels of decision making was constrained, as fewer women were available to promote from within and fewer women at the right experience level to hire in from the outside.

The factor that was perceived to be significantly important to men and women in encouraging greater women participation in work was work – family balance. Flexible working hours, crèche, safe transport were facilities most people wanted. ILO Gallup interviews with nearly 149,000 adults in 142 countries and territories, supports this finding and highlights its relevance globally. The report that sought to identify constraints to women's effective and full participation in the world of work found that:

“Policies that do not reconcile work and family responsibilities could lead to lower female labour force participation rates, higher levels of sectoral and occupational segregation, and higher uptake of involuntary part-time work for women, as well as wage and income disparities”

In 1981, the ILO adopted the Workers With Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156) with the goal of creating “effective equality of opportunity and treatment as between men and women workers with family responsibilities and between such workers and other workers.”

The Convention calls for measures to:

- Prohibit discrimination in employment against workers with family responsibilities;
- Support terms and conditions of employment allowing for work-family balance;
- Family-friendly working time arrangements;
- Develop or promote family-friendly facilities such as childcare and other services;
- Provide training to allow workers with family responsibilities to become and remain integrated into the workforce, as well as to re-enter after an absence due to those responsibilities

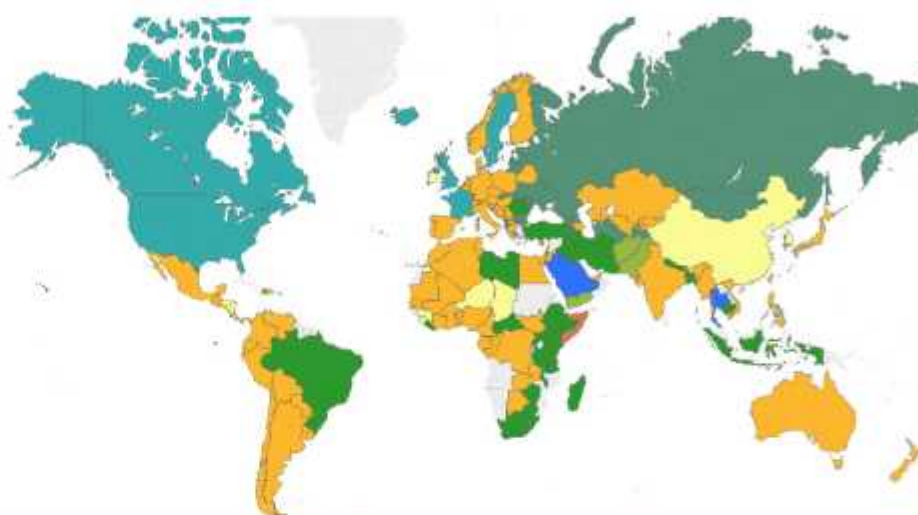
Key findings of the ILO-Gallup project:

Globally, both men and women mention balancing work and family as the top challenge that working women face.

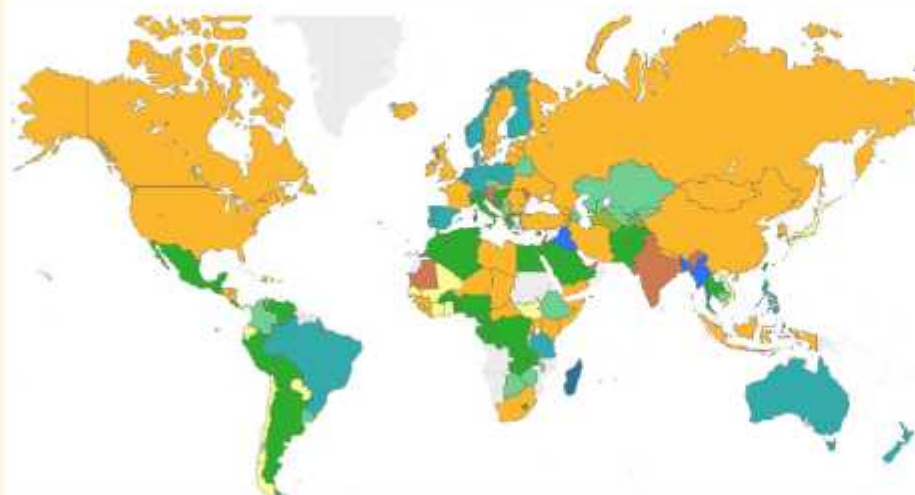
First most challenging

- N/A* Lack of skills/experience/education
- N/A* People prefer to hire/promote men
- Safe transportation
- Unequal pay
- Lack of good-paying jobs
- Unfair treatment
- Do not approve of women working
- Affordable care
- Work/Family balance
- Lack of flexible work hours
- Not surveyed

*Was not mentioned as a top challenge



Second most challenging factor



- Lack of skills/experience/education
- N/A* People prefer to hire/promote men
- Safe transportation
- Unequal pay
- Lack of good-paying jobs
- Unfair treatment
- Do not approve of women working
- Affordable care
- Work/Family balance
- Lack of flexible work hours
- Not surveyed

*Was not mentioned as a top challenge

According to this report, in India the most critical factors influencing decisions to work were work –family and flexible hours of work.

On the awareness of POSH, there was a gap between theoretical knowledge of the Act and actual in-depth understanding of it. There was a need for greater dissemination and regular orientation and training on its issues. Members of the internal complaint committee also needed training, on the various legal mandates, related to women's work as well as on POSH.

Initiatives taken by organisations towards greater gender equality

Some of the initiatives that the organisations had taken up towards greater gender equality included

- Equal pay for equal work
- No-discrimination policy for recruitment, and promotion based on merit.
- Introducing leadership development programmes
- Intensive trainings based on self-assessments
- Encouraging role models to mentor and inspire people within the organisation
- Regular confidential feed back loops
- Organising collective introspections through Retreats.

Reasons for Organisations' interest in gender equality at work place

Organisations were interested in and keen on committing policies and monitoring and mentoring practises to enhance gender equality. The reasons for this as given by the top management were as follows:

a. Compliance of statutory obligations was a basic motivation.

b. Organisations were sensitive to their reputation and the way they were perceived. There was a clear aversion to controversies over sexual harassment litigation. Several company directors referred to the recent 'Me Too' campaign as having immense significance for all organisations in today's world. It revealed suppressed injustice and exploitation in subtle forms that were not just detrimental to women's dignity, but were also like a 'death knell' as one director put it, to the company's reputation. It was felt that if top management mainstreamed gender equality and ensured continuous vigilance and training, it would pre-empt such situations. This was also the strongest motivation to agree to an independent and objective gender audit;

c. Gender diversity opened new perspectives and capabilities and so contributed new products and services. This could be understood as the 'gender dividend'²⁸ that like dividends from other financial mechanisms, made for a dual-focus business case: women as talent and women as consumers. This helped in expanding the customer base, open new markets and multiply revenue sources for the company;

²⁸ The Gender Dividend: Making the Business Case for Investing in Women. (2011). Deloitte.

Judy Rosener writes about Nike's and Jill Ker Conway's journey in her book America's Competitive Secret: Women Managers, "Initially her idea was rejected out of hand. As Nike president Richard Donahue recalled, "Our habit was to make a male product, color it pink and sell it." Conway kept arguing for a separate division run by women and targeting female customers. Eventually the board acquiesced, and by late 1993 the women's division accounted for 20 percent of Nike's domestic revenues." (Judy B. Rosener, America's Competitive Secret: Women Managers, (New York: Oxford University Press), 1995,)By May 2016, Nike's revenues from its women's segment had revenues of nearly \$6.3 billion, and the company announced plans in 2015 to grow that to \$11 billion by 2020. (Trefis Team, "Here Are The Three Key Growth Drivers For Nike", Forbes, November 24, 2015.).

d. Investors were more inclined towards companies with strong records of gender diversity and policy evidence of supporting women.

e. Gender equal policies augmented employee satisfaction and so motivated everyone towards better work effort better products and add to a company's bottom line.

These reasons resonate with the analysis in a Grant Thornton report of the reasons why companies value gender equality at work place (Women in Business: beyond policy to progress, March, 2018)

Top gender equality policies and practices businesses have in place :



81%

Equal pay for men and women performing the same roles



71%

Non-discrimination policies for recruitment



59%

Paid Parental leave

Top drivers for businesses to introduce gender equality policies and



65%

To attract and keep employees



65%

To live up to organisational values



55%

To enhance company performance

Main barriers that Prevent gender equality policies and practices being



22%

Levels of complexity in translating good intentions into practice



21%

Stereotypes about gender roles



16%

Lack of evidence that it has a positive impact on company performance

Recommendations

- Gender audit is an iterative process. It needs adaptation according to changing contexts, policies and strategies. Each organisation should develop its gender audit plan and calendar. This will also help it to think about goal setting and integrate gender concerns in its regular monitoring framework.
- Gender analysis is needed for both programs/products/services offered by organisations, as well as of the institutional arrangements, structures and processes of the organisations.
- Qualitative indicators should be developed by organisations and this should be a collective process of discussion, analysis and prioritisation. This should involve field offices, as they often tend to be on the periphery of policy and consultation.
- Effort should be made for hiring more women at the manager level. This is eminently feasible as it was noted that in every organisation, the gender gap shrank with education. In situations where women had similar education and experience as men, both women and men said that women had the same opportunity to find good jobs. Education and skilling programmes, both prior to induction and post induction, can make a real difference here and unlock women's talent.
- Providing adequate maternity protection and leave provisions, offering flexible working hours, and addressing the need for better childcare can go a long way towards increasing participation of women in work.
- A pro-active approach to integrating self – critiquing mechanisms is needed. This requires top level leadership. Leadership development and sensitisation are crucial to this.
- Innovative linkages between traditional audits and gender audits need to be designed. This would give gender audits a statutory status that is needed to enforce the constitutional mandates for gender equality. At present, gender audits are still an exception and are at the discretion of the employer.

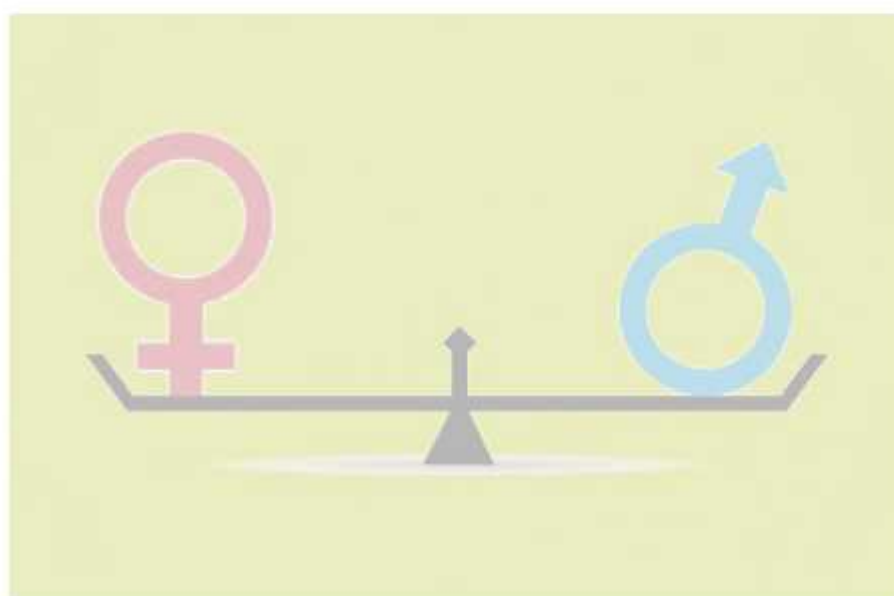
Three initiatives of Biocon Ltd

Maternity Leave: Women employees are entitled to 26 weeks of ML for up to 2 children, and 12 weeks of ML from 3rd child onwards. Commissioning mothers can avail up to 12 weeks of ML, with gross salary. Flexi work hours for a maximum of 4 weeks as well as extended ML up to 52 miscarriage or medical termination of pregnancy, 6 weeks of ML is provided.

Crèche Facility: Mandate is to provide facility to 100 per cent of the crèche applications. Three crèches are used by employees, free of cost. Out of the three facilities, two facilities are combined, and in one of them, there is an exclusive room for nursing mothers.

Biowin: This 'of the women, for the women and by the women' forum is functioning full fledge facilitating women related initiatives like work-life balance, women leadership developments etc.

- Greater dissemination of the POSH provisions and guidelines is needed. Action taken by organisations under POSH need to be made more transparent. POSH concerns should be more mainstreamed into organisational culture. This can be done through gender sensitisation workshops and trainings. POSH committees need to be encouraged to be more active. Ways of interaction with the organisation should be devised that allow both sides to imbibe a culture that respects women.



Gender Audit as an Opportunity for Empowerment

Gender audits are assuming significance in today's world, as more women in the age group of 18 to 44 years are stepping out of their domestic sphere to join the paid work stream. Traditionally, audits brought finances and expenditures under the scanner. Gender audits do not just assess how the resources are distributed; they examine the capabilities and opportunities that women can avail of and in the process, can become turning points that trigger behavioural transformation. New alliances need to be forged between the institutional audit systems, government and policy makers, private sector employers, researchers and international agencies committed to the cause of gender equality and sustainable development.

UN Women highlighted the Gaps Analysis Tool - an easy way to benchmark where an organisation stands in terms of gender equality and take the corrective steps. Best practices within the industry were shared to leverage existing platforms to educate the industry on the benefits of gender equality in the workforce and identify role models to "grow the tribe". The group agreed on the following next steps:

- Encourage more CEOs to pledge their support towards gender equality.
- Identify mentors who can lead other organisations in their sector to adopt gender equal policies
- Create ways to increase brand/ PR value for organisations that encourage women in their workforce

Enable cross pollination of best practices by:

- Leveraging existing platforms and content
- Identifying role models
- Storytelling
- Sharing success stories and policies

source: UN Business India Forum 2018

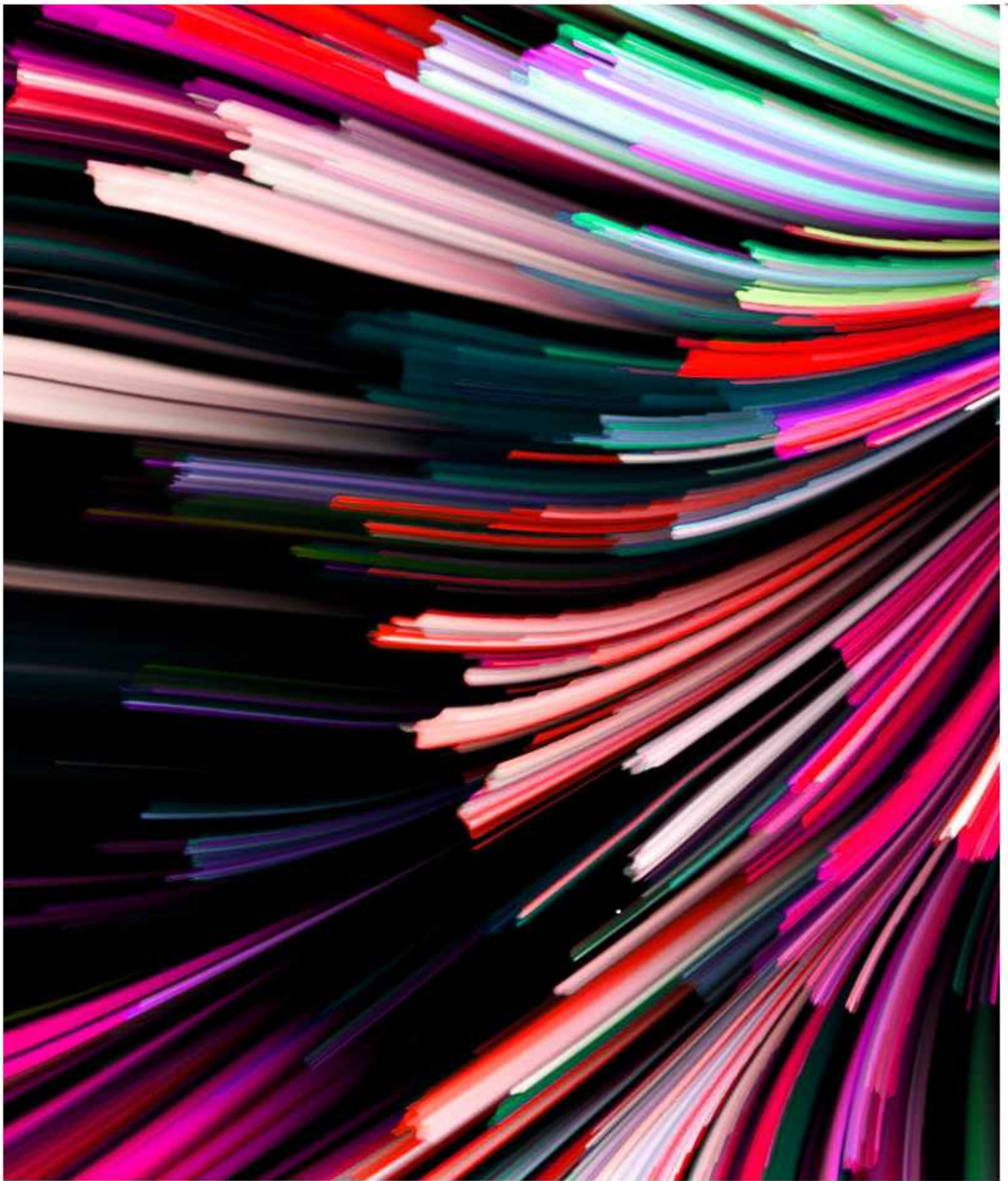
About IPE CKD

IPE Global-Centre for Knowledge and Development (IPE CKD) is the not-for-profit knowledge management arm of IPE Global, an international development consultancy organisation working for twenty years across six continents and collaborating significantly with governments at home and abroad. IPE CKD is engaged with knowledge generation and dissemination on a diverse range of issues, such as poverty alleviation, gender equality, education and skill development, health and nutrition- all kernel to inclusive growth and sustainable development. IPE CKD's partners include premium institutes of global excellence such as IIT Bombay.

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