



NOMA MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

(Affiliated to All India Management Association)

1st NMA Women Development Conference 2024

Fly High



Scaling Heights....

Unleash For

The Next Normal



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About NMA

Noida Management Association (NMA) is an autonomous non-profit professional body registered under the Society Registration Act, 1860 and is affiliated to All India Management Association. NMA was founded on 22nd April 1989. It is a Management Think Tank, devoted to the cause of promoting excellence in management through application of essentials of modern management principles and practices.

OUR MISSION

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OBJECTIVES:

- a) To promote and develop management science education
- b) To promote amongst members exchange of knowledge, experience and ideas on sound management principles and practices.
- c) To make available benefits of its activities and facilities to the public at large.
- d) To promote education in theory and practice of management and related subjects through meetings, discussions, lectures, research projects, seminars, conferences, programmes of studies, dissemination and exchange of information, experience and ideas, libraries, publication of booklets, abstracts, journals and periodicals.
- e) To collaborate and cooperate with other management associations or similar institutions in India and abroad in the task of advancing the aims and objects of the Association and also getting itself affiliated to any similar National and International body, if considered necessary.
- f) To take up case studies and projects works in any field of management including those specially required to meet the need and requirement of small scale industries which have mushrooming presence in Noida.
- g) To provide professional service/consultancy to its members or nonmembers. The activities of the Association shall be mainly confined to NOIDA & GREATER NOIDA area. It can arrange its activities at any other places or place as may be required.

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CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Ms. Veena Swarup

Conference Chair & Former Director- HR, Engineers India Limited

MEMBERS

Prof (Dr) Tripti Bajpai Toor

Head of the Department – MBA ,
School of Business Administration
Bhagwan Parshuram Institute for Technology (GGSIPTU)

Dr. Renu Luthra

Advisor to Chancellor, Galgotias University

Ms. Anupama Jha

Corporate Trainer & Life Coach

Dr. Sunita Dwivedi

Association Professor,
Symbiosis Center for Management Studies-NOIDA
Symbiosis International (Deemed) University pune, India

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SP Jain Institute of Management & Research

Dr. Sweta Saurabh

Director, I Business Institute, Greater Noida

Ms. Anuja Sehgal

Chairperson Women Empowerment Committee, NMA

Ms. Vijaya Sampath

Partner- Human Capital

Ms. Aastha Juneja

Associate Director - SheXO Program, Enabling Areas
Deloitte Shared Services India LLP

OUR FOUNDER MEMBERS

S.No	Name	Address
1	A.C Jain	A-48, Sector-5, Noida-201301
2	S. Kumar	F-28, Sector-22, Noida-201301
3	Brig. S.V.S. Choudhary	410, Sector-29, Arun Vihar, Noida-201301
4	V. Dwivedi	C-469, Sector-19, Noida-201301
5	S.S Verma	G-63, Sector-56, Noida-201301
6	Brig. V.K Ahuja	1219, Sector-37, Noida-201301
7	Raveen Negi	2520, Sec-D, Pkt.-II, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi
8	N.K. Dhooper	D/25/19, Kavi Nagar, Ghaziabad
9	V.K Singhal	C-5-10, SDA, New Delhi-110006
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1	Adesh Jain2	1989-1992
2	V.J. Prakash	1993-1995
3	S.C. Kulshrestha	1996-1997
4	Wg. Cdr. R.S. Shukla	1998-1999
5	Alok Agarwal	1999-2001
6	Dr. (Mrs.) B. Shukla	2001-2003
7	H.K. Garg	2003-2004
8	A.C. Chaturvedi	2004-2005
9	M.K. Rustagi	2006-2007
10	J.D. Singh	2007-2009
11	Dinesh Jain	2009-2010
12	K.P. Verma	2010-2011
13	S.K. Tomar	2011-2013
14	Dinesh Jain	2013-2015
15	S.K. Tomar	2015-2016
16	S.N. Singh	2016-2018
17	Surinder Mohan	2018- 2020
18	S.N. Singh	2020- 2022
19	Sandeep Mittal	2022- 2024

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am very delighted to announce that Noida Management Association is organising its 1st Women Development Conference on 14th November 2024. The Women Development Conference is a pivotal initiative aimed at empowering women professionals to reach new heights. By emphasizing collaboration and innovation, the conference seeks to equip women to navigate the next normal and achieve their full potential. I am sure it will provide valuable insights into fostering inclusivity, understanding diverse perspectives and implementing effective strategies for team empowerment. This focus on women's development is not just equality, it's about driving innovation and success in today's dynamic business environment.

I am sure the participants from Public and Private Organizations, Institutions shall be highly benefited from this conference.

Wishing you all a successful and impactful conference.

With best wishes



Dr. Yogendra Singh
President
Noida Management Association



DR. YOGENDRA SINGH
PRESIDENT
NOIDA MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

**MESSAGE
CONFERENCE CHAIR**

Corporate Diversity is considered a Game Changer. Organisations are actively looking at enhancing their Diversity agenda, especially with a focus on Gender Diversity. There are special efforts world over to groom and develop Women Professionals to meet the need & expectations of the present times. Young Women Professionals too are aspiring and working towards achieving their professional dreams.


This Conference is a step towards developing young Women Professionals to " Fly high, Scaling Heights-- Unleash for the Next Normal". Its all about developing young women leaders through learning experiences. Focusing on complexities involved, the Sessions have been carefully curated to bring out the nuances, to guide participants through Experiences and Best Practices by Speakers from diverse fields and geographies.

The Conference Sessions are:

- Breaking the Mould-- Meeting Aspirations
- Overcoming Barriers--Scaling Heights
- The Equity Agenda--Nurturing for Balance
- Women in the changing World of Work--Stories from the Heart
- Diversity--AGlobal Perspective

The Conference includes Panel Discussions, Plenary Talks, and a Fire Side Chat, wherein, through discussions & presentations the perspectives, thoughts, practices and experiences will highlight the issues and challenges and show case the Best Practices. An array of Eminent Speakers from India &Overseas , from Government, Public & Private Sector, Academia & International Organisations will share their thoughts & experiences.

A lot of effort has gone into preparing for the Conference. The rich experience of the Committee Members and the untiring hard work by Team NMA has gone a long way in weaving the fabric of the Conference. I'm sure the Participants will benefit and have rich takeaway as practices and future solutions. I wish the Conference all success.


(Veena Swarup)

MS VEENA SWARUP

Conference Chair
& Former Director
HR Engineers India Ltd

**MESSAGE
DIRECTOR GENERAL, AIMA**

Congratulations to the Noida Management Association (NMA) on organising its 1st Women's Development Conference. This initiative marks an important advancement in the conversation around corporate diversity and inclusivity. For years, NMA has taken a leading role in bringing valuable insights to the management community, and this conference reinforces its dedication to supporting the growing contributions of women in today's business landscape.

Diversity, particularly gender diversity, is widely acknowledged as a cornerstone of organisational resilience and growth. Modern organisations increasingly recognise the value of balanced representation as they navigate complex challenges and seize emerging opportunities. This conference, with its theme 'Fly High, Scaling Heights- Unleash for the Next Normal', is a timely step toward equipping women professionals to meet the evolving demands of the corporate world.

My compliments to the NMA team and the organisers for their dedication to advancing these meaningful conversations. I am confident that this conference will serve as a catalyst for the next generation of women leaders and contribute to building a more inclusive corporate environment.

Warm regards,

Rekha Sethi

Director General

All India Management Association



REKHA SETHI

Director General

All India Management Association



VEDIQUE NUTRITION—ANCIENT DIETS BASED ON YOUR GENETICS

Dr Shikha Nehru Sharma

Founder- One Health

In modern times ,most people have realised the importance of a healthy balanced diet. Gone are the days when people would follow any random diet plan, because the awareness about the importance of good nutrition and its health benefits are well known. Today there is a lot of information available, both offline and online about nutrition and even main stream media extensively covers many aspects of nutrition related to good health. However due to this information overload, many people get confused about food choice and get overwhelmed due to the extensive information available about diets, nutrition and health.

In my days as a practicing allopath doctor, I found a huge gap in holistic management of chronic diseases due to the absence of application of “food as medicine”. The famous Greek Father of Modern Medicine- Hippocrates had many quotes related to food as medicine.

“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food. “Hippocrates(460BC-370BC)”

In order to understand the medicinal qualities of food one must first understand, what does it mean when we use the term food?

Human Body is Made of Food

If we pause to reflect that what are we made of? what is our body made of? the simple answer is that the human (physical) body is constructed using food. The logical conclusion is that if each cell and organ of our body is made up of food particles (modified to be the human body) then it is quite clear that to manage any disease, we must first and foremost ingest the right kind of food materials. How do we know what our body needs? and what is the right kind of food to eat when the body has landed in a state of dysfunction?

The answers to all these questions lie in our ancient texts—The Vedas

When I started looking for scientific answers to my curious mind, I could only find the logical and practical answers in the Vedas. The Vedas hold the key to understanding Nutrition and its medicinal properties. Let's delve deeper in the unique and amazing concepts of Vedas and nutrition.

Unique Aspects of Nutrition in Vedas

1- According to Vedas the physical body is made from food. Food is the basic food material used in making each cell of our body, however how the raw material used to construct the body is dependent upon the “seed of intelligence” residing inside each one of us, which in modern medicine we call ‘Genetics’. Hence, our genetics is the super-brain guiding the construction of our body.

2- Since genetics plays a role in how our body uses food and utilizes food, it becomes important to understand what kind of body type we have and which foods are useful for our bodies and which foods we should avoid, because it is not suitable for the body.

3. In Vedas a very interesting and ingenious system is there to figure out our genetic type (Prakriti –core physical nature) through a set of detailed questions along with the pulse diagnosis. You may call this method a sort of “reverse engineering”, Figuring out the kind of genetic make up of the individual by assessment of the nature and workings of the human body which is the ultimate creation of the individual human gene. A typical assessment of the individual body type (called phenotype in modern medicine) is based on a set of questions which covers every thing from the body structure, digestion, sleep, mind, psychological nature. A comprehensive assessment also includes the “pulse diagnosis. The final out come of all this a classification of the person under a specific genetic type. Once you know your genetic type, then you simply have to follow the rules of eating specifically for your genetic type to live along and healthy life.

4. According to the Vedic Rules of good nutrition, the human being has to abide by certain formulas for a successful health.

These formulas of good eating are as follows–

- a) Eat according to your unique body type for living a healthy life.
- b) Choose the foods which are appropriate for that season, for example on to have food with a cooling nature in a cold season like curd and coconut water. Similarly do note at eggs and garam masala in summer .
- c) Eat according to the circadian rhythm of the body. The circadian rhythm of the body follows the Sunlight, so as the Sunrises and sets, so does our body's circadian rhythm behave. Our metabolism is the highest at noon and very sluggish after sunset, hence missing lunch and having a heavy dinner is a terrible idea and with definite adverse consequences on the health of the individual.
- d) Ensure your food is balanced according to the 6 prime tastes as given in nature –which are–Sour (like Amla- Indian Goose berry) Sweet (Like Fruits ,Figs, Dates) Salty (like Rock salt, natural salt in vegetables) Astringent (like Tea, Radish) Spicy (Green Chilies, Red Chilies, Black Pepper, Bittergourd). According to Vedas, the reason we need these 6 tastes is rooted in science. Each taste has a functional value and is important as it supports the body's functions. Let us explore what is the importance and logic behind each taste and what is value they have for the body –

Sour taste– Reduces irritation and inflammation in internal tissues, helps to hold water in tissues (if dry), promotes healthy bile movement which is important for the gall bladder and digestion of oils.

Pro Tip–Reduces our taste after surgery for better tissue healing and avoid sour taste at night to avoid water retention.

Sweet taste– This taste helps to nourish the joints, cells and tissues and helps to relax the nerves and the body ,supports building / growing the body, moisturizes the body and joints, nourishes the tissues of the body. Helps in gaining weight and body strength .

Pro Tip– Reduce (but do note eliminate) sweet taste if one is over weight

Salty- Helps to improve appetite, helps to clear mucous in lungs, Holds water in the body if taken in excess.

Pro Tip- Reduce salt in take if one has loose soft flab. Also in High blood pressure.

Astringent— Helps the tissues to tone and tighten especially useful for post- menopausal women. Cools the body in summers

Pro Tip— Taking One Amla Daily in vegetable juice is a simple anti ageing formula.

Bitter Taste— Important for maintaining healthy pancreas, gall bladder, healthy blood and fat balance. Hence given more incases of problems of gall bladder, Insulin (Pancreas), Cleans blood, good for skin problems like pimples . Over-weight issues .

Pro Tip— Find interesting recipes of Bitter Gourd (Karela), consume green leafy vegetables regularly for healthy gallbladder and insulin control

Pungent/Spicy Taste— Found in Chilies, Onion, Garlic. It is important as it helps to expel excess gas, helps to improve blood circulation in the tissues, improves sweating so that the pores expel toxins from the skin.

Pro Tip-Having Kaada (decoctions) using healing herbs and spices (ginger, Black pepper etc.) is a great way to be healthy in winters.

e) Food is like medicine so always combine foods according to the rules of good food combinations. To the modern person, who is used to having berries with milk (strawberry shake) or watermelon with curd, it may seem strange, however the reality is that food is a Bio-chemical and much like a chemistry lab, you cannot mix wrong chemicals together, otherwise the resulting reactions can harm the lung, intestine, joints, and many more organs. Even though the adverse effects take time.

f) Some wrong food combinations are— Milk or curd with fruits Watermelon with any other food Honey with Ghee in equal quantity Heating Ghee Non Vegetarian Food and Dairy products

g) Consuming food according to the stage of life—Our body needs and digestive capability change with age, hence it is important to eat according to the age.

For example in childhood one needs more of fats, carbs and proteins. In youth it is more of proteins and carbs, in middle age it is more of proteins and rough age and in old age some healthy fats (like ghee) and vegetables with less of simple carbs and less of heavy proteins (but plant proteins are fine).

In today's era of rising lifestyle diseases like Diabetes, heart problems, Liver problem and cancers, Vedic way of eating foods can be the best way to protect one's health and live a high quality of life .



BREAKING THE MOLD AND OVERCOMING BARRIERS -WE ARE DEFINED BY THE PATH WE CHOOSE

Anita Y. Tang

Vice President, World Academy of Productivity Science

This is a personal journey of mine- a Chinese woman born in Hong Kong, who lived and worked in Singapore and now resides in the United States.

The great Roman philosopher, Seneca, asserted that “Luck is When Preparation Meets Opportunity.” I believe that working hard is one ingredient toward achievement, we also need to have the right resources aligned when an opportunity arises.

Preparation is a lot easier when one likes what one does. I am fortunate that I always like and enjoy what I do. And as a curious person, I always welcome new ideas and opportunities to learn new things. I have wanted to be a multi-talented person since I was young.

Luck, though not always on my side, my curious personality does help me prepare in many different aspects.

1970s-1980s, Hong Kong

I was born in the early 1960s in then-British colonial Hong Kong. I got my first job right after I finished an Advanced-Level education, it was with a French bank in Hong Kong, first working as a clerk in the settlement department and two years later, as a trainee in the dealing room/treasury.

One day after work, I went out for dinner with a Malaysian friend, he was a senior person in the industry. My friend brought another friend of his, a British man who was an expatriate in Hong Kong working in the aerospace industry. While waiting for my friend to get ready, the British man asked about my job — I said I worked at a bank. “As a secretary?” he presumed. I asked him why he thought that way. He said, “What else for a woman; not a bank manager.” That was the end of our conversation. The year was 1983.

By the mid-1980s, I headed the funding desk in another French bank. Two years later, I was one of the pioneers in Hong Kong engaged in trading the newly introduced financial instruments, and also the only market maker for Swiss Franc interest rates in Asia. My fourth and last job in Hong Kong was to build a funding desk for an Austrian bank that entered the Asian-Pacific market for the first time.

Luck: Hong Kong's rise as a financial center started around 1970 when banking institutions mushroomed in the city, thus interbank trading. In the early 1980s, one did not need a college degree to become a trainee in treasury. At that time, female dealers in Hong Kong did not even make up 10 percent of the industry. Every financial institution wanted a female dealer in its dealing room to perceive diversity, or “for show.” If one could present a good trading record, it was easy to get noticed, especially a woman dealer. I liked my line of business, I worked hard, I continued to update my skills, and, I obviously got noticed.

In my eight years in four dealing rooms in Hong Kong, preparation met many opportunities.

Breaking the Mold and Overcoming Barriers: It is not true that only men can be good traders, that is only a myth. Women, who may be the minority in an industry, can shine also. In my last job, we had two female dealers in treasury and both excelled in our roles.

The Turn of the 1980s, Singapore

While working for the banks holding their trading deck, I also traded for my own account - as long as the bank and my personal trading accounts were not in the same brokerage, my bank employers did not see any conflict of interest. My positions came out ahead on the infamous Black Monday in 1987. It gave me much confidence to start full-time trading for myself; the goal was to go to Singapore to trade financial futures on the trading floor. However, my mother was concerned for me as a single woman going overseas to another country where I had no family. I shelved the plan and continued on my fourth job hitting new milestones. One day, my mother told me that I should go to Singapore and start my own trading business or else I would find my life unfulfilled. I thought I was happy and accomplished in my fourth job . . . I was glad that my mother, who was also my best friend, knew me better than I knew myself. I went to Singapore. My mother moved to Singapore and took care of me for three-and-a-half out of my four years there. During my first year in floor trading in the Singapore International Monetary Exchange (SIMEX), I made one-third of what I used to take home from the bank; levelled with the bank compensation in the second year; did very well in the third, and the fourth and last year, I did extremely well.

Was SIMEX a hard environment? Of course, from one culture to another, from a controlled working environment to an everything-goes dog-eat-dog world, from brokers used to entertain me to I was lucky to be offered a chance to entertain the trading floor order fillers. It was hard. After four years on the trading floor and making many acquaintances and some friends, many others working in SIMEX still referred to me as “the girl from Hong Kong.” I did emerge into the country, but not the culture in the workplace.

Luck: My past experiences and industriousness in studying the market made it possible for me to do well in trading. It would be easier if I had order fillers feed me winning trades, but I survived without that benefit. The Exchange featured me publicly as a successful trader from abroad — as part of its effort to promote more outside traders to engage in floor trading in Singapore. Being a woman trader gave me an edge in publicity over other male traders who came from abroad.

Breaking the Mold and Overcoming Barriers: I did not need to rely on order fillers to give me the price edge and could still survive, so I did not need to entertain them if I chose not to, which I had chosen not to. People viewed it as a “privilege” to hang out with the order-filling groups, but I'd prefer to hang out with people I considered friends — at or outside the Exchange.

In the Late 1980s and Thereafter, the United States

Full-time Student, Part-time Trader

I loved my work but not my workplace. When I started to find excuses not to get up to go to work, I knew the end was in sight. So, I packed up and went to the United States to get my first and second degree — after eight years with four banks in Hong Kong and four years in Singapore trading for my own account. Before I went to Chicago, I only had two acquaintances there whom I got to know when working in Singapore. I am still in touch with one of them.

My older sister in Australia, who retired at age 32, asked why I did not work for a few years more to save up enough money to retire. I told her that “retirement is not my thing.”

To be a student again was a luxury. With the work experience, I was able to connect real-life incidents with book knowledge — it all made sense. Those few years were a good break from work for me to leisurely acquire knowledge. It was a wonderful feeling to know that getting a degree was not about finding a job afterward but for knowledge and personal growth.



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You thought I would give up trading? Not a chance. I was a full-time student and a part-time trader. After my first degree, I became a floor trader again, and this time, at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME).

Full-time Trader, Part-time Student

Was CME a hard environment? Absolutely. Some Asian people were working on the trading floor but they were mostly runners than traders; females were working on the floor but they were mostly runners or on clerical jobs. In my first week on the trading floor, a female order filler told me that “we girls should stick together.” Luckily I did not take her seriously as she was “unstuck” as soon as a good trade came about and she tried to grab it for herself. As an independent trader, I learned to rely on my own hard work and view of the market, which most of the time paid off.

I only worked mornings as the market mostly moved then. I had much time at my disposal for the rest of days. I volunteered for community service or charity work in my first year at CME but did not find sorting food items at the Greater Chicago Food Depository a good use of what I could offer. For the next two years, I went for an Executive MBA program — one day a week — at Evanston. I loved it.

A New Territory

Like many MBA graduates, I got into consulting as soon as I was done with the program. It was not planned but things just fell into place. I joined a dozen other Hongkongers and started a Shanghai-based management consultancy in 1999.

It did not work out.

However, the development opportunities in China fascinated me — so many new things, so many people keen to do something, and especially when I saw the country on the verge of an economic explosion.

I started my boutique U.S.-China cross-border business advisory practice in the early 2000s.

There was a time I led an American group to China to attend a forum. We took the train from Shanghai to Nanjing. I was talking to my American peers. I heard a mother telling her young daughter (5-6 years old) that when she grew up she should learn to be a translator like this lady (me) here. I told the young girl that learning a foreign language could be very useful but being a translator should not be the sole possibility; the sky is the limit.

Was China consultancy difficult? It was more than difficult as I knew little about the business environment and business culture there, which turned out to be quite different from what was being practiced in the West. It was a steep learning curve. The stereotyping certainly did not help either. However, I found a niche — I built a team of American colleagues in the U.S. and secured working partners in China, my firm offered “Chinese literate, America experienced” advisory services.

Luck: The fast-changing business environment and robust economic development in China offered many opportunities and challenges. Captivated by the influx of new information, I soaked up the knowledge eagerly. I was honest, not shy about asking for help, and did not mind taking the position of devil's advocate. The training from my business degrees certainly played a key role in my acquiring new knowledge as I had learned to think outside the “financial-only” box, something I was very accustomed to as a trading professional. I was prepared to undertake considerable effort for minimal remuneration to gain practical experience. All these efforts were recognized. I worked closely with a nationwide think tank in China which gave me more opportunities to learn and to contribute. **Breaking the Mold and Overcoming Barriers:** Stereotyping was the biggest hurdle to overcome. Many American firms hired a Chinese person in-house and expected this person to know everything about doing business with / in China. These could be people of Chinese race who might not even speak Put on ghua and had not been in China

previously. Or, an American expatriate was sent to China on a project, came back and became a China expert. Many times, projects with such hires failed. Other than the big firms, most other consultants in the China space were boxed into this undesirable stereotype.

It took time, hard work, proof of ability, testimonials from past clients and other professional service providers, and much more in order to stand apart from the stereotype. Once that was established, things started to positively accumulate. In the knowledge market, reputation is a firm's or a person's most important asset, which I guard like a lion.

What's Now and What's Next?

I did not feel that I had spent my time effectively volunteering for community service while at the CME, I eventually found a more effective role — sharing my experiences with others so that they do not need to go through all the lessons personally but through some of the others' experience to shorten their learning curve. I was lucky that men and women before me shared with me their experiences so that I could better find my routes. I have also learned to share my experiences with others.

Though I believe in mentoring, I am even more accustomed to coaching and knowledge exchange as people do not have the same experiences and if we can keep an open mind, we can learn a lot from each other.

I participated in several annual Camp CEO events organized by the Girl Scouts of Chicago and Northwest Indiana. It matched an executive woman with a Girl Scout for a year and the program kicked off with the Camp. It was a three-day camp and each executive woman was asked to commit 24 hours to the Camp joining its activities. There were many activities including knowledge and experience-sharing sessions, sports, and group games. While we executive women shared our stories and experiences, we also learned from the girls. I had a chance to play football (soccer as it is known in the U.S.), archery, and kayaking, activities we were not exposed to when we were young, and also saw how proficient the young ladies were with technology.

POWER, opening doors for women, was another program I used to support. POWER promotes and develops women leaders by providing unique opportunities for senior-level leaders and high-potential talent to interact and exchange ideas with thought leaders, industry experts, and peers. I have always emphasized one notion: "Don't only demand senior women leaders to pull, high-potential talents should push from below also, team work with concerted efforts is always more effective to get results."

Time has changed, knowledge exchange is mutual, it is two-sided instead of one. Times have changed, and technological advancement has made it possible to do exchanges cross-border and cross-time zones, all at ease in one's home base.

I shared experiences with others not only in North America, but also in Asia, the U.K. and Europe, and Africa. I continue to expand that network.

I draw strength from those who came before me and I am eager to embrace a chance to continue such tradition.

Remember: Be prepared and be ready to seize any opportunities that arise.



FINLAND'S STORY OF GENDER EQUALITY AND THE NEW FAMILY LEAVE SYSTEM

Iiris Määttä

Second Secretary

Embassy of Finland in New Delhi

Finland has a long history of gender equality. Over a hundred years ago, in 1906, Finland became the first country in the world to grant all women and men full political rights, meaning not only the right to vote but also to stand for elections. In the first elections in 1907, 19 women were elected to the 200-seated parliament. In hundred years, Finland has transformed from a largely rural and poor country into a competitive, innovative, high-tech Nordic welfare society. The success of Finland as a country is to a great extent linked to improvements in the status of women and gender equality. Back a century ago, given early political rights and education, strong women of the time used their political influence to demand important reforms for the wellbeing of all. This included better schools and health-care. Later on, during the war years, women had to work for a living and run the economy, which helped them to become a natural part of the work force and economy. Without the contribution of half of the adult population, Finland's path towards development would have looked very different.

Today, women and men are equally represented in the Finnish labour market. This is due to affordable, good-quality childcare, measures to reconcile work and family life, and a policy to distribute family leaves more evenly between parents. Free school meals have also played a role in enabling women to work outside the home. In addition, discrimination based upon gender, gender identity and expression of gender is prohibited by law. There are of course also areas that still need improvement, such as closing the gender pay gap. Despite the egalitarian principles and the fact that parental leaves for fathers were first introduced already at the end of the 1970s, childcare responsibilities have for a long time fallen mainly on women. For a long time, the maternity leave was much longer than the paternity leave, and the working culture did not necessarily encourage fathers to take much parental leave. In 2022, Finland reformed its family leave system to better meet the needs of modern society. The reform aimed to increase equality in working life and between parents and to take better account of different types of families. In the current system, both parents get an equal quota of parental leave of 160 days, of which 63 days can be transferred to someone else who takes care of the child. You can turn over parental leave days to the child's other parent, your partner who is not the child's parent, the partner of the child's other parent or another person who is the child's legal guardian. The reform also gives parents considerably more flexibility as they are able to take leave in several parts or on a part-time basis.

Early statistics show that the family leave reform has had an impact in sharing childcare responsibilities more equally between women and men. Men's share of parental allowance days has increased by more than eight percentage points in a few years. In 2020, before the family leave reform, men's share of parental allowance days was about a tenth, while in 2023 it was already 16% and in January-June of 2024 the share was just under 20%. At the same time, women still count for the vast majority of parental leave days.

One of the lessons in Finland's history is that gender equality does not happen automatically or overnight. Gender equality can be promoted with specific policies like the family leave system described above. It takes political will and reforms to change things. In addition, many other things such as attitudes and customs matter, and those take longer to change. A gender equal society benefits women and men and enables everyone to lead a more balanced life. It also benefits the economy, which can harness the full potential of society and not just a half of it. For Finland, gender equality was a truly efficient way to develop into a more prosperous and stable society and economy.



FROM ENTRY-LEVEL TO BOARDROOM: OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT IN INDIAN CORPORATES

Mahua Venkatesh

Representation of women in India Inc continues to be weak. Though it shows a marginal improvement of 26.8 per cent in 2024 compared to 23.9 per cent in 2016, the number is concerning. Different studies throw up different figures. A study by Avtar reflects a higher representation of women in corporate India.

In the entry level, women's representation is almost 40 per cent, according to the report by Avtar, a leading workplace culture consulting company. However, the studies reflect weak representation of women in the senior roles and that is not so encouraging for one of the fastest growing economies of the world.

A report by LinkedIn and the Quantum Hub showed that the women's representation in senior management was only 18.3 per cent despite India's focus on gender equality.

Awareness on this issue with most companies now emphasising on D&I programmes has significantly increased and today we have boardrooms aggressively brainstorming on issues related to women's participation. Most companies have a clear mandate now to hire women as part of CEO goals and objectives. Regular trainings, mentorship, offering flexibility are just among the several things that companies are doing to increase diversity. Pay parity is another area that is being taken up seriously.

But the findings of the World Economic Forum(https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2024.pdf) clearly underlines the need for the corporate world to do a lot more. According to the study, India falls in the group of economies with the lowest levels of economic parity along with Bangladesh, Sudan, Iran, Pakistan and Morocco. "These economies all register less than 30 per cent gender parity in estimated earned income," the WEF said, adding that the level of parity in labour force participation rate is under 50 per cent for all listed economies.

When it comes to the highest executive roles, women's representation drops even further: only 6 per cent of CEOs in the world are women, representing just a 1 per cent increase from our previous edition.

(<https://www2.deloitte.com/id/en/pages/cxo-programs/articles/women-in-the-boardroom-report.html>).

The report however points out that Southeast Asian countries have made steady progress and are better placed when it comes to women representation in senior roles. Women's participation is significantly higher in the corporate work structure in the Southeast Asian countries, which have also registered an increase in the percentage of board seats held by women leaders. In 2021, women representation was at 17.1 per cent but increased 2.8 percentage points in just two years. In 2023, it was 19.9 per cent.

While diversity is an area which needs to be taken up across all boardrooms the world over, India needs to aggressively get its act together though change has started creeping in.

India's Dynamics

Women contribute only 18 per cent to India's gross domestic product (GDP) though they constitute 48 per cent of the population, a study by the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) revealed. This is something to be worried about. Importantly, the study pointed out that gender equality could potentially result in boosting India's GDP by



NDA MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

30 per cent. Unsurprisingly, the women participation in labour force is much higher in the rural India. The Economic Survey noted that the female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) rose to 37 per cent in 2022-2023 from 23.3 per cent in 2017-2018. Besides, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) has facilitated the opening of 52.3 crore bank accounts, of which 55.6 per cent of account holders are women, as of May 2024.

However, women participation in the workforce is lagging in the urban areas. The Covid 19 pandemic hit the employment rate of women even more.

Why working women quit

Women are still considered the primary caregivers to their children. By the time they are ready to “devote” more time to their work, they are in their mid forties when they have to battle ageism. Pay parity is another key issue for women. These issues need to change.

However, there is one more factor, which women themselves need to address.

Several human resource practitioners say that the fall in number is due to the Indian culture and tradition. Whether we like it or not, in the West or even in Southeast Asia, the work and family culture is different and the trend is to have working women.

“After I had children, I decided to focus more on home and I devoted my entire time and energy in bringing them up. I have no regrets. The aim is not just money but to enjoy the time,” a mid level executive who was working for a multinational confessed.

“Why should I work? My husband is now earning more than enough and I want to enjoy life. I have no shame in not earning,” another friend said.

Surely, these examples are many. And it is time that women help themselves.

The overall increase in income levels, especially in the urban areas, has led to many women taking a conscious decision to opt out of workforce.

A report by Mint earlier noted that “the decline in female workforce participation is partly about culture. As Indians became wealthier, families that could afford to keep women at home did so, while those at the lowest rungs of society are still seen as potential earners.”

As India aims to touch the \$5 trillion economy, she needs her women to come forth and be a part of the growth story. Last year, India during its one year G20 presidency, showcased its culture of diversity with a thrust on women led development. The government has laid down its vision of Nari Shakti and a developed India by 2047 marked by gender equality and elimination of stereotypes. While the government has taken a host of proactive steps, we the people of India need to ensure that those do not remain mere slogans.

The onus is on every Indian to ensure that on ground women participation in the workforce increases with dignity and unbiased dynamics.

So a piece of advice to women executives, especially those in the mid-level – hang in and seek mentorship from seniors.



EXPLORING THE INTERPLAY OF INDIAN MYTHOLOGY, GOVERNMENT POLICIES, AND NGO EFFORTS FOR GENDER JUSTICE

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Introduction

In the rapidly evolving global landscape, the concept of equity has moved to the forefront of public discourse, emphasizing the need for fairness and justice across different sectors of society. The "equity agenda" refers to intentional efforts and policies aimed at addressing systemic inequalities by ensuring that everyone—regardless of their background, race, gender, socioeconomic status, or other identifiers—has access to the same opportunities and resources.

Equity differs from equality in that it acknowledges individuals' unique circumstances and aims to provide support tailored to their specific needs, instead of assuming a one-size-fits-all solution. As wealth and opportunities become increasingly polarized, nurturing a balance through the equity agenda is essential for fostering social cohesion, economic prosperity, and a sense of belonging for all citizens.

A crucial aspect of this broader equity agenda is the pursuit of women's equity, which involves ensuring that women have equal rights, opportunities, and access to resources. Gender disparities have long shaped the lives of women in Indian society, imposing systemic barriers to their progress. Achieving women's equity requires dismantling these barriers while empowering women to break free from patriarchal norms. Interestingly, Indian mythology offers numerous examples of powerful female figures whose stories of strength and resilience remain relevant today. These narratives, combined with contemporary government policies and civil society efforts, illustrate the ongoing journey toward gender justice in India.

This article delves into the women's equity agenda by bridging perspectives from Indian mythology, government policies, and the work of NGOs, complemented by relevant statistics to highlight both the challenges and progress in achieving gender justice in India.

Insights from Indian Mythology on Women's Equity

Indian mythology is replete with stories of strong women and goddesses that symbolize empowerment, justice, and resilience—values central to today's women's equity agenda.

One of the most prominent figures is Durga, the warrior goddess, who represents courage and strength. Durga embodies the power of women to challenge injustices and defend their rights, and her story has become a symbol of women's empowerment in India. This symbolism resonates with feminist movements, where women continue to fight for equal rights and protection against violence. Despite the cultural reverence for Durga, gender-based violence remains rampant in India. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-2021), 46% of Indian women reported experiencing some form of physical or sexual violence from their partners during their lifetime, highlighting the gap between cultural ideals and lived realities.

Similarly, the story of Sita, from the epic Ramayana, offers insights into resilience in the face of societal judgment and hardship. Though often portrayed as a symbol of devotion, Sita's strength is evident in her endurance of abduction, separation from her family, and societal judgment. Her journey mirrors the perseverance required by

women today as they navigate a patriarchal society. For example, India's female labor force participation rate remains alarmingly low, around 24% in 2022, one of the lowest globally. This underscores the persistent structural barriers to women's economic empowerment.

Draupadi, from the Mahabharata, is another powerful symbol. Humiliated in a royal court, Draupadi demanded justice, embodying the ongoing fight for dignity and respect that women seek today. Draupadi's battle for justice reflects the continuing struggle against gender-based violence. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), over 31,000 rape cases were reported in India in 2021 alone. These figures are a grim reminder of the deep-rooted issues women face regarding personal safety and respect in society.

While Indian mythology highlights the strength and resilience of women, it also reminds us of the gender-based struggles that persist today. By aligning these mythological stories with modern-day feminist movements and policy actions, Indian society can draw inspiration to create a more equitable future for women.

Contemporary Government Policies for Women's Equity

To combat gender disparities, the Indian government has implemented several policies designed to promote women's equity. These initiatives seek to create an environment where women can thrive, free from the systemic barriers that have historically limited their progress. One of the most significant initiatives is **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao** (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child), launched in 2015. This program aims to improve the declining child sex ratio and promote education for girls across India. By addressing gender discrimination and advocating for equal educational opportunities, this initiative represents a critical step toward closing the gender gap. Government data indicates progress, such as the improvement in the sex ratio at birth in Haryana from 834 in 2011 to 918 in 2021. However, challenges remain, with female literacy rates still trailing behind male literacy rates (70.3% compared to 84.7%, according to NFHS-5), signaling that more work is needed to ensure equal educational access.

In addition to educational initiatives, the **Mahila-E-Haat** (Women's E-Marketplace) was launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to promote women's entrepreneurship by facilitating the sale of products and services by women. This online platform is a vital step toward supporting women's financial independence and economic empowerment, particularly for those operating in the informal sector. Despite these efforts, women represent only 13.76% of Indian entrepreneurs, illustrating the ongoing need to bridge this gap. Digital platforms like Mahila-E-Haat can play a significant role in helping women achieve financial autonomy, thus contributing to their overall empowerment.

Moreover, the **National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW)** takes a multi-dimensional approach by focusing on women's health, education, employment, and legal rights. The mission has made notable strides in improving maternal health, as evidenced by the decline in India's maternal mortality ratio (MMR) from 167 per 100,000 live births in 2011 to 97 in 2020. This reflects a growing commitment to women's health, yet further action is necessary to ensure that all women benefit equally from such initiatives, particularly in rural & under served areas. Additionally, the **One Stop Centre Scheme (OSC)**, also known as Sakhi, provides integrated services to women affected by violence, offering essential medical, legal, and psychological support. Since its inception, more than 700 centers have been established, aiding over 300,000 women as of 2021. However, the continued rise in gender-based violence highlights a pressing need for stronger systems to protect women and provide them with the support they need.

Together, these initiatives reflect a strong commitment from the Indian government to advance women's equity and empower them in multiple areas of life. Although progress has been achieved, persistent challenges demand continuous efforts and creative strategies to ensure that every woman can fully attain her rights and potential.

NGO Contributions to Women's Equity

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role in advancing women's equity, often filling gaps in government efforts and providing direct services to under served communities. By addressing critical issues such as education, healthcare, financial empowerment, and gender-based violence, NGOs are instrumental in fostering environments where women can thrive.

One notable example is SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association), which focuses on empowering women in the informal sector—an area that accounts for a significant portion of the Indian economy. By providing microfinance, healthcare, and vocational training, SEWA addresses the economic challenges these women face, thereby enhancing their livelihoods. With over 1.9 million members, SEWA plays a vital role in supporting women who contribute approximately 55% to India's GDP yet remain underrepresented in formal financial systems. This support not only uplifts individual women but also strengthens the economy as a whole.

In the realm of education, Pratham emerges as one of India's leading education-focused NGOs, dedicated to closing the gender gap in education, particularly for girls from disadvantaged backgrounds. The organization's Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2023 reveals that while girls' school enrollment rates have improved, significant gaps persist in learning outcomes. For instance, fewer girls enroll in STEM fields compared to boys, limiting their future opportunities in high-demand sectors. Moreover, the lack of access to smart phones means girls lag in digital skills, further exacerbating the gender gap in technological proficiency. Although girls outperform boys in reading their regional language, socio-cultural barriers, such as early marriage and domestic responsibilities, continue to hinder their educational progress.

Complementing these educational efforts, Jagori emphasizes gender sensitization and advocates for survivors of gender-based violence. Through campaigns like Safe Delhi, Jagori aims to create safer urban spaces for women. However, despite these initiatives, a staggering 93% of Indian women report feeling unsafe in public spaces, highlighting the urgent need for continued work in gender-sensitive urban planning and policy advocacy. This unsettling reality underscores the interconnectedness of education, safety, and economic empowerment in advancing women's equity.

Moreover, Goonj addresses the critical issue of menstrual hygiene by providing low-cost sanitary products to women in rural areas and educating communities on menstrual health. This work is particularly vital, as 23% of girls drop out of school upon reaching puberty due to a lack of menstrual hygiene products. Goonj's initiatives, such as "Not Just a Piece of Cloth," have positively impacted millions of women, yet the need for continued action remains imperative to tackle this widespread issue.

Collectively, these NGOs illustrate the multifaceted approach necessary to promote women's equity, demonstrating that progress in one area—be it economic empowerment, education, safety, or health—can lead to transformative outcomes in others. The ongoing efforts of these organizations are crucial in paving the way for a more equitable society where women can achieve their full potential.

Nurturing Women's Equity – A Holistic Approach

Achieving women's equity in India requires a holistic and collaborative approach that includes government action,

NGO interventions, and societal change. The narratives from Indian mythology provide cultural examples of strong women, while modern policies and NGO initiatives offer practical tools to dismantle systemic barriers. Government policies, such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, and NGO initiatives like SEWA's support for women in the informal economy, work together to address the multi-faceted challenges that women face. Collaboration between governments and civil society is critical to ensuring that progress toward women's equity is sustained and inclusive. Cultural attitudes toward gender roles must also shift for these initiatives to succeed. Campaigns promoting the values of gender equality and elevating mythological female figures can help challenge patriarchal norms and create a more equitable society. Additionally, stronger enforcement of existing laws is necessary to combat the root causes of gender-based discrimination and violence. Programs like Sakhi must be made more accessible to ensure survivors of violence receive the support they need.

Conclusion: The pursuit of women's equity in India is deeply rooted in mythology, modern policy frameworks, and civil society efforts. Drawing inspiration from mythological figures like Durga and Draupadi, who symbolize strength and resilience, and aligning these ideals with government initiatives and NGO efforts, India is making strides toward gender justice. However, the journey is far from complete.

Women's equity involves breaking down the entrenched social, economic, and cultural barriers that have historically held women back. While government policies and NGO programs are integral to this effort, lasting change will require a societal shift in attitudes toward women. Only then can India fully realize the promise of gender justice—where all women, like the goddesses of Indian mythology, can rise to their full potential.

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CORPORATE DIVERSITY AS A GAME CHANGER: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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Corporate diversity is gaining attention as a powerful tool for companies looking to boost growth, innovation, and long-term success. Businesses around the world are beginning to understand that having a diverse and inclusive workforce is not just about doing the right thing; it's also about improving their performance, staying competitive, and appealing to a broader range of customers. In this article, we'll explore what corporate diversity means, its benefits, and some of the challenges organizations face when trying to create an inclusive workplace.

What Is Corporate Diversity?

Corporate diversity means having a workforce that includes people from a wide variety of backgrounds—different races, genders, ages, nationalities, religions, and so on. It also means having employees with different skills, experiences, and ways of thinking. On top of that, inclusion is about creating a work environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to do their best.

When companies prioritize diversity and inclusion (D&I), they make sure all voices are heard, and people from different backgrounds can contribute their unique perspectives. This leads to more creativity, better decision-making, and new ideas. Companies that focus on D&I don't just meet social expectations—they set themselves up for better business results.

The Business Case for Diversity: Why It Matters

Research shows that diverse companies tend to do better financially. A report from McKinsey & Company found that organizations with more women in leadership were 25% more likely to be profitable compared to those with fewer women in these roles. Additionally, companies with more racial and ethnic diversity were 36% more likely to outperform less diverse peers. Diverse teams bring fresh perspectives, which can lead to better problem-solving and innovative solutions.

Another study by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) revealed that companies with diverse management teams earned 19% more revenue through new ideas and products than companies with less diversity. For industries like technology and pharmaceuticals, where innovation is key, having diverse teams can be a huge advantage.

Deloitte's research also supports this, showing that inclusive cultures are much more likely to experience better business results, such as higher profits, improved employee satisfaction, and stronger innovation. The evidence is clear: diversity isn't just a nice-to-have; it's a must-have for companies that want to succeed.

Diversity Across the Globe

The way companies approach diversity can vary depending on the region and culture. Let's look at how different parts of the world are handling diversity efforts:

North America: Leading the Way

In the United States, many companies are pushing hard for diversity. Some of the biggest corporations are setting goals to increase gender and racial diversity within their ranks. For example, the Women in the Workplace Report by LeanIn.Org and McKinsey found that the number of women in senior management roles has grown steadily over the past few years. However, challenges remain, and there's still work to be done to close the gender gap.



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Many U.S. companies are also committed to racial diversity, especially following global movements for racial justice. A report by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) showed that more than 800 businesses have achieved top scores for LGBTQ+ inclusion, demonstrating an ongoing effort to expand diversity beyond just gender and ethnicity

Europe: Policies Driving Change

In Europe, governments are actively promoting diversity through laws and regulations. For instance, the European Union's new rules require companies to have at least 40% of non-executive board members be women by 2026. The UK's Hampton-Alexander Review also set targets for increasing female representation in leadership roles, and many companies have already reached or exceeded these targets.

The European Commission's report on equality shows a strong focus on integrating different groups—like ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ people, and those with disabilities—into the workforce. These efforts are aimed at creating a more inclusive work environment across Europe.

Asia: Focus on Gender Diversity

In Asia, the focus on gender diversity is increasing. Japan, for example, has traditionally struggled with gender inequality, but recent efforts through government initiatives have led to more women participating in the workforce. India has also introduced laws requiring listed companies to have at least one female board member, showing a commitment to increasing gender representation despite cultural and systemic challenges.

The Impact of Corporate Diversity

Diversity has a big impact on companies, affecting everything from innovation and financial performance to attracting and keeping talent. Here's how:

Innovation and Creativity

Diverse teams are proven to be more innovative. A study in the Harvard Business Review found that companies with diverse leadership teams were more likely to grow their market share and capture new markets. When people with different experiences and backgrounds come together, they bring new ideas and perspectives, which can lead to creative solutions and products.

For example, Procter & Gamble (P&G) has used its diverse workforce to develop products that cater to different consumer needs worldwide, giving them an edge in global markets.

Better Financial Performance

Deloitte's research shows that companies with diverse and inclusive cultures are more likely to meet or exceed their financial goals. Employees who feel they belong and are valued tend to be more engaged and productive, which benefits the company's overall performance.

A study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) found that companies with gender-diverse leadership teams are 21% more likely to be profitable than their peers. For instance, Microsoft's D&I strategy has helped increase employee satisfaction and contributed to its financial success.

Attracting and Keeping Talent

Companies that prioritize diversity are more attractive to job seekers. A report by Glass door revealed that a large majority of job seekers consider diversity an important factor when choosing where to work. Companies with strong D&I strategies are more likely to retain employees, as they create an environment where everyone feels valued.

Salesforce is a good example of a company with successful D&I initiatives that promote inclusion and high employee retention. By building a diverse workforce, they create a culture that appeals to talent from around the world, driving growth and innovation.

The Challenges of Achieving Diversity

Even though diversity has many benefits, companies often face challenges in implementing it effectively. Common barriers include unconscious biases, resistance to change, and lack of leadership support.

Unconscious biases-automatic attitudes or stereotypes-can influence hiring and promotion decisions, leading to less diversity in leadership roles. Companies may offer bias training, but without deep changes in policies and practices, these biases persist. A report by the World Economic Forum (WEF) found that only 30% of companies have effective strategies for achieving their diversity goals, showing a gap between intent and action. Another report by Catalyst highlights that under represented groups often don't have access to mentorship and sponsorship, making it difficult for them to advance in their careers.

Leadership's Role in Driving Diversity

Leaders play a key role in making diversity work. Inclusive leaders set the tone for their organizations by modeling behaviours that promote diversity and holding their teams accountable for progress. Research suggests that companies with leaders who are actively involved in diversity efforts tend to see more success.

Pepsi Co, for example, ties its senior leaders' evaluations to diversity goals, ensuring that diversity becomes a priority in the company's culture and strategy.

Looking Ahead: Diversity as a Strategic Priority

Corporate diversity isn't just a trend; it's becoming an essential part of business strategy. Companies that embrace diversity are more likely to achieve long-term growth and maintain a competitive edge. Moving forward, we can expect more companies to develop personalized diversity strategies, hold leaders accountable, and use technology to identify and reduce biases. By making diversity central to their business model, companies set themselves up for success in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world.

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FEMININE LEADERSHIP

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The world has made significant progress. More and more women are assuming leadership positions in the Corporate world. However, they continue to navigate challenges as they are persistently scrutinized and disadvantaged on issues such as their suitability and capabilities. In order to have an edge over their male counterparts, it is imperative that women lead with their Divine Feminine. Simply put, it means not trying to fit into the boys' club in order to lead. Instead leading through their spiritual energy which is compassionate, vulnerable, heart-led, intuitive and creative.

Practicing feminine leadership can liberate women managers from subordinate and controlled positionings in gender hierarchies. It can make them ethical leaders which only comes if you are able to tap your inner power and get guided from within. Such a leadership is ethical because it comes from practicing spirituality which is the most unrecognized and unacknowledged tool in the arsenal of a corporate leader.

Good leaders are hard to find. There is a misconception that leadership is about structure, competition, being secretive, guarded, action-driven, data-based, goal-oriented, and outcome-focused. Such leaders struggle with their teams that don't trust them. The team lack motivation and inspiration. It is expected normally for the leaders to embody masculine energy. Such leaders are totally result focused at any cost. Because in the corporate world it is believed, if you cannot measure something you cannot manage it. Often times such leaders are feared and not necessarily respected. While it certainly is important that leaders should be smart, strategic and decisive and should be able to analyze, plan, and execute their vision. But these are not enough in the real world to be a truly effective and inspiring leader.

Some of the most successful and admired leaders in history have led with their heart. However, in the harsh and competitive corporate world, men have been told that those leading with their heart equals being weak. And a leader must be smart and strategic and not allow their soft side to emerge. The result is toxic workplaces full of people who work together but are completely disconnected from each other, competing against one another to see who reaches the top first, even if it means stepping on other people's toes to climb faster. It also leads to employees being in a constant state of anxiety and stress because they suppress how they truly feel about things and lack the courage to show up authentically. Women with their inherent femininity can easily and naturally lead with their heart and be more effective as leaders.

What does Feminine leadership or leading with the heart mean? For starters, it means to be more authentic, empathetic, ethical, and caring deeply about the people you lead, the causes you serve, and the impact you create. It also means to be guided by your values, intuition and to show compassion, kindness and gratitude. It also means building lasting relationships, creating a collaborative environment and being nurturing and patient with people.

It means living in the moment rather than the past or the future. Being guided from within gives a person inner strength. It makes external trouble appear smaller and easier to tackle. Also, when a person goes within, he/she gets an answer to why the problem happened in the first place.

A spiritual leader who is guided by the conscience, takes action and is not totally focused on the result. Such a

leader don't stifle anyone's creativity and innovation. They don't intimidate, rather encourage their team to have experimental mindset. They create an environment of psychological safety, taking feedback from the employees. They are authentic and show genuine concern and interest in people they work with

Leading with your heart is not something that you are born with nor can you learn from a book.

It is something that you develop through practice and experience. It is a skill that you can cultivate and improve over time. This is reinforced when you are associated with the right environment that would nurture this quality over a period of time.

This can be achieved by practicing self - awareness. A simple question to be asked is 'Who am I?' 'What do I truly want out of my life'? If there were no barriers like money or power, what would I want to do? Consider the answers to these questions to be your sense of inner wisdom and trust the messages you receive. Self-awareness is the key component of emotional intelligence.

In order to practice self - awareness, one has to practice stillness of mind and body. When we practice stillness we shift from pursuing the external markers of success and instead focus on the intrinsic goodness that ancient wisdom and modern science say are the true basis of a good life. Meditation helps in stilling the body and the mind.

Such leaders live consciously. This means they live life of their choosing, not chance. They understand that the body and senses denote the physical aspects of human existence, distinct from the supreme Self; they realise that physical experiences are separate from the true intellect. Such leaders have greater mental clarity, emotional growth and spiritual insight. They are action oriented, yet detached from the result. Their inner power gets enhanced.

It's time women show up in leadership tuned into their inner strength and wisdom. It means leading with their heart. It's time to create more balance between the structured container of the Masculine and the intuitive force of the spiritual feminine. It's time for the Feminine to rise. This can create workplaces where people are kind, transparent, compassionate, and able to thrive and achieve and still cheer each other on.

Becoming a leader who leads with the heart is not a one-time thing. It is a continuous journey of learning and growing. Reflecting on their life and profession is a regular routine for such leaders. They have to consider their impact on the organization and the people they lead. It is a way of being and a way of doing. It is a way of delving within and drawing strength from the unlimited authentic power that we are born with. It is a gift that women leaders can give to themselves and to others.



THE EQUITY AGENDA – NURTURING FOR BALANCE

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The issue of gender equity has been fiercely debated internationally, nationally and locally in various fora, across time. For a country to achieve equitable growth, it is necessary that all sections of its population, both male and female, have equal access to resources. The vision for Viksit Bharat@2047 envisages the Indian economy as a driver of global economic growth and a magnet for global talent, trade and capital, translating into an average annual growth of about 7.5% over the next 20-25 years. This can only be achieved when both men and women have equal access to the basic necessities of education, health as well as access to livelihoods and income.

In this context, it may be pertinent to take a look at some of the important gender statistics, such as the Gender Development Index (GDI), the Gender Inequality Index (GII) and the Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR), to understand the status of gender equality in India. The World Economic Forum also publishes the Gender Gap Report on the state of gender parity. Further, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focus on gender equity and empowerment of women and girls, among others.

The Gender Development Index (GDI), introduced by the UNDP in its Human Development Report in 1995, measures gender inequality across three key areas of human development, i.e., education (mean years of schooling for adults aged 25 plus), economic resources (estimated annual income) and health (longevity and health indicators). The UNDP Human Development Report (2023-24) has ranked India 134th among 193 countries in its GDI rankings. It is noteworthy that some of its Asian neighbours are placed much higher, such as China (75th), Sri Lanka (78th), Vietnam (107th), Indonesia (112th), Bhutan (125th) and Bangladesh (129th). Two of the key indicators where India scored 'low' are mean years of women's schooling (5.5 years as compared to 7.6 for men) and per capita income (\$2958 as compared to \$10,696 for men, on PPP basis). Women have fared even worse in the UNDP Gender Inequality Index, where India's rank dropped from 102 to 134 between 2021-22 and 2023-24, mainly due to a high Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) of 103 per 1,00,000 live births (SDG 3.1), very high ABR or adolescent birth rate (SDG 3.7) of 16.3 as against WHO target of 2.5 (ABR is the number of births to women aged 15–19 per 1,000 women in that age group). Further, women participation in the political space, measured by the number of seats in Parliament (SDG 5.5) is only 14.6, population with secondary education (SDG 4.4) is 41.0% for women (as compared to 58.7% for men), and finally, labour force participation rate is only 28.3% as compared to 76.1% for men.

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index (2024) has ranked India 129th (out of 146 countries), with a score of 0.661. What is telling is that there has been decline in both score as well as rank over 2023, by -0.002 and 2 ranks respectively. Not only that, India ranks third lowest in Southern Asia. WEF's Global GGI annually benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity across four key dimensions: 'Economic Participation and Opportunity', 'Educational Attainment', 'Health and Survival', and 'Political Empowerment'. A study of the sub indices indicates that India has recorded the lowest levels of economic parity, similar to Bangladesh, Sudan, Iran, Pakistan, and Morocco, with less than 30% gender parity in estimated earned income. India showed the best

The overall increase in women's participation in the labour force is driven by more rural women joining the workforce. The PLFS 2022-23 data shows that the LFPR increased by 5% for urban women and 14% for rural women. This could partly be linked to a more accurate measurement of women's work, according to several analyses. Women in India, and many developing countries, are widely engaged in unpaid economic work—different from care work or domestic work, like working on farms or family enterprises for instance—for which they are neither paid nor recognised as workers. The data being collected now is more cognisant of the historical mismeasurement of women's work and might be the reason for the increase in LFPR. Women unpaid workers rose from 31.7% of total women workers to 37% from 2017-18 to 2022-23.

gender parity in secondary education enrolment, ranked 65th globally in political empowerment of women and 10th in parity of years with female/male heads of state over the past 50 years. However, women's representation in ministerial positions (6.9%), and in Parliament (17.2%) remains very low.

Over the last decade, the Government of India has introduced a number of initiatives aimed at reducing the gender gap across social, economic and political spheres, namely, the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Andolan, establishment of Mahila Shakti Kendras, Mahila Police Volunteers, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana and Kasturba

Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas. 33% of the seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions are reserved for women. Similarly, the Constitution has also reserved one third of all seats in Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies for women. In order to promote female entrepreneurship, the Government has initiated Programmes like 'Stand-Up India' and 'Mahila-e-Haat' (an online marketing platform to support women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs) and the 'Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme' (ESSDP).

Female participation in the labour force and access to decent and appropriately paid work is essential for inclusive and sustainable development. With rural India driving the trend, the Economic Survey (2023-24) observes that the female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) rose to 37% in 2022-2023 from 23.3% in 2017-2018, although it is well below the global average of 47%. As of May, 2024, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) has facilitated the opening of 52.3 crore bank accounts, of which 55.6% of account holders are women. The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - NRLM, the Self-Help Groups (SHGs) programme covering more than 89 million women under 8.3 million SHGs, has been empirically associated with women empowerment, enhancement of self-esteem, personality development, reduced social evils, and medium impacts in terms of better education, higher participation in village institutions and better access to Government schemes. Secondly, the encouraging wave of women entrepreneurship fueled by 'Start-up' and 'Stand-up' India have ensured that around 68% of the loans have been sanctioned to women entrepreneurs under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), and 77.7% of the beneficiaries under Stand-Up India are women, as of May 2024. Thirdly, under the aegis of Digital India, as of July 2023, more than 53% per cent of the Prime Minister's Rural Digital Literacy Campaign (PMGDISHA) beneficiaries are women. In order to increase the participation of women in leadership roles, the Companies Act, 2013 mandates that all listed companies and all unlisted companies with paid up share capital of ₹100 crore or a turnover of ₹300 crore must have at least one women director on their Boards.

The gender gap in India's labour force, attributed largely to conservative social norms and due to both 'demand' side (work opportunities) and 'supply' side (availability of women for work) factors, remains the most persistent paradox of recent decades. This is despite increased economic growth, a decrease in fertility rates and increased enrolment of women in higher education over decades. The exclusion of women from paid work has resulted in perpetual gender inequality in the economy. Traditionally, women in India have largely been employed in labour

intensive, low paid and informal work without social security, such as insurance and pension. The State of Working India Report, 2023 has pointed out that older women with lower levels of education are exiting the workforce, while at the same time, younger women with higher levels of education are entering it, the number of women in salaried employment is increasing, while women in informal wage work are decreasing and the share of women working in agriculture is decreasing, while the proportion of women entering the services sector is increasing. As the number of women in salaried employment increases, it has a positive impact on the gender gap in earnings, which decreases with more women leaving casual wage work. These shifts in the female workforce imply a longer term impact on women's economic participation in the country. In the latest round of PLFS (2022-23), another significant trend was observed, that the proportion of self employed women rose to its highest at 70.1%, up from 60% in 2021-22. The category of self employed has two sub categories in PLFS—own account worker and employer, and unpaid helper in household enterprises. More than half of the women worked as “unpaid helpers” in family enterprises.

The share of self employed female workers has always been higher in rural areas as compared to urban areas. Agriculture and allied activities account for three fourths of the work that rural women are involved in. The increase in self employed workers can also be interpreted as a sign of more women taking up entrepreneurship across the country. Under the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana, which extends micro credit for entrepreneurship, nearly 70% of beneficiaries are female and 84% of loans sanctioned under Start Up India have also gone to female beneficiaries. Both these programmes have been enabled through the drive for digital financial inclusion in recent years, which have been gender inclusive in design. Some caveats, however, must be looked at. The State of India Working Report connects the rise in self employed rural women to the rise in economic distress after the pandemic, which has impacted women more than men. The data bears this out. The increase in the self employed category of workers, which was prevalent during the pandemic amongst both men and for women, is back to pre pandemic levels for men but remains increased for women. It might be that both trends coexist, economic distress forced more women to enter paid work, and easy access to credit through government schemes has enabled more women to start micro enterprises. In any case, there is a fundamental shift underway in women's participation in the Indian economy.

Not unexpectedly, despite the overall increase in women's workforce participation, the burden of care work and domestic work on women has not decreased. Women in India spend an average of 7.2 hours on unpaid domestic work compared to 2.8 hours spent by men, which has a direct bearing on their ability to participate in paid work. This is because women continue to have a 'triple' gender role (reproductive work which is unpaid, productive work which is under paid & community work which is also unpaid) whereas men only perform 'productive' & 'community' roles. With more women entering paid work in the country, the quality of employment will matter, with 'decent' work, defined by fair income, social protection and safe working conditions, as the underlying goal. At the same time, women's entry into the workforce must be supported with greater investments in care infrastructure and services, along with the reduction and redistribution of care work at home. The Government has taken various steps to improve female's participation in the labour force, to ensure their economic security and quality of their employment. Some of the important measures include, codification of various Labour Laws for harmonising the needs of job seekers, improvement in Maternity Leave Rules, child care leave and skill upgradation through Women Industrial Training institutes, National Vocational Training Institutes and Regional Vocational Training Institutes. Similarly, corporate employers must consider important incentives to encourage higher female participation, such as flexible working hours (remote work options, flexible hours, and compressed workweeks), paid healthcare benefits, child care assistance (crèche facility in workplace), among others. But most importantly, employers must extend equal pay for equal work and design leadership training and other development programmes specially targeted for career progression.

Government, business leaders and society must collaborate to contribute to macro level solutions for gender equality and to ensure equal pathways to growth, prosperity, innovation, and sustainability for both men and women. Through collaborative efforts and targeted interventions between governments and business, between institutions and communities, it is possible to make 50/50 a reality.



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FLY HIGH, SCALING HEIGHTS: UNLEASH FOR THE NEXT NORMAL

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As we navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world, the mantra "Fly High, Scaling Heights" resonates deeply. This phrase encapsulates the ambition to rise above challenges, embrace innovation and unlock potential in the "next normal" — a term that signifies the evolving landscape of our lives, both personally and professionally.

As the world transitions into the "next normal," businesses and individuals alike are navigating a landscape marked by rapid change and unprecedented opportunities. The concept of "fly high" and "scaling heights" has never been more relevant as one seeks to adapt and thrive in this evolving environment.

Here's how one can unleash one's potential and soar in the new era.

The Context of the Next Normal

The "next normal" emerged as society grappled with the aftermath of global events that reshaped our routines and perspectives. The pandemic, technological advancements and environmental challenges have prompted a re-evaluation of how we work, live and interact. In this new paradigm, adaptability and resilience are paramount. Understanding the "Next Normal"

The "next normal" refers to the evolving landscape shaped by technological advancements, global challenges and shifting societal norms. It encompasses changes in work environments, consumer behaviour and the global economy. Understanding this new paradigm is essential for anyone looking to succeed in the coming years.

A. Key Drivers of Change

Several factors are driving this transformation. Now, let us understand the landscape of change as illustrated below:-

Embrace Innovation

Innovation is the cornerstone of success in the next normal. Companies must prioritize agility and creativity, exploring new technologies and methodologies to stay ahead of the curve. Encourage a culture of **experimentation within one's organization, where new ideas are welcomed and tested.**

Prioritize Digital Transformation

The digital revolution has accelerated, making it essential for businesses to invest in digital transformation. This means leveraging data analytics, AI and cloud technologies to streamline operations, enhance customer experiences and drive growth. Embracing digital solutions will position one to respond swiftly to market changes and customer needs.

Foster Resilience

Resilience is key to navigating uncertainty. Building a resilient organization involves not only preparing for



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disruptions but also cultivating a mind-set that views challenges as opportunities for growth. Encourage teams to develop flexibility and adaptability, enabling them to pivot strategies when necessary.

Cultivate Leadership

Strong leadership is vital in guiding teams through change. Leaders should focus on clear communication, empathy and vision. By inspiring and empowering employees, leaders can create a motivated workforce ready to tackle new challenges and pursue ambitious goals.

A. Strategies for Scaling Heights

To thrive in the next normal, individuals and organizations must adopt strategies that emphasize agility, resilience and innovation.

1. Embrace Agility

Agility is crucial in a rapidly changing environment. Organizations must be willing to pivot quickly in response to new information and shifting market demands.

Agile Methodologies

Implementing agile frameworks in project management enables teams to collaborate effectively and adapt to changes swiftly. This approach fosters innovation and accelerates delivery.

Continuous Learning

Encourage a culture of continuous learning where employees are empowered to acquire new skills and knowledge. This adaptability positions organizations to embrace change rather than resist it.

2. Foster Innovation

Innovation is the lifeblood of growth. To scale new heights, businesses must cultivate an environment that encourages creative thinking and experimentation.

Design Thinking

Adopt design thinking methodologies to address complex problems. This human-centered approach promotes empathy, ideation and prototyping, leading to innovative solutions.

Cross-Functional Collaboration

Breaking down silos and encouraging collaboration across departments can spark new ideas and drive innovation. Diverse teams bring varied perspectives that enhance problem-solving capabilities.

3. Enhance Employee Well-Being

A motivated and healthy workforce is essential for organizational success. Prioritizing employee well-being fosters loyalty and enhances productivity.

Mental Health Support

Implement programs that support mental health and well-being. Providing access to counselling services and promoting mindfulness can create a supportive work environment.

4. The Role of Technology

Leveraging Technology for Growth

Technology plays a pivotal role in scaling heights in the next normal. Organizations must leverage digital tools and platforms to enhance efficiency and drive innovation.

Data Analytics

Utilize data analytics to inform decision-making. Analysing consumer behaviour and market trends can provide valuable insights that drive strategic initiatives.

The Rise of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming industries by automating processes and enhancing decision

- making. Organizations that harness AI can gain a competitive edge.

C. Navigating Challenges

While the next normal presents numerous opportunities, it also poses challenges that require strategic navigation. As we strive to "fly high" and "scale heights" in the context of the next normal, it is essential to acknowledge the numerous challenges; organizations and individuals face. Below, we delve into some of the significant challenges present in this pursuit:

Managing Uncertainty

The unpredictable nature of the current environment necessitates robust risk management strategies.

1. Rapid Technological Change

Description:

The pace of technological advancement presents a dual-edged sword. While it provides opportunities for growth and improvement, it also creates pressure to adapt quickly.

Challenges:

Skill Gap: Many employees may lack the necessary skills to effectively utilize new technologies, leading to a workforce that feels ill-equipped.

Strategies to Overcome:

- Offer continuous training and reskilling opportunities.
- Communicate the benefits of technological change clearly and consistently.
- Create a gradual rollout plan for new technologies to allow for adaptation.

2. Cultural Resistance

Description:

Organizational culture profoundly impacts how teams respond to change. Resistance to new ways of working, particularly post-pandemic, can stifle innovation and growth.

Challenges:

- **Fear of Failure:** Employees may hesitate to engage in innovative practices due to an ingrained fear of failure or negative repercussions.
- **Siloed Departments:** Cross-departmental collaboration may be lacking, creating barriers that inhibit the flow of ideas and information essential for innovation.

Strategies to Overcome:

- Foster a culture of psychological safety where employees feel secure to express ideas and take risks.
- Break down silos through team-building activities and interdepartmental projects.
- Recognize and reward both individual and group efforts in innovation.

3. Economic Uncertainty

Description:

The current economic landscape is fraught with uncertainty caused by global events, supply chain disruptions and fluctuating market conditions.

Challenges:

- **Budget Constraints:** Economic challenges may lead organizations to tighten budgets, making it to difficult invest in innovation, technology and talent development.

4. Workforce Well-Being and Mental Health

Description:

The impact of the pandemic on mental health has emphasized the importance of employee well-being as organizations navigate the “Next Normal”.

Challenges:

- Burnout: Many employees face burnout due to prolonged remote work and blurred boundaries between professional and personal life.
- Engagement Drop: Disconnection from colleagues and the work environment can lead to decreased engagement and productivity.
- Mental Health Stigma: Even as awareness grows, mental health stigma may still prevent employees from seeking the necessary support.

Strategies to Overcome:

- Implement wellness programs that focus on mental health resources and support systems.
- Encourage regular check-ins and foster open communication between managers and employees regarding workload and mental health.
- Promote a work-life balance through flexible work policies and supportive management practices.

Conclusion: Embracing the Future with Confidence

As we navigate the uncharted waters of the “Next Normal”, the principles of “flying high” and “scaling heights” become ever more relevant. In a landscape reshaped by rapid technological advancements, evolving consumer expectations, and the ongoing implications of global challenges, the potential for growth and innovation is vast, yet fraught with obstacles. Organizations and individuals alike must adopt a proactive mind-set, embracing change as an opportunity for transformation rather than a hindrance. By fostering a culture of resilience, agility and creativity, we can not only tackle the challenges presented by this new environment but also thrive within it.

Moreover, collaboration and inclusively will be paramount. As we unify our strengths and embrace diverse perspectives, we enhance our capacity to innovate and adapt. Whether in business or personal endeavours, working together fosters a sense of community that can elevate us all.

“Fly high, scaling heights” is not just a motto; it is a call to action in the face of unprecedented change. By embracing adaptability, fostering collaboration and prioritizing well-being, we can unlock our full potential and thrive in the next normal.

As we move into the next normal, the ability to fly high and scale heights will depend on our readiness to embrace change, innovate and collaborate. By focusing on digital transformation, resilience, leadership and sustainability; individuals and organizations can unleash their full potential and thrive in this new era.

Ultimately, the journey to fly high and scale new heights in the Next Normal is not merely about achieving external goals; it is also about personal growth, resilience and fulfilment. By embracing this journey with determination and optimism, we can transform challenges into opportunities, paving the way for a brighter, more innovative tomorrow.

As we step into this new era, let us commit to uplifting one another—individually and collectively—so that we can truly soar to new heights and unlock the boundless potential that lies ahead. The sky is not the limit; it is merely the beginning of our journey.



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: EMPOWERING POTENTIAL FOR THE NEXT NORMAL

By Dr Anuja Sehgal

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Introduction

The article delves into the significance of diversity and inclusion in the business world, its advantages, and practical strategies for maximizing its potential in a rapidly changing world.

Understanding Diversity and Inclusion in the Next Normal

Diversity encompasses the characteristics that make individuals unique, including race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, and cultural background.

Inclusion promotes appreciation, value, and integration of diverse voices into an organization's culture, while diversity emphasizes workforce structure and a climate that values and respects diverse perspectives.

“The Next Normal” is a term predictably established by McKinsey repeatedly in their reference articles from 2009 and 2020 onwards. It refers to the post-COVID-19 era, marked by a significant restructuring of the economic and social order. It incorporates cutting-edge or non-existent technologies that could become common practice soon. McKinsey Report 2020 signifies the secure belief that businesses should reimagine working models and focus on digital strategic solutions to adapt to remote work and digital transformation. The well-ordered planning of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) can help companies understand diverse customer needs, foster innovation, and build resilient teams for better decision-making and financial performance.

However, certain barriers to inclusion must be understood. These include implicit bias, micro aggressions, and structural inequities. Implicit bias is essential for scrutinizing unconscious biases and how they affect decision-making, contributing to conducive universal inequality. Microaggression refers to knowing the subtle, unintentional, prejudiced comments and behaviors that alienate individuals from sidelined groups. Structural inequalities involve proper institutional practices and policies that continue exclusion (Kim, 2024).

Organizations should foster a welcoming environment for diversity and inclusion through policies, mentorship, and employee resource groups, concentrating on equity vs. equality to address particular barriers.

Benefits of Diversity and Inclusion

- **Enhancing Innovation and Creativity:** Diverse teams bring varied standpoints, leading to more creative problem-solving and innovation. When individuals with distinct backgrounds and experiences collaborate, they challenge each other's assumptions and spark new ideas (Hennekam & Follmer, 2024).

This cognitive diversity is crucial to brainstorming sessions, product development, and strategic planning, where innovative solutions are crucial for success (Hartman & Hartman, 2024).

- **Improving Employee Engagement and Retention:** Inclusion fosters an intellectual sense of togetherness and belonging among individuals, leading to higher engagement, appreciation & contribution at work. Research indicates that such inclusive organizations experience lower turnover rates and higher productivity, ultimately leading to a better bottom line (Zapata & Cui, 2023).

- **Expanding Market Influence:** Diversity within an organization mirrors customer diversity, enabling better understanding and connection with a wider range of customers, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. Hence, the prearrangement of D&I will be useful for enhancing the brand reputation, market growth, and expansion into new demographics.

Strategies for Unleashing D&I Potential

1. Leadership Commitment: Leadership plays a fundamental role in establishing a culture of D&I. The visibility of D&I initiatives should be reinforced through visionary action, transparency, trust, employee empowerment, leadership values, leadership by example, and cultural change (Allen, 2018).

2. Creating an Inclusive Culture: An inclusive culture requires appropriate awareness training programs and communication on unconscious biases and diversity. The organizations can plan resources and conscious community exertions to celebrate and recognize sector-specific D&I initiatives (Novak & Vipiana, 2024) in alignment with global perspectives across cultures to create an all-inclusive organizational culture.

3. Implementing Fair Recruitment Practices: Organizations must refine their talent pipelines to reach under represented groups. They should utilize blind recruitment techniques to minimize conscious bias and ensure diverse hiring panels. Blind recruitment involves discounting all classifying information from the hiring funnel, linking the job application, final interview, and ultimate hiring decision. The process includes hiding relevant personal information such as name, gender, age, ethnicity, and more, preventing unconscious and conscious biases from affecting hiring decisions. For example, renowned software companies have started employing blind hiring techniques in candidate evaluation based on their proper performance challenges (Vivek, 2022).

The Toronto Symphony Orchestra is credited with the practice of blind hiring in the 1970s. It is supposed to be composed of only white male musicians. The symphony started applying partitions to hide auditioners' identities to create diversity. As a result, blind auditions became the norm, causing a significant change in how the entire business recruited talent. Hence, according to a 1997 National Bureau of Economic Research study, the proportion of women musicians in the leading U.S. orchestras rose from less than 5 percent in 1970 to 25 percent in the 1990s.

Hence, research shows that by devotedly seeing diverse applicants, organizations can enhance their overall diversity trends in skill acquisition, application, and retention. Past research evidence has projected that the COO of GapJumpers, Petar Vujosevic, has reflected on anonymizing candidate informational resumes along the lines of blind auditions conducted by orchestras and has thus prospered in building diversity within their organization.

4. Establishing Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) provide a platform for employees with shared backgrounds or interests to connect, support one another, and advocate for inclusion within the organization by sharing similar experiences. These groups help identify value feedback from regular employee perceptions, experiences, involvements, and standpoints on company policies. These can assist in supportive updates in company policies and diversity-rich policies and practices to promote inclusion across organizations.

Organizations should support ERGs with resources, training, and opportunities for collaboration on D&I initiatives (Welbourne et al., 2015). Some examples of ERGs are women's networks within organizations that address gender representation and challenges.

5. Measuring Progress and Impact: Organizations should establish metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) initiatives. They should scrutinize data to identify gaps and trends in D&I efforts for insightful decisions on continuous improvement.

Significant D&I metrics:

1. Diversity in Recruitment:

- Track the demographic breakdown of applicants, interviewees, and recruits and measure effective approaches applied to reach under represented groups.

2. Retention Rates:

- The comprehensive analysis of annual turnover rates across various demographic groups to recognize any crucial disparities and probable exit reasons.

3. Promotion Rates:

- Monitor the rate at which diverse backgrounds are promoted and evaluated for representation in leadership positions.

4. Employee Job Satisfaction:

- Regular employee surveys may be directed to assess differences in inclusion and general job satisfaction in demographic groups.

5. Engagement Surveys in D&I Agendas:

- Track involvement percentage in D&I training, workshops, Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), and relevance of effectiveness of initiatives

6. Performance Indicators:

- Evaluate the significant individual performance contribution in D&I initiatives across different demographic groups and consider the efficiency, innovation outcomes, and financial performance.

Hence, it is critical to measure the progress of D&I initiatives. Understanding organizations must be willing to familiarize themselves and thus evolve their D&I strategies based on understandings gained from realistic data analysis.

6. Providing continuous learning opportunities

To inspire, encourage, and advance a culture of D&I, organizations must capitalize on constant learning and expansion prospects (Steele & Derven, 2015). These involve steering deliberations about D&I through workshops, seminars, and mentor ship programs. Some noteworthy strategies that can help implement continuous learning opportunities in D&I are:

1. Training Workshops and Sessions:

- Conduct steady interactive role plays and group discussions on unconscious bias, cultural capability, competence, and inclusive leadership.

2. Seminars and Conferences:

- Host seminars and conferences including specialized experts and diverse spokespersons to share experiences, fresh perceptions, and best practices in D&I.

3. Mentorship Initiatives and Programs:

- Establish mentorship initiatives, including reverse mentoring, that pair less experienced employees from diverse backgrounds with senior leaders to guide them on D&I issues.

4. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs):

- Support cross-ERG collaboration for skill-building workshops, networking, and interactive sharing of unlike perspectives.

1. Literary Discussion Groups:

- Create literary discussion groups focused on intensive D&I literature and reviews, allowing employees to gain depth knowledge.
- Boost open interchange of personal experiences connected to readings.

2. Operationalize Open Learning Platforms:

- Present self-paced, blended learning on D&I; provide certification and incentives for completion.

3. Consistent Feedback Machinery:

- Operationalize investigative surveys and employee feedback channels on D&I initiatives and gather suggestions to realize the efficacy of knowledge opportunities.

Continuous learning aims to increase self-bias awareness and diversity and inclusion by equipping employees with practical skills for diverse environments, fostering openness and collaboration, and fostering better learning associations and communities within working relationships.

Conclusion

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) are crucial for organizations to thrive in the next normal. Organizations must strategize continuous learning on D&I activities to foster a culture of inclusivity in diverse talents for future development, prosperity, and innovation.

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Ms. Suneeta Reddy President AIMA giving Certificate of Participation to C.S Mishra Executive Officer NMA

GENDER EQUALITY IS A HUMAN RIGHT NOT A WOMEN FIGHT



Lighting of the Lamp by Anita Chauhan, National President ISTD, Sh. Sandeep Mittal President, Sh. S.N Singh, Dr. S.B Mitra & C.B Sharma



A Group Photo

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND CONTRACT LABOUR



Disciplinary Procedures and Contract Labour on 4th August 2023
Shri Sandeep Mittal President NMA Addressing the Delegates



Delegates Participating in the Program

RTI ACT AND POSH ACT



President Dr. Yogendra Singh
Welcoming Sh R.P Singh Director-HR IFFCO



Sh R.P Singh Director-HR IFFCO
along with Shri Dinesh Jain and Dr. S.B Mitra

CODE ON SOCIAL SECURITY



Shri C.S Mishra Executive Officer NMA Welcoming the Guests on Dias



A Group Photo



A Group Photo



Delegates Participating in the Program

DECODING UNION BUDGET 2024 ON 30TH JULY 2024



Lighting of the Lamp by President NMA Dr. Yogendra Singh



Chief Guest Addressing on Decoding Union Budget 2024

DECODING UNION BUDGET 2024 & BLANKET DISTRIBUTION



A Group Photo



Blankets Distribution on 31st December 2023



Blankets Distribution



A Group Photo



President NMA Dr. Yogendra Singh Honoring Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Member of Parliament, G.B. Nagar

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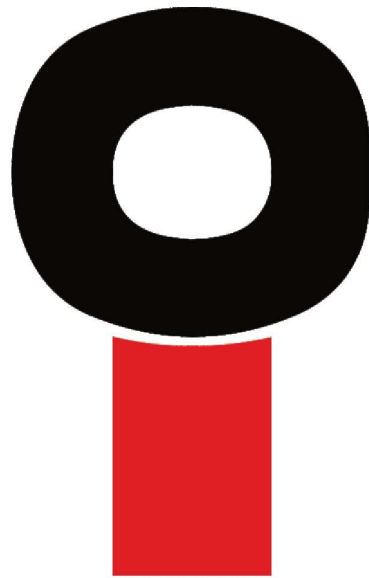
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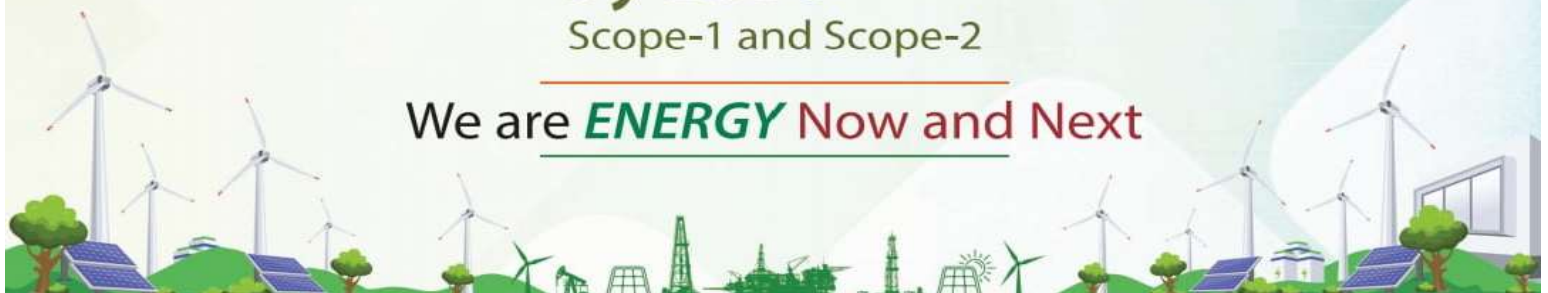


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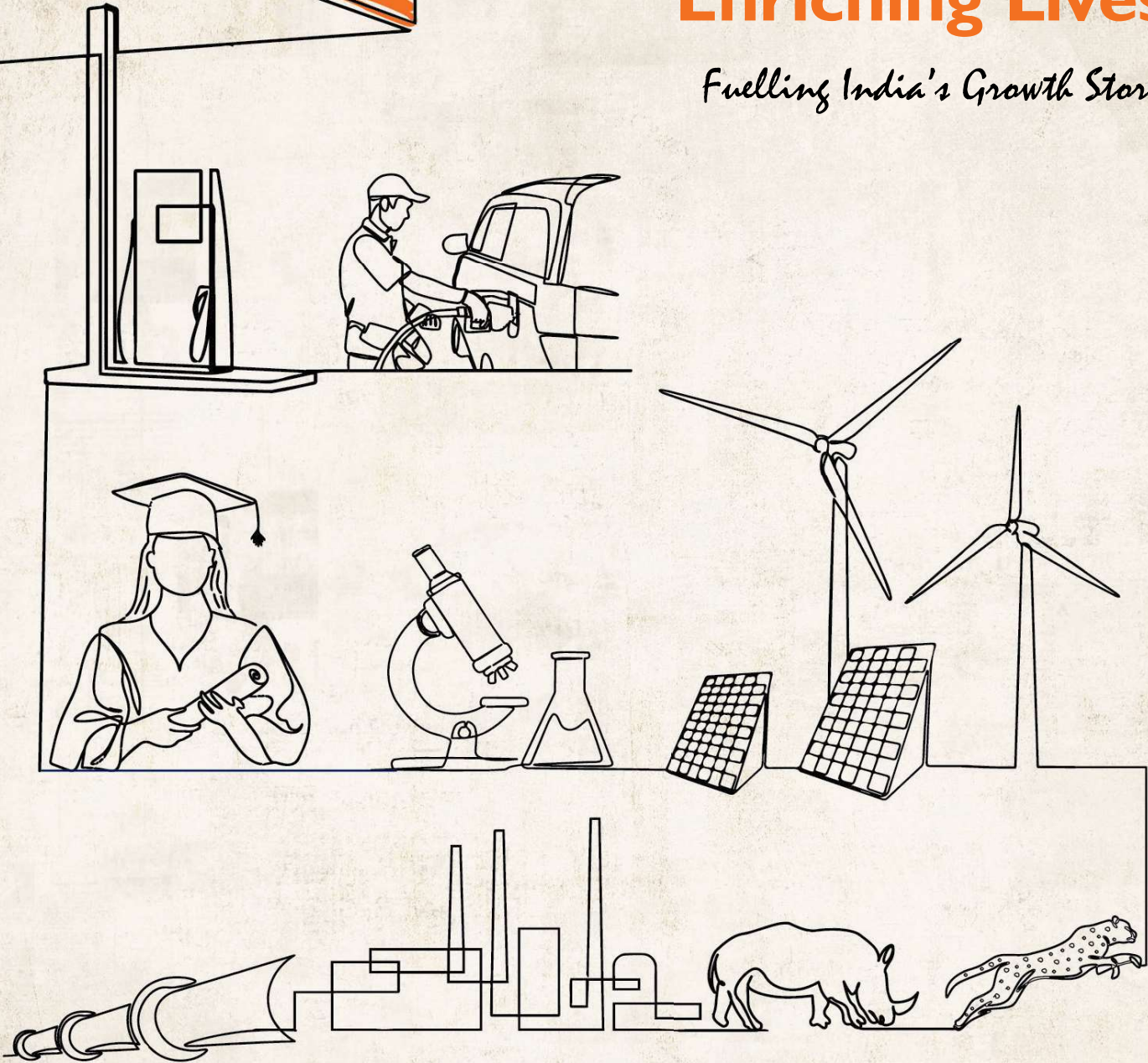


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