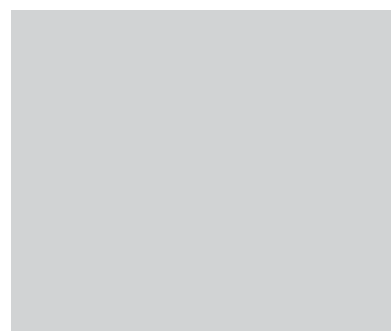
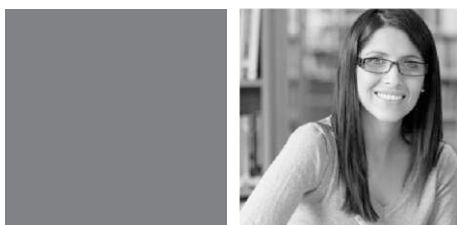
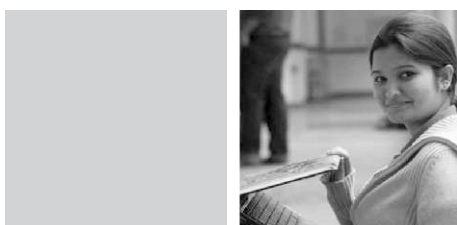




Roadmap to Gender Balance:

Compendium of
ideas by
Corporate Leaders
in India
towards improving
Women's Workforce
Participation

VIEWPORT 2016



Roadmap to Gender Balance:

Compendium of
ideas by
Corporate Leaders
in India
towards improving
Women's Workforce
Participation

Authored by

Dr. Saundarya Rajesh, Founder-President, AVTAR Career Creators and
FLEXI Careers India, Chennai

Mr. K. Umasanker, Co- Founder – AVTAR Career Creators & Chief
Recruiting Officer

Mr. Karthik Ekambaram, Vice President (Consulting Services), AVTAR

Ms. Anju Rakesh, Lead - Research & Analytics, AVTAR



Dr. Saundarya Rajesh

Founder President
AVTAR Career Creators & FLEXI Careers India

**FORE
WORD**

ROADMAP TO GENDER BALANCE: COMPENDIUM OF IDEAS BY CORPORATE LEADERS IN INDIA TOWARDS IMPROVING WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

Sometime in early January this year, my team was engaged in a high voltage, high decibel discussion on gender diversity benchmarking. That was when one of my colleagues very enthusiastically remarked that the theme for International Women's Day 2016 is – 'Pledge for parity.' As we wound up the meeting and left the hall, I decided that as much as we would take the pledge with good intentions and great will, we would also embark on a mission of putting together a roadmap to the dream destination of gender balance, the worthiness of this destination evidentially supported by the implications of this balance and impending parity.

They say, when you have the right intentions, opportunities present themselves. Soon after I received a communication from the Ministry of Women and Child Development of India that I have been named one of the achievers in the #100 Women Achievers List in the category of Women Empowerment. After the initial euphoria died down, I decided that the most befitting return gift we could give the ministry would be a compendium of ideas from prominent corporate leaders in the country on increasing the number of women in active workforce. My team and I reached out to 100 thought leaders in Corporate India with a view of understanding what they think are the most critical enablers of women's careers in India that can ensure their career sustainability and ensure that women continue to be part of the workforce in "right" numbers.

The responses were overwhelming and insightful, out-of-the box and visionary, to say the least. Having been witness to women's career patterns over several years and armed with the experience of diverse talent management in the country, each leader shared his/her views on the same, that when synergized can help improve women's workforce participation rates significantly in the country. It is with absolute delight and with immense hope for the country's future that I present to you – **THE THREE MOST CRITICAL ENABLERS THAT CAN IMPROVE WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION** as proposed by these visionaries:

1. FORMULATING STRONGER LAWS ON WOMEN'S WORKFORCE REPRESENTATION

Legislative reforms that encourage organisations to hire more women and engage with their current women employees can provide a great boost to the women's workforce participation in the country. This will also ensure that equality in access to opportunities is guaranteed to women and they join and stay in the workforce in large numbers. As keen observers of the laws of this country, here are a few pointers from industry leaders with regard to this concern:

- Provide a highly publicized tax rebate on small and medium enterprises which employ women who are re-entering the workplace after a break of at least one year (For e.g. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a Federal tax credit instituted by the United States Department of Labor, available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment.)
- Women's representation at each organisational level must be expected to be at a given percentage. In case of non-accordance to the same, penalty may be imposed. (To give an example, Norway passed a quota law requiring a minimum of 40% of each sex on the boards of all public limited companies. In 2006, it applied to the newly established public limited companies and from 2008 to all public limited companies. A failure to meet the quota may result in penalties or, as a last resort, in the company's dissolution. As a consequence, the number of women on the boards of large companies in Norway has risen sharply.)

2. CONDUCTING GENDER SENSITISATION DRIVES THROUGH MAINSTREAM MEDIA

Being able to shed unconscious biases and prejudices against the opposite gender is critically relevant in the creation of a gender equal society. Just like the sensitisation drives the government has currently initiated against social evils or crimes on women, it is the need of the hour that informative, sensitive and responsible campaigns through mainstream media (that has a penetrative reach amongst the masses) are initiated by the Government to spread greater awareness on gender equality. To this end, here are a few measures that leaders felt that need to be taken:

- Create good quality online gender sensitisation workshops that can be widely disseminated to men and women to build awareness of some of the challenges women face at work
- Conduct gender sensitisation and awareness sessions/workshops/counselling at schools and colleges
- Televising the success stories of women leaders in Indian in a first-person, story-telling format
- Initiate an entire communication campaign which is around raising the ambition levels of women and changing stereotypes
- Use mass media to promote the idea of women at work, encourage women's participation in the workforce and highlight its benefits

3. SKILLING WOMEN RETURNING POST A CAREER BREAK

Presently, there is very poor focus on re-skilling women who are returning after a break in career. The Ministry of Women and Child Development in association with the National Skill Development Corporation and enthusiastic private organisations can provide skill-development programs, followed by placements at small, medium and large enterprises. In conjunction with the idea, the leaders felt that the following initiatives will help:

- Create a national registry of women on career breaks, collating data of women employees who quit from small, medium and large enterprises
- Create organized networks/registered bodies wherein returning women (currently on breaks) can register for employment
- Conduct skill-building workshops through these networks either free or for a nominal fee.
- The Indian Woman's contribution to the national GDP is at 17 per cent, much lower than the global average of 37 per cent, and the lowest among all 10 regions in the world.

There were many more such ideas that can illuminate the path to gender balance and brighten the future of the country. This white paper I promise - is going to be colourful, in that sense! But before the details are unveiled, here are some hard facts that we stumbled upon en-route:

- India is ranked 114th amongst 142 countries on the scale of gender gap as per the World Economic Forum's gender gap Report 2014.
- It has one of the lowest female labour force participation in the world and also has one of the highest rates of women quitting the workplace because of work-life related issues – 48% women abort careers midway.
- The 2.8 crore women in urban India who are currently working, also face multiple challenges while trying to remain employed, productive and contribute economically to our country.
- The Indian Woman's contribution to the national GDP is at 17%, much lower than the global average of 37%, and the lowest amongst all the 10 regions in the world.

So why is it that this path needs to be taken and cannot wait any longer to be taken?

✓ Because research suggests that if India's women's workforce participation rate can be increased to 41% by 2025, this would add an estimated Rs 46 lakh crore (\$700 billion) to India's GDP – in percentage terms - a 16% surge.

✓ Because of the impact on the country's social fabric. More women in employment would mean better living conditions for the family, stronger communities being forged and a greater acceptance of the power of gender parity and equity.

✓ Because for businesses operating here this would mean greater innovation, improved business efficiency and a more holistic understanding of customer markets.

So that is it – the elephant in all its glory is in the room, waiting to be taken notice of. A country aspiring to become a global leader in the next few years cannot afford to neglect the economic, social and business implications of this elephant - enhanced women's workforce participation. And as torchbearers to the future of this country, I urge you to join us as we take the 'Pledge for parity' and continue your journey to that elusive balance with full gusto!



Dr. Saundarya Rajesh

INTRODUCTION

"Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance."

Kofi Annan,
former UN Secretary General
(Source: UNESCO archives, 2006)



Elementary science has taught us that achieving balance precedes the act of ascertaining equality. No less true when the 'elements' being equated are the genders – equality requires balance! And when it comes to corporate India, the way the scales of gender balance tip at every level, every juncture leaves even the most convinced of the case for gender diversity, baffled and disappointed. True that the last several decades have been witness to a powerful, radical transformation - one in which more women got educated, entered gainful employment and became economic contributors and participants in the country. For a land which is 48.5% women⁽¹⁾ and of which more than 30%⁽²⁾ live in urban areas and are in greater access of the opportunities in the corporate world, this has had several implications – social and economic. As per the world economic forum's gender gap report 2014⁽³⁾, the gaps between the genders are getting steadily closed in India, basis their respective educational attainments with a consolidated score of 0.85 on a scale where 0 designates inequality and 1 designates equality.

For the record,

- 45.9% of all enrolled undergraduate students in India are women ⁽⁴⁾.
- 40.5% of all enrolled PhD students in the country are also women ⁽⁴⁾.
- In 2012-2013 the percentage of women enrolled in specific undergraduate degree programs that are professional/vocational in nature, included – 28.5% in Engineering/Technology, 40.2% in IT and Computer, 35.6% in Management, 32.0% in Law ⁽⁵⁾.
- 27% of all entry level positions in India Inc. are women ⁽⁶⁾.

But the 'good numbers' that look as though we are headed to the desirable figure of '50-50' do not last long. 48% of

Indian women abort careers mid-way, before they even reach the mid career mark. This is 19% more than the Asian Average⁽⁷⁾. Only 15% stay on at the mid-level and only 5% of women are at senior executive positions⁽⁷⁾. The alarming drop in the overall female labour force participation rate in India has been by 8% from over 37 per cent in 2004-05 to 29 per cent in 2009-10 ⁽⁸⁾. This talent drain of trained, qualified professionals also means that investment of time, capital and effort spent in educating one half of the population – women also go unutilized/under-utilized post their exits.

Before we get into greater details, it is important that the work architecture of an average Indian Woman Professional (IWP) is examined. The most prevalent work architectures of today require professionals to be physically present at their offices during designated work hours, entail additional travel to dispense greater responsibilities as they move up the corporate ladder and expect them to typically work longer hours to attend to additional concerns. Needless to say, this model still holds its affiliation with the more traditional 'male-breadwinner,



Seema Unni,
Vice President -
HR and Head of D & I for
Global Business Services,
Fidelity Investments

"As a nation we carry a legacy that views women's role as care givers as more important than their economic contributions. Women have the potential to be economic powerhouses; provided there is acceptance and encouragement for them to bloom to their fullest potential."

female care-taker' family model and the emphasis on 'presenteeism' – on workers being physically present at their workplaces is almost as strong as it was post the industrial revolution era that revolutionized the working styles of the world. In the Indian socio cultural milieu, where young girls are conditioned to become care takers of the family not withstanding their educational attainments and which is furthered by the myriad roles they play after they (as professional women) enter the institution of marriage – as a wife, mother and a daughter-in-law, juggling the dual responsibilities – of home and work becomes a daily struggle for the average IWP. Aspirations are often reprioritized at the altar of the 3 Ms – Marriage, Maternity and Motherhood, which also characterize the early to mid career stages of a vast majority. Lack of enablers or frameworks of support that could have enabled their professional aspirations make career interruptions inevitable and several thousands of women (18% of women, every year) leave the workforce, never to return. Statistics pertaining to women's labour force participation also establishes this theory - A survey of 1,000 women working in the capital, Delhi, and its neighbouring areas in 2015 found that only 18-34% of married women continued working after having a child (9). In a national survey by LinkedIn 60% Indian women said they will slow down their careers once they have children (10) and another survey by Outlook Business and AVTAR in 2010 (11) showed 62% women will either quit, take breaks or move to organisations that are more women friendly for overall family care.

So what can be done to ensure stability of women careers in the Indian context? What can employers do and what more can IWPs themselves do? Over the last several studies we undertook on women careers – pointers aplenty emerged – that organisations can instantiate enablers for women careers in the form of flexible working

architectures, mentor networks, on-site crèches and skill building programmes; that it will help if women professionals themselves are more intentional about their careers – seek out mentors, build rapport with their managers and discuss careers with their friends. But we knew we weren't done and far from being dusted! And we knew we were right when a 2014 study commissioned by ILO on developing economies observed that the ability of a woman to be part of the labour force is impacted by 6 critical factors, namely,

- 1) Level of economic development
 - 2) Educational attainment
 - 3) Social dimensions, such as social norms influencing marriage, fertility, and women's role outside the household
 - 4) Access to credit and other inputs
 - 5) Household and spouse characteristics
 - 6) Institutional setting (laws, protection, benefits)¹²
- reaffirmed our belief in the need for more exploration.

As we put together this compendium of ideas from thought leaders in India – each of whom were visionaries in their league, we realized that the complexity of an IWP's career system leaves space for many more interventions– by the Government in its legislative capacity, by the media (social, physical et.al) by virtue of its ability to instigate grass root level changes, by the social ecosystem in terms of conditioning young girls and enabling their aspirations. To set the context, this report takes you through the evolution of women's workforce participation in India and critical observations with regard to Indian women's career patterns over several years. The heart of the report is the comprehensive list of ideas as proposed by the corporate leaders who astutely believe in the vision of gender balance. The several social, economic and business imperatives of more women in the workforce - the shared end goal of each one of the action points proposed serves as the fulcrum to this effort of ours.



Myriad Roles Indian Women Professionals play once they get married and start a family

EVOLUTION OF WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA



Participation of women in different sectors of the organized workforce in India has undergone phenomenal changes over the last 30 years. Greater educational attainment of women, boom in the services sector more specifically after the liberalization, privatization and globalization strategies were implemented and the subsequent opening of economy, unprecedented leap in technology that led to greater global exposure and evolution of family models to nuclear, dual earner/ dual income families have all contributed to these changes. In a 2013 analysis of NSSO (National Sample Survey Organisation) data, the following trends (as shown in Table 1) were reported in the workforce participation of Indian women .

The decline in women's participation in agriculture by 15.3% in the years from 1983-84 to 2009-10 and the surge in participation of women in the services sector (by 58.8%) and manufacturing sector (23.2%) during the same time-frame, may be noted.

Additionally, it was observed that in 2011-2012, women comprised 14.7% of all urban workers, a small increase from 13.4% in 1972-73, while for rural workers there was a dip in the percentage - women comprised 24.8% of all rural workers, down from 31.8% in 1972-73 .

Regions	Sector wise composition of women in the work force, 2009-10					Change in sector wise composition of women in the work force, 1983-84 and 2009-10				
	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Services	Mining	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Services	Mining
North	70.1	6.4	2.4	20.9	0.2	-15.5	38.8	637.3	73.9	119.5
Centre	76.9	5.5	8.8	8.7	0.2	-11.4	-7.1	806.5	45.2	-61.4
North-east	67.9	4.0	9.6	18.3	0.2	-9.9	-55.0	2686.4	21.4	-37.0
East	59.4	18.7	4.0	17.4	0.6	-23.4	79.4	691.1	57.7	-2.9
West	72.3	5.9	1.8	19.9	0.2	-12.9	3.1	14.5	107.0	32.2
South	61.4	14	5.6	18.5	0.6	-18.6	33.6	428.8	45.8	37.3
India	68.4	9.8	5.6	15.8	0.4	-15.3	23.2	477.1	58.8	-8.1

Table : Evolution of Workforce Participation Rate of Women in India from 1983-84 To 2009-10
(source: Economic Growth and Female Labour Force Participation in India¹⁵)

WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA : RECENT TRENDS

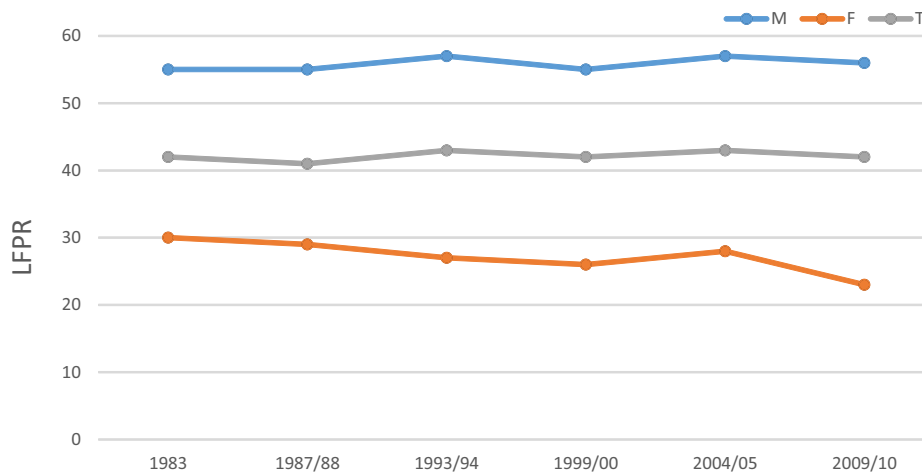


FIGURE 1 : FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE: GLOBAL TRENDS (SOURCE: IMF REPORT - WOMEN WORKERS IN INDIA: WHY SO FEW AMONG SO MANY?)

In this section, certain recent trends in the overall workforce participation rate of Indian women against the global context are presented. As may be interpreted from Fig.1, in comparison with all other geographies – that of East Asia & Pacific, Europe & Central Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and North America, the decline in the female labour force participation rate is sharpest in India, during the time-window from 1990 to 2010. The decline is at almost 8% as per this study⁸.

In figure drawn is a comparison between the labour force participation rates of women and men basis NSSO reports, in the Indian context from 1983 to 2009-10. While the percentage of men in active labour force remains almost a constant (between 50% and 60%) from 1983 to 2009/10,

the decline is noticeable amongst women. By numbers, more women work in rural India than in cities probably due to the monetary imperative of employment and the continuing existence of joint family systems that extend support for working women in the domestic front.

As per population Census 2011, the total number of women workers in India was 15.0 crore. In the rural areas, it was 12.2 crore while in urban areas it was 2.8 crore¹⁵. The total workforce participation rate of women workers is at 25.5 per cent. To explore the economic impact they create it is also important to understand the gender wage gap that exists in the country. Though several initiatives have been taken to ensure wage parity and though the Gender Pay Wage Gap is shrinking in India (The average wage rate for women is now 20% compared to a gap of 29.2% in 2004-05, shows data from the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), women earn only 56% of what their male colleagues earn for performing the same work¹⁶. Moreover the more educated a woman is, the wider the pay gap and the pay gap increases as women advance in their careers. It may be noted that the gender pay gap between urban males and female workers in India is almost Rs.70/day. While male wages on an average male in urban India is Rs. 377.16/day, that of the urban female is Rs. 308.79/day¹⁷.

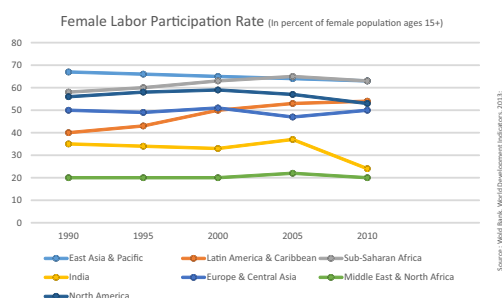


FIGURE 2 : LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE IN INDIA: A GENDERED VIEW (SOURCE: DECLINING TRENDS IN FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA: EVIDENCE FROM NSSO 10)

WHY ARE INDIAN WOMEN LEAVING THE WORKFORCE?

The statistics around female labour force participation in India show that women exit their workplaces in substantial numbers, every year. And hence any discussion on bringing more women into the workplace and retaining them there should be preceded by an understanding of what the deep rooted reasons are that lead women to career breaks. The most common life cycle model for Indian women basis societal expectations is that of a woman entering the institution of marriage possibly in a professional capacity that her educational attainment entitles her to. Maternity and motherhood are natural consequences and juggling her professional responsibilities while catering to the needs at home becomes a virtual struggle. To elaborate, the bulk of the 3 Cs as well – cooking, cleaning and caring, continue to be a woman's responsibility in most households. Let us stick to talking numbers - India's gender chore gap, the difference between the amount of housework done by women and men, is the largest of any country for which data is available, according to World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Report 2014 ; women spend on an average 300 more minutes than men, every single day attending to household chores. Furthermore the chore gap is most



is easier to interpret Fig.3 which explains the reasons why women leave the workplace, basis a study conducted by the AVTAR Group in 2012. The top 3 reasons as emerged were the lack of flexible working options, which are options that allow women professionals to work from remote locations at their times of convenience (77%), lack of support systems at home (74%) and long working hours (74%) – all which make impossible the jugglery of the dual burden for women – of that at home and that at work. Additionally the lack of affordable day care facilities, family pressure to quit work, longer commute time to work, night shifts and unsafe work environments are other reasons for Indian women calling it quits.

In a 2011 Benchmarking study on Asian Women Professionals , it was found that the majority of Indian women drop off the workforce between junior and middle career stages. In other Asian countries studied, such as China, Japan, Malaysia or Singapore, the more significant drop was between mid and senior stages. This is an indication that the talent pipeline begins to leak women talent, very early, in the Indian context. The interventions of career enabling to retain women must therefore be extended at the early stages to prevent this leakage and allow women to be in the course of the leadership pipeline.

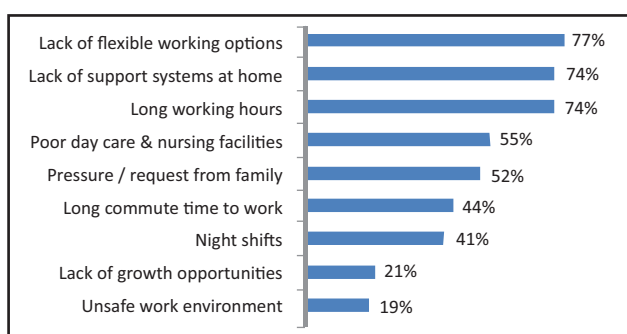


FIGURE 3 : WHY DO INDIAN WOMEN QUIT WORK? (SOURCE: THE CAREER TRAJECTORIES OF INDIAN WOMEN PROFESSIONALS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY 38)

pronounced in cities, rather than in villages. Among women surveyed by India's National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in 2011-12, around 39% in rural areas and about 50% in urban areas spent most of their time on domestic duties. Of those women about 60 per cent in rural areas and 64 per cent in urban areas did so because there was nobody else to carry out the domestic duties. Given this context, it



	Junior	Middle	Senior	The Leaking Pipeline	
				Percentage change from junior to middle	Percentage change from middle to senior
China	55.41	43.97	20.72	-20.65	-52.88
Hong Kong	51.62	44.50	22.77	-13.79	-48.83
India	28.71	14.91	9.32	-48.07	-37.49
Japan	45.37	26.11	7.77	-42.45	-70.24
Malaysia	53.17	41.08	27.57	-22.74	-32.89
Singapore	54.19	39.74	21.50	-26.67	-45.90
Average	48.08	35.05	18.28	-29.06	-48.04

FIGURE 4 : PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN AT DIFFERENT CAREER STAGES ACROSS ASIAN COUNTRIES (SOURCE: GDBM 2011, COMMUNITY BUSINESS [9])

With that said, support systems and organizational initiatives can serve the cause of women careers, only when women themselves want career progress. The absence of this 'intentionality' can also result in women aborting careers as they do not find any compelling reasons to stay on. In an in-house 2015 study chartered on Career Intentionality of Indian Professionals (Intentionality is the extent to which a professional deploys intention to chart his/her career trajectory), it was found that though women are intent on career achievement (at marginally higher

percentages than men) at the early and mid career stages in their lives, they do not invest in career development like men – women are less likely to network, seek mentors or build professional rapport with their peers or superiors. This difference in the way women and men nurture their careers could result in women not seeking career enablers most aggressively, subsequently resulting in breaks.



TOWARDS IMPROVING WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA : THOUGHTS FROM CORPORATE LEADERS



The trends indicate that women are indeed leaving work and Corporate India is in fact on the '**backtrack mode**' on the road to gender balance. The reasons are out there for all of us to see and most organisations are in the know. To reverse these trends and continue the onward journey, it is important that collective actions are taken by all change makers in the country. The compendium of ideas from corporate leaders echoes the same belief. In this section, a comprehensive mention of ideas garnered from 100 diverse leaders of corporate India to the end of improving women's workforce participation rates in the country, are presented.

PROVIDING EQUALITY IN ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING

As education plays a very critical role in laying the foundation for a flourishing career, it is important that women are given equal access to all opportunities to educate, train and develop themselves for their career pursuits. Moreover education will also empower girls and help them make critical life decisions. To this end, here are some proposals as put forward by the leaders:

- ◆ Make it compulsory to educate all girl children up till their graduation. Girls who hail from economically backward classes may be exempted from paying fees starting from high school (8th standard). This policy should be inclusive of all women in the country – those in metro cities to those in the remotest of villages.

- ◆ Ensure that premier institutes of technical / professional education (such as the IITs) attract more women. Today these numbers are too low. This may be done by providing more training opportunities for young girls throughout middle and high schools to prepare them for the rigour and standards set by such institutes.
- ◆ Initiate formal vocational skill development programmes for women to make them economically independent and utilize their skills to earn a living
- ◆ Reinforce the importance of educating girls through role models and success stories

FORMULATING STRONGER LAWS ON WOMEN'S WORKFORCE REPRESENTATION

Legislative reforms that encourage organisations to hire

more women and engage with their current women employees can provide a great boost to the women's workforce participation in the country. This will also ensure that equality in access to opportunities is guaranteed to women and they join and stay in the workforce in large numbers. As keen observers of the laws of this country, here are a few pointers from industry leaders with regard to this concern:

- ◆ Provide a highly publicized tax rebate on small and medium enterprises which employ women who are re-entering the workplace after a break of at least one year (To improve minority employment, many governments world over have instituted tax rebates to encourage businesses to hire from minority groups. For e.g. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a Federal tax credit instituted by the United States Department of Labor, available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target group who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment²⁰.
- ◆ Similar to the SEBI directive on a quota of one female director on the board of every listed firm, women's representation at each organisational level must be expected to be at a certain pre-decided percentage. In case of non-accordance to the same, penalty may be imposed. (To give an example, Norway passed a quota law requiring a minimum of 40% of each sex on the boards of all public limited companies. In 2006, it applied to the newly established public limited companies and from 2008 to all public limited companies. A failure to meet the quota may result in penalties or, as a last resort, in the company's dissolution. As a consequence, the number of women on the boards of large companies in Norway has risen sharply. Countries such as France, Netherlands, Iceland and Spain also have similar quota legislations for women. However, if quota legislation is to achieve targeted, sustainable results, it should both provide for dissuasive penalties for non-compliance and be backed up by additional measures to fill the leadership pipeline with women talent (training of

talented women for senior management jobs, databases of qualified women ready for such positions, etc.)

- ◆ Provide option to women to extend their retirement age beyond the normal retirement age given the years likely lost to childcare and their enhanced life expectancy compared to men
- ◆ Provide for 20% reservation for women in employment for both in the public and private sectors

CONDUCTING GENDER SENSITISATION DRIVES THROUGH MAINSTREAM MEDIA

Being able to shed unconscious biases and prejudices against the opposite gender is critically relevant in the creation of a gender equal society. Just like the sensitisation drives on media against social evils or crimes on women, it is the need of the hour that informative, sensitive and responsible campaigns through mainstream media (that has a penetrative reach amongst the masses) are initiated by the Government and independent organisations to spread greater awareness on gender equality. To this end, here are a few measures that leaders felt that need to be taken:

- ◆ Create good quality online gender sensitisation workshops that can be widely disseminated to men and women to build awareness of some of the challenges women face at work and help break some of the conscious and unconscious biases in this space.
- ◆ Conduct gender sensitisation and awareness sessions/workshops/counseling at schools and colleges
- ◆ Televising the success stories of women leaders in India in a first-person, story-telling format
- ◆ Initiate an entire communication campaign which is around raising the ambition levels of women and changing stereotypes
- ◆ Use mass media to promote the idea of women at work, encourage women's participation in the workforce and highlight its benefits
- ◆ Include gender equality as a syllabus item for school students

“Use mass media to promote the Idea of women at work, encourage women's participation in the workforce and highlight its benefits”

Gangapriya Chakraverti,
Director – Human Resources
at
Ford Motor Company -
Global Business Services,
Chennai



CREATING INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS AT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

An environment of inclusion where women are treated equally and respectfully is necessary for them to make strides in all their endeavors. This requires educational institutions and organisations to sensitise students / employees on gender equality and eliminate gender discrimination from the system. According to leaders, the following steps may take us closer to this goal:

- ◆ Create an inclusive culture in companies and at universities by making sure many women are hired and they achieve leadership positions
- ◆ Initiate mandatory sensitisation trainings in organisations starting from senior levels to the junior most levels, on gender differences and working alongside both genders
- ◆ Ensure enlightened and progressive leadership with regards to creating the right environment by policies, sponsorships, development activities for gender equality
- ◆ Encourage mixed schools/educational institutions Recognize organisations that have initiated best practices to increase the number of women on their rolls

ENSURING SAFE AND SECURE WORK ENVIRONMENTS

In a day and age where an increasing number of crimes are reported against women in the country, it is important that they are ensured of safety at their places of work. More importantly, today's market

place demands us to work in different time zones to support global projects. Women are deprived of many of these opportunities due to a lack of a safe mode of commuting to or from work at odd hours. Safe commute and security at their workplaces can not only prevent them dropping off the workforce, but also improve their productivity. To quote what a few leaders felt about means to achieve the same:

- ◆ Enforce stronger laws to encourage safety for women
- ◆ Make it mandatory for all organisations to have formal anti-sexual harassment policies
- ◆ Direct organisations to provide for transport of women employees at late or early hours in cabs/buses driven by drivers with verified backgrounds. Additionally, organisations should ensure that women have male colleagues as escorts accompanying them through their commutes.

ENSURING GENDER WAGE PARITY

Wage parity is a metric reflective of the gender equality of India as a society. Surveys have shown that gender pay gap between urban males and female workers in India is today at almost Rs.70/day. While male wages on an average male in urban India is Rs. 377.16/day, that of the urban female is Rs. 308.79/day . Many leaders felt that ensuring gender wage parity is critical in enhancing women's workforce participation and the following measures may help achieve the same:

- ◆ Ensure that there is equal pay, conditions and performance assessments based on output that professionals create and pay is not in relation to the number of hours they clock work
- ◆ Encourage organisations to revamp performance assessment metrics for women who are back at work after a career break (such as maternity break) to minimize the wage penalty they might otherwise have to incur

PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO WOMEN

Women-owned or women-run businesses generally tend

to hire/employ a greater number of women. Senior leaders who shared their view in this connection felt that the following steps may be taken to further empower women entrepreneurs via financial support:

- ◆ Provide special financial facilities/loans for women entrepreneurs who pass government approved skill development programs and for other professionally qualified women
- ◆ Provide women with the bank finance to start a business. The environment must be safe and non-threatening to an aspiring woman entrepreneur. It is suggested that there may be one woman loan officer in every branch and NOT necessarily a women's bank to execute these loans
- ◆ Additional tax breaks for women entrepreneurs

CREATING FLEXIBLE WORK ENVIRONMENTS

Flexible working refers to alternate arrangements of work that allow professionals to work at their time or place of convenience. Some of the most popular forms of flexible working are work from home, flexible working hours (professionals can work during time slots most suited to their schedules) and part-time work. Many countries such as the U.K and the New Zealand have formal legislations to this end that allow professionals to request for flexible working. For actioning this idea, leaders felt that the following measures may be useful:

- ◆ Formulate policies to enable workplace flexibility such as that for work from home, flexible working hours or part-time working. Though this may be a gender neutral initiative, it is particularly important for women who are juggling multiple roles, to continue to be a part of the work force during difficult years rather than dropping off mid-way
- ◆ Revisit and review labour legislation to facilitate working reduced hours, flexi working, telecommuting (remote working) – to remove barriers between full time and part time, short term employment

INCREASING MATERNITY LEAVE AND CHILD CARE LEAVE MANDATES

As already pointed out, it is post-maternity that a significant number of Indian women drop off the

workforce. Disintegration of joint families in urban India and the lack of reliable and affordable day care centers imply that young mothers do not have family support or hired support to take care of their infants during the early months. To encourage more women to return to work after having children, leaders propose that the following measures may be considered:

- ◆ Extend the current mandated maternity leave policy of 3 months of paid leave to at least five months. This may be followed by a short period of leave without pay (up to six months) and provision for working flexibly for up to another six months time
- ◆ Provide financial incentives for organisations which have extended maternity leave policies. Otherwise there will be greater caution in hiring women. Other incentives for hiring women who are returning to the workplace after career breaks may also be considered.
- ◆ Make allowance for mandated maternity leave to be repurposed as Parental Leave, to be shared between the two parents in whatever proportion that suits their personal circumstances
- ◆ Provide for special leave for child sickness or education needs

ENSURING PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE CHILD CARE

Based on results of several studies in India, women often tend to quit or progress in their career after starting a family. For the record, a survey of 1,000 women working in the capital, Delhi, and its neighboring areas in 2015 found that only 18-34% of married women continued working after having a child. In a national survey by LinkedIn 60% Indian women said they will slow down their careers once they have children. Traditionally in a country like India, it has been women's responsibility to raise children. Enabling women to progress in their careers simultaneously while raising children will be a critical enabler to women careers, according to the thought leaders. To this end, the following measures may be taken:

- ◆ Promote private enterprises to excel in the area of affordable, reliable and cost-effective childcare
- ◆ Create an accreditation process for day care centers that ensure that families feel that their children are in safe environments

- ◆ Start government funded but privately run top-quality day care facilities
- ◆ Make it mandatory for all large enterprises with women employees to:
 - Provide for Safe/Hygienic Child care facility in-premise OR
 - Reimburse child care expenses for women employees

“Institutionalizing appropriate HR Policies (e.g. part time working, child care assistance, sabbatical, work from home etc.) would enable many more women employees to keep up their professional momentum, while balancing personal priorities. This would ensure that we not only have a higher women representation in the talent pool at junior levels, but also in mid to senior leadership of organizations.”

– **Shireen Chopra, HR Manager, Xerox Research Center India**

CULTIVATING WOMEN LEADERS

The biggest inspiration for a woman aspiring for career progress comes from women leaders who are role models and whose success stories are worth emulating. Recognising women leaders and making their journeys known can motivate young women in the threshold of their careers to follow their paths. Leaders suggest that some of the measures given below can help realize the same::

- ◆ Treat women with as much respect as their male counterparts. Give them leadership roles and make them project managers.
- ◆ Ensure more representation of women at senior levels and boards:
 - incentivise seasoned women professionals to take on and be represented at core forums and break all attitudinal barriers in existence
- ◆ Create a pool of industry mentors - both men and women - for high potential women in leadership roles - to provide guidance and a sounding board to gain perspective as they grow their careers

- ◆ Organise formal drives for women career counseling and mentoring
- ◆ Create networks of senior women leaders and encourage young women to deploy these networks for career pursuits
- ◆ Recognise powerful women role models in the Public services / PSUs and make known their achievements

ENCOURAGING BUSINESS SPONSORS

For the goal of greater women in employment to be attained, it is important that every organisation that is a potential employer of women be encouraged to contribute to the same. Several thought leaders opined that in order to retain and nurture women talent organisations can initiate skill building drives for women, create women employee networks and connect women to career mentors or sponsors. For providing an optimal employee value proposition to the woman employee, organisations may also want to consider formalising flexible working routines, providing in-premise child care facilities (or sponsor the same) and account for safe transportation of women employees to and from work. The encouragement may be provided in the form of:

- ◆ Recognition for businesses that have initiated successful practices for retaining and engaging women employees
- ◆ Tax rebates for organisations that have initiated successful practices for retaining and engaging women employees

SKILLING OF WOMEN RETURNING POST A BREAK

Presently, there is very poor focus on re-skilling women who are returning after a break in career. There are 1.5 million Indian women, most with commendable experience records wanting to make career comebacks. To enable their career returns, the leaders felt that the following initiatives will help:

- ◆ Create a national registry of women on career breaks, collating data of women employees who quit from small, medium and large enterprises
- ◆ Create organized networks/registered bodies wherein returning women (currently on breaks) can register for employment

- ◆ Conduct skill-building workshops through these networks either free or for a nominal fee. These workshops may be customized to meet the skill demands of the labour market (technical and soft skills) at any given point of time. Additionally, there could also be targeted sessions for addressing specific issues faced by second career women such as confidence gaps, need for better work-life integration, sensitizing their families on the importance of them returning to work etc.

“Co-workers and many a times family need information, positive endorsement and pride to enable better work environment for women.”



Darpan Vashishta,
Country Manager:
Consumer Goods, PepsiCo India

CREATING EQUAL AND SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL ECOSYSTEMS

Socio-cultural conditioning in many families in India often results in girls growing up to be less intentional about careers. The gender bias and stereotypical notions on gender roles are unconsciously fed to young boys and girls who grow up to intrinsically believe in the ‘male-breadwinner, female-caretaker’ family model. For women to progress in careers, family support and support of all social ecosystems they are part of – both at an emotional level and at a physical level is indispensable. To list a few thoughts from the leaders to address this concern:

- ◆ Educate a girl’s/woman’s ecosystem. A fair amount of insensitivity reflected by family and co-workers of women, a large part of which is rooted in unconscious biases and/or inability to appreciate the value women bring to work-place, deter the pace at which a woman makes career progress. Co-workers and many a times family need information, positive endorsement and pride to enable better work environment for women.

- ◆ Enforce gender equal positive norming and monitoring in the society
- ◆ Increase penalty for social evils against women/girls such as dowry and child marriage
- ◆ Sensitise the social fabric in India, wherein families need to encourage daughters to take up serious technical careers
- ◆ Enforce gender equality at home; sensitisation of mothers to achieve the same is critical

IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURAL SUPPORT

Indian women are not only responsible for child care but also for the care of elders in the family. Strengthening childcare and eldercare facilities in major employment hubs like cities, industrial hubs, etc including providing financial incentives for NGOs and private sector enterprises that are willing to set up and manage them can encourage many women who have care taking responsibilities to avail of these facilities and continue working, according to some leaders who shared their views on the same.

CREATING MORE OPPORTUNITIES AND RESERVATION IN PRIVATE SECTORS

To encourage more women to join the private sector, many leaders felt that more opportunities should be created for women in this sector through reservations.

ENHANCING WORKPLACE AMENITIES

Workplace amenities that are below standards or that compromise on safety regulations may result in women quitting work at such places. It is important that hygienic and safe infrastructural support such as provision of ladies restrooms or changing rooms and nursing rooms were young mothers can nurse their infants are provided to retain women talent, opined leaders.

IMPROVING PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

Greater political participation of women ensures that their needs are more aggressively addressed. More women in government could also boost economic growth as women are more likely to spend money on improving health, education, infrastructure and poverty according to this study²³. The world economic forum's gender gap report 2014 ranks India at the 15th position (out of a total of 142

countries) with regard to equality in the political participation of the genders, which is a positive trend. Leaders felt that the initiatives such as the recommended 33% reservation for women in legislature at National and state level will improve participation of women.

ENHANCING SELF DETERMINATION OF WOMEN TO WIN DESPITE GENDER HANDICAPS

The most critical stakeholder of a woman professional's career is perhaps she herself. Leaders felt that it is therefore

important that women are empowered as young girls to fuel their internal desire to succeed despite odds, to be assertive, to network and to seek support to pursue their aspirations.



ENGAGING WITH SECOND CAREER WOMEN: ANOTHER TALENT IMPERATIVE TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA



Woman Professionals who took a break from their corporate careers but are currently ready for a career re-launch constitute the class of second career women. According to 2012 estimates they are 1.5 million or more in number . Majority of these women are those who took breaks to attend to their domestic responsibilities like that of child-bearing, child rearing, elder care etc. A small percentage of them are those who took breaks due to other personal reasons like relocation, higher studies or ill health. Over a period of time most of these women no longer have ineluctable caring responsibilities in the domestic front or other compelling reasons that led them to a career break and they are in search of opportunities to resurrect their careers and relive their dreams of climbing up the corporate ladder. The time, effort and money spent in educating and training these women which were seemingly wasted serve as the driving forces and these second career women emboldened by their commendable career past are ready to re-enter the workforce bandwagon.

The motives for career re-entry vary from a desire to be financially independent to putting an end to boredom to self-actualization. Irrespective of the motive, the benefits attached to hiring from this largely untapped talent pool are aplenty; such as the cost benefits attached to this talent pool (because they are a trained talent pool with prior work experience and many of them are interested in project based assignments or flexible options such as part-time/flexi-time which are cost-effective to organisations as

against a full-time hire), their career stabilities stemming from their realistic expectations about their workplaces, the greater levels of commitment they show due to more matured and balanced outlooks et al. Investment of time, money and effort in re-skilling them to compensate for their career gaps are sure to prove beneficial to businesses in the long run.

It has been observed that women ready for a second career unanimously feel that flexible working is a must for sustaining their second innings. This could be because they harbor apprehensions about encountering stumbling blocks along the way due to poor work life integration that might potentially end their renewed careers. Lack of flexi-time or part time job opportunities and the non availability of flexi options like remote working when the place of work is way too far, coerce them to take up jobs that tend to under utilize their past training (scientific and technical training) and the result is a population of women professionals doing less skilled jobs for which they are over-qualified. Unfortunately many organisations fail to recognize the importance of flexi-work options in enhancing the gender friendliness of their workplaces. Innovative second career programmes are flagged under corporate social responsibility initiatives culminating in them not being accessible to the women they are intended for. Fig.7 illustrates the working style preferences of second career women as emerged from a study by AVTAR

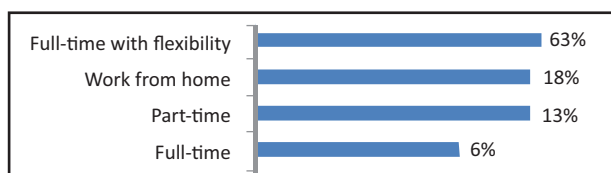


FIGURE 7 : PREFERRED WORK OPTIONS FOR WOMEN SEEKING A SECOND CAREER (SOURCE: AVTAR STUDY ON SECOND CAREER WOMEN, 2012)

According to a 2013 study by us on the corporate perspective towards second career women, it was found that those companies that have policies for rehiring women returnees were very happy with their performances and felt that such women illustrate a higher level of commitment as they have returned on their own resolve. The benefits of hiring second career women according to organisations ranged from the utilization of an alternate talent pool to the cost benefit attached to this talent pool (sadly, an effect of the wage penalty these women incur due to their career breaks), their career stabilities stemming from their realistic expectations about their workplace, the greater levels of commitment they show due to more matured and balanced outlooks et al. For successful integration of these women into their new found places of work, a certain amount of retraining was necessary, opined corporate bodies. Organisations attached maximum importance to the need for updating the technical skill sets of women career returnees in knowledge areas like accounting, finance, programming, marketing etc. A subset of them felt that such women need to undergo attitudinal training for interacting effectively with peers and supervisors and integrate themselves in their new found places of work. There is also a need to polish their communication skills and improve their

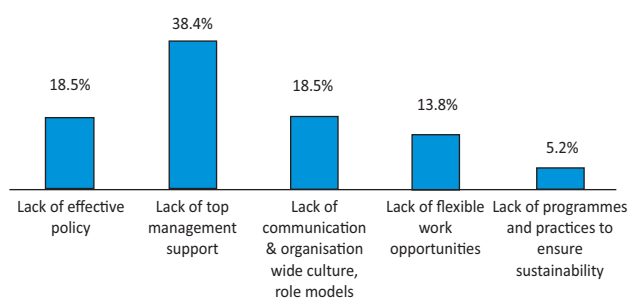


FIGURE 8 : BARRIERS TO FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS (SOURCE: AVTAR - OUTLOOK STUDY ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE, 2010 (13))

FIGURE : PREFERRED WORK OPTIONS FOR WOMEN SEEKING A SECOND CAREER (SOURCE: AVTAR STUDY ON SECOND CAREER WOMEN, 2012)

capabilities of being a team player. In order to catch up with the fast paced ways of corporate work, they might have to put extra efforts to effectively manage time felt a few. Even with all these actions in place, much needs to be done to sensitise organisations and its full time employees about the bargain of rehiring these skilled women.

Apart from attitudinal barriers, career sustainability of second career women requires organisational enablement in the form of policies for better work-life integration. The AVTAR - Outlook study of 2010 showed that the major obstacle to rolling out policies to ensure greater work life integration of employees was lack of support from the top management of organisations (as shown in Figure 8). Other perceived problems were the lack of an effective policy, lack of an organisation wide culture that supports such initiatives and the lack of successful role models who have negotiated their careers and lives, integrated-ly. Initiatives to enhance the 'family friendliness' of the workplaces should be undertaken with a sense of urgency. This transformation is essential at the macro level in the organisation and must be fuelled by the leadership team. If formalized programmes for career re-entry of second career women anchored around work-life integration are initiated by the government, it will set a new trend of employment that corporate bodies can follow suit.

"As a growing girl everyone in the role of an influencer around her should work towards imbining in her that she is also a critical contributor towards economy."



**Shilpa M., Head
Consumer Technical Insights,
Marico**

IMPLICATIONS OF GREATER WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION



So what can be achieved through executing each one of the listed action points? Yes – synergized effort can ensure greater women's workforce participation. But how will these impact the country's economy, its social fabric and operational businesses? 'Most positively', is the two-word answer. But there are more elaborate reasons to be convinced of these potent ideas – each one of them. And here are they:

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF GREATER WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

The economic implications of greater women's workforce participation are several. To consume the implications in its entirety it is important to first understand where Indian women stand with regard to financial empowerment. The World Economic Forum's gender gap report 2014³ ranks India at 134 on a total of 142 countries with regard to the economic participation of both the genders. Basis Visa's International Barometer on Women's Financial Literacy²⁷, Indian women score a 36.8/100 where the 0-100 index is based on the five individual 0-100 scores for budgeting (25%), emergency savings (25%), frequency in talking to children about money (25%), perception of young peoples' money skills (12.5%), and the desired age to begin formal personal finance lessons (12.5%). The same report ranks India at 19 in terms of the financial literacy rate of women amongst the 27 countries surveyed. But there are reasons to look forward to according to a 2011 survey by IMRB on the income levels of urban Indian women²⁸ which brought out the following facts:

- ◆ Indian women might still be earning lower wages compared to men, but the gender gap in wages is fast decreasing.
- ◆ Income level of urban Indian women has doubled in the decade 2001-2010. This increase has also led to the average urban household income doubling. The urban Indian woman who earned Rs 4,492 per month in 2001 was taking home as

much as Rs 9,457 as of 2010. This in turn led to a huge increase in savings.

- ◆ The rise in her income is directly reflected in the average monthly household income of urban India going up from Rs 8,242 to Rs 16,509 in 2010.
- ◆ While 34% of women participated in the actual buying process in 2003, by 2010 that number had gone up to 43%.
- ◆ There has been a 33% jump in the number of women who have a savings bank account in the last decade.
- ◆ Also, from only 4% of women owning their own credit card back in 2001, there has been a 150% growth as 10% of women in 2010 possessed a credit card. The savings accounts owned by women in the last few years - 14 million in 2007 to 29 million in 2011



Gender gap in wages is fast decreasing in India

That gender equality plays an important role in economic development has long been understood by social researchers. Various studies have highlighted how lower female labour force participation drags down economic growth, and that empowering women has significant economic benefits in addition to promoting gender equality. The World Economic Forum's 2014 Global Gender Gap Report³ also finds a positive correlation between gender equality and per capita GDP, the level of competitiveness, and human development indicators. So what are the numerical implications for India? Over the next 40 years, India is projected to add 424 million working-age adults²⁹.

According to a 2015 study commissioned by McKinsey Global Institute, if India can increase women's labour force participation by 10 percentage points (68 million more women) by 2025, India could increase its GDP by 16%³⁰. Relating India's performance to the best-in-region workforce participation rate of 41%, this would add an estimated Rs 46 lakh crore (\$700 billion) to India's GDP. Figure 5 illustrates the economics of this case in greater detail.

Another key exhibit (Figure 6) from the same report indicates that India has the highest relative potential for additional GDP growth from advancing women's equality amongst all regions examined.

Other researches also show that investing time and effort in women's employment has a lot of pluses. The International Labour Organisation has suggested that women's work may be the single-most important factor in reducing poverty in developing economies. A 2012 study on third billion countries by Booz & Company established that an increased number of women in the workforce could imply that India's GDP could go up by as much as 27%, per capita income could go up by as much as 20% by 2030³¹. Other benefits of greater women's workforce participation according to economists are:



FIGURE 5: THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR GENDER PARITY IN INDIA (SOURCE: MCKINSEY REPORT ON POWER OF PARITY, 2015 (25))

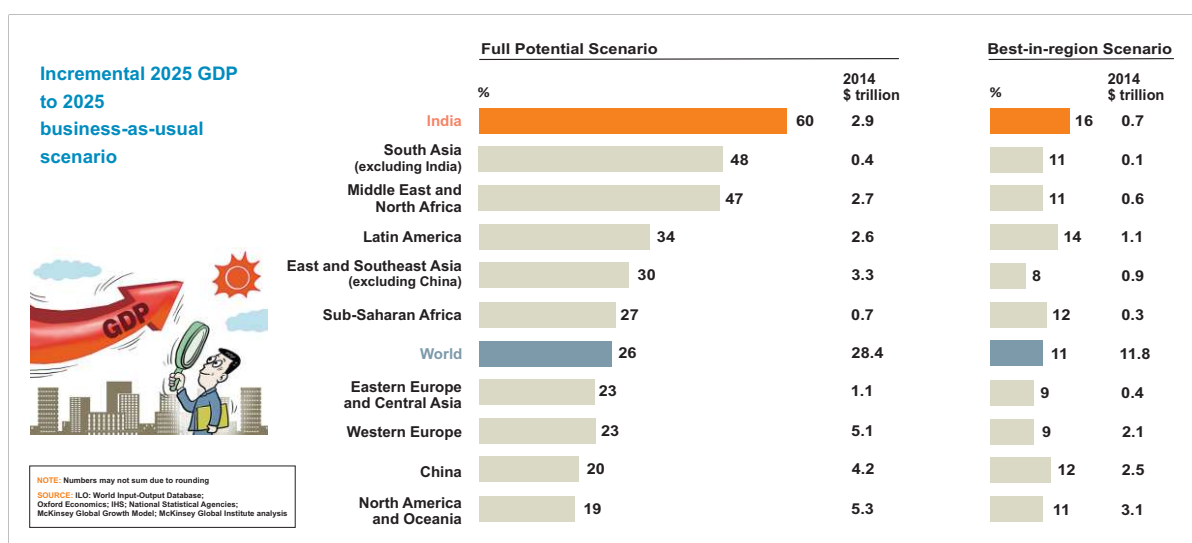


FIGURE 6: INCREMENT GDP FROM ADVANCING WOMEN'S EQUALITY (SOURCE: MCKINSEY REPORT ON POWER OF PARITY, 2015 (25))

- ◆ Increased purchasing power of women
- ◆ Enhanced skill diversity of the workforce as also its productivity
- ◆ Business result improvements
- ◆ Increased number of women owned businesses

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF GREATER WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

Greater women's workforce participation would imply that more women become income generators. The World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development³² released by World Bank showed that a woman's income correlated positively with the number of years her children spent in school. Further to this, the ability to earn significantly impacts the confidence levels of Indian Women according to a 2014 study conducted by us³³. Moreover, women tend to garner greater societal respect by virtue of bringing home pay packets.

As women have a natural tendency to invest their incomes in children's education and health, the economy grows alongside a healthier and better educated younger generation. Family's living conditions improve, stronger communities are forged and the journey to prosperity is set. More women in government could boost economic growth as women are more likely to spend money on improving health, education, infrastructure and poverty according to this study²³. Numerous studies show that men spend more of their income on items for their own consumption, including alcohol, cigarettes and high-status consumer goods whereas women are more likely to purchase goods for their household and specifically for their children, including food, healthcare, education, clothing and personal-care products³⁴.

"Earning Opportunities will empower women thus increasing their participation in domestic decision making process especially on matters related to children's health and education."



Prabhakar Lingareddy,
Vice President-Human Resources
(Agri - Business Division)
ITC Limited

Many married women tend to be dependent on their spouses on financial matters and many single women on their parents/partners/siblings etc. There are dire consequences of being thus financially dependent; it can be damaging to relationships, self-esteem, and overall happiness, apart from the financial disaster should the safety net fail³⁵. Furthermore, being gainfully employed in paid labour and having financial independence paves the way for greater financial literacy. Only when a woman handles her personal finances on her own, does she master the skill of smart budgeting, saving and investing which can help her in adversities and unfortunate, unexpected scenarios such as in the case of a married woman, a divorce or spousal demise^{36 37 38}. Other life events that affect the trajectories of women's financial lives include (re)marriage, returning to school, relocation, and employment opportunities³⁹. Being in employment and having a life outside of homes also empower women and give them the confidence to report domestic crimes or other assaults that they are subject to, found another research⁴⁰.

BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS OF GREATER WOMEN'S WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

Researches world over have continually established that becoming gender diverse to mean having more women in an organisation's workforce is a smart business strategy as well. To list a few proven benefits for businesses which employ more women:

- ◆ Fosters innovation and creativity
 - Men and women have different viewpoints and ideas ultimately leading to superior performance at the business unit level as innovation and creativity are fostered.
 - Framing Diversity in terms of its inventiveness, imagination and competitiveness has been established as a smart practice for re-enlisting employees in organisational change.
- ◆ Increases revenue and client penetration
 - A gender-diverse workforce provides easier access to resources and expertise that can be leveraged for increased revenue and deeper client penetration

- ◆ Enables access to broader customer markets
 - A gender-diverse workforce allows the company to serve an increasingly diverse customer base
- ◆ Improves employer branding
 - Gender diversity helps companies attract and retain talented women. This is especially relevant as more women join the labour force around the world.
- ◆ Increases business efficiency
 - Gender diverse groups have higher collective intelligence and performance than homogeneous groups.
- ◆ Accounts for talent deficit
 - India is likely to add 65 million jobs in the next decade and finding qualified talent ignoring the women talent pool can result in an uncalled for war for talent.

“Diversity is not just a poster or the right thing to do. It's critical to drive creative thought and ultimately a successful company.”



- **Jonathan Mears**, Senior Director
EMEA and APAC Talent Acquisition at VISA

“Many clients are women and from different cultures. Having employees that represent your client diversity is key to success. Creating an inclusive workplace culture is crucial to attract diverse exceptional employees.”

Sophie V. Vandebroek,
Chief Technology Officer,
Xerox



CONCLUSION

“When it comes to the enormous challenge of our time—to systematically and relentlessly pursue more Economic Opportunity in our lands—we don't have a person to waste and we certainly don't have a gender to waste.”

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON,
FORMER U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE.

(Source: Remarks at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Women and the Economy Summit, 2001)



In a country that is almost fifty percent women, no other statement could be truer. This report is an effort in bringing together the vision of corporate leaders in India for this cause - of improving women's participation in the country. For India to register economic and social growth to realise its vision of becoming a global leader and for businesses to benefit out of optimal gender balance, it is imperative that more women become part of the workforce. We believe that every idea which is part of this compendium has the potential to reinvigorate the journeys of Indian organisations' to gender balance. As reinforce the '**Pledge for Parity**', let us do so concertedly with greater conviction, pledging our efforts for the same!



International Women's Day

8th March 2016

#PledgeForParity

Each of us can be a leader within our own spheres of influence and commit to taking action to accelerate gender parity.



REFERENCES

1. Implementation, Ministry of Statistics & Programme. Table 2.1 Area and Population by States (Census 2011). Statistical Year Book India 2015. 2015.
2. 2015, Statistical Year Book India. Table 2.8 Projected Total/Urban Population By Sex as on 1st March. s.l. : Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, 2015.
3. Schwab, Klaus and Eide, Espen Barth. World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report 2014. s.l. : World Economic Forum, 2014.
4. Indiastat. State-wise Enrolment at Various Levels of Higher Education in India - Part 1. 2012-2013.
5. " Table 12 Enrolment at Under Graduate Level in Major Disciplines/ Subjects (Based on Actual Response). [book auth.] Ministry of Human Resources Development. s.l. : Government of India, 2011.
6. Bagati, Deepalai. 2010 India Benchmarking Report. s.l. : Catalyst, 2010.
7. Francesco, Anne Marie and Mahtani, Shalini. Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia 2011. s.l. : Community Business, 2011.
8. Mahapatrao, Sandhya Rani. Declining Trends in Female Labour Force Participation in India: Evidence from NSSO. 2013.
9. Divya Arya. Why motherhood makes Indian women quit their jobs. BBC News. [Online] April 2015, 23. [Cited: January 11, 2016.] <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-32377275>.
10. Moyes, Ngaire. What Do Women Want? At Work, That Is.... [Online] 2013. <http://blog.linkedin.com/2013/02/28/linkedin-what-women-want-study/>.
11. OUTLOOK-BUSINESS-AVTAR WORK LIFE BALANCE SURVEY. [Online] 2010. <http://www.mdraonline.com/worklife.pdf>.
12. Verick, Sher. Female labor force participation in developing countries. s.l. : ILO, 2014.
13. Economic Growth and Female Labour Force Participation in India. Lahoti, Rahul and Swaminathan, Hema. 2013.
14. Workforce Participation Rate by Sex and Sector in India. [Online] 2013. <http://www.indiastat.com/labourandworkforce/380987/workparticipation/299/stats.aspx>.
15. India has a workforce of 47.41 crore: Government. Economic Times. [Online] July 16, 2014. [Cited: January 5, 2016.] http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-07-16/news/51600535_1_national-sample-survey-office-nssso-crore.
16. Global Employment trends 2014. s.l. : ILO, 2014.
17. NSSO. Key Indicators of employment and unemployment in India 2009-2010, NSSO Reports. s.l. : NSSO, 2010.
18. Gender Chore Gap: Where Housework Is Most Unfair. WSJ. [Online] October 29, 2014. [Cited: January 10, 2016.] <http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2014/10/29/gender-chore-gap-where-housework-is-most-unfair/>.
19. Tracking the Career Trajectories of Men and Women in India to Assess Career Intentionality. s.l. : FLEXI Careers India, 2015.
20. Work Opportunity Tax Credit. Seal of the United States Department of Labor UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR -Employment and Training Administration. [Online] [Cited: January 5, 2016.] <https://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/>.

21. The Gender Balance in Business Leadership . s.l. : European Commission, 2010.
22. Flexible Work Arrangements: Literature Review Report to the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women (NACEW). 2012.
23. Women in the workforce: The importance of sex. [Online] April 12, 2006.
<http://www.economist.com/node/6800723>.
24. Segueing into a second career. Times of India. [Online] 2012. [Cited: July 10, 2014.]
<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/variety/segueing-into-a-second-career/article4077420.ece>.
25. THE CAREER TRAJECTORIES OF INDIAN WOMEN PROFESSIONALS IN THE IT INDUSTRY: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY. RAJESH, SAUNDARYA and EKAMBARAM, KARTHIK. 6, 2013, International Journal of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Research, Vol. 2.
26. Second career of women professionals in India: A corporate perspective. Rajesh, Dr. Saundarya. 1, 2013, Asian Journal of Management Research, Vol. 4.
27. VISA. Visa's International Barometer of Women's Financial Literacy. 2013.
28. Samidha Sharma; Namrata Singh. In 10 years, urban Indian women's average income doubles. Times of India. [Online] [Cited: January 2016, 11.] <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/In-10-years-urban-Indian-womens-average-income-doubles/articleshow/9364285.cms>.
29. Jackson, Richard and Howe, Neil. Global Aging and the Future of Emerging Markets. s.l. : CSIS, 2011.
30. Institute, McKinsey Global. THE POWER OF PARITY: ADVANCING WOMEN'S EQUALITY IN INDIA. s.l. : McKinsey, 2015.
31. Aguirre, DeAnne, et al. Empowering the third billion women and the world of work in 2012. s.l. : Booz & Co, 2012.
32. Revenga, Ana and Shetty, Sudhir. World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development. s.l. : World Bank, 2012.
33. Indian Women Professionals and Their Financial Independence: A Socio Economic Study. Rajesh, Dr. Saundarya, Ekambaram, Karthik and Rakesh, Anju. 2015, IJ-BRITISH, Vol. 2.
34. Lawson, Sandra and Gilman, Douglas B. The Power of the Purse: Gender Equality and Middle Class spending. s.l. : Goldman Sachs, 2009.
35. Financial independence for women. [Online] 2013. <http://www.womenandmoney.com/2013/02/01/financial-independence-for-women>.
36. Landers, Jeff. Divorcing Women: When You Earn More Than Your Husband. [Online] 2013.
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jefflanders/2013/04/10/divorcing-women-when-you-earn-more-than-your-husband/>.
37. The consequences of divorce for adults and children. Amato, Paul R. 4, 2000, Journal of Marriage and family, Vol. 62.
38. Financial Planning for Later Life: Subjective Understandings of Catalysts and Constraints. Kemp, Candace L., Rosenthal, Carolyn J. and Denton, Margaret. 2004, Journal of Aging studies.
39. Motivating Women to Adopt Positive Financial Behaviors. Rowley, Megan E., Lown, Jean M. and Piercy, Kathleen W. 2012, Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education.
40. Johnson, Emma. Women must be financially independent to thrive. [Online] 2013.
<http://www.wealthysinglemommy.com/you-cannot-call-yourself-a-feminist-and-choose-to-be-financially-dependent-on-a-man/>.

- 
41. Housmann, Ricardo, Tyson, Laura D. and Zahidi, Saadia. The Global Gender Gap Report. s.l. : World Economic Forum, 2012.
42. Das, Sonali, et al. Women Workers in India: Why So Few among so many? s.l. : IMF, 2015.
43. Bekhouche, Yasmina, et al. The Global Gender Gap Report. s.l. : World Economic Forum, 2013.
44. Inderfurth, Amb. Karl F. and Khambatta, Persis. India's Economy: The Other Half. s.l. : CSIS, 2012.
45. Mahapatro, Sandhya Rani. Declining Trends in Female Labour Force Participation in India: Evidence from NSSO. 2013.
46. Lawson, Sandra and Gilman, Douglas B. The Power of the Purse: Gender Equality and Middle class spending. s.l. : Goldman Sachs, 2009.

CORPORATE LEADERS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS COMPENDIUM

We wish to acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of all thought leaders and visionaries who armed with their prolific track records and industry expertise, shared their views on women career enablement with us. They are:

- ♦ **Mr. A.S. Girish**, Head (Human Resources), Apollo Tyres Ltd., Chennai
- ♦ **Mr. Adil Malia**, Group President HR at Essar Group
- ♦ **Ms. Anita S Guha**, Specialist Solutioning Leader, Professional Learning Delivery, IBM India
- ♦ **Mr. Darpan Vashishta**, Country Manager: Consumer Goods, PepsiCo India
- ♦ **Ms. Darshana Ogale**, Sr. Vice President at Capgemini India Pvt. Ltd
- ♦ **Ms. Gangapriya Chakraverti**, Director – Human Resources at Ford Motor Company – Global Business Services, Chennai
- ♦ **Ms. Gayathri Ramamurthy**, Lead – Leadership Development, D&I at Capgemini
- ♦ **Ms. Geetha Mohan**, Global IT Delivery Lead, Cargill Business Services
- ♦ **Mr. Jonathan Mears**, Senior Director EMEA and APAC Talent Acquisition at VISA
- ♦ **Mr. K. Balaji**, Team Leader - Human Resources at Saint Gobain Glass India
- ♦ **Ms. Kamini Saberwal**, People and Culture Consultant, Victoria, Australia
- ♦ **Ms. Meera Ramesh**, Human Resources - Talent Acquisition, Kennametal Shared Services Pvt Ltd
- ♦ **Ms. Nisha Verma**, Head - Talent Management, Vodafone India
- ♦ **Mr. Prabhakar Lingareddy**, Vice President-Human Resources (Agri-Business Division), ITC Limited
- ♦ **Ms. Priya Gopalakrishnan**, Director HR, Exide Life Insurance
- ♦ **Ms. Rama Bijapurkar**, Indian management and market research consultant and author
- ♦ **Mr. S.V. Nathan**, Senior Director and Chief Talent Officer, Deloitte India
- ♦ **Mr. Saurabh Ahirkar**, Talent Acquisition - Head at AXA Business Services Pvt. Ltd
- ♦ **Ms. Seema Unni**, Vice President - HR and Head of D & I for Global Business Services, Fidelity Investments
- ♦ **Mr. Sharad Verma**, Global Head - Human Resources at Polaris Consulting & Services Ltd
- ♦ **Ms. Shilpa M**, Head – Consumer Technical Insights, Marico
- ♦ **Ms. Shireen Chopra**, Xerox
- ♦ **Ms. Sophie V. Vandebroek**, Chief Technology Officer, Xerox
- ♦ **Mr. SriRaj Kantamneni**, Senior Director, Cargill Global IT - India Competency Center
- ♦ **Ms. Sushila Kapoor**, Service Delivery Leader at BNYMellon International Operations (India) Pvt Ltd

*As a few of the leaders did not want their names to be acknowledged and we have chosen to respect their request.

About AVTAR CAREER CREATORS and FLEXI CAREERS INDIA



AVTAR Career Creators is a Talent Strategy Consulting firm providing Human Resources and Recruitment Consulting Services to leading Indian and MNC organisations in India. AVTAR was founded in 2000 by Dr. Saundarya Rajesh to serve as an engine to focus on traditional and non-traditional talent pools in India. A pioneer in diversity recruitment in the country, AVTAR provides specialized placement services for flexi-time and part-time positions basis organisational requirements apart from full-time positions by its Executive Search Team. Its process of managing large Recruitment Projects, without compromising on quality, enables AVTAR to be an agency of choice for volume recruiters in the verticals of Information Technology, Banking and Business Process Outsourcing. Other services from AVTAR include Selection Process Outsourcing, HR Information Studies and Contingency recruitment plans.



FLEXI Careers India (FLEXI), the social enterprise arm of AVTAR works extensively in the area of Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) with a special focus on gender diversity. With a keen focus on gender diversity to create sustainable careers for women, FLEXI assists discerning organisations in making their workplaces more welcoming for women. FLEXI enables high-growth organisations to focus sharply on diverse talent pools (diverse by gender, generation, culture, physical capabilities etc.) and devise inclusive talent strategies to manage a diverse workforce. Through services of Diversity & Inclusion consulting, advisory services for creating, implementing and auditing policies and practices on D&I, workshops/training programs and state-of-the-art research projects, FLEXI has helped charter Diversity & Inclusion plans for several organisations in the IT, FMCG and Financial sectors in the country in the past. Some of the key focus areas of FLEXI's training programs are Demystifying & Appreciating Diversity, identifying & developing women leaders, accounting for Work-life integration needs of employees and creating flexible careers for them. Under the aegis of FLEXI, SEGUE Sessions - India's largest career creation program for women returnees were hosted in many Indian cities and towns over the last few years that helped enable the second career dreams of several thousands of Indian women.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Dr. Saundarya Rajesh, a Ph.D in Women's workforce participation from SRM University, is the Founder-President of AVTAR Career Creators and FLEXI Careers India, Chennai. She is an MBA from Central University Pondicherry and a gold medallist in English Literature from Madras University. Dr. Saundarya leads tripartite (community-organisation-individual) engagements in engaging with diverse talents, Diversity training, Diversity Audits, Sensitisation Training and Diversity Recruitment. Under her guidance and mentoring, India has seen the advent of formal Second Career programs for women, initiated by several large organisations. She also conceptualised and founded the AVTAR I-WIN network in 2005 which is **India's first service, connecting Interim Women Professionals (women professionals on career breaks) to part-time or flexi-time corporate career options**. She has published several academic papers related to Diversity & Inclusion and women careers in journals of national and international

repute. Dr. Saundarya is also frequently quoted in business papers and mainstream newspapers for her views on women's workforce participation and is a much sought after keynote speaker in events on women empowerment. In January 2016 she was selected as one of 100 Women Achievers in the category of '**Women Empowerment**' in the #100women campaign on Facebook, which was an initiative by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India and the achievers were subsequently recognized by the President of India at Rashtrapati Bhavan. She has also been recognized by the industry and society for her accomplishments through a slew of awards.

*Dr. Saundarya Rajesh is the Founder-President,
AVTAR Career Creators and FLEXI Careers India, Chennai*

Mr. Umasanker Kandaswamy, Chief Recruiting Officer at AVTAR Career Creators holds a Masters in Public Administration from the University of Madras, is an Electronics & Communication Engineer and has done an MDP from Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. With 20 years of experience in Recruitment Consulting, Umasanker is a prolific headhunter, with over 1700 closures in his career, comprising of top management, senior management and reporting-to-board positions.

One of the founder members of AVTAR and also the senior most member in the team, he heads the business for AVTAR Career Creators with multiple branches across India with his team helping him achieve the desired results. Umasanker has spearheaded large mandate recruitment projects for a variety of industries. Sourcing of any kind comes naturally to Umasanker – he manages IT sourcing with as much versatility as Non-IT. Every year, Umasanker has, as a personal goal, been training young generation in the path of Leadership and has been invited by many colleges to be the Chief Guest to address the young graduates & post graduates. His passion for people is equaled only by his passion for music and cricket – Umasanker is a great singer and is a fast bowler.



*Mr. K. Umasanker is the Co- Founder
AVTAR Career Creators & Chief Recruiting Officer*

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Mr. Karthik Ekambaram is an MBA with 18 years of experience in business analysis and consulting. Starting his career in IT business consulting, Karthik moved into HR consulting handling recruitment for a number of IT companies. A deep and abiding interest in business consulting has prompted him to look at Diversity & Inclusion as a business driver for organisations by employing it as a talent, CSR and business strategy tool. He has carried out Job Analysis, Time and Motion studies at several client sites for the purpose of Flexidizing and Unbundling of jobs to create flexi-career tracks in organisations interested in implementing flexible working options for their employees.

Karthik has worked on many research studies on Diversity & Inclusion, Second career women, Generations in the workforce, Flexible working and Work-life balance. He has conducted Diversity & Inclusion audits for a number of organisations. Karthik has also co-authored several papers that have been published in Journals of national and international repute.

*Mr. Karthik Ekambaram is the Vice President
(Consulting Services), AVTAR*

Ms. Anju Rakesh – a national topper in AISSCE 2003 (CBSE Class XII Examination) in Science Group, completed her Engineering in Computer Science from BITS, Pilani – one of the premier institutes of technical education in India. After interning with Yahoo! Research for a brief period of time, she joined the Research Division of Infosys Technologies Limited as a Junior Research Associate. During her stint with Infosys, she was a co-author of four international publications in the fields of Knowledge Engineering and Artificial Intelligence (AI), one of which she went on to present at AAAI, a premier conference in AI in Atlanta (USA) in July 2010.



A second career woman herself, she currently leads the Research & Analytics division at AVTAR. She has been part of several women centric studies undertaken by AVTAR and FLEXI – on career intentionality of women in 2015 and economic centerdness of women in 2014, to name a few. She has also been a critical part of Diversity & Inclusion consulting services provided by AVTAR. Anju has also co-authored several papers on Diversity & Inclusion and women careers in journals of national and international repute.

Ms. Anju Rakesh is Lead – Research & Analytics at AVTAR

Roadmap to Gender Balance:

Compendium of
ideas by
Corporate Leaders
in India
towards improving
Women's Workforce
Participation



VIEWPORT 2016