

**ATTITUDINAL CHANGE SHALL
ENCOURAGE BETTER
WORKPLACE GENDER PARITY**

FINDINGS FROM INSIGHTSUTRAS GLOBAL SURVEY

“FREEDOM CANNOT
BE ACHIEVED
UNLESS
WOMEN
HAVE BEEN
EMANCIPATED FROM
ALL KINDS OF
OPPRESSION.”



NELSON R. MANDELA



BETTER **GENDER EQUALITY** AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PYRAMID THAN THE TOP

Gender equality at the workplace is a slowly advancing phenomenon even as globally companies and individuals have been promoting the need for parity of genders in corporate offices. Many studies conducted over the years demonstrate that while women are found in large numbers in lower levels at any organization, the scale tips heavily in favor of men for senior roles and in corporate boards. **As of 2019, 36% of global boards were found to have at least 3 women¹, in line with scholarly research that indicates that organizations that have at least 3 women directors on the board demonstrate better financial performance². Globally women held just 20% of board director seats in 2019³ even as countries such as India, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Norway have introduced mandatory quotas for women on boards at public companies⁴.** This is in stark contrast to women participation at the lower levels in the workplace where 36% of workforce comprises of women⁵.

It is universally acknowledged that women graduate at higher percentages from colleges than men and yet there exists huge disparity in presence of women at executive positions as also the discrepancies in salaries between the genders. Multipronged efforts are helping bridge the gap in the last 15 years as seen in the gradual improvement in gender statistics at workplace. However, there are still huge leaps to be made. **The economic participation and opportunity sub index of World Economic Forum's global gender gap report of 2020 shows that only 58% of the gender gap at workplace has been closed so far and that only 55% of women in the age group of 15-64 globally are engaged in the labor market as against 78% for men of the same age group⁶.**

1. MSCI ACWI Index developed by MSCI which is an independent research firm.
2. 2018 Global board diversity tracker
3. Women on Boards 2019 Progress Report
4. The quota legislative strategy for women directors - Global overview, CWDI, 2019
5. Gender equality global report and ranking 2019 by Equileap
6. World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report 2020

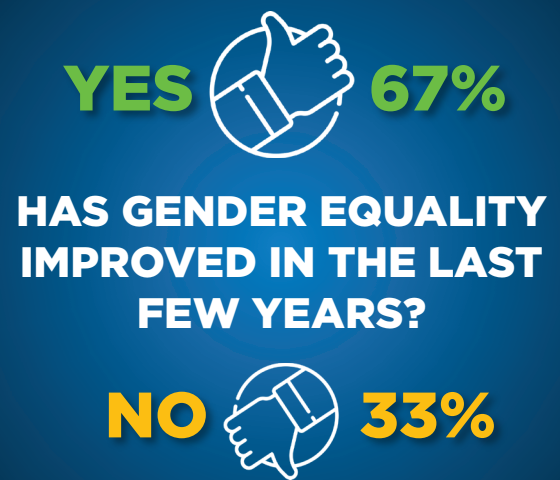
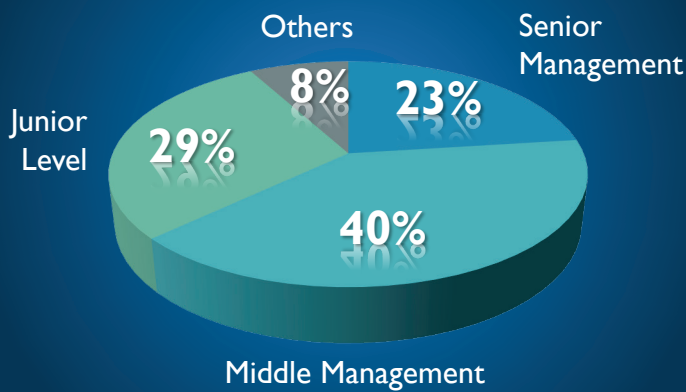
INSIGHTSUTRAS SURVEY ON GENDER PARITY AT WORKPLACE

Intrigued by these global statistics on workplace gender parity, InsightSutras conducted a global survey with working women professionals across various industries and various professional and experience levels to understand the factors contributing to the inequality and what needs to be done to bring about better gender parity at the workplace. Following sections contain some of the key findings from this research.

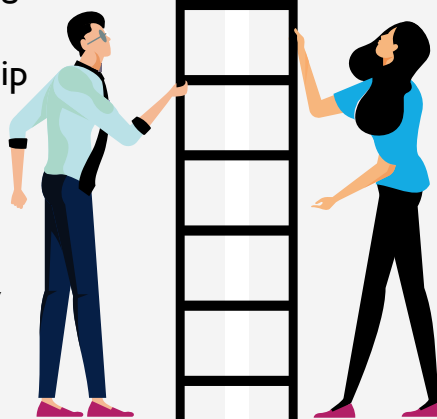
Beyond acceptance of women at managerial and senior executive and board director roles, there are other larger issues that contribute to lack of gender parity in the workplace, chief among them being:

- Prevalent mindset of prejudice against women in workplace
- Prevailing male dominance culture in predominant workplaces

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS



Women employees have been witnessing a welcome progression in bringing in parity between genders at workplace. While in some industries such as the high tech and knowledge sectors, equality is given more prominence and diligently practiced, there is perceived huge deficit in gender equality in other traditional industries such as manufacturing. The focus for the best part of the last decade on gender parity at the workplace has been on eliminating the glass ceiling that women face when aspiring for senior leadership roles. However, in recent years, the attention has turned towards breaking the barriers that prevent women from donning managerial roles, as the inequality begins from these levels onward.

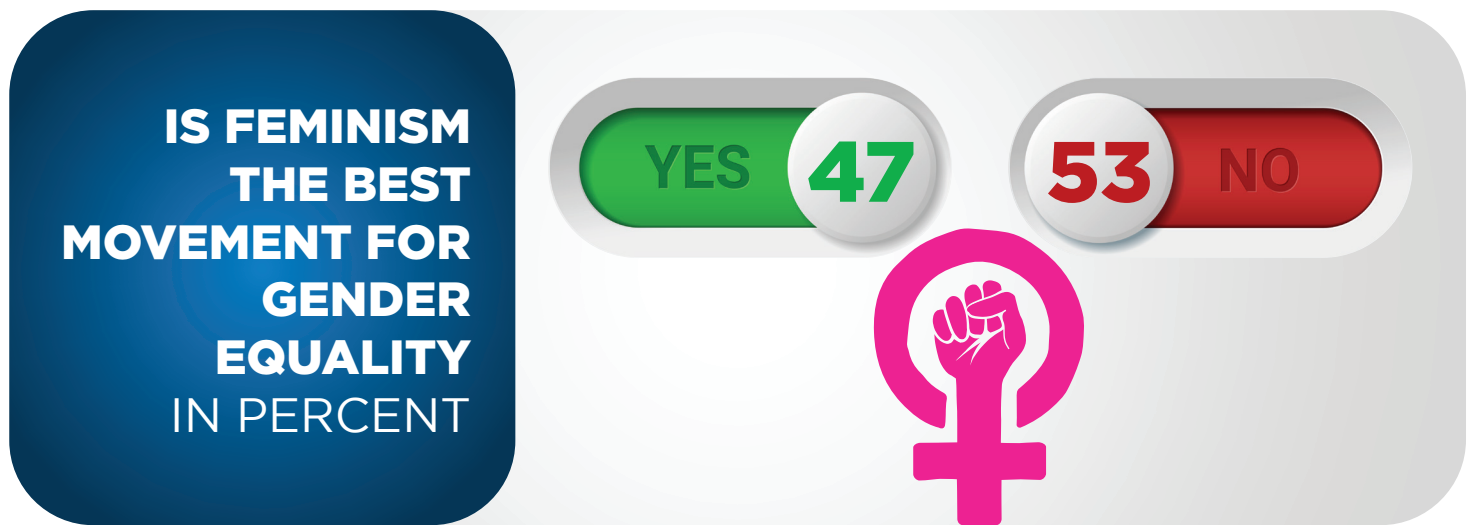


- Persisting pay gap - women globally earn nearly 23% less than men at the same role⁷
- Perceived absence of equality in laws and treatment of men and women
- Society expectations that compel women to give priority to family
- Established conventions about women in workplace such as - women not flexible for transfers and frequent travel, women not open to demanding job roles etc.
- Last but not the least, different forms of harassment, including sexual at workplace.

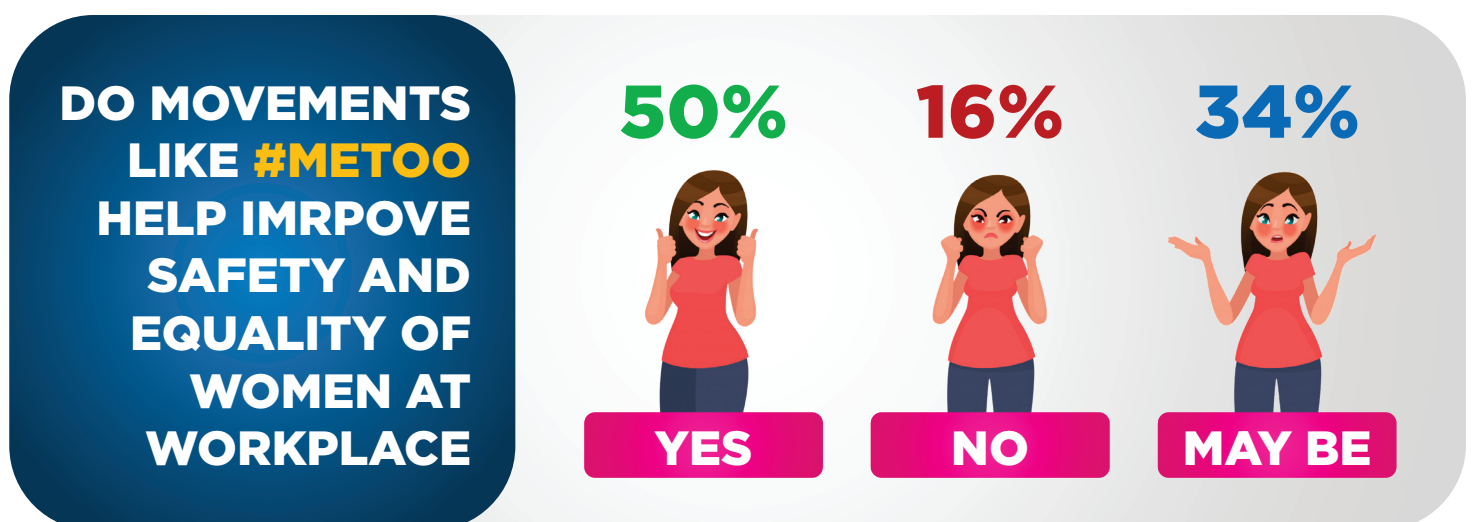
7. Gender equality global report and ranking, 2019 by Equileap

TRIGGERED BY FEMINIST MOVEMENT; BUT ONLY MINDSET SHIFT CAN BRING ABOUT THE DESIRED RESULTS

Feminism movement that began in the 1960s has played a major role in championing equal rights from women in homes, society and the workplace. Many countries adopted laws to usher gender equality propelled by the feminist movement. Its impact in improving the standards and rights from women in workplace is largely esteem able.

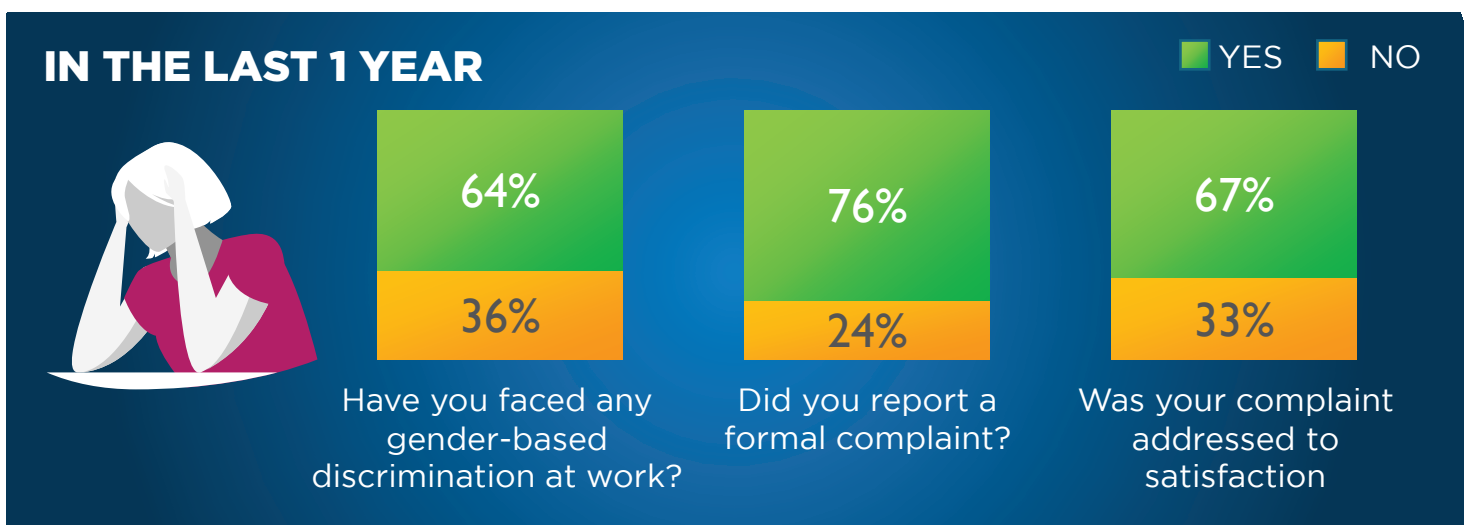


Thanks to the more recent #metoo and similar feministic movements, organizations have been taking progressive measures to make workplaces of equal opportunity for men and women. It is also worth acknowledging that the feminist movement provided the seed towards better equality for women, however, it is the mindset change brought through enhanced awareness that can truly create equality for women at workplaces.

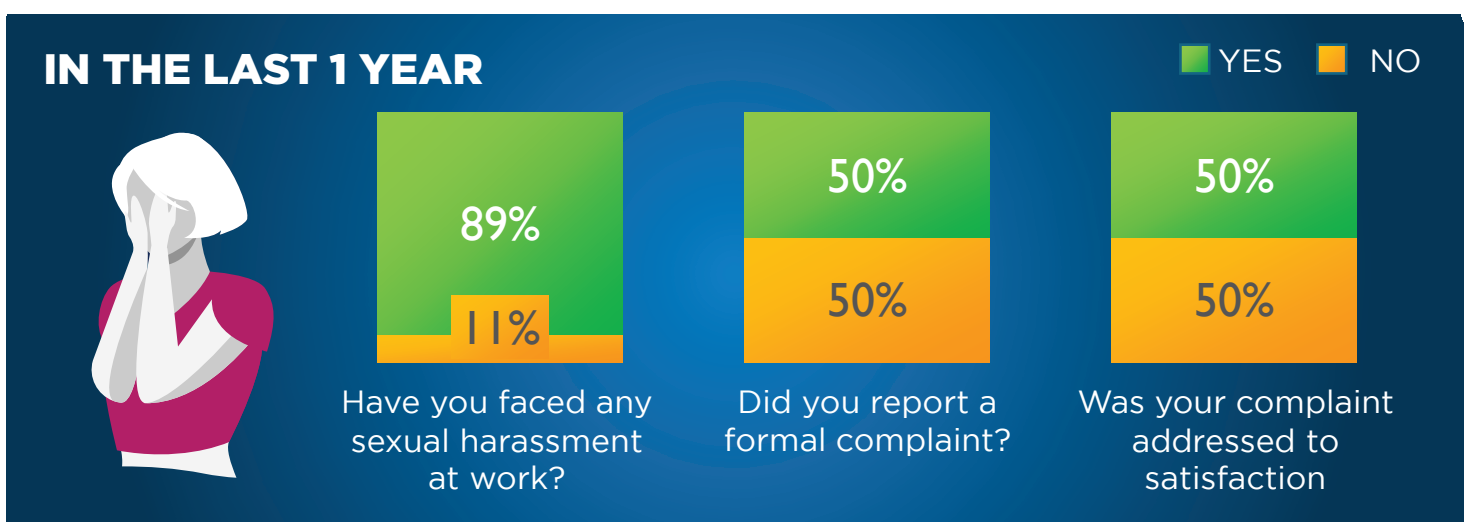


NEED FOR STRINGENT POLICY MEASURES IS ACUTELY FELT

The absence of stringent harassment policies and the lack of prompt action initiation on harassment complaints have resulted in women employees being hesitant to report any harassment faced. **Less than 60% of companies globally have any form of anti-sexual harassment policy⁸**. It is widely reported that a very negligible proportion of gender discrimination and gender-based violence acts are reported in corporate organizations. Further worrying is the fact that, of the reported cases, action till closure is undertaken on a very miniscule proportion.



Most often cases, female employees are harassed by men colleagues who are their superiors/supervisors which makes them reluctant to report the incident. Fear of their career being harmed by the superiors and/or lack of trust in the management and concerned personnel believing their word against a supervisor leads to women employees not reporting harassment issues.





RIGHT CULTURE AND SPIRIT OF INCLUSIVENESS IS ESSENTIAL

Creating the right culture is essential for promotion of gender parity in organizations. It is imperative for companies to focus on certain essentials such as creating an environment for equal opportunity and fairness, providing better work life flexibility and ensuring that workplaces are safe, secure and respectful.

Encouraging diversity at all levels shall ensure creation of equal opportunity across ethnicity and genders. Organizations also need to consciously involve women employees and encourage their participation as confidence building measures.

ARE WORKING WOMEN TREATED ON PAR WITH THEIR MEN COLLEAGUES?

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
As a working woman, are you treated on par with men colleagues in your opinions being sought?	13%	4%	16%	41%	26%
As a working woman, are you treated on par with men colleagues in career advancement?	16%	14%	14%	21%	26%
As a working woman, are treated on par with men colleagues in compensation?	14%	19%	19%	24%	19%

POST PANDEMIC WORK CULTURE CHANGES AND THE RESULTING IMPACT ON GENDER PARITY ISSUES

The onset of the Covid-19 crisis has led to a transformative shift in the way organizations function and one of the most critical developments is the increase in home office. This trend is a huge boost to women employees as some of the key reasons for women to quit careers early on are the inability to stay away from home for extended periods and the need for more flexible work timings. The current trend of more home offices alleviates these challenges for women thus ensuring their increased participation in labor force. However, the changes in workplaces post the pandemic are likely to usher a new set of inequality challenges that women could likely face.

PROS & CONS TO WOMEN IN WORKPLACES POST COVID



PROS

Increasing home offices ensure women do not have to sacrifice on their careers as they can work from home



General perception that women employees are more sincere even in the absence of supervision could make them preferable for remote working

CONS




Perception that women would spend more time on household chores if made to work from home, could potentially lead to non preference for remote employment





As companies look to downsizing compelled by economic situation, likelihood of more women employees than men, being let go is very strong


WAY FORWARD


Organizations need to take some sure small steps to start building gender parity cultures at the workplace. Some of these steps include:

Believing and holding as fundamental principle the need to be an **equal opportunity employer**. In the post Covid workplace, this becomes even more critical. 


Human resources (HR) teams to consciously create awareness on gender parity across all levels in the organization. 

Investing in training to eliminate unconscious gender bias amongst employees in managerial/ supervisory/ management roles. 

Ensuring equal proportion of women as first level managers as progression to management roles starts from here. 

Establishing stringent anti sexual harassment policy and policies for women employee protection and welfare. Penalizing harassers through severe punishment to demonstrate commitment. 

Adhering to hiring policies for equal number of men and women in workforce 

Following fair practices in complaint resolution irrespective of whom the allegations are against. Setting up an unbiased and independent conflict resolution team that provides immediate resolution of complaints and is empowered to recommend punishment where it is due. 

A TRULY EQUAL
WORLD WOULD BE
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**WOMEN RAN HALF
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AND COMPANIES,
AND MEN RAN HALF
OUR HOMES.**



SHERYL SANDBERG, COO Facebook

ABOUT INSIGHTSUTRAS

InsightSutras is an upcoming outsourcing solutions company, providing Market Research Services, Data Analytics & Insights and Offshore Partnership. The company is founded and backed by four accomplished and well-known market research professionals, sharing over 130 years of global industry experience among them. This rich experience mirrors in every aspect of InsightSutras' client-centric, value added and world-class services offerings.

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