



# WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY 2020

An initiative by  
HER CAREER FOUNDATION  
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# PURPOSE



## CAREERS HAVE NO GENDER!

This is the sole purpose of our survey on Workplace Gender Equality. Through this survey, we want to understand :-

- ❑ The gender equality landscape in the Indian workplace
- ❑ Find the progress companies have made towards enhancing gender equality
- ❑ Find whether gender equality is being treated as a business priority.

Many people see achieving gender equality as a women's issue but it is a human's issue. Although there have been a lot of changes to achieve parity at workplaces, gender equality is still far from being achieved as the big talks of policies to make this happen just remain on paper and never see the light of the day. Over the last decade, people have become increasingly aware and sensitized about equality in the workplace to create an inclusive culture. We want to observe the approach of the corporates towards fostering equality and the extent to which the policies, if any, are implemented and practised in the organizations. The motive is to baseline key practices for enhancing gender equality in the Indian corporates.

Its to come up with active solutions and measures to guide the organizations to achieve the parity that's promised on paper as any serious shift towards a more inclusive, egalitarian and sustainable society starts with gender equality.

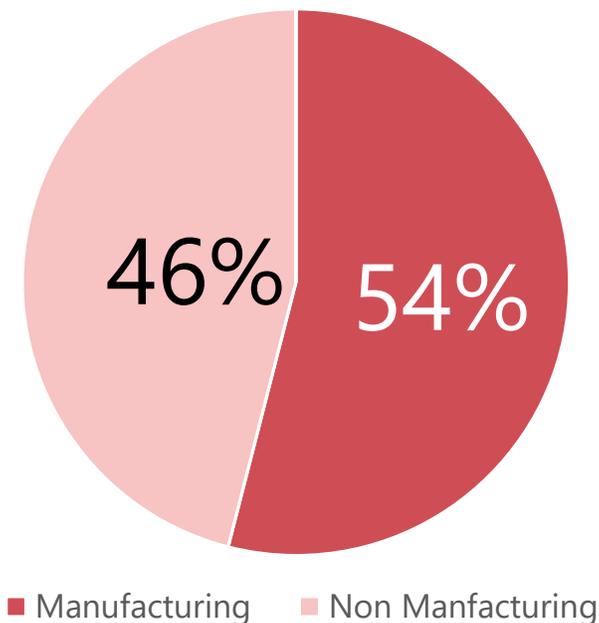
This survey will provide us with an insight into what happens at workplaces, how wrong and right the policies are and what can we collectively do and suggest to change it and encourage equality. Achieving gender equality requires the engagement of women and men, boys, and girls. It is everyone's responsibility.



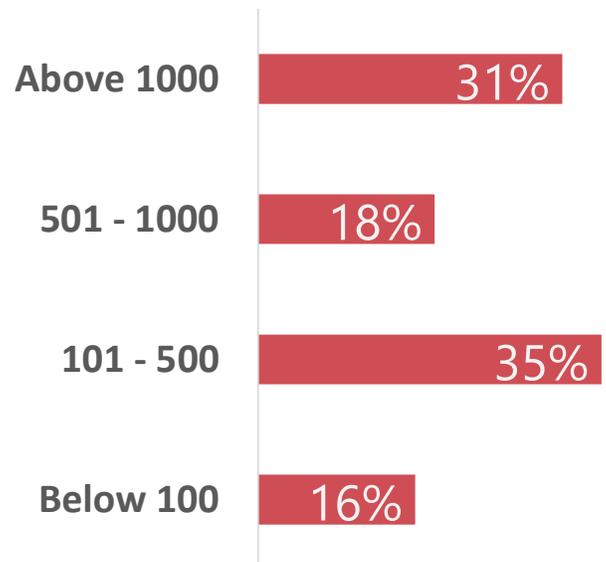
# SURVEY RESEARCH ON WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY

RESEARCH  
FINDINGS

## INDUSTRY SEGMENT



## ORGANIZATION WORKFORCE STRENGTH



## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This report is based on a Quantitative survey that was conducted with 313 Corporate Human Resource professionals from all over India and across the industry, as well as qualitative discussions with over 25 Senior Human Resource professional to gain a greater insight into the survey subject

## KEY FOCUS AREA

- Gender Equality Landscape in the workplace
- Challenges to Gender Equality in the workplace
- Organization's initiative to promote and foster gender equality
- Key policies for enhancing gender equality in the Indian corporates
- Gender Diversity in Leadership

# WORDS FROM THE WISE

*Indian companies use a broad-brush approach. Corporates are lacking Gender Equality and women are struggling for several reasons. Not much is done by the leaders- from senior positions to the CEO. The unconscious bias is very strong where men leaders don't want to take a chance on women leaders. We need to put bets on women and their work. Even when the government rolled out policies in CA 2013, there was no pipeline suggested. Women have to grind 20-30 years before getting a place on the board. Many women who reach the top think that they have become a man. Why is this necessary? Why is the thought that only men can reach the top and only when you reach the top you come to par with men, is still prevalent in society?*

*Women are not promoted however knowledgeable they may be for the fear that they'll quit in some time and that the role requires a lot of attention and responsibility. Both organization and women have a 50-50 role to play- organization can create a good and welcoming ecosystem while women need to be more competitive and break the mindset of the society."*



**Mr. Cyrus Jalnawala**  
Ex -HR- Director

*"Women need to work harder, smarter and longer than men to get appointed or promoted into leadership roles. Businesses need to reassess their process and criteria for promoting talent in order to break this deeply ingrained bias towards male leaders. Men and women are seen differently and the difference in my experience and observation is that women need to show competence more times before the company believes it. This inequality has a profound impact on the talent pipeline which has made organizations realize that they suffer this 'hollow-middle'"*

**Human Resource Head  
MNC Manufacturing**

*Some organizations tend to fake what they are not. This refers to the hidden nature of the corporates where they appear to be running diversity programs and all but don't do enough in that matter and are not very active in Gender Equality. So what appears in front of you may not be real, we should not form any judgment before knowing the truth.*

*At the end of the day, it is just for the sake of branding, the diversity agenda is not aligned to the hiring practices and corporates only do so to showcase it to the external world.*

**Head of Talent Acquisition,  
India & Middle-East , MNC**



# BREAKING FREE

Women in general, working or not have been subject to certain expectations in society that are not the same for men. Somewhere between being married, raising children, and always having to make family their priority, women had to give up their careers. The main reason they quit is that they are in a constant dilemma as to how to be effective in both their professional and personal lives. Indian women have more responsibilities than men as they have to wear multiple hats at the same time. Lack of proper support forces them to sacrifice their career and look after their home.

Some do, however, come back into the workforce after a few years. Even though women making a comeback into the corporate world seems like an encouraging idea, it is often not as rosy.

Most women share similar challenging experiences of juggling multiple roles - as a wife - being a companion to her husband in both good and bad times, as a mother - responsible for the education and upbringing of the children, as a daughter-in-law - taking care of the household responsibilities, and as a working professional - meeting organizational responsibilities.

Whereas, a man doesn't have to quit his job to look after the family.

It is high time to stop looking down on women because of gender stereotypes and recognize the transition of women from home-makers to career women whose occupation and employment define their fundamental identity and societal worth.

**BREAKING  
FREE FROM  
THE  
CULTURAL  
CONFINES**

# GENDER EQUALITY?



A business is only as good as the people it hires. As every coin has two sides, hiring talented people is not enough, companies need to manage the talented employees well and give them opportunities irrespective of gender so that they stay for long. Despite a substantial rise in the number of women joining the workforce in India, gender parity continues to suffer, especially at senior positions.

Many companies and organizations conduct gender equality and diversity programs for maintaining the balance among men and women employees but the question is **how many women employees are actually benefited from those programmes?**

**How many organizations truly take responsibility and initiative** about those programmes?

Many organizations take up the gender inequality issues but use a "laissez-faire" approach to diversity and equality which will merely reinforce the business solutions for women to advance rather than reduce the existing gender inequality. Many countries, including India, are supportive of women in terms of

getting well-deserved maternity breaks. However, organizations fail to complement the law and smoothen the transition back to the workforce for these women.

**“WOMEN ARE LUCKY  
BECAUSE WHATEVER  
FEAR THEY HAVE  
INSIDE THEM,  
THEIR DESIRE TO WIN  
IS ALWAYS STRONGER”**



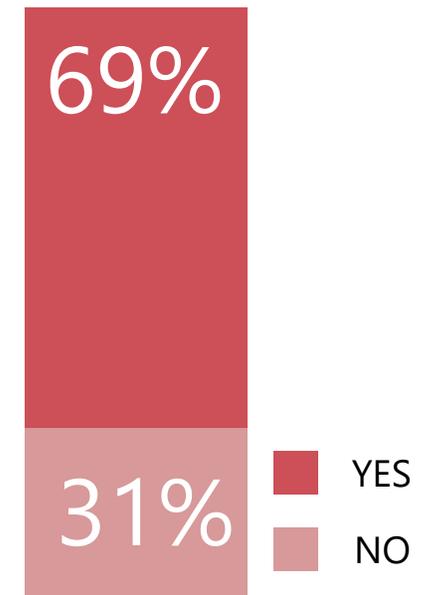
# DO ORGANIZATIONS WALK THE TALK?

RESEARCH FINDINGS

## Does your organization have a strong focus on Gender Equality at the workplace?

**69%** of the respondents said their organizations are highly committed to Gender Equality

**31%** of the respondents said that Gender Equality is not treated as a business priority



Organization's focus on Gender Equality

### GENDER EQUALITY – ORGANIZATIONS TALK ON MAKING IT A BUSINESS PRIORITY!

It is encouraging that so many companies prioritize Gender Equality.

However, businesses cannot benefit if they don't attract both men and women to their workforce. Lack of action, gender stereotypes, and unconscious biases can be the reason these companies are still lagging behind.

*"We can't deny the fact that chauvinism still prevails in the industry. Men are still hesitant to take orders from a woman. But overtime, things have changed and men have started recognizing the hard work put in by women and have grown to respect them."*

**Mr. Arnab Mitra**  
Chief Human Resource Officer



# ADEQUATE POLICIES FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

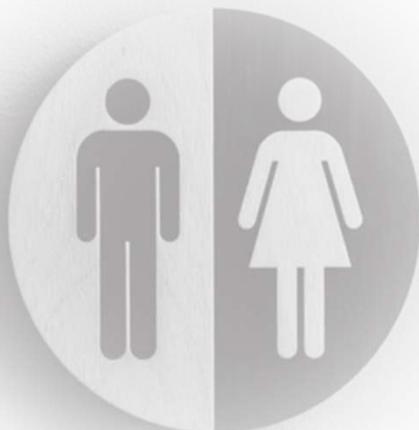
### Does your organization have adequate policies for Gender Equality in the workplace?

The equality policies considered are all types of synchronized efforts to create gender equality between men and women at the workplace level. Hence the pivot is on gender equality and not equality in terms of age, ethnicity, sexuality or other issues.

The survey findings clearly show that there is not enough awareness and sensitization about Gender Equality in 35% of the organizations.

This could be due to lack of proper training or low importance given by organizations.

The organizations have started giving importance to building an inclusive culture and promoting the idea of having equality at the workplace with the introduction of various policies and measures to promote safety, equal opportunity, and work-life balance of women which further builds a connection of trust between the women and their organization.



YES

NO

**65%**

of the respondents said that their companies have adequate policies to support women in the workplace

**35%**

of the respondents said that their organizations do not have policies to support women in the workplace

### GENDER EQUALITY – IT'S TIME TO SHIFT FROM PRIORITY TO VALUE!

If we are serious about making Gender Equality a reality, organizations have to move beyond a priority and start shifting their thinking around **VALUES**.

With time priorities can change but values are constant.

The most visible aspect of culture is behaviour which is shaped by **BELIEFS** and **VALUES** of the organization.

# RECOMMENDATION

## POLICIES ON GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ORGANIZATION

It is disconcerting that even though the corporates are well aware of the benefits of an equal workforce in terms of gender, there is still a lack of progress in closing the gender gap. There is clearly a need for policy initiatives where companies need to do more to put their commitment into practice to empower women in the corporates as gender disparities still persist in 35% of the companies. This starts with taking firm actions- setting clear goals, proper accountability through a channelized system, and setting equality targets. Building an inclusive culture and giving equal opportunity can pave the way for Gender Parity.

Gender Equality is more than just a Moral Responsibility!

**It is not enough to just have policies related to Gender Equality, it must be weaved into the Organization's cultural fabric**

But, the question is whether the policies in the company's booklet are actually being practiced in true spirit?

It is important to remember that having adequate policies in place is not enough until it is

implemented. Active and intentional actions on the part of both employers and employees have to be taken to enlist and retain women in the workforce at all levels to narrow down the equality gap.

**Integrating gender equality with company processes, goals and objectives:**

To bring about a positive culture change, organizations should start being intentional in their approach and align gender equality road map with every process, goal and objective, going beyond paper and pen, putting every intentional effort to live it in spirit. It is important to have a complete ecosystem in the organization to foster gender equality at the workplace, driving sensitization among employees; having top-down approach, weeding out recruitment and promotion biasness, creating a women talent pipeline for futuristic, creating mentoring and capability development programmes for **"WOMEN ONLY"**

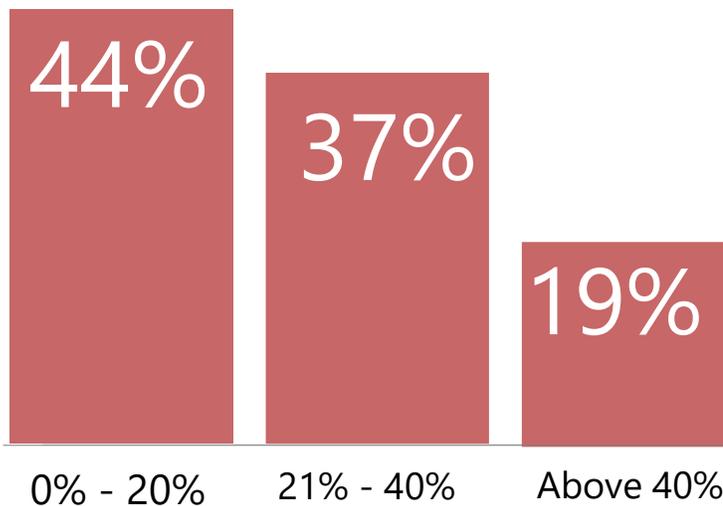
*"Earlier, women were less likely to be hired at the managerial level and far less likely to be promoted. Now things are different, a lot of companies who are promoting Gender Equality have a task force which is working towards diversity and inclusion projects. The inequality had a profound impact on the talent profile which made the organizations realize they had a hollow middle level leadership."*

**VP – HR  
Manufacturing MNC**

# STARK REALITY-WOMEN IN THE ORGANIZATION'S WORKFORCE

RESEARCH FINDINGS

## What is the percentage of women in your organization's workforce?



### Percentage of Women in Your Organization

In a country where women are earning more bachelorette degrees than men, they are still under-represented in not just the senior leadership positions but even at the entry-level and managerial level jobs.

**As per our survey 69%** of the respondents claimed that their organizations focus on Gender Equality but the harsh reality struck when the data revealed that only **19%** of the organizations have **above 40%** of women in their workforce

**44%**

of the respondents said that their organizations have between

**0% - 20%**

**of women** in their workforce

**37%**

of the respondents said that their organizations have between

**21% - 40%**

**of women** in their workforce

**19%**

of the respondents said that their organizations have

**Above 40%**

**of women** in their workforce

*"The first critical step to a manager, the disparity that has now come down (as compared to the last 10 years) is coming at par. Now companies are promoting women and also ascertaining what percentage of women do they want in their organization, consciously looking at a certain percentage of women leaders."*

CHRO- MNC

# PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN ORGANIZATIONS' WORKFORCE

RESEARCH  
FINDINGS

## WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN ORGANIZATIONS' WORKFORCE

It is also due to lower participation in the workforce when compared to men, women are less likely to move ahead than men in the corporate ladder.

### **But why does it happen?**

**There are several reasons:**

#### **Setting foot in entry-level jobs:**

Women are generally judged or looked down upon because of various gender stereotypes and a mentality that only men are capable of certain roles. The engineering sector typically has the stereotype of being a 'man's line of work'. For example, when picturing a delivery driver, one might typically picture a male. The same goes for those working within the engineering industry segment. Of course, this illustration doesn't paint a modern picture and the industry has seen a vast transformation. Nevertheless, the stereotypes still seem to linger to this day. We should not shy away from doing all that we can to make engineering a welcoming place for women. But we must also not 'overcorrect' and alienate men. That could be a ticking time-bomb for the future. We must 'socially' engineer a comfortable balance between the gender lines, and open up the sector for everyone, no matter what their gender background and identity is.

#### **Putting up with administrative roles:**

Even if women are selected for certain jobs, it takes them a long time to be promoted. This is because

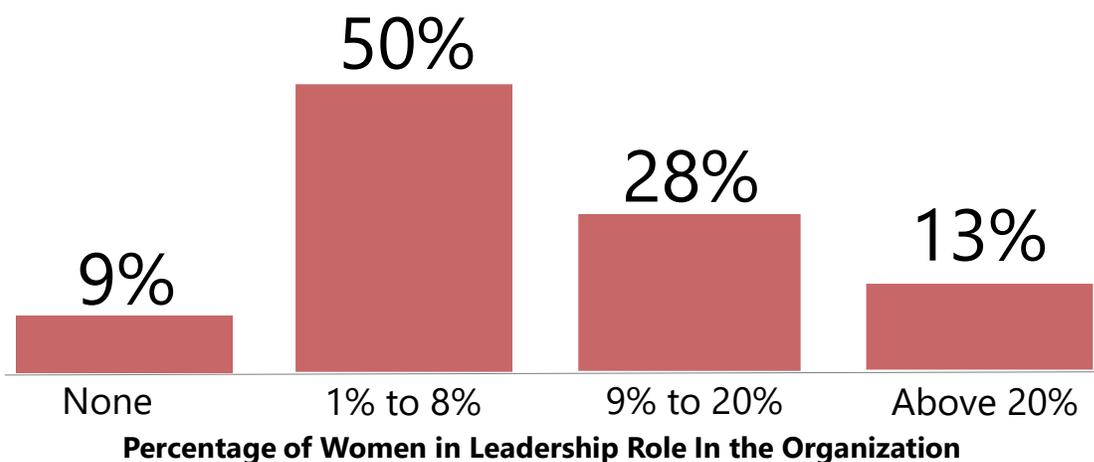
of the misconception that they will soon move into the family way and won't be available for roles that require all of their attention. The unconscious bias is very strong when taking decisions for promotions at middle-level management.



# WOMEN AT THE LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS

## Percentage of Women at Senior Management/ Leadership Role In the Organization



**9%** Of the respondents said that there are **NO WOMEN** in leadership role in their organizations

**50%** of the respondents said that the representation of women in leadership role is **between 1% to 8%** in their organizations

**28%** of the respondents said that the representation of women in leadership role is **between 9% to 20%** in their organizations

**13%** of the respondents said that the representation of women in leadership role is **above 20%** in their organizations

In a shocking revelation, **9%** of the respondents reported that there is **NO WOMEN representation** at the Leadership level in their organizations, whereas only **13%** of the respondents said that they have women representation **above 20% at the Leadership.**

*This comes as a shock because women are underrepresented in not just the corporate pool of the organization but also in the leadership positions.*

- What is causing women to leak out in the pipeline to the top management role?
- What is preventing the ambitious women of India to reach the senior leadership position?
- Do unconscious biases and inequality outnumber women significantly?

# RECOMMENDATION

## WOMEN AT THE LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

To increase the participation of women in the workforce, companies need to be more attentive towards addressing the hiring, promotion, and representation of women in every level of management. The recruitment process should be made more inclusive and selections should be made purely on skills and experiences to promote workplace equality. Positive changes are likely to happen when organizations build a welcoming ecosystem and gender-blind promoting policies for women.

The problem of “glass-ceiling” which prevents women from reaching the top should be addressed by giving the right opportunity, mentorship, and sponsorship for advancement in career. If the corporates have the right processes in place to hire and promote more women by creating an inclusive culture and preventing biases to creep in, equality won't be a distant idea. It is critical for both men and women who are in the senior roles to mentor and give opportunities to young women leaders.

*“Talking about the leadership population division, women are still a minute percentage. Very few organizations are working towards providing leadership opportunities and giving importance to women returning from an employment gap. They are skeptical about whether women deserve such opportunities but I firmly believe women are equally competitive in all ranks, positions, and roles they hold. It is time for people at the top-level management to stop differentiating between employees on the basis of their gender, rather recognize them only on the basis of their performance and contribution in the company.”*

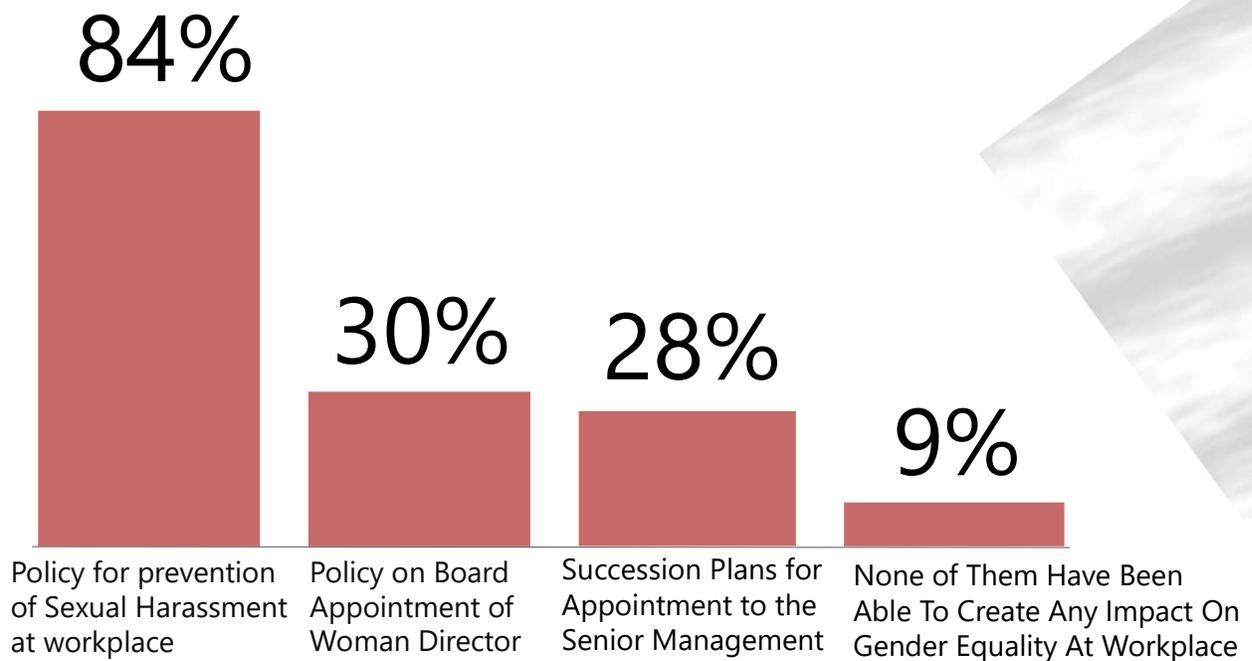
**Mr. Manu Widge**  
**Head of Talent Acquisition**  
**India and Middle-East**



# POLICIES V/S PRACTICE: THE NEED FOR CHANGE

RESEARCH  
FINDINGS

## Policies which have made an impact on enhancing Gender Equality at the workplace [Multiple Choice Question]



All talks of Gender Equality have been restricted to some laws and policies which are vaguely implemented but not adhered to.

People still don't feel an immense pull from inside to change their way of thinking and their approach towards women.

The Company's Act of 2013 gave way for some new laws and policies like:

- Policy for prevention of Sexual Harassment at workplace
- Policy on Board Diversity (appointment of woman director)
- Succession plans for appointments to the board /senior management

**84%** of the respondents rated POSH as the most important element to enhance gender equality at the workplace.

**30%** of the respondents said policies on Appointment of Women Directors will have an impact on enhancing gender equality at the workplace.

**28%** of the respondents said organizations having proper succession planning of women to the senior management will have an impact on enhancing gender equality at the workplace.

**9%** of the respondents feel that these policies have not been able to create an impact on Gender Equality at the workplace

# POLICIES V/S PRACTICE: WORDS FROM THE WISE

## WORDS FROM THE WISE



*Advocate Debasrita Saratkar*

*She is a Senior Legal Practitioner with experience over 15 years in corporate laws, women rights, employment laws, IT and data protection.*

*A certified POSH Consultant handling complaints in sexual harassment and employment issues related to women.*

## POSH ACT BACKGROUND

*"For the first time in the year 1995 in the matter of Rupan Deol Bajaj vs. Kanwar Pal Singh Gill[1] the Supreme Court recognized sexual harassment as a crime falling squarely under Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code as outraging the modesty of a woman to include outraging the dignity of a woman. Soon to follow was the historic and landmark judgment of Vishakha vs. State of Rajasthan[2] a rape case involving a social worker in Rajasthan in 1997, that laid exhaustive guidelines on prevention and protection against sexual harassment strongly advocating a code of conduct in every workplace. For the first time, the Apex Court defined sexual harassment at workplace, for the first time in 1997 and promulgated measures to curb it. Equality in employment cannot be achieved if women are subjected to gender-specific violence at the workplace, such as sexual harassment. The Supreme Court observed that actions resulting in violation of*

*one's rights to 'Gender Equality' and 'Life and Liberty' are in fact a violation of the victim's fundamental right under Article 19 (1) (g). This judgment set the groundwork for the POSH Act, 2013. Prior to the enactment of the 2013 Act, the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1987 was the law which could be used to address sexual harassment at workplace to a limited extent by holding companies liable for the harassment of women through the use of books, photographs, painting, films, pamphlets, packages etc. containing indecent representation of women. Unlike earlier times where professions of women were limited to few sectors, like banking, insurance, doctors and academicians, in today's world, women are equal partners and perform in every possible profession. Today women have transcended all barriers and are contributing immensely to the economy of the country and hence there lies a huge responsibility on the society to create a sense of safety and security among working women and also to create deterrence against sexual harassment at the workplace through a strict laws and stringent implementation of the POSH ACT".*

## TRAINING

*"There is a regular need for training and sensitizing employees on the dos and don'ts related to the activities that could transcend into sexual harassment advertently or inadvertently will go a long way in curbing Sexual Harassment. Organizations could also make their employees confirm affirmations that employees understand the policy and agree to comply with the policy in letter and spirit. A safe and healthy workplace ensures a robust goodwill for an organization."*

# POLICIES V/S PRACTICE: WORDS FROM THE WISE

## WORDS FROM THE WISE

## POSH ACT BACKGROUND

### COMPLIANCES – AND NEED

*“There are very stringent compliance requirements under the POSH Act; which undoubtedly big organizations and multinational companies are adhering to. The Act provides protection not only to women who are employed but also to any woman who enters the workplace as a client, customer, apprentice, and daily wageworker or in ad-hoc capacity and seeks to cover workplaces in the unorganised sectors. In practice, however it is seen that in the mid-sized and small institutions and firms are giving it a pass even though non-compliances are associated with penalties. While there are policies against sexual harassment but the awareness through trainings and workshops are rare. Trainings and workshops help in sensitizing the topic of sexual harassment and reinforces the firm’s no tolerance policy towards sexual harassment. Bringing the law is force is just one part of the battle, creating awareness and educating women and men as victims on their rights and redressal mechanisms available to them under the Act is a long term and continuous effort.”*

### WORK FROM HOME (WFH)

*“Work from home is a very tricky scenario as while there is no physical contact between the harasser and the victim, the harassment could be verbal or visual, through innuendos and in a private chat room which could be equally agonising and traumatic for the victim. Under such a scenario it is very extremely important that organizations should conduct regular online training and affirmations for creating awareness and assuring a safe environment to its women employees. A Whistle Blowing hotline should be functional and responsive that maintains complete confidentiality of the details and persons involved.”*

### ROLE OF ICC

*“Under the Act, every employer is required to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC). For establishments having less than 10 workers, the Act provides for setting up of Local Complaints Committee (LCC) to be constituted by the designated District Officer at the district or sub-district levels, depending upon the need. This twin mechanism ensures that women in any workplace, irrespective of its size or nature, have access to a redressal mechanism. The LCCs enquire into the complaints of sexual harassment and recommend action to the employer or District Officer. While the ICC holds power of the court of law in summoning and examining of witnesses and documents, the report of the ICC is in the form of recommendation to take any action including a written apology, warning, reprimand or censure, withholding of promotion, withholding of pay rise or increments, terminating the respondent from service or undergoing a counselling session or carrying out community service, compensation to the victim to the employer and hence lacks the authority of a verdict. If the victim is aggrieved with the recommendations of the ICC, an appeal can be filed before the civil court which then converts into a long-drawn battle under the civil and labour laws of the country making the entire episode traumatic and frustrating for the victim. Having said that, she still believes that the act is a progressive step to tackle misogyny, prejudice against women and their skillsets.”*

# POLICIES V/S PRACTICE: WORDS FROM THE WISE

## WORDS FROM THE WISE

## WOMEN IN BOARDROOM COMPANY ACT 2013

**Mr. Sanjay has been a practicing Company Secretary for the last 7+ yrs., handling a mammoth clientele base of more than 700 companies which includes Private and Public listed companies.**

*The regulatory push through Companies Act, 2013 (w.e.f. 1st April 2014) has made it mandatory to appoint at least one woman Director on Board of a certain class of Companies which includes all Listed Companies, though a high majority of the categorized organizations have complied with the regulatory directives, still, there is a long way to go to bring in the desired Gender Inclusiveness in the Board Rooms.*

*Sanjay highlights that SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 also required every Listed Company to appoint at least One-woman director on the Board of every Listed Entity. However, many grey areas exist in reality. It has been more of reluctant compliance by the Indian corporates. They have found a way to play around the rule to comply but kill the primary objective behind the law. For sake of technical compliance, boards of many companies roped-in, family members of the Promoter(s) or related parties as women director on the Board to comply with the law.*

*He says "Women on board of the unlisted public companies are more of a namesake only to adhere to the regulatory compliance. They don't get to participate in the meetings or decision-making, they are treated as a **SHADOW DIRECTOR**.*

*These are dummy appointments to keep up with the compliance."*

*Sanjay notices that organizations with better representation of women on board have shown higher revenues and profits than the board which has only male members.*



*"When it comes to taking leadership positions, women are not considered as the right choice because they have to maintain a work-life balance. Women are earning more bachelor's degrees than men but when asking for salaries, promotions, they are paid less attention than men."*

**MNC - CHRO**

# POLICIES V/S PRACTICE: TO FOSTER GENDER EQUALITY

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Percentage weightage given to Gender Equality while taking decisions for the

#### RECRUITMENT

72%

of the respondents have said that in their organizations the weightage given to Gender Equality during

**RECRUITMENT**

is

**BELOW**

30%

#### EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

52%

of the respondents have said that in their organizations the weightage given to Gender Equality during

**EQUAL PAY  
FOR EQUAL WORK**

is

**BELOW**

30%

#### PROMOTIONS

58%

of the respondents have said that in their organizations the weightage given to Gender Equality during

**PROMOTIONS**

is

**BELOW**

30%

**Recruitment** is the first barrier women need to cross as many challenges and biases await her post joining, if weightage given to Gender Equality is still languishing below 30% during Recruitment, **how are we going to achieve gender parity?**

#### **Equal pay for equal work**

Is a fundamental first step, to help advance equality in the workplace and society. It's more about establishing gender equity. Despite the equal pay debate gaining momentum, still, 52 % of the respondents have reported that the weightage given to Gender Equality **for Equal Pay for Equal Work** is still below 30%.

**This highlights that wage inequality is a big part of the challenge women are facing.**

58 % of the respondents have said that the weightage given to Gender Equality during **PROMOTIONS** is below 30%. If a significant effort is not made to retain and promote women, companies risk losing women in leadership and future women leaders and undoing years of laborious progress toward gender equality

# RECOMMENDATION

## GENDER EQUALITY WHILE MAKING DECISIONS

### CHANGE IN RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

Organizations need to be vocal and announce openly that they are extensively looking for female employees to join their workforce.

Implement gender-neutral recruitment processes. Changes to obsolete masculine-worded job descriptions will encourage women to believe they are deserving and demanded in the workforce.

Provide training on unconscious bias. Sensitize and train the recruiting team and the hiring managers in a way that they realize the importance of women and having them at work, how they are equal to men and should be given equal opportunities as well.

Blind hiring should be encouraged. Blind hiring reduces biases during the talent acquisition process by removing information like name, gender, religion, or socioeconomic background.

### EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

Companies should ensure equal wage or wage parity from the offer level itself. Review salaries and standardize pay. Equal pay for people working in the same position should be the rule, regardless of their gender.

Equal remuneration act of 1976 should be mandatorily implemented at all workplaces.

The workforce should be trained in sensitization, especially men, to avoid any form of discrimination against women. Conducting seminars and holding sessions to promote gender equality needs to be encouraged

and held regularly to change the biased mindsets of people

### PROMOTIONS

Women careers don't follow the pattern of linearity like men's career does. It is filled with challenges on the personal front and they have to face organizational biases that affect their advancement in the corporate structure

#### What Organizations Need to Do?

- ❑ Corporate leaders could set enforceable goals that will drive the course of action.
- ❑ Women employees should be provided with mentorship, networking and sponsorship support for career development and advancement.
- ❑ Strict checks should be introduced to weed out personal biases during performance evaluation for promotions.
- ❑ Merit should be the sole yardstick for promotions, irrespective of their gender or any other demographics.

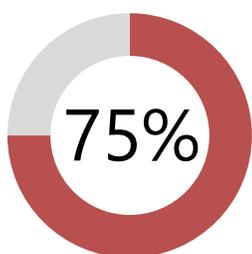
*"We should understand that recruitment of a critical managerial position in the organization is followed by the discussion behind closed doors where women are seen as people who would leave their jobs in some time due to their personal lives. This idea is not put into the heads of people by senior male managers but that by the females in the senior leadership positions. **Women pull back other women.** They are the ones holding back the younger women to prosper in the career also known as a queen-bee syndrome where women in authority refuse to mentor and share their knowledge with their female subordinates."*

**Mr. Arnab Mitra**  
**Chief Human Resource Officer**

# ESSENTIALISM: WORK-LIFE BALANCE

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

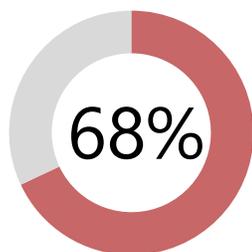
### Does your organization have specific policies to promote and support work-life balance of women employees?



#### FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

75% of the respondents reported that their organizations have policies related to Flexible Working Hours to promote the work-life balance of women employees.

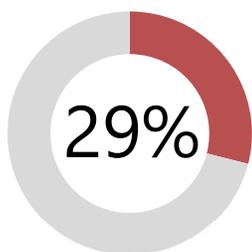
The Survey Findings clearly show that organizations want their employees to be efficient and for the same reason policies on flexible working hours have been promoted in most of the organizations.



#### TELECOMMUTING | REMOTE WORKING

68% of the respondents said that their organizations have specific policies on Telecommuting or remote working to promote the work-life balance of women employees.

The Survey findings clearly show that Telecommuting or working remotely has been supported by most of the organizations and they have policies for the same. Gender Equality in the workplace has been evolving and organizations have taken the issue of letting their employees work remotely seriously.



#### PART-TIME WORKING

Only 29% of the respondents said that their organizations support part-time working to promote the work-life balance of women employees.

The Survey findings clearly show that organizations don't promote Part-time working. The Indian Culture does not trust the idea of employees working for part-time hours and insist on full time working experience.

*"An individual lady definitely has to take many difficult decisions in life such as whether she wants to give time to her child or she wants to move ahead in her career. But if you are saying that you will be hundred percent available for your family and move up the ladder of success, it will not happen. There is always going to be a trade-off between professional and the personal life and the woman has to make these choices. Nobody's stopping her"*

**CHRO- MNC**

# RECOMMENDATION

## ESSENTIALISM WORK-LIFE BALANCE

A few steps that companies can take to help promote Gender Equality in the Workplace starts with giving women a more flexible work schedule and open-ended tools to perform better. Women are often left behind in the workforce as they cannot put in the same hours as their male counterparts. It is not shocking that it becomes more difficult for women to put in the hours as safety becomes an issue while returning home. In a situation like that the company must reassure their female employees that they will make schedules that suit her and take into consideration her family and security concerns. Women can be put in projects that do not have strict and difficult timelines, be allowed to work from home options when they require and be provided with the tools that need to perform the job. Organizations can also be providing safe transportation on days when women employees have to stay in the office longer than usual.

There are certain policies and initiatives that an institute can introduce and adhere to. Policies like publishing gender equality data should be practiced on regular intervals in all levels of management. Gender Equality cannot be achieved without the help of men in the workforce as they do form the majority. In situations as such, it is important for them to understand the benefits of equality. Companies should be open to dialogues when concern about hiring more women compared to men crop up. Well researched data should be presented and the decision to hire women should be justified with it.

Proper counselling should be available to tackle inbuilt bias and to make everyone understand the need for equal opportunities. Not only internally but companies should also be vocal about gender equality in their organization publicly.

*"Certain organizations are definitely coming up with various programs to develop the capacity of women but this should happen on a larger scale. Extra benefits don't include creche facilities, work from home policies as those policies are the fundamental provisions of the organizations. So whenever it is hiring, such things are not taken into consideration as they already have these policies and it does not add to the benefits they are giving to the women."*

**HR - HEAD- MNC**

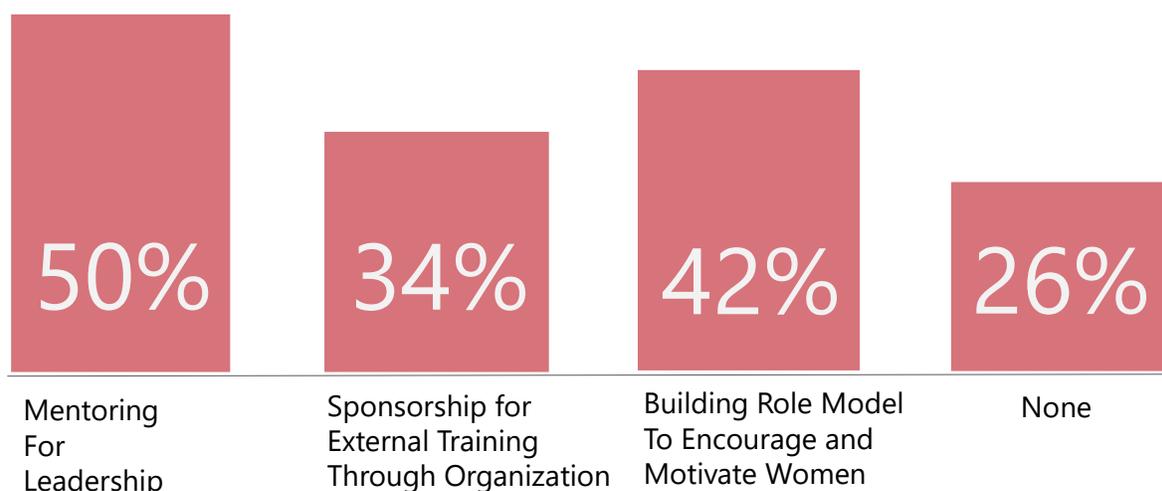


*"Balance is not better time management, but better boundary management. Balance means making choices and enjoying those choices." - Betsy Jacobson, Business Consultant*

# DEVELOPING FUTURISTIC WOMEN LEADERSHIP

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Select among the following initiatives your organization is taking to develop futuristic women leadership [MCQ]



## Organization's initiative to develop Futuristic Women Leadership

- ❑ **50%** of the respondents said that their organizations provide mentoring to women for leadership
- ❑ **34%** of the respondents said that their organizations provide sponsorship for external training through corporate transformations programs
- ❑ **42%** of the respondents said that their organizations help in building networks and role models for women employees
- ❑ **26%** of the respondents claimed that their organizations don't take any step towards developing Futuristic Women Leadership

Shocking to learn that **26%** of the organizations still don't feel there is a need for developing women leaders, this is really regressive.

There is a strong correlation between gender diversity and better business performance. If organizations do not start giving priority to women in hiring and retaining them, they are likely to miss the bus when the whole corporate world is fighting tooth and nail to be more gender-inclusive as the positives of having a balanced workforce are clearly evident.

*"It is the responsibility of the working woman's manager to lead the way for her and provide her the opportunities like coaching, mentoring, and actually understanding where her drive is."*

**Mr. Manu Widge**  
**Head of Talent Acquisition,**  
**India & Middle-East**

# RECOMMENDATION

## DEVELOPING FUTURISTIC WOMEN LEADERSHIP

**Leadership development needs of women are unique and different, it has to be tailored to meet their specific developmental needs.**

### ASSESSMENT

Organizations need to ensure that leadership based competencies and behavioural indicators are part of the 360 degree and other leadership assessment tools.

Provide Training to reduce possible evaluation biases  
Organizations need to engage developmental discussions regarding leadership assessments, and integrating the assessment with the development programs.

### TRAINING PROGRAMS

Organizations need to support and sponsor women with MDP's and certification programs.  
Create **'WOMEN ONLY'** and 'mixed-sex leadership development programs, both mentored by senior leadership.

### COACHING

It is one of the most common methods to reinforce leadership training and development of Leadership potential. Professional Coaching for leadership development of women leaders should be an ongoing strategy to create the talent pool.



Leadership should foster a culture of developmental coaching as a part of Organization's DNA with a specific agenda of leadership development which is a separate process from performance evaluation.

### MENTORING

Women should be supported and moulded in developing the skills needed to play the role of both mentee and mentor.

Developing mentoring programs that match high potential women employees with people in leadership roles.

Engage more women to mentor other women and men in the organization, it will help break the glass ceiling.

**Mentoring relationships should be supported across the levels in the organization, and programs need to be designed that assist women in structuring and managing their mentoring relationships.**

***The Indian women around us are no longer the submissive, nurturing, obedient and emotional types. Today's working women are just as aggressive and ambitious as men. They recognize their talents and understand their rights. They are ready and willing to play a more significant managerial role and 'lean in' to their careers more than their mothers ever did.***

# RECOMMENDATION

## DEVELOPING FUTURISTIC WOMEN LEADERSHIP

### NETWORKING

Outcomes of interpersonal networks include increased influence and power; access to job opportunities, information, and expertise; and job performance (Brass, Galaskiewicz, Greve, & Tsai, 2004).

Organizations need to create avenues to increase women's access to formal and informal networking opportunities within organizations and professions.

### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

**Experiential learning** also known as (EXL) is the process of learning through experience, and is more specifically defined as **"Learning Through Reflection On Doing."**

Organizations should construct programs that provide access for women to developmental Job assignments which are intricately associated with career advancement, for example – assignments associated with higher risk and complexity but of higher return and value.

Organizations should have proper process in place to award developmental opportunities and root out any inherent bias in existing practices.

Women's organizational leadership capabilities should be recognised and encourage the transfer of knowledge into organizational responsibilities.

### CAREER PLANNING

Organizations should support and encourage the process of proactive career planning and leadership development for women. People in leadership should provide strategic leadership and career development for their female staff.

There is a grave problem when it comes to our collective thought process with women in leadership across the board. The leadership gap is very evident. This problem of not having enough women in leadership is running really deep and visible across the industry spectrum. We need to acknowledge the stereotypes and individual biases that hold women back.

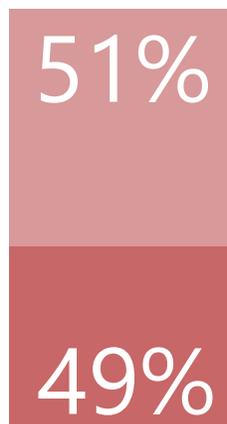
***We are cognizant of how women in leadership roles can help restore balance and wholeness to our businesses and communities, then what's that holding us to restore the gender balance in leadership roles ?***



# POLICIES ON HIRING WOMEN FROM A CAREER BREAK

RESEARCH FINDINGS

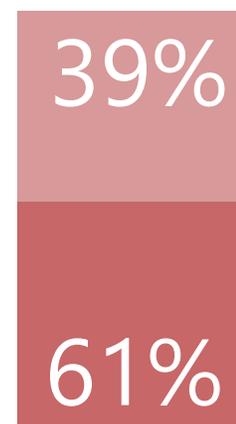
## Organizations Having Policies On Hiring Women From A Career Break?



## Organizations Having Returnee Internship Programme?



## Organizations Having Hired Women From A Career Break?



YES  
NO

- ❑ **51%** of the respondents said that their organizations do not have hiring policies on women from a career break
- ❑ **78%** of the respondents said that their organizations does not have Returnee-Internship Programs for women
- ❑ **39%** of the respondents said that their organizations have never hired women from a career break - **this is definitely a BIG gap**

Lack of proper policies on hiring woman from a career break, only makes it difficult for women to set their foot back into professional lives.

Women have to face many hardships to fulfill their wish of working in the corporate world again.

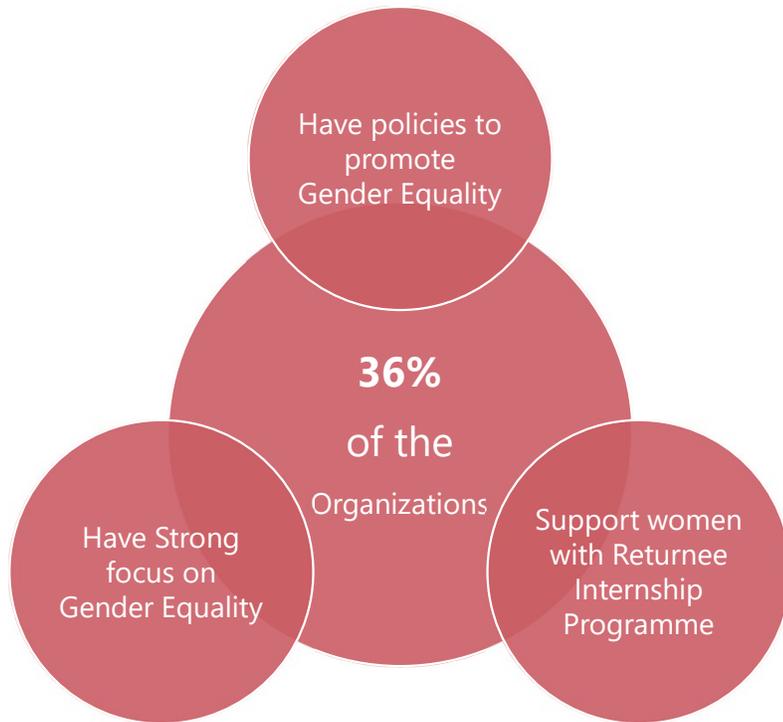
### **Having a strong women workforce looks like a good idea but isn't practiced in its true spirit.**

A deep-rooted cause of unconscious bias occurs when hiring women from sabbatical as people who lack knowledge about the current market and cannot work up to their managers' complex job expectations.

Let us appreciate the invaluable and priceless contribution of a woman, going for a career break, towards a social and humanitarian cause.

Let us be more enthusiastic in welcoming her back when she is ready and decides to join the main workforce. All we need to do is respect her potential and give her a second chance to establish her career .

# RESEARCH INSIGHTS



As per our survey

**ONLY 36 %**

of the organizations focus on Gender Equality, have policies to promote Gender Equality and support women with Returnee Internship Programs



As per our survey

**ONLY 10 %**

of the organizations with focus on Gender Equality, have hired women from a career break and have Returnee Internship Programs.

# RECOMMENDATION

## POLICIES ON HIRING WOMEN FROM A CAREER BREAK

Women consider giving-up their professional lives as it is the last option in their hands. Though sometimes, they have to choose such a painful option due to several inevitable reasons. They perpetually take a break with a burning desire to come back on board as soon as possible. But unfortunately, only a partial percentage of women manage their way back in the corporate world.

On their way back, they face numerous hurdles which make the scenario more challenging. The obstacles involve personal issues, as well as challenges from the industry. In the industry, there are challenges like lack of opportunity or network, changed job scenario, and poor gender equality at the workplace. Simultaneously women face their personal-demons, gap in skill sets, inflexible work environment, and reduced family support. So, when

women meet such challenges, then the returnee internship arrives for the rescue. This initiative shares the vision to empower women to lead with dignity. The mission is to re-skill, re-shape, and re-build the workplace by sharing programs that will guide women to the personal and professional development required to rejoin the industry again.

Maternity leaves are not enough. Organizations need to be welcoming towards those women who make a comeback because of their desire and passion to work. Flexi work and part-time work options should also be available to make it more convenient for women to settle down in the organization.

**Organizations should focus on creating an inspiring ecosystem that fosters all kinds of diversity and promotes inclusion.**



### Reshaping the **WORKPLACE**

If change is to happen, work cultures need to be more inclusive of women. Sensitivity and Empathy should be built into the recruitment process with strong accountability on the part of those driving these processes to negate the impacts of biases..



## GENDER EQUALITY

has been part of the social discourse for centuries, has gained prominence in the global awareness consciousness as it is the fundamental right of an individual and it has positive implications.

According to the United Nations, Sustainable Development Goal, achieving Gender Equality for all Women and Girls by 2030 globally is one of the 17 goals envisioned by the UN. Despite Serious efforts by the proponents of Gender Equality, it is still a work in progress activity.

Systemic challenges and personal biases are the major factors which create barriers to women's entry into the workforce and hinders the advancements in their careers.

Equity will serve as the fulcrum to balance gender and the workplace to achieve equality. Gender Equality is the end goal and Gender Equity is the means to get it.

## Gender Equality, Still A Long Way To Reach There .....

### **WE ARE GLAD**

**53%** of the respondents have shown interest in partnering with various initiatives by **HER CAREER FOUNDATION**, which shares the vision to empower women.

The mission is to develop a holistic ecosystem for women empowerment where women find room to grow and advance in their personal development and professional advancement.

Women Empowerment is Essential for Sustainable Development.

# DISCLAIMER

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# THANK YOU!

## HER CAREER FOUNDATION

Registered Trust - Reg No - E10756

Not-for-Profit platform that provides Learning, Networking & Mentoring resources for women who are on a career break and are planning to rejoin the main workforce and supports women entrepreneurs in their entrepreneurship journey.

[www.hercareerfoundation.org](http://www.hercareerfoundation.org)

