



# Empowering DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

A CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

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## AN ONGOING COMMITMENT TO EMPOWERMENT AND EQUITY

**W**hile the prevailing sentiment in society and business is that diversity is a good thing. However, there is a pertinent need to dig deeper and introspect what it actually means

to be diverse and why it matters. Striking a balance between diversity, equity, and inclusion isn't easy but it matters for a sustainable business and society. An acceptance of



differences in attitudes, opinions, and appearance is also part of a cultural introspection and transformation. Many organizations today are acting as exemplars for diver-

sity and inclusion in their respective industries. Gender diversity is a good start, but policies about diversity and inclusion mustn't end with gender diversity.

It is also not enough for organizations to merely issue politically correct statements or policies about diversity, equity, and inclusions. There is a need to follow-through

with meaningful action to still lasting change. The idea is to embrace and celebrate diversity, equity, and inclusion to make it a business expectation.

## Clearing the path for HUL's next generation of women in leadership



**ANURADHA RAZDAN,**  
Executive Director, Human Resources (HR) and Vice President HR, Unilever South Asia

**A** few years ago, an incident got me to reflect on what it meant to create a truly inclusive environment, when an employee came up to me and shared a very personal experience of how often they felt like they had to hide a part of their identity when stepping into the workspace."

Diverse representation is non-negotiable. However, I have come to realize that representation alone does not create an equitable organisation. Representation simply means getting a seat at the table, but it takes a culture of deliberate inclusion for all voices to be heard. It is the role of organisations to ensure that there is a level playing field and a culture where people do not feel the need to conform.

Biases are usually deep rooted and not easily apparent. Recognizing this, at HUL we have taken a bold approach to breaking stereotypes by consciously introducing women into roles typically dominated by male bastions- e.g., roles in sales and supply chain. Right now, three of our factories are led by women and we continue to groom female talent to step up to leadership roles across the board. Additionally, we have introduced Project Samavesh, which is our program to provide the infrastructure and policies to push for greater representation at shopfloor level and the Ahilya program to introduce more women in our sales frontline.

"Recently I had the pleasure of going on a trade visit to one of our key markets in Mumbai

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and while learning about our channels, customer platforms and consumers of the future I had the privilege of working the market with one of our young & talented Ahilyas - Kiran Shinde. Our Ahilya Program is a passion project that focuses on equal opportunities for women to join frontline roles in our sales force. The Ahilya program is also about making a positive impact to the communities we work with and empowering women in our outer core to be financially independent & shape their own future. Today the Ahilya program is 420 women strong & gaining momentum across the country with an ambition to build a frontline salesforce that is truly diverse & inclusive."

In a modern economy, gender differences in employment are overwhelmingly driven by policies and norms rather than any innate differences between men and women in average suitability. Understanding this,

at HUL we proactively audit our systems and processes for structural biases while making conscious choices to introduce progressive policies and practices that help level the playing field for all. We have significantly invested in infrastructure and services to support employees across different life stages - including best in class creches and day cares across all our offices and 16 of our factories, subsidized virtual childcare, access to employee assistance programs and counselling services. We have been speaking to our employees and many more men are sharing household chores and I see this as a great opportunity for us as organisations to lead for progressive policies on inclusion and lead and support the spirit of a more balanced household.

Finally, I believe that change starts at the top. At Hindustan Unilever we proactively take part in in-depth exercises to better understand diverse lived experiences and identify inherent biases. For example, all our senior leaders have gone through a rigorous, 3-month program to understand and overcome their microaggressions and implicit biases while exploring ways to understand and leverage their privilege to support advocacy for less privileged groups.

While organisations have come a long way there is still much to do in reshaping expectations and stereotypes. A more equitable future is possible, and it will be determined by the actions we take now.

## Organizations are now recognizing that diversity extends beyond gender



**CHANDRA BALANI,**  
Head - Global Enterprise, India, AWS India - Amazon Internet Services Pvt. Ltd

**How have your D&I policies evolved over time?**

>> We believe that as companies focus on innovation and growth, a diverse workforce in technology organisations, whether small and large, will play an increasingly vital role. Gender, race, age, national origin, secular orientation, culture, education, along with professional and life experiences contribute to AWS's diverse perspectives.

In addition to SheBuilds, we have several international programs that promote inclusion, diversity, and equity (ID&E). We serve diverse customers, operate in diverse communities, and rely on a diverse workforce.

**How has the perspective towards a more gender diverse workforce changed over time?**

>> Initially, the term diversity was associated with only women; however, organizations are now recognizing that diversity extends beyond gen-

der. The perception is changing as businesses realize that there is a wealth of diverse talent waiting to be discovered. This shift in perception is being driven by the tangible benefits from effective decision-making that a diverse workforce naturally drives. At AWS, we firmly believe that each employee brings something new and distinct to the workplace. We work tirelessly to foster a culture in which people feel safe, valued, and encouraged to share their unique perspectives.

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## Women IOCIans accelerating IndianOil's growth



**RANJAN KUMAR MOHAPATRA,**  
Director (HR), IndianOil

**I**ndian Oil has been growing and serving the nation for over six decades. While IndianOil has always been sensitive towards gender inclusiveness but over the years we have witnessed tremendous growth of women executives within the organisation. Today, women IOCIans are heading strategic locations like Refinery units, Pipeline locations, Marketing area offices, Depots, Aviation Fuel Stations, etc. This has been possible due to several policy interventions which have accelerated their growth. We all know women are excellent multi-taskers and wonderful home makers and at times their focus shifts from their career. To ensure they have the right kind of

I believe that a woman has everything that is required to be a leader.

guidance and mentoring, we have specific training programmes for women in middle management. I believe that a woman has everything that is required to be a leader, all that is required is the aim, zeal, guidance, perseverance, hard-work, support, and encouragement that they well-deserve!

## SAP Labs India's D&I practices published as Harvard Business case study



**SINDHU GANGADHARAN,**  
SVP & MD, SAP Labs India and Head, SAP User Enablement

**How can D&I become ingrained at all levels in an organization? What are some best practices?**

>> The business case for gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity is more persuasive than ever when it comes to profitability, collaboration, and innovation. At SAP Labs India, we achieve this goal by incorporating these factors into our work life: A) Inclusive Culture: To thrive as an intelligent enterprise, we offer an inclusive culture that empowers people to run at their best, enable the many voices at SAP to create a greater sense of community, and promote accountability for inclusion and collaboration. B) Diverse Ecosystem: A rich and diverse ecosystem drives innovation and allows us to better serve our customers. We lever-

age SAP technology for inclusion, ensure our tools are accessible, and build a diverse and inclusive tech ecosystem across the entire supply chain of supplier diversity to consumer experience. C) Inclusive Career Journeys: At SAP, we provide employees with an environment where uniqueness is valued and where expectations for growth and development are transparent. In fact, it's a great matter of pride for us as Harvard Business Review now features SAP Labs India's D&I practices as a Case Study for organizations around the world.

**What are some of the biggest challenges that your organization faced when it came to implementing D&I and creating a gender di-**

**verse workforce? How has it addressed these challenges?**

>> True diversity and inclusion in the workplace address institutional racism, xenophobia, gender bias, ageism, homophobia, and other forms of marginalization. At SAP Labs India, we make every effort to ensure that all stages of the employee lifecycle are inclusive to enable employee success. Our leaders are held accountable for inclusive hiring and inclusive behaviours, and we are committed to relentlessly pursuing our goal to increase the percentage of women in executive or in leadership positions in addition to reaching full gender parity for all levels. A diverse team is more effective in addressing the needs of SAP's global customers and partners, and inclusive culture brings people together to foster innovation. To leverage our collective diversity, we are building inclusive processes and structures to encourage behaviours that support the growth and development of all employees.

### TEAM ET EDGE



**DEEPAK LAMBA**  
President, Times Strategic Solutions Limited

"The dynamic for businesses is changing for the better and gender diversity is at the crux of this change. Harnessing the energy and creativity of a diverse and equitable workplace can have a potent impact on business and society. Thus diversity, equity, and inclusion has become a business imperative today. It is no longer relegated to boardroom conversations and is fast becoming a business mandate. However, getting diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives right is a process of evolution that is transforming businesses and people. We are already witnessing a momentum shift in such initiatives."

## Henkel showcases women colleagues as role models



**S. SUNIL KUMAR,**  
President - Henkel India

**H**enkel has been fostering gender diversity coupled with a strong inclusive culture and ethos since inception. As a result of this, in India, we have women working in traditional male bastions such as shop floors and production sites.

One of the key differentiators for having been able to attract and retain gender diverse talents across domains is the equal opportunity to grow and platforms given to craft career paths by exploring different roles in India and beyond.

In addition, we have been showcasing our women colleagues as role models on multiple platform, both internal and external. This visibility has helped us attract new talents at entry, middle and senior levels. Increased gender diversity has also enabled our teams to be

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more receptive to varied perspectives and overcoming unconscious biases, if any.



**ANIL JOSEPH,**  
SVP and Head of HR, APAC and EMEA, Sutherland

**How have your D&I policies evolved over time?**

>> Our DEI charter has evolved exponentially over the past 10 years. We leverage feedback from regular surveys, support Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), hold inclusion training and discussion sessions, and conduct accessibility audits to frame our DEI perspective in all that we do, as we continue to learn and adapt to ensure we're driving inclusive policies. The success of our journey is evident with 98% employees rating us as an Inclusive employer, along with 30%+ improvement in diversity representation year-on-year. Apart from adopting best practices, our strength lies in listening with empathy and finding sustainable solutions to support and leverage our diverse workforce.

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**How has having a more gender diverse workforce unlocked value for your business?**

**ness?**  
>> The diversity of identities, experiences, ideas, and perspectives along with careful orchestration of its magic has unlocked immense value. Using this multi-dimensional approach has led to more informed decisions and innovative solutions, resulting in an 11% increase in productivity. And this extends beyond Sutherland to our clients as well, leading to shared gains realized in greater organizational performance, profitability and one of the highest industry-wide Customer Net Promoter Score (NPS).





## EVOLVING WORKPLACES FOR WOMEN: Ability, Flexibility and development



**REKHA SHARMA,**  
Chairperson,  
National Commission  
for Women

**T**he rise in women's workforce is one of the world's most remarkable economic development. Over the last decade women have grown to be more inspiring in the workplace, bringing in fierce competition, developing cooperation, and leadership; a growing force of women across nations and communities are now instrumental for organizational growth and productivity. More firms are promoting female leadership as they apply new tools and tactics to enhance their workforce ratio. Mentorship programmes and flexible work schedules are just two of the numerous initiatives that have contributed to a lively and diverse workplace culture. "The Economic Times Best Organisations for Women Conclave," held on March 30, 2022

at the Sahara Star in Mumbai felicitated organisations whose contributions have been invaluable in creating an outstanding work environment for women to help them thrive. The hybrid event saw participation from over 70 organisations that have taken unique measures towards establishing a more diverse and inclusive culture.

Delivering the keynote speech, Rekha Sharma, the chairman of the National Commission for Women remembered Indu Jain stating, "I was inspired by her journey and today, societal mindsets are evolving towards women." Arundhati Bhattacharya, Chairperson & CEO, Salesforce India discussed the role of mentors and sponsors in one's career path, in a conversation with Pallavi Malani, Managing Director and Partner, BCG India. "Mentors can be people with more experience to guide you, while sponsors are those who are a step ahead of you, recommending good positions for you," Ms. Bhattacharya was quoted as saying.

The event featured a panel discussion on the theme, "Role of women: Building an inspiring work culture," with leaders such as Dr Ritu Anand, Chief Leadership & Diversity Officer, TCS; Nandini Sarkar, Global Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Leader, Boeing India; Mukta Nakra, Head - Human Resources & Sustainability,

Marks & Spencer India; Amit Sharma, Vice President - HR, Volvo Group India; Priyanka Shaw, HR Business Partner-Corporate & Global Domain Functions, ZF Group, and Sarika Naik, CMO & Chairperson Diversity - India, Capgemini. The session was steered by Anvesha Thakker, Partner & Lead, Renewable energy KPMG, India.

Bollywood actor and UN Goodwill Ambassador, Dia Mirza unveiled 'The Economic Times Best Organisations for Women Coffee Table Book' at the conclave and felicitated organisations that have stepped forward to make a difference and have successfully created a new benchmark by empowering women colleagues, making them an integral part of their workforce.

Priya Kumar, a motivational speaker and author, addressed one of the most crucial parts of diversity, which is the work-life balance. Following that, Suparna Biswas, Partner, McKinsey, served as moderator for a conversation on adapting to flexible working arrangements, which included speakers Vishakha RM, MD & CEO, IndiaFirst Life Insurance, and S Sunil Kumar, President, Henkel - India.

The sessions also deliberated on the evolving working conditions for women across all sectors and verticals over the last two years. It highlight-

ed the numerous efforts made by organisations for career growth and work-life improvement for working women. Sujatha Shrivastava, Associate Partner, CoE Leader - Culture, Inclusion & Diversity, People Experience & Talent, KPMG in India moderated the session with speakers Sumek Gopal, Vice President Human Capital and Head Talent acquisition APAC Optum, Runa Dhawan, People Director, AB InBev GCC, Krishna Muniramaiah, Head Human Resources- Asia Pacific, Altmetric, Nilesh Kulkarni, CHRO, Bharat Serums and Vaccine and Pavitra Singh, CHRO, PepsiCo India.

Bollywood actor Sharvari distributed awards in another round of the felicitation ceremony, a few of which are mentioned below:

- Technology: AWS India, SAP Labs, Capgemini, Western Digital Corp, IBM India
- Financial Services: LIC Housing Finance, HDFC Life, HDFC Ergo, Future Generali and Godrej Housing Finance
- Internet: Flipkart, Nykaa, Myntra
- Oil & Gas: Indian Oil, HPCL
- Consumer goods: Sephora, Pepsico, HUL, Marks & Spencer
- Healthcare: Metropolis, Medi Assist
- Real Estate: K Raheja

## INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE



**G. SATHYA NARAYANAN**  
Managing Director - South Asia, Galderma

"We at Galderma believe that diversity is an essential for long-term success. This means our employees can express themselves freely and encourage diversity of thought. For us getting more women in field roles is a priority as we are growing every year. Through our platform 'Unearth' we promote inclusion and discuss pertinent topics that affect women. We offer the best Maternity Care benefits for our employees and their spouses. We also ensure there is no bias during interviewing to make merit-based decisions."



**SANGEETA MALKHEDE**  
Global Head of HR, GAVS Technologies

"Women play multiple roles in their lives. Due to social conditioning and bias, they often prioritize other roles over their professional ones. Women leaving their careers mid-way is a major reason why there is lesser representation at the leadership levels. We make it our priority to support those who are returning from a break and mentor women through exclusive Leadership Development program to climb the ladder with confidence."



**AJAY AMBEWADIKAR**  
APAC HR Head, CNH Industrial

"I think that organizations in general are facing two issues, first is to hire women employees and second is to retain them by:

- Removing Conscious and Unconscious biases: Managers to take ownership for creating the right environment of equity and opportunity.
- Career plan - We generally observe that women employees are working in operational capacity, need to develop performing women and groom them for higher responsibilities."



**DIBYAJYOTI PATTANAI**  
Director, Annapurna Finance Pvt Ltd

"Ensuring equal representation of women in the workplace leads to a multiplicity of perspectives that sparks creativity, innovation, and efficiency, which in turn helps the company to achieve its vision. A balanced workplace always yields higher productivity and improvement in performance. It's a prerequisite for any advancing institution which is client-centric and needs to be diverse and inclusive."



**ANITHA MANIKANTAN**  
Sr Vice President & Head of Human Resources,  
Medi Assist Healthcare Services

"Technology has enabled training and management of employee life cycle through better connectivity. At Medi Assist we have always used technology to innovate our business models and thus we could effectively leverage tech in migrating to this hybrid model of work. We consciously work on remote engagement and wellness initiatives for our diverse workforce in improving their morale, mental agility and productivity."



**AANCHAL CHOPRA**  
Senior Vice President & Head - Human Resources,  
TransUnion CIBIL

"Our diverse and inclusive culture is the result of empowering all, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity or background. Efficiency of our efforts are definitely enhanced with the use of new age tools enabling us to drive inclusive practices focused on hiring, employee development, mentorship and career advancement. Automation is eliminating human biases reducing any impact on decisions related to hiring, training and engagement."



**ANJALI BYCE**  
CHRO, STL

"In STL, at the heart of building a gender-diverse workforce is enabling diversity of thought, new ways of working, equal opportunity, and creative problem-solving. This is a very meaningful and definitive shift away from a 'metric of representation' to a 'measure of value add'. We see diverse teams exhibiting better operational performance, higher volition, and increased innovation. Diversity is our strength. Equality is our value. Inclusivity is our culture. We aim for every employee to feel safe, included, and respected, leading to a deep sense of belonging."

## Diversity and Inclusiveness is at the core of who we are



**SUDAKSHINA BHATTACHARYA,**  
CHRO, HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Ltd.

**Could you highlight some of your organization's initiatives toward D&I?**

>> HDFC ERGO is an inclusive, empathetic, and equitable workplace that nurtures talent and helps them grow to realise their potential.

Some of the key initiatives that we have undertaken towards our DEI vision are:

**Project Shakti** is our diversity initiative that creates an all inclusive workplace by offering equal opportunities and making the company a preferred employer of choice for women. Since the launch of this initiative in 2021, we have witnessed a 5 percentage point's increase

in women's representation across the organisation. Our philosophy is based on 3 pillars - improve gender representation, build an inclusive performance culture & become a more gender-balanced organisation.

**Project Purple** is aimed at building opportunities and drawing up a career path for people with special abilities. The purpose is to create an inclusive space that can encompass any change required, from operational to mindset, and everything in between.

**Re-vibe** is a first-of-its kind gender neutral return-to-work program, designed for professionals who have opted for a

temporary pause from work and are looking to start over their professional life. It provides 360° supports to identify, groom, and nurture talent to help them relaunch their professional careers.

**Nari Shakti** is our audacious effort to employ women as in-house surveyors for vehicle inspections, a role that has been long dominated by men. We curated a 3-phase training program to help them get market-ready. It is not just about imparting training, but empowering them to do roles traditionally done by men.

**Talentize** is our platform to hire and on-board colleagues from diverse backgrounds outside of the Insurance industry to add fresh perspective. When we onboard talent that is not indus-

try agnostic, we bring in new ideas and innovation that can help propel our endeavours.

**How have your policies towards gender diversity evolved over time?**

We are particular about having a merit-based gender neutral environment, where only the talent matters. Besides a host of forward-looking policies around work-from-home, providing privilege leave categories, our policy also supports adoption, surrogacy, and infertility treatments. As an organisation, we have been working towards nurturing an equitable environment and believe that diversity is not just about aspects that are tangible, but also about the diversity of mind, skill, as well as the thought!

## Diversity is the central fabric of the empowering culture at Mastek

**M**astek prides itself on being a company that is committed to the empowerment and inclusion of women. Our policies and initiatives are majorly focused on bringing about better gender equality, equal opportunities and pay parity. To ensure better diversity and an inclusive workspace, we make every attempt to recruit and support women across roles and levels. Through a spectrum of sensitization programs, inclusive hiring, developmental initiatives and we aim to provide opportunities for women to progress in their roles. Our flexible policies and laser-focused initiatives have proven successful and helped us in ensuring that 100% women Mastekers returned-to-work post their maternity break. Initiatives such as Reshine provide women on a career break the opportu-



**MANINDER KAPOOR PURI,**  
Global CHRO, Mastek

nity to restart their careers after a pause. Our flagship program 'Women Empowered by Mastek' and 'Elevating Women in Leadership Series' actively organizes mentorship programs to encourage high-potential women Mastekers to aspire to senior leadership roles.

## Timely assessments of D&I goals is a must



**MOHIT SOOD,**  
Regional Managing Principal, India ZS

**How can an organization ensure that D&I becomes a part of its DNA and not just a mere fad? How can it be made sustainable in the long run?**

>> Today, diversity has transcended to mean more than race and gender; it is about creating an ecosystem where different voices are encouraged and heard. To effectively drive this

positive change and make it part of a firm's DNA, it is important to focus on holistic programs instead of one-off initiatives like a singular focus on diversity hiring, without supplementing it with sustainable initiatives to engage and retain talent. I think, the broadest of the gaps can be bridged if we craft thoughtful guidelines that keep in mind the entire employee cycle from the interview application to exit.

In order for companies to sustain D&I practices, we need to prioritize introducing equitable programs and creating an inclusive environment and culture, which in conjunction will automatically lead to a truly diverse workforce. These small shifts and reprioritization of goals will eventually transform the D&I outlook, but a piece of the puzzle is to ensure timely assessments and evaluation of goals against the intended progress.

## D&I is about a work culture where you feel truly appreciated and able to express

**What is the business case for creating a more gender diverse workforce and D&I overall?**

>> The impact of an inclusive team with diverse individuals cannot be gauged in numbers alone. You have to understand the level of change it brings into the real world. The contribution of our female professionals provides us a broader perspective and helps us make a long-lasting impact. At Servify, women play a key role in our global expansion and in strengthening our business for the long term.



**ARUN VERMA,**  
Chief Human Resources Officer, Servify

ing a work culture where you are truly appreciated and encouraged to express yourself. One where nobody feels creatively restricted. When you have a unique set of people coming together and collaborating for a common goal, it produces both collective and individual gains.

**Why are organisations placing so much emphasis on D&I?**

As a company, being diverse and inclusive is not just about having people from different backgrounds. It is about build-

## Our brewery in Aurangabad, Maharashtra, has a 50:50 gender ratio on the shop floor



**TANVI ROHATGI,** People Director - India & South East Asia, AB InBev

**O**ur purpose is to dream big to create a future with more cheers, which means a world with more diversity and inclusivity. With our people as our greatest strength, we play an important role in championing diversity and inclusion across

our operations. Our brewery in Aurangabad, Maharashtra, with a 50:50 gender ratio on the shop floor, is a testament to many bold initiatives as we continue to dream big. In this spirit, we have been running a 60+ member D&I council with functional representation to drive initiatives with a longer-term vision, such as extended paternity and maternity leaves, women development leadership programs, and same-gender adoption leaves to name a few. We are here to sell the best quality beer and beverages and bring the best minds together from across sectors, genders, and demographics, coupled with the primary mission to serve our consumers and customers.

## Our Diversity & Inclusion foundation has focused on care



**TAPAN SINGHEL,**  
MD & CEO,  
Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Co. Ltd

**What role has technology played in opening up avenues for diversity and inclusion?**

>> Technology has made work from home possible by given opportunity to people to be connected from where they are, giving focus to skill and work rather than physical presence, the trust factor is further strengthened by technology. It saves time of travel, cost and I believe enhances productivity as well as the happiness quotient. Its facilitated a new Gig workforce, wherein projects can be given to Gigsters, who can work on them remotely, work on multiple projects with different companies and in a sense deliver across a wide spectrum of industries making

optimum use of their skills. Technology helps us transcend borders and I have been thinking on, why cannot Indian companies have people from other nationalities work for us? This can be a combination of remote and hybrid working and this will further bring more diversity to the companies.

**Could you highlight some of the D&I initiatives undertaken by your organization?**

>> We facilitated permanent work from home & hybrid working model for employees who have opted for it. We actively encouraged the transfer of employees based on opportunities to different parts of the country thereby bringing in inclusivity and of course exposure. Through our various distribution channels we are hiring employees from semi-urban & rural parts of the country who hold a great understanding of the local markets, thus bringing in a more diversity. We strongly believe in gender diversity, as it brings in skill and perspective diversity. We have women leadership programs to identify and promote women leaders. Additionally we recruit a healthy gender mix for some of our trainee programs, with priority of course to skilled and deserving candidates.





# Diversity and Inclusion are business imperatives



**BALFOUR MANUEL,**  
Managing Director, Blue Dart

## How have your D&I policies evolved over time?

>> Diversity and Inclusion are not only 'nice-to-have' attributes, but are business imperatives. The power to innovate at the velocity that customers demand will only be possible if the workforce mirrors the customer base and deeply understands each customer segment. This is our philosophy at Blue Dart, where women have been crucial contributors to every milestone we have crossed. 'Strength through Diversity' is at our very core and is a key part of our operations since Day One. Even in 1983, Blue Dart's Operations was led by a woman colleague. Today, women work shoulder-to-shoulder with men as frontliners, pilots, and engineers, also leading as the National Customer Service Head and the Managing Director of Blue Dart Aviation apart from various leadership positions in Senior and Middle Management. Diversity and Inclusion have always been and will always be a part of our Common DNA.

## What are some of the biggest challenges that your organization faced when it came to implementing D&I and creating a gender diverse workforce?

>> Blue Dart has prioritized Diversity and Equity as one of our key foundational pillars since Day One of our operations. We believe that we must

be able to visualize a workforce and a work culture that is equal in every way. We encourage and promote diversity in every form of the word including gender, race, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristics. At Blue Dart, numerous initiatives have been launched keeping D&I at the centre of our operations to enhance Women in Management (WiM), and achieve a healthy diversity balance in the organization.

## What are some key challenges that your organization has faced with regard to retaining women employees and how has it addressed them?

>> As an Equal Opportunity employer, Blue Dart has always applied its, 'People First' philosophy to each and every employee. It is our People who make the brand shine and therefore, we do everything to ensure that we take care of them. Retention and loyalty to the brand are results of a good work culture.

In order to retain our women colleagues, numerous initiatives have been introduced to provide them with a work culture that not only helps them progress in their professional careers but also offers a flexible environment through which they can achieve work-life balance. It is why our retention of women in the workforce continues to remain significantly

high in the industry, resulting in more women growing through the ranks to roles on the Board as well as in Middle and Senior Management positions.

At Blue Dart, we have also launched an All Women Service Centre, initiated the 'Women at Blue Dart' campaign which provides our women colleagues, a powerful platform to share their experiences, introduced the 'Women in Aviation' initiative to familiarize young schoolgirls with various aspects of the aviation industry, curated an entire week to Diversity and Inclusion, initiated an internal and external campaign called 'Thank You, You Inspire Us!' and, mandated numerous POSH training sessions for all our team members. The exceptional work culture and growth opportunities that are provided for women cement their trust in our brand to be their Employers of Choice.

## INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE



**TANAY KEDIYA**  
VP & COO, Allstate India

"At Allstate, Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity is not a result of any policy; it is part of our shared purpose. For Gender Enabling and empowering the women around us to excel and lead in their chosen fields is a shared responsibility across the company. Our inclusivity programs, various policies & initiatives, and the awards we've garnered all stand as a testament to this fact."



**CHIDAMBAR R S**  
Sr. Vice President-HR & Admin, Brigade Group

"Diversity and inclusion are two key focus areas of the Brigade Group. One of our core values, fairness, lays great emphasis on these aspects. A testament to this is being consistently recognised as a Great Place to Work for women and a Safe Place to Work for women. We have created many policies to encourage women in the workplace. For example, we have constructed projects that are completely women-led - starting from engineering to architecture to legal. We strongly believe a diverse and inclusive workforce is key to the growth of any organization."



**URVI ARADHYA**  
CHRO | K Raheja Corp

"When diverse talents work together, the outcomes are far more proficient and valuable. As an equitable employer, we acknowledge and respect distinctive needs, views and capabilities of our people. The result, is the curation of a work environment, entrenched in dependability and trust. An inclusive talent mix encourages broader perspectives, fresher ideas and improved problem solving, which is good for both, people and businesses."



**VISWANATHA GOWD**  
MD&CEO, LIC India

"We consider women make an effective workforce. The narrative has begun to change in the past few years where women are rising in organizational hierarchical structure to occupy top positions. This instills a sense of confidence in the society. We are glad to be at the forefront of this progressive ideology. Technology supports modern day professional to strike a work life balance with their personal lives, providing them with opportunities for development and advancement."



**DR. RITU ANAND**  
Chief Leadership & Diversity Officer, TCS

"Increase representation, improve heterogeneity and provide an enabling ecosystem where men and women can grow. Diversity must involve men and women. Our foundation has been built with women employees."



**VISHAKHA RM**  
MD & CEO, IndiaFirst Life Insurance

"Gender diversity needs to be highlighted separately. Religion and other aspects are gender-agnostic. Firms should look at employees in an equitable manner and extend hyper-personalisation towards employees."



**PAVITRA SINGH**  
CHRO, PepsiCo India

"We have all seen stereotypes in aspects of society. What we see in the workplace is a reflection. Consequently, these stereotypes are happening across different generations and all walks of life. The first step is to create awareness in a non-threatening format."

# DEI is a business priority for us



**RAGINI DEWAN,**  
Senior Director Commercial, Maersk

## How can DEI become ingrained at all levels in an organization?

>> I'm glad that we say DEI and not D&I. Equity is so important in this context as it means fairness of access and opportunity for all. To have DEI ingrained in our culture, it is imperative to see this as a Business Priority and not just HR initiative. In my experience, most companies in the past have not been able to progress in this journey because of the very same reason. I have often heard in the meeting rooms people saying "but we appreciate diversity of thoughts" which is so true but to have diversity of thoughts, one needs diverse people in the room. To advance on gender diversity agenda, building a gender diverse organization is a goal for all of us. Even the most promising executives should not reach the leadership team if they do not buy into the company's diversity agenda. The right role models are crucial. In short, when women work at companies where leadership looks achievable and enjoyable, they will strive to get there and this eventually will help in increased women representation too. In the past, Shipping and Lead Logistics industry has seen mostly men joining the workforce, hence some of our assumptions needs to be addressed - a) our customer base is as diverse as our employee base, hence do not assume all customers as "He" while talking; b) replace man-hours with person-hours, these

As leader's take personal goal not only to hire diverse talent but also support and mentor them in thriving. Create a culture of allyship by just listening and not assuming.

can drive behavioural shifts in our ways of thinking and working.

## What are some best practices to overcome road-blocks?

>> Every company is at a certain stage in their DEI journey across gender diversity, LGBTQIA and People with Disability (PWD). Celebrating differences is a great place to start in this journey. Hire people who are different Vs who brings similarity. As leader's take personal goal not only to hire diverse talent but also support and mentor them in thriving. Create a culture of allyship by just listening and not assuming. Call out inequality if you notice it, rather than waiting for some other person in the group to call it out or completely ignoring it. Making diverse individuals' part of the decision-making vs informing and not assuming capabilities basis gender. Creating a safe place for everyone and a culture where it is okay to be vulnerable sometimes.

# Our goal is to become the most diverse industrial gas company in the world



**KAVITA JOHN,**  
Director Human Resources, Air Products India

**A**ir Products' goal is to become the most diverse industrial gas company in the world. Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (DIB) are fundamental to achieving this goal and our higher purpose to bring people together and create an environment where everyone knows they belong and matter.

A culture that encourages Inclusion and Belonging is essential. Air Products leadership is accountable for the annual Diversity Action Plan, where each region lays out their strategy for enhancing DIB. We are advancing our efforts towards building a diverse workforce, fostering a respectful and inclusive culture, to seek out diverse perspectives and take actions to create meaningful change.

Diversity and Inclusion goals are important to building organisational strength, underpinned by clearly articulated policies and values. Attracting and retaining diverse talent and creating a culture where people can excel helps drive business goals; and will ensure we not just build but sustain a gender diverse organisation.

We are advancing our efforts towards building a diverse workforce, fostering a respectful and inclusive culture, to seek out diverse perspectives and take actions to create meaningful change.

# Inclusive growth is an accurate measure of organisational success



**RUNA DHAWAN,**  
People Director, AB InBev GCC

**A**B InBev GCC has always believed that any organization's accurate measure of success lies in inclusive growth. Our people policies are designed around three key pillars - dream, people, and culture; setting us apart from our peers and enabling us to create a culture of trust.

Our DE&I policies aim to build equity and foster an environment that encourages development. We have collaborated with diversity consultants to improve the talent pipeline of women candidates in analytics, technology, and data science among other domains. We have initiated a flexible working policy for employees returning from maternity leave, giving them the freedom to opt for convenient work hours.

We believe organizations cannot achieve DE&I with a one-time campaign or initiative. This shift requires empathetic leadership, where every individual must believe in the vision for inclusive growth and incremental steps structurally in terms of policies and culture to move the needle on DE&I.

We have initiated a flexible working policy for employees returning from maternity leave, giving them the freedom to opt for convenient work hours.

# Seeing a strong women workforce is empowering

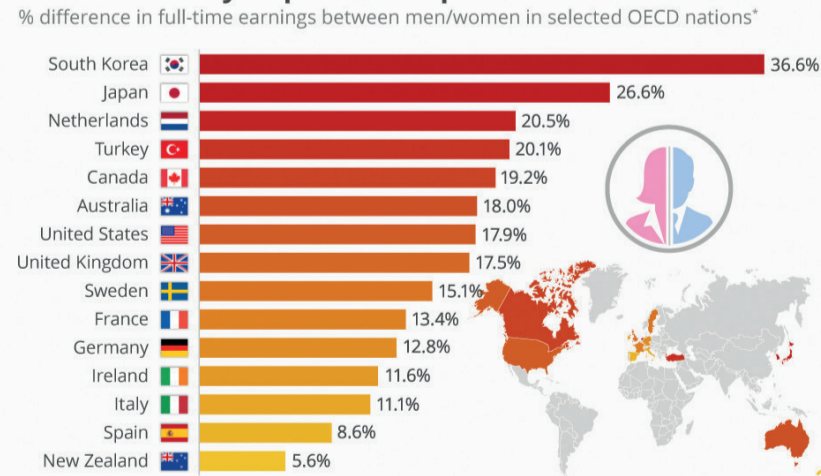


**RICHA TANDON,**  
Brand Head- Magic Moments, Radico Khaitan Ltd.

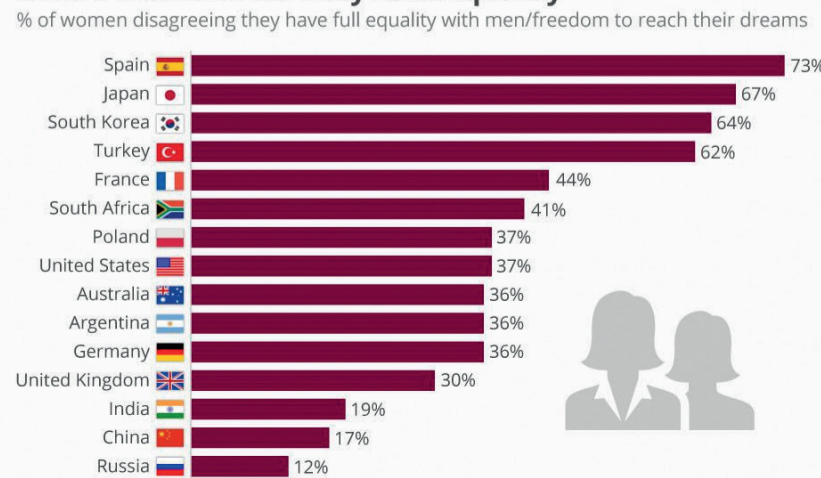
**G**one are the days where women at senior positions or women in leadership would be a rare thing. Times have changed and that's been happening across the globe.

In the alcohol-beverage industry too, liquor is being consumed almost equally by men as well as women. Therefore you'll see ample women workforce in this alcohol fraternity too. And at all levels. So being a brand head at Radico is no different. In this day and age I don't think there's any taboo of women working in the liquor industry. Our top management too feels the same and you'll see women at all levels AND in senior positions at Radico. It is overwhelming to see a women workforce in this industry at all levels and departments. Bartenders, Mixologists, production, sales, marketing, Finance, Commercial not just in Radico but in the entire alcohol-beverage industry. That actually feels very empowering.

## The Gender Pay Gap In Developed Nations Visualized



## Where Women Feel They Lack Equality



\*as a % of the earnings of men, latest available year







# Diversity has always been there around us



**SAPANA SRIKANTH,**  
General Manager – Capability Building, HPCL

**D**iversity has always been there around us. This universe has it and so does our beautiful planet. Careful inclusion of Diversity in Nature provides the very foundation for sustenance of life. Similarly, the need for gender diversity at work place was always there. It has been gaining importance over time, as more & more women join & successfully complete their professional education.

The perspective towards a more gender diverse workforce is rapidly changing with the female mind contributing to the world in unique ways. As women increasingly find themselves in leadership roles, the result is a natural paradigm shift in the way power and influence have traditionally been viewed. This represents a movement towards one that is more inclusive and compassionate, emphasizing the greatest good for all. The infusion of the feminine psyche in the work place has set the stage for a greater balance of power, and for a more cohesive and interconnected vision for the world. Organizations understand the benefits of a diverse workforce and are embracing it.

We are proud to have many such women working for us across the country who are an inspiration to young women who wish to make a successful career in the industry.

A gender diverse work force is continuously getting enhanced at Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, where Women employees are given opportunities, mentoring, guidance to take key positions breaking traditions. There are great initiatives of bringing women employees in the mainstream of business operations.

There are many challenges when it comes to implementing D&I and creating a gender diverse workforce. It is not only including Women but making our work environment adaptable and accommodating to this diverse workforce. At the same time, retaining the core for work principles.

Inclusion process is on-going process. The best practice for D&I is the complete story view rather than intermittent interventions. Women are treated equally in all aspects whether it is Pay packages, growth and developmental opportunities or promotions.

Women have also increasingly been provided opportunities in Refinery Shift Operations, Project Sites, LPG Plant and Depot Operations which have been traditionally considered as male bastions. Our Corporation has ensured that proper infrastructure is in place at these locations which is conducive for the working of women employees.

Many initiatives like Swayam (Self Development), Kavach (Safety), Paramarsh (Counselling), Sparsh (Health) and many other special policies are made to continuously support our women employees at HPCL.

We at HPCL are proud of our women employees who lead, inspire and challenge stereotypes. We are proud to have many such women working for us across the country who are an inspiration to young women who wish to make a successful career in the industry.

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## Great place to work for women



**RAJEEV THAKUR,**  
Director, Grassik Search Pvt Ltd

**What are some need-gaps that you have identified when it comes to retaining your women employees?**

>> Grassik is an equal opportunity employer that does not believe in providing special privileges for women that are likely to undermine their true strength. Instead we provide a level playing field. Women are emotionally tough, ambitious & hate being treated as fragile.

An empathetic organisation, our empathy spreads equally across the organisation. As mothers & homemakers, we understand women's need to maintain a work-life balance, hence flexibility is a given. Leaves are sanctioned on request. Women are tough & amply compensate for time spent on domestic responsibilities.

We welcome women return-

ing after a long work break. They come well sorted & raring to restart working. Their initial inertia is higher than those who are simply shifting jobs.

We ensure a safe work environment for women & our Code of Conduct is clear regarding appropriate behaviour towards them. We have created diversity through equality rather than reservations, which would be an insult to the no-longer weaker sex.

**What role has technology played in opening up avenues for diversity and inclusion?**

>>> The pandemic has brought home the fact that people can work from anywhere, thanks to technology. The biggest beneficiaries of this are homemakers. The bias against their ability to work in certain con-

ditions has been removed enabling their greater presence in the available work force, ensuring greater diversity.

At Grassik, virtual meetings have created a far more homogenous organisation as these meetings enable closer bonding & sharing of information, the very basis of diversity & inclusion.

Technology has greatly helped me run my Learning & Mentorship programmes online helping people know that the management is invested in their happiness and success. I find online meetings more open, frank & participative. This helps to seal any gender & other demographic splits.

We are currently in the process of introducing newer tech tools with human centric approach to ensure D&I initiatives move beyond just lip service.

## Diversity and inclusion are cornerstones to organizational success

**D**iversity and inclusion are among the cornerstones upon which an organization's success relies. Integrative thinking is the outcome of the collaboration of people with varied experiences, and it gives organizations perspectives that encourage creativity and innovation.

A diverse and inclusive culture allows organizations to create a better mindset, build a cohesive environment, attract better talent, and improve the internal value system of the workplace, which leads to enhanced productivity.

Sadly, women still face dis-

**SHILPI AGARWAL,**  
Chief Strategy Officer, Cyfuture



crimination and struggle to break the glass ceiling. But women can smash it by identifying and raising concerns that exist in the organization. They must discuss the challenges and barriers they face with concerned authorities and not let these barriers stop them. A determined persona, unstinted focus on professional goals, and persistent and focused efforts contribute substantially to breaking the proverbial glass ceilings and soaring to new heights!

## D&I requires an emphatic approach

- Diversity and Inclusion, needs an empathic approach which truly helps D&I become the essence of the organization. At OISL, change comes from multiple sources instead of a top-down approach. Employees can bring their authentic selves to work every day and feel empowered to create change within our organization. Most importantly, we must continue to track and enhance implemented processes to make genuine progress with DNI initiatives.
- Simple things like measuring quality over quantity and being cognizant of women's representation in every process go a long way in empowering women.



**ARVIND RAJ B,** Vice President, Human Resource, Olam Information Services Pvt

Building awareness of biases & stereotypes, creating a psychologically safe workplace, providing access to resources, and last but not least, accepting individuality can create a flourishing work environment for our women colleagues.

## We have a dedicated program to foster skill development in women employees



**SUNITA DAS,** Director Quality, Greater India and South East Asia, Edwards Lifesciences (India) Pvt Ltd

Our leadership team is committed to the development of our female employees through programs that support health and well-being, opportunities for significant strategic roles in the organization.

**E**dwards Lifesciences leads the field of replacement tissue heart valves, repair products and critical care monitoring, helping millions of patients worldwide. We are also proud to have diversity and inclusion (D&I) as the heart of our organization's wellbeing and sustainable growth. Edwards promotes an inclusive culture where gender neutrality is a guiding principle. Key D&I initiatives include:

- Workshops for women employees for personal & professional development
- Coaching programs to develop female employees for the organization's significant and leadership roles and culture of accountability initiatives (e.g., Flexible work hours, work from home policy, Prevention of Sexual harassment, Individual Development plan (IDP) Program

Our leadership team is committed to the development of our female employees through programs that support health and well-being, opportunities for significant strategic roles in the network of women employees—the ENOW (Edwards network of Women) program.

## Technology is helping DEI initiatives to have a greater impact



**SHANTANU DAS,** CHRO, Amway India

**A**t Amway, we are increasingly turning to technology to help drive consistency, scalability, and better insights for DEI initiatives in the areas of talent acquisition, capability building, employee engagement and analytics. Technology

solutions help in attracting diverse workforce, reducing unconscious bias in recruiting and enabling effective candidate selection. In capability building there is emergence of e-learning and virtual reality to help employees better understand DEI and adopt appropri-

## INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE



**ARVIND MEDIRATTA**  
MD & CEO, METRO Cash & Carry India Pvt Ltd

"Women leaders bring in lot of opportunities to the table; a diverse perspective, empathy, inclusivity, ability to deal better with adversities and promote overall wellbeing. However, retail job is quite demanding, wherein long operational hours may deter women from taking up jobs at stores. It is imperative to support the women workforce with flexibility in work schedules, especially with pre and post maternity facilities to help them strike the right balance between work and caregiving. In addition, reskilling and upskilling is critical to help them stay on track of their career goals."



**ISHITA MEDHEKAR**  
CHRO, Metropolis Healthcare Ltd.

"Metropolis' board & leadership team is fully committed towards its D&I agenda which is tracked and measured regularly. With a diversified workforce consisting of 40% of women employees, our endeavor is to strengthen the women representation at the leadership level. To achieve this goal, we have deployed a dynamic hiring strategy to recruit more women across all levels & functions, and by launching the MHL Second Career for Women Program."



**LAURENT LADROYES**  
Director, Human Resource - Michelin India

"Diversity at the heart of Michelin's ALL-Sustainable approach. The 'All-Sustainable' approach is embedded in the Group's strategy based on a balanced development between People, Profit & the Planet. Michelin sees diversity as a human imperative and a key contributor to Company's performance. Promoting diversity in all its forms and inclusion. Diversity is a fundamental asset and a performance booster. This approach aims to strike a balance between human, environmental, and economic priorities. Michelin believes that our success depends on the development and fulfillment of our employees, regardless of their nationality, gender, religion, or disability. A diverse workforce reflects society, generates collective intelligence, and ensures everyone feels welcomed, recognized, and valued."



**JAISON THOMAS**  
Managing Director, Midland Credit Management India Pvt. Ltd

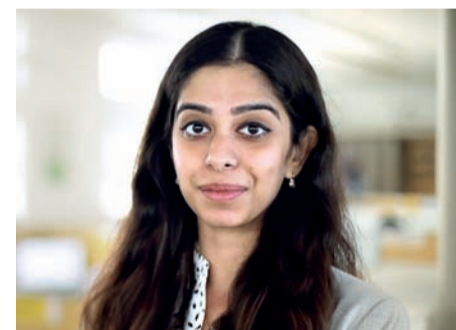
"Diversity and inclusion are the cornerstones of a fair, transparent, and an equitable work culture. They power open dialogues, innovation, and creative problem solving and have a direct impact on the success of an enterprise. I strongly feel that we need to create an empowering environment for our female colleagues and equip them with all the skills and allies required for them to succeed on equal terms. Let's not place the onus of breaking the proverbial glass ceiling solely on them. Organizations must set the tone from the top to encourage diverse talent."



**PULKIT SETH**  
Vice Chairman, Pearl Global Industries Limited

"We at Pearl Global push our D&I agenda by taking our diversity hiring goals a notch higher each year aiming to achieve 50% women workforce. PACE (Personality advancement and career enhancement training is specifically designed to provide foundational skills to our women employees. Supervisor & Manager development programs enable them to climb the leadership ladder. Policies like free sanitary wear at the plants, POSH, maternity leaves and policy have supported retention of women employees."

## Gainwell believes in empowering and elevating people



**AKANKSHA CHATURVEDI,** Head-Corporate Strategy & CRM, Gainwell Composites Private Limited

**A**t Gainwell, we believe in empowering and elevating our people, every day. Traditionally, the construction & infrastructure and mining industries have always been considered to be the male bastion. At Gainwell, we challenge this notion and make every effort to break the bias. We believe in creating enriching experiences for our people as we continue to welcome more women into our family every day. Some of the most efficient frontliners at Gainwell, battling the not-so-ideal working conditions, are the young women toiling at the mining project sites and at the E&T customer sites.

We are committed to

We believe in creating enriching experiences for our people as we continue to welcome more women into our family every day.

building the ladders to fulfil the professional and personal aspirations of our women team members. They are encouraged to take chances, be fearless and explore new ventures. The success of our programs has been made possible by the commitment of the entire organization—specifically, the male members who are actively involved in creating an equitable workplace. The Gender Diversity Council with an equal representation of men and women alike, ensures the adoption of inclusive policies like POSH, leadership development, awareness program, knowledge development and recognition program, mentor-mentee program and several other initiatives that have been designed to empower women and to create an environment where the women of Gainwell can feel free to be their authentic selves at work.

critical category where Technology like Qualtrics enables tailoring survey questions to seek employee feedback and identify themes. Solution such as Visier help in DEI analytics to gather trends, insights and prioritize DEI areas that need focus and enhancement as it helps with magnitude of data around diversity, promotion, turnover, talent mapping, etc.





## We are focused on nurturing women talent and providing an environment for them to grow as leaders



**RANGA R KANAPATHY**  
Head - APAC Business, Global Delivery,  
India Technology Centre, Altimetrik

### What are some need-gaps that you have identified when it comes to retaining your women employees?

>> As a company we are focused on nurturing women talent and providing an environment for them to grow as leaders and achieve their career aspiration. To ensure this, we identified need-gaps in the areas of physical & mental health, work-life balance, financial and professional support. Through our WINGS initiative (Wom-

en's Initiative for Networking Growth and Success) several programs like overcoming impostor syndrome, women centric health sessions, networking in the workplace, personal finance, manage work from home, and the recently launched mentorship program are conducted to close this gap.

We also see that the WFH and the hybrid model of working provides flexibility and an opportunity to create a work-life balance that contributes to the retention of women employees. Additionally, these models allow women to take care of their family-focused responsibilities.

### What role has technology played in opening up avenues for diversity and inclusion?

>> Technology has enabled talent to work in a flexible environment where personal and professional demands are met seamlessly. Diverse workforce from across geographies, age groups, even remote villages are able to connect and work while continuing to enjoy their authentic way of life. We are seeing more women better powered to take care of their personal and professional responsibilities. Upskilling and certifications programs from across the world is now possible without stepping out of their houses. We are also able to open opportunities that are boundary-less. In addition, we are able to include all Altimetrians digitally

and through a hybrid to engage with us and experience our vibrant culture, from wherever they work.

### Could you highlight some of the D&I initiatives undertaken by your organization?

>> Our D&I focus is just not with respect to gender but also includes the diverse talents we bring, work experience of employees, community conscience programs, and more. Some of the initiatives that we are currently running include:

- WINGS - Women's Initiative for Networking, Growth & Support.
- IMPACT - CSR program where we support communities, underprivileged women and underprivileged children to improve in the areas of education, health and livelihood.
- REBOUND - Unique back-to-work program aimed to help experienced women technologists resume their tech journey.
- LEVEL-UP - Where we hire BCA and BSc graduates, sponsor their MCA degrees while working at Altimetrik.
- NCG - New College Graduate hiring program.
- LEAP - Hire trained off-campus fresher's through finishing school tie-ups.
- TALENT ACADEMY - A talent development program where we hire, train and provide a career development path.

### What is the business case for D&I? Why has D&I become important for organizations in recent times?

Mahatma Gandhi quoted "Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and test of our civilization." I believe that it is a business and societal responsibility to truly represent the diverse world that we live in and be inclusive in every way. Research shows that diverse teams are more innovative and outperform homogeneous ones over time - across profitability, value creation, decision-making, and employee engagement. Gartner says that, "Through 2022, 75% of organizations with frontline decision-making teams reflecting a diverse and inclusive culture will exceed their financial targets." Our experience at Altimetrik shows that a diverse team delivers a broader range of problem-solving approaches, an aspect of Altimetrik that clients appreciate and expect. We are marching towards a 30% women diversity ratio this year and aim to be 35% by 2022.

On a more subtle level, a diverse workforce improves trust and employee engagement. Trust leads to respect for colleagues and creates an environment where everyone collaborates comfortably, leading to higher productivity. Building trust has become important in a hybrid working model, and we believe it has a role to play in controlling attrition.

## INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE



**SHISHIR AGARWAL**  
CHRO, PNB MetLife

"PNB MetLife takes immense pride in being an equal employment opportunity employer nurturing a diverse, inclusive and collaborative work environment. Our efforts directed to maximize our progress on the diversity front have ensured 36% female representation in 2021, amongst the best in the industry in India. While we are proud of what we have achieved, the journey to embed the DEI culture continues at PNB MetLife."



**V.K. SINGH**  
Director (Personnel),  
Power Grid Corporation of India Limited

"POWERGRID has been at the forefront of maintaining gender diversity. We have huge participation of women in all verticals including all high end-technological tasks. We also support women education through our CSR efforts and provide trainings to them on Hot-Line maintenance, Health & Safety Measures. We have dedicated women-cell and budgets for all such provisions."



**ANJALI RAGHUVANSHI**  
Chief People Officer & Director - Business Concepts,  
Randstad, India

"At Randstad, we recognize that future-focused organizations place equity, diversity, and inclusion at the heart of their people and growth strategy. We should focus on developing and representing more women leaders and inspiring others, implementing flexible and pragmatic policies and programs for gender equity, and encouraging employee resource groups for women to continue bold conversations. We must see the 'possible in people' and work towards building & sustaining an inclusive organization."



**SARVESH MAHESH**  
CEO, Tavant

"At Tavant, we embed DEI into our DNA by breaking down systemic barriers, providing opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds, celebrating each other's uniqueness, and ensuring they feel welcomed, valued, and heard. We passionately intertwine diversity, equity, and inclusion to our organizational goals, align it with our purpose, and ensure that everyone owns it. We encourage our people to embrace 'self-awareness' and bring their 'whole selves' to work."



**AMIT CHOPRA**  
Managing Director, India and South Asia,  
Thermo Fisher Scientific

"Our approach to retaining women employees has been created, keeping in mind the unique challenges that women face. Our approach has been to listen to their concerns and feedback, create policies which are conducive to their inclusion while also providing role models for mentoring and guidance. We maintain a gender neutral approach for all policies and processes."

## We aim to provide a progressive and open environment for each employee



**SAURABH AGARWAL**  
Senior Director and General Manager, LPM South Asia, Avery Dennison

### How has the perspective toward a more gender-diverse workforce changed today? What has changed the D&I status quo in the industry?

>> In today's work culture, it has been proven time and again that most exemplary ideas originate from varied viewpoints, experiences, and backgrounds. This has triggered a paradigm shift in how we see a gender-diverse workforce. Diversity of ideas is critical to the success of any organization. Especially, in today's fast changing uncertain times, there is no way to succeed without the whole talent pool adequately participating including a diverse workforce.

Diversity is one of our eight values at Avery Dennison that define us, reflecting our desire to provide a progressive & open

environment for every employee. It's ingrained in our daily interactions, procedures and decisions to foster a fair, inclusive and an ethical workplace in which everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential. We are cognizant of the fact that in matters of decision-making and creativity, diverse thoughts, ideas, and views lead to better customer solutions and innovation.

In my opinion, the willingness of an organization to act consciously for the betterment of developing a more engaged and motivated workforce has influenced the shift in D&I status quo. As more and more organizations realise in this post pandemic era, it is the PEOPLE who are key differentiators in this fast growing economy.

### What are some of your organization's key initiatives to foster greater gender diversity?

>> At Avery Dennison, we have set strategic focus on increasing the number of women in positions of leadership and providing opportunities to marginalised populations in certain regions. As an equal opportunity employer, we make genuine efforts to ensure that all workers and potential employees are treated fairly and that their dignity as persons is respected. Our D&I targets and thinking, drives our strategic business planning and goal setting, to demonstrate the relevance of DE&I in our organisation.

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>> At Avery Dennison, we have set strategic focus on increasing the number of women in positions of leadership and providing opportunities to marginalised populations in certain regions. As an equal opportunity employer, we make genuine efforts to ensure that all workers and potential employees are treated fairly and that their dignity as persons is respected. Our D&I targets and thinking, drives our strategic business planning and goal setting, to demonstrate the relevance of DE&I in our organisation.

We ensure hiring and elevation of women employees within the organisation while welcoming employees of diverse backgrounds. Additionally, we conduct focused training on

Unconscious Bias, Men as Allies and focused workshops regularly which helps us to manoeuvre and drive this goal in an effective manner.

Few other additional vital practices that are present in the organisation to support our D&I goals include policies & pay practises, promotions, rewards and recognition, etc; focused training like women at work training, adoption/surrogacy leaves, etc. Hiring initiatives such as ReADvent (for Hiring after Career Breaks), Gender-diverse Hiring & many more.

We ensure that we cross leverage external prestigious collaborations such as Great Places to Work, which is symbolic of our progressive outlook towards learning and imbibing industry best practises within the organization.

## We have always proactively imbued gender equality in all our activities



**VEENA SATISH**  
VP People and Culture, MoEngage

We continually strive to recognize and address gaps that prevent women from advancing their careers. Our focus this year is to further build out the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion charter for our global audience.

policies are continuously evolving over time to accommodate for recent events and developments, both on and off work. One of our biggest hurdles was during the COVID-19 pandemic, where women employees were hit the hardest. Outside of work, there was a sudden increase in added responsibilities for women, which took a big toll on them physically and mentally. To address these, we incorporated policies that included paid mental wellness leaves and covid recovery leaves. We also shifted to remote working practices and, based on employee feedback, will eventually shift to an optional hybrid work model as well. Our flexible working model ensured that our employees could manage multiple responsibilities - at and beyond work, and achieve work-life balance as well. Through this period, we also launched our Employee Finance Loan policy to provide financial assistance to employees in need. We also organized multiple mental health workshops with experts to tackle mental health issues potentially induced by the pandemic and other factors for women. Our aim was to assure all our new and existing women employees that we recognize their struggle and support them, both financially and mentally.

## It's the Inclusivity of DEI that is compelling



**RITESH TALAPATRA**  
Managing Director, Optum Global Solutions (India) Private Limited

### How can technology be leveraged to solve the healthcare challenges of the future?

>> There are many areas where technology can deliver impact but here are the four key ones:

- Consumer experience - ability for a tech-savvy consumer to study their ailment, find and compare providers and rates, and schedule appointments. Researchers have discovered that when people become more aware of these technologies, their use increases as well
- Wellness - people are using their mobile phones to research on diets, exercise regimens etc. along with wearable technologies and IoT to actively monitor their health
- Predicting health events and leveraging AI to prevent them and provide a personalized experience
- Creation of digital platforms that allow for the interoperability of data, across organization boundaries, for building a personalized care experience

### How can India contribute to building innovative tech solutions?

>> India has a vast technology talent pool - and healthcare is important for every one of us

because we face challenges related to the appropriate care for our parents, our relatives and occasionally ourselves every day, so it's a topic very close to our hearts and a mission that speaks to each one of us. It will define the future of healthcare. The start-up ecosystem in India is developing numerous innovations in health tech. We are supporting this ecosystem through our Optum Start-up Studio program.

### How can we ensure diversity and inclusion in the technology space and what are some of Optum's initiatives towards the same?

>> It's the I of DEI, the inclusivity, that I personally find compelling - we welcome and understand people who are different from us. That in turns drives organizational diversity. Our flagship programs include:

- United Women Leading in Technology (UWLIT): Supporting gender diversity to intentionally pave pathways to improve women representation and progression in technology.
- UHG Women Invent: A part of the UHG Invention Program to enhance patent diversity.
- Women in Analytics and Data Science: To promote

women in Data Science.

### What role can the private sector play to ensure that tech talent in India invest their skills in the healthcare space?

>> Providing the right environment, workplace and policies is important for our talent to be their authentic selves. Also important are trainings with digitised content, self-assessment tools, gamified curriculum, etc. to enable learning.

At a society or country level the key question I ask myself is - did I just exploit an existing tech ecosystem by hiring from others or did I contribute to the ecosystem by building a fresh and new talent base. What impact do we want to leave?

### Where is the digital health-tech space heading globally and what are some future trends in the sector?

>> One of the biggest trends, witnessed even prior to COVID-19, is that the center of gravity for healthcare is moving out of large hospitals and closer to our homes. The focus on mental health and the uptick of digital therapeutics are other heartening factors to note. We are building out the plumbing that enables provider assets to be instantly online and ready for telehealth services.

We are building out the plumbing that enables provider assets to be instantly online and ready for telehealth services.





# Our women employees have gone beyond stereotypical roles



**ALOKE SINGH,**  
CEO, Air India Express

We are particularly proud that the percentage of women pilots are more than twice the global average. And in many key operational roles, involving technology, in Flight Despatch, Engineering, Flight Safety and OCC, women play a key role. Still there is a long way to go, but we are on the right path!

**What are some need-gaps that you have identified when it comes to retaining your women employees?**

>> Air India Express operates regional international services with a fleet of B737, under an LCC model. Following the privatisation of our parent company, we are now a part of the Tata group, known globally as a model employer.

Two-thirds of our workforce is aircrew, with women making up a significant part. By its very nature, air services are 24x7 operations – it is a stressful occupation, with long and odd hours, often involving prolonged stays away from family. Training and ‘tests’ are frequent. We have identified that particularly women employees, need a supportive and flexible environment to cope with these work stresses, and balance their personal lives. Towards this end, the airline has a number of initiatives – such as a professional one-on-one counselling programme aimed mental, emotional and physical wellness. For women aircrew undergoing refresher training, we now add an extra day devoted exclusively for programmes to cope with work stresses. That apart, women employees are encouraged to advance their professional careers.

**What role has technology played in opening avenues for diversity and inclusion?**

>> Aviation as an industry is at the cutting edge of technology. D&I in our industry has been a

mixed bag – because many roles around technology were seen as roles suitable only for men – such as cockpit crew, engineering and leadership roles. But in Air India Express, we are particularly proud that the percentage of women pilots are more than twice the global average. And in many key operational roles, involving technology, in Flight Despatch, Engineering, Flight Safety and OCC, women play a key role. Still there is a long way to go, but we are on the right path!

**Could you highlight some of the D&I initiatives undertaken by your organization?**

>> D&I has been an area of focus in the airline for long. The numbers speak for themselves – about 40% of our workforce is women. Our women employees have gone beyond stereotypical roles and have broken into what were traditionally seen as roles only men could do. In ALEX, almost 50 of our 325 pilots are women – representing 14% of the cockpit crew strength. Many amongst them have climbed the professional hierarchy by sheer hard work, becoming check pilots and training captains. Several key leadership positions in the company are held by women.

Besides the statutory requirements, we make sure that the workplace is comfortable, all channels of communications are open, and we encourage free and frank feedback. The company follows a zero-

tolerance policy towards sexual harassment. The women leaders of the company play a mentorship role.

Half of our employees, mainly cabin crew, are recruited from Tier 2/3 cities from where we operate the bulk of our services. It allows employees to be within the support system of their own families and friends, while at the same time minimising crew positioning flying and hotel stays – a win-win for both the organization and the employee.

**4. What is the business case for D&I? Why have D&I become important for organizations in recent times?**

>> A diverse, well represented workplace leads to well-balanced perspectives and better decision making as a consequence. And this is all the more important for today's VUCA world. Human factors are key, whether it's the service aspects, or safety. A supreme example is from the recent crisis – we believe a key reason we could navigate the pandemic successfully, was gender diversity. The airline has been recognised for its business continuity efforts and won the coveted 'Business Continuity Award' at the recent Wings India aviation event organised by FICCI and the Ministry of Civil Aviation. And it was heartening that during the pandemic, when the virus was a feared unknown, employees, including women employees unhesitatingly stepped forward to make sure our services kept going.

## INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE



**NILESH KULKARNI**  
Chief Human Resource Officer,  
Bharat Serums & Vaccines Limited

"Today more than ever, we see that diverse and inclusive workplaces witness several organisational benefits such as a stronger employee commitment, increased levels of transparency, improved levels of innovation, and an empowering people culture. It's about building & sustaining an inclusive work environment where everyone feels valued, finds a common agenda, and is provided an equal opportunity for shared experiences & learnings, that helps achieve business goals and personal aspirations."



**PREETY RAJ**  
General Manager HR,  
Bosch Global Software Technologies Private Limited

"DE&I is part of our organizational DNA. It's a business mission for us. In order to support the DE&I ecosystem, apart from conducive practices, policy framework such as MOM- Managing the spirit of motherhood, Back@Bosch – programs to welcome and integrate new mothers post maternity and many other initiatives are helping us leverage the efforts."



**NILESH PATEL**  
Managing Director, Carlsberg India

At Carlsberg India, we aspire to be a more diverse and inclusive company to reflect the diversity of our consumers. We want to bring diverse perspectives within our own organization to serve our consumers needs, and therefore strongly believe that it strengthens our organization. It brings creativity, innovation and can give us competitive advantage."



**SANDEEP MAHAJAN**  
Chairman & Managing Director Goodyear India Limited

"At Goodyear we believe, an inclusive culture is where all associates feel like they are being heard, our leaders and teams reflect the diversity of the changing workforce and our customers, and we value the power of differences to drive innovation and business success for the organization."



**VIBHASH NAIK**  
Chief Human Resource Officer,  
HDFC Life Insurance Company Ltd.

"DEI is not a one-off HR agenda - it is a mission, a transformational journey where everyone in the company comes together and mindfully makes the workplace inclusive for each other. HDFC Life works at two levels to build a truly inclusive culture - the cognitive and the systemic. Our inclusive policies, such as Women Mentoring Circle, the Second Careers Program, and gender-neutral medical claim policies are lived in spirit by its leaders who walk the talk with a bias-free mindset for all."



**HEMA MANI**  
Regional Director – HR India & China,  
Lennox India Technology Centre Pvt Ltd

"At Lennox India, it is all about enjoying your work with great fun, unlimited creativity, flexibility and great team members. It is about being amongst the finest in the field and feeling inspired in their presence. This is a place where we have the liberty to be our true selves. A place where we unleash our potential. We cherish every moment we are here."



**AMIT SHARMA**  
Vice President – HR, Volvo Group India

"Hiring women on the shopfloor is a fundamental challenge that we face in mechanical engineering. There is a larger issue of talent availability when it comes to women. The key thing that we have been booking at is that infrastructure is not a barrier to hiring women. We have to ensure that the ergonomics on the shop floor are equally comfortable with women. Such a nuanced approach helps us create an equal opportunity for all. It is also important to have the right role models for both men and women, across all levels of the hierarchy."



**NANDINI SARKAR**  
Global Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Leader, Boeing India

"The age-old notion is that women have to emulate men and imitate masculine qualities. However, the feminine touch, intuition, empathy, and what women bring to the table and make them stand out. They bring great organizational acumen and bring stability to the environment apart from other attributes. Boeing believes in the economics behind gender inclusion for a sustainable tomorrow."



**PRIYANKA SHAW**  
HR Business Partner- Corporate & Global Domain Functions, ZF Group

"We need to create role models. There should be a conscious effort toward instilling diversity and empowerment within firms. On our part, we plan to increase women in leadership roles by 20%."



**DIA MIRZA REKHI**  
Actor, Producer, UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador & United Nations Secretary-General's Advocate for Sustainable Development Goals, Global Ambassador IFAW

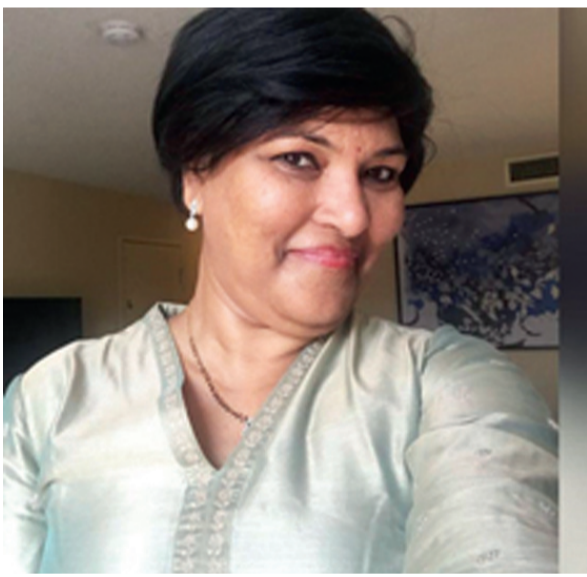
"To encourage women in roles of leadership and to ensure that no one is left behind. While the world is dealing with many crises, gender equality is a crisis that must be paid attention to. Women are wonderful, capable, and powerful and they must get their due. Women in leadership exemplify their roles through empathy and it is a word that we don't speak about. The fact that women can empathize, care, and deliver in the workplace. It's not something that we always have as these are attributes that need to be nurtured."



**SARIKA NAIK**  
CMO & Chairperson Diversity – India, Capgemini

"The last 2 years have been difficult and brought about opportunities and challenges. Now, women are at an advantage given the options of hybrid work environments. I find it commendable to find women from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities seeking IT education and working in MNCs. One of our programs, Sakhi Drishtikon has enabled some of these women."

# Gender diversity creates a self-fulfilling cycle



**DR. KIRANMAI DUTT PENDYALA,**  
Head of Human Resources, Western Digital India

Our five-pronged strategy focused on hiring, developing, networking, engaging and retaining women to ensure better representation in the workforce has made Western Digital one of the 100 Best Companies for Women in India, recognized by Working Mother & Avtar in 2016, 2019 and 2021. It is a recognition of our consistent commitment to being gender-balanced and culturally inclusive.

**How has the perspective towards a more gender-diverse workforce changed over time?**

>> Organizations have understood the benefits of having a diverse workforce. While reputation is vital, gender diversity has many other pressing and substantial benefits related to an organization's bottom line. Gender diversity creates a self-fulfilling cycle. But simply hiring women or transgenders into the workplace isn't enough. To reap the benefits of gender diversity, one needs to empower those workers to not only reach but exceed their full potential.

The pandemic has also given more women the opportunity to work from home, which has helped improve gender diversity. Post pandemic, many companies rolled out special and customized work-from-home roles. Besides a greater acceptance of remote working, the boost comes from firms increasing hiring initiatives targeting women and improving the second career, and flexible working policies.

**What are some of the biggest challenges that your organization faced when it came to implementing D&I and creating a gender diverse workforce? How has it addressed these challenges?**

>> The biggest challenge in the

We have special training for PWD candidates to equip them, and after the training, they do six months internship with WDC. Based on their performance, they are hired as full-time employees.

hardware manufacturing engineering industry for implementing DE&I is talent availability. Finding right talent with diverse backgrounds is difficult in the engineering industry. WD has come up with various strategies to accomplish the suitable composition of diversity in the workplace.

We have special training for PWD candidates to equip them, and after the training, they do six months internship with WDC. Based on their performance, they are hired as full-time employees. We have also started rehiring initiatives for the women who took a break in their careers. The initiative is called UNPAUSE.

**How can D&I become ingrained at all levels in an organization? What are some best practices?**

>> D&I has to be a part of the

organization's culture. Simply creating inclusive workplace policies is not enough. It's important to have a proper communication channel at all levels. Educating managers and regularly taking feedback about the employee experiences will help to ingrain the D&I culture.

At Western Digital India, we have a robust Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion framework where everyone is treated equally, while identifying and respecting the differences. WDIN DE&I framework engages Leaders with their wider teams to offer mentoring, and coaching to address diversity-related challenges- be it Generational, Geographic, Gender, PWD, PRIDE, etc. Targeted interventions are crafted to address specific opportunity areas within DE&I. We also actively ensure our talent is diverse when it comes to vertical or lateral career movement and hiring.

Our five-pronged strategy focused on hiring, developing, networking, engaging and retaining women to ensure better representation in the workforce has made Western Digital one of the 100 Best Companies for Women in India, recognized by Working Mother & Avtar in 2016, 2019 and 2021. It is a recognition of our consistent commitment to being gender-balanced and culturally inclusive.

# ID&E has become part of our operating model



**SUKANYA CHOUDHURY,**  
CHRO, Kyndryl India

**Could you highlight some of the D&I initiatives undertaken by your organization?**

>> Although Kyndryl has only been around for just over eight months, embedding Inclusion, Diversity & Equity (ID&E) into our DNA and in everything we do has always been our primary goal. As a firm, we are making sure ID&E becomes part of our operational model whereby we are committed to incorporating it into our decisions on hiring, talent development, and career advancement.

Kyndryl Inclusion Networks (KINs) are groups of passionate volunteers led by executives who are role models of the ID&E charter. KINs are company sponsored, employ-

We need to do things differently. We can't follow the same old models and expect to attract and retain the high performing talent needed for long term success. This means also expanding the canvas from where we hire from and whom we hire, and accounting for increased flexibility in how and when we work while still finding the balance of delivering to business needs.

ee-led resource groups that are dedicated to creating spaces where all Kyndryls can find and provide support and advice. KIN members work together to continue the advancement of their respective communities by focusing on recruitment, retention, advancement, and allyship. With the support of executive sponsors, KIN leaders and mem-

bers co-create an environment that empowers them to bring their whole selves to work, individually and collectively, to support the activation of our culture.

**What are some of the biggest challenges that your business has faced in its journey towards having a more gender diverse work-**

force?  
>> Across the board the biggest challenge is to evolve our recognition of what it will take for organisations to sustain inclusion and equity for a geographically dispersed workforce as they emerge from a COVID pandemic. We need to do things differently. We can't follow the same old models and expect to attract and retain the high performing talent needed for long term success. This means also expanding the canvas from where we hire from and whom we hire, and accounting for increased flexibility in how and when we work while still finding the balance of delivering to business needs. We need to enable our employees to find stable ground, stay resilient, and not burn out.