6. GENDER

6.1. An Overview
The objective of GENDER section of the study is to explore the evolution and significance of Gender Inclusivity issues in relevance to Global and Indian environment, To understand which variables influences and shapes the Gender Inclusivity in Indian IT and ITES sector and to analyse the extent of the influence and to attain a composite picture of Indian IT and ITES industries current status in regards to Gender diversity.

This is done by analysing the policies and organizational efforts in addressing gender diversity and employee perspective. To achieve this objective information is collected analysed and interpreted through collating information from surveys – Organizational and Employee, Structured interviews with HR Managers, Focus group interviews, In-depth Interviews with employees and scholars/researches in the field and published secondary sources that include company websites

6.2. Gender Definition
Gender is commonly applied to denote the general differences between male and female entities. Though sex and gender is often used interchangeably, sex refers to the biological concept and gender is mostly used to denote physiological, social and cultural aspects of maleness and femaleness. According to United Nations Development Program and World Health Organization, Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.

6.3. Evolution of Gender Dimension in Social Context and Workplace
Society throughout the years has laid out the roles and behaviour it expects from men and women. Women typically are accorded with the role of care giver with home making as her primary function and men with the role of breadwinners. Though the extent of role delineation and associated issues vary in degree across culture and nationalities, everywhere in the world,
throughout times, it is found that gender role delineation often led to the formation of visible discrimination and sometimes invisible restrictions in women’s free and full-fledged participation in social spheres.

Gender discrimination refers to discriminatory beliefs and attitudes in relation to the gender of a person. Though legal definitions of what constitutes gender discrimination diverge between countries, in essence it refers to an adverse action taken by one person against another person that would not have occurred had the person been of another sex/gender. Such inequality or discriminatory treatment, mainly due to unjust allocation of resources and opportunities leads to limited economic opportunities, social and political participation which in turn lead to a Gender gap or Gender divide. In no region did women enjoy equal legal, social, and economic rights. History is marked with women’s struggle to attain equality in status and break free from socially imposed conventions – Right to vote, Right to property, Right for education, Right to work, Right for equal pay. Gender gap might be blatant and openly unfair in some social setups whereas subtle in others.

Consequences of gender discrimination or gender gap are felt not only at an individual level but have profound impact on the socio–economic framework of a society or country. According to World Bank (World Bank Report, 2003) Promoting Gender equality is an essential component of an effective economic and human development strategy. The report elaborates “There is now a shared understanding with the development community that development policies and actions that fail to take gender inequality into account and fail to address disparities between males and females will have limited effectiveness and serious cost implications”. This view that there is a statistically significant positive association between gender equality and economic development is supported by several studies conducted in this area (Arab Human Development Report, 2003, United Nations Report, 2002, World Bank Report, 2003)

6.4. Gender Gap and Workplace

Detrimental effects of gender gap as in all arenas of social life are present in workplace too. Traditionally workplace was considered the bastion of men. Biased social fabric and culture,
insular outlook, limited access and exposure to channels of education and lack of career orientation all combined led to general invisibility and devaluation of women’s economic contribution and diminished involvement in the workforce. Gender discrimination in workplace often manifests in the form of biased and hostile working environment, inequitable pay differentials, harassment to less subtler and furtive forms of exclusion and partiality in assigning roles and responsibilities.

Looking into women’s participation in workplace the tendency to clump in low paying low end jobs with limited prospects is often seen, both in the organized and unorganized sector leading to their work and income being considered secondary. Evolution in society, influence of industrialization, modernization, globalization, exposure to higher education in professional and technical arenas and constant struggle on the part of women has brought about a change in the role and capacities in which women work. In some areas it was gradual and in certain arenas extenuating emergencies\(^1\) provided the thrust.

The importance of women’s equal participation in social spheres and economy is dawning on societies. Governments, organizations and society on a whole today reflect the changing attitude towards women empowerment, in some strongly and in others imperceptibly. Yet the fact remains that even though women have made strides asserting their rightful position, long held perceptions regarding gender roles still pave way for discrimination which makes women’s struggle the longest continuing battle for equal status.

6.5. Gender in Indian Society – An Overview

While pondering on the issue of gender, gender inequality and discrimination in India, India can be described as a land of paradox – A land that worships women as the ultimate all powerful goddess (Parashakti) while in some pockets female infanticide still exists. Scrutiny into Indian culture, society and gender hierarchy reveals that male dominance is manifested in family relationships, inheritance laws and customs, workplace, religious and other cultural

\(^1\) World war 11 herded women toward un-chartered jobs especially assembly lines. Rosie the Riveter became a feminist icon in US
institutions. This Gender inequality visible in all arenas of Indian society can be traced back to Vedic period. (The privileged position of male is evident in the fact that it is the male child who is deemed to receive the inheritance of spiritual rights and worldly possessions (property) in Indian patriarchal society, Manusmriti)\(^2\).

In India, social restrictions confined women to her households and prevented her from entering the mainstream. This situation has undergone a lot of change. Reforms\(^3\) in education and social set ups have eased the constraints urging women to explore avenues of higher education and embark up on a profession.

This exposure to varied channels and fields of education has resulted in women progressing to a wide range of professions - Law, Medicine, Engineering, and Entrepreneurship. Coupled with this, buoyant growth in Indian economy has opened up many opportunities for women helping the role and responsibilities of women attain new definition and perspective. Majority of women workforce is concentrated in the unorganized and informal sectors, more than ninety percent (91.38) but with the advent of globalization; new avenues of profession are opening up for women, especially in the urban sector. Many service sectors, for e.g. IT, ITES and Banking is witnessing a phenomenal increase in the number of its women employees reflecting the changing status of women as a component of Indian workforce.

6.6. Gender and its impact on Indian IT and ITES Sector

One of the main objectives of this research work is to understand the dynamics of workforce diversity dimensions at play in Indian IT and ITES industry. Gender is often purported as the most significant diversity dimension in Indian IT and ITES industry. In this study I am trying to

\(^2\) Manusmriti – Laws of Manu. Earliest work of Hindu law and ancient Indian society which contains law, rules and code of conduct. Manu is considered to be the progenitor of mankind in Hindu tradition. There are exceptions to this where in certain matriarchal societies lineage is asserted on mothers side.

\(^3\) Social reforms governing marriage (widow remarriage, child marriage, Sati), Property, Education all have influenced the change in social set up governing gender in India
assess the level of gender inclusivity in Indian IT and ITES industry and the impact, gender as a diversity dimension has on Indian IT and ITES industry.

Assessing Gender inclusivity in Indian IT and ITES industry will require a multifaceted approach. This is mainly due to the nature of this particular diversity dimension. Gender as a diversity dimension is multi-layered and its effect is multidimensional, varying in degrees and depth accordance to variables in the environment which it interacts with. Organizational policies and practices are usually framed in response to combat the ongoing, unresolved issues and problems women encounter and the root of these issues can be traced to the environment - legal, political, social and cultural environment in which it exist. So, to gather a clear perspective on where IT and ITES industry stands in terms of addressing gender as diversity dimension and to better understand the significance of gender initiatives in organizations it is necessary to identify Gender inclusivity determinants and issues and its relevance in Indian IT and ITES industry. The chosen issues are

- Representation.
- Glass ceiling
- Gender Stereotyping and roles
- Attrition
- Gender Pay Gap
- Sexual Harassment
- Safety and Security

6.7. Gender Representation

Quantifying representation of women or statistical data is an indicator to help us understand the extent to which gender as a workforce diversity dimension is getting assimilated in IT & ITES sector. In the last decade, the number of women in Indian IT and ITES, from 2, 84,000 in 2000 has crossed the 10, 00,000 mark in 2010. (Chart-1). That is a seventy one percent increase in the number of women in a span of 10 years. Analysing the percentage of women in IT industry shows that the percentage of women employment is slowly but steadily increasing in the IT sector. 2001 - 15%, 2003 - 21%, 2006 - 26%, 2007 – 2008 -2010-30%. (NASSCOM survey and
The several reasons behind this phenomenal increase in the representation of women in IT and ITES sector is identified and enumerated as:

- **IT and ITES is the fastest growing sector in India** – It is biggest the source of employment for qualified professionals in urban areas and now is expanding roots in the semi urban and rural areas. This sector along being the fastest growing is also one of the top employers with ever increasing demand for employees.

- **IT and ITES sector is perceived as women friendly sector** – Though working in IT and ITES sector often means putting in long work hours and frequent night shifts for those working in BPO sectors, companies though their conducive work atmosphere/organizational climate, women friendly policies and practices is considered as a viable and preferred employment for women. Along this the lucrative nature of remuneration in this sector adds on as an incentive.

- **Change in societal attitude about women working and their choice of profession** – The number of women joining professional courses – in this case, engineering and other technical fields have increased. There is a fivefold increase in girls opting for higher
education during the 1951 to 2006 (UGC report 2005-2006). This increase directly account for the increase in women in IT workforce.

These figures vouches the popular conception that IT and ITES sector is one of the largest recruiters of women in India. One factor that needs to be taken account of is that appraising gender representation in terms of total number or percentage of women does not reveal the whole picture. To better understand of the extent and level of gender inclusiveness it is necessary to delve deeper into accompanying aspects like the role and status of women in IT sector. It is not just the numbers but how these numbers are dissipated among the levels of hierarchy in organization that tells us about absolute representation.

6.8. Glass Ceiling

Glass ceiling refers to the unofficial, invisible barrier that prevents a qualified female from advancing through the hierarchy of an organization mostly due to discrimination based on her gender. The term Glass ceiling was coined since the limitations which block the advancement is not immediately apparent. The invisible barrier exists and is experienced but there are no explicit impediments in the form of documented policies or procedures that prevent women from advancing. It is more like an informal, unwritten policy. Markers like, Gender wage gap, occupational segregation, absence of women in leadership and top level positions, job stereotyping indicates the presence of glass ceiling in an industry.

6.8.1. Global Scenario and Glass ceiling

Glass ceiling is a phenomena that is present anywhere and in any industry throughout the world and throughout the years. This inexplicable but omnipresent deterrent often prevented or hampered women’s rise to the upper echelons and positions of leadership and responsibility.

---

4 Origin of the term can be traced to 1979 by Katherine Lawrence and Marianne Schreiber, employees in Hewlett and Packard, and subsequently in 1984 by Gay Bryant in an article and Carol Hymowitz and Timothy Sechellhardt in the March 24, 1986 edition of the Wall Street Journal to in reference to the indiscernible obstacles that obstruct career advancement of women

32
Numerous studies and articles have pondered over the presence, reasons and consequences of glass ceiling.

There is some divide on the opinions regarding the existence of glass ceiling with one section of people doubting the existence of such an invisible restraint. Many corporations believe that these impositions are self-created and that the issue is blown out of proportion. On the other hand there are several dedicated studies which confirm the presence and ill effects of glass ceiling. A survey by Fortune magazine (Patricia Sellers, 2007, Spencer Stuart 2007) revealed that only 10% of senior managers in Fortune 500 companies constitute women. The survey mentioned that large number of corporate giants still have no women directors on their boards.

Studies conducted in India echo similar findings. A study conducted in India reveals only 26.1 percent of the listed companies (392 of 1,500 firms) have a woman on their boards. Out of the 278 directors on the BSE Sensex companies, there are only 10 women directors. Apart from this, women executives in India earn 40 percent less than what men earn over their entire career. Banking on the overwhelming data on glass ceiling I am going forward relying on the assumption that glass ceiling though unseen is not unfelt.

What leads to Glass ceiling? As women have the status of the primary caregiver in our society, there is a tendency to accord a secondary status to the work she does outside home. Attitudinal prejudices on the subject of a woman’s commitment and level of involvement in her work, the ability to handle pressure and amount of time to put in exists in a workplace. Glass ceiling is not healthy from the standpoint of an organization too. As the presence of glass ceiling fails in maximal realization of its women workforce’s potential, the company suffers from the underutilization of its human resources5.

5 Catalyst, a research organization that monitors the progress of executive women in a study concluded that companies with at least three women directors performed significantly better than average in terms of return on equity and return on sales and return on invested capital
6.8.2. Glass Ceiling in Indian IT & ITES Industry – Current Status.

Indian IT industry portrays a less encouraging picture when it comes to the representation of women in the top rung of the corporate ladder.

6.8.2.1. Organizational statistics

In regards to the existence and extent of glass ceiling in Indian IT and ITES industry the results were the following:

- Out of the 50 organizations in the study, only two were headed by women.
- Among the companies in study, 60% had an all-male board of directors and women constituted approximately 7% of the top management.

6.8.3. Employee Perspectives

Glass ceiling and advancement in career was discussed in focus interviews. The agenda of the focus interviews were to elicit employee perspectives on role of gender in career advancement to throw light on the reasons that contribute towards the presence of glass ceiling. The participants were given an introductory overview to get them acquainted with the topic. Two focus group interviews with 8 participants each were conducted. The responses are recorded below.

- **Capability to perform** – In regards to capabilities there was no difference of opinion that men and women possess equal capabilities that are pre requisite in terms of qualifications and technical know-how. Both male and female employees had the opinion that they do not find gender a differentiating factor in terms of capabilities required to perform the job.

- **Advancement of Career** – The participants were split in their opinion regarding the role of gender in advancement of career. Men and women did not quite agree in their perspective. Majority of the female (70%) participants are of the opinion that advancement in career is not entirely dependent on capabilities and qualification. Most men feels that advancement is career is irrespective of gender. The discussion also brought out an interesting point with women ascertaining that they are ambitious and want to advance in career but familial commitment, break in tenure, preference for a balanced work life acts as intervening variables in reaching the goal.
- **Effect of major life events** - In this line to further the discussion the question on the effect of major life events was introduced. This revealed the influence of the gender aspect in career advancement. Almost all women (exception of 2%) said that life events like marriage, child birth, Child care, elder care led to a break in the tenure and hence affected the career progression. Female participants felt that flexible work timings helped them to continue with the job but working from home and working in flexible hours lead them to be less visible and might be one reason which affects the advancement. For men these life events did not have any major impact on their career.

- **Perceptions about Gender** – The general perceptions that women being less available, lack of flexibility and commitment were identified as other factors that deters the career progression of women.

So in regards to the presence of glass ceiling in Indian IT and ITES sector from the collative information through research sources we can reach an inference that the effects of glass ceiling is present in Indian IT and ITES sector. Analysing the perspectives of employees validates that gender poses as a deterrent in career advancement.

6.9. **Gender Stereotyping and Assigned Gender Roles**

Stereotypes⁶ are generalizations, or assumptions that people make about the characteristics of all members of a group based on an image about what people in that group are like. A stereotype can be a conventional and oversimplified conception, opinion, or image based on the belief that there are attitudes, appearances, or behaviours shared by all members of a group.

Stereotyping is a mental process that people do knowingly and unknowingly and can range on subjects like from gender, race, religion, age, sexual orientation or age and often attaches negative connotation on the subject. Gender roles, generated from cultural stereotypes perceive

---

⁶ The origin of the word stereotype can be traced to the Greek words stereos which means solid, firm and tupos which means impression, engraved mark. Thus stereotype is a firm impression. The term, in its modern psychology sense, was first used by Walter Lippmann in his 1922 work Public opinion although in stereotyping has been done and talked about all through human history
women in the role of a caregiver. These gender roles often permeate to workplace too. Gender stereotyping in workplace leads to discrimination and prejudice and creates an unhealthy and unfair environment. Wage discrimination, discriminatory practices in employment decisions, sexual and pregnancy harassment, glass ceiling are some of the detrimental consequences of gender stereotyping.

Men have traditionally been viewed as the primary earning member, hence occupations predominated by men continue to be economically valued and pay higher wages. Women have traditionally been viewed as being caring and nurturing and are designated to occupations which require such skills. While these skills are culturally valued, they were typically associated with domesticity, so occupations’ requiring these same skills doesn’t carry much economic value. Large influx of women in workforce is found in female oriented domains like nursing, teaching and administrative and clerical positions. The elements of gender roles; behaviour, choice of profession, dynamics of personal relationships, appearance are not concrete and have evolved through time. Now women are breaking the stereotypes associated with profession and are vociferously pursuing previously male dominated professions.

6.9.1. Gender stereotyping and roles in Indian IT – ITES sector

In IT, majority of the job opportunities fall in the technical category, especially at the entry level. Functional areas like Human resource Finance and Marketing mostly takes on a support role. Usually all around the world the number of women in technical field is lower as compared to that of male counterparts. Statistics and reports (NASSCOM –MERCER Report, 2005) attests that the number of women entering, the technical field in IT is in an upward trend. This trend in industry is a reflection of the changing societal mind-set which is projected in a female’s choice of education field and her career. Participation of women in engineering and technical fields was negligible till the early 1980s. Enrolment of women in engineering started to show a gradual increase from 3.7 in 1980’s to 16.2 in 2000’s (UGC Report, 2005- 2006) which led to a subsequent increase of women opting for career in technical field. The story takes new dimension in ITES sector which is predominantly women dominated. The long hours, erratic shifts and work timings, apprehensions regarding security are not holding them back. ITES industry in India is one sector that is trying to break every stereotype regarding the choice of
work, where earlier the common assumption held was female preference for 9 to 5 jobs with job security and a prolonged career path.

However one thing to mention is that the entry level workforce in these sectors, especially ITES is very young. It is these women whose familial and social roles are still evolving that the hazards don’t seem to deter. It is true that the number of women in this industry is showing a steady increase, but is this trend limited to the entry or is the sector able to sustain it? Is the industry able to hold its fort or does the gender role assignment gain an upper hand as these women progresses to balance their work and family life? To answer this question a closer look at the attrition rate and its causes among the women workforce in Indian IT and ITES sector is to be looked into.

6.10. Attrition

The unpredictable and uncontrollable, but normal, reduction of work force due to resignations, retirement, sickness, or death is defined as attrition. Attrition due to resignation has always been one of the biggest problems Indian IT and ITES industry face with a persistently high attrition rate over the years7.

6.10.1. Attrition and its reasons in IT and ITES sector

The objective was to find the reasons for attrition and to probe if it was the same reasons that prompted men and women to leave their job. The reasons of leaving the job were probed with the employees as well as in the interviews with HR managers.

---

7 Average attrition rate in IT-ITES is 15 -16 %.Attrition rates are much higher in voice based BPO’s hitting as high as 55% in 2010 (ASSOCHAM)
Table 1 REASON FOR ATTRITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Attrition</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better career opportunities (Career Progression &amp; Remuneration)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Stagnation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Like Balance</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monotony of Job</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odd working hours</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attrition occurs irrespective of the genders, but the curious factor is that the reasons involved were different in the case of each gender. When queried on the reasons for leaving jobs, factors like work-life imbalance and odd working hours was mentioned only by women. In the interviews conducted with HR managers when queried about the main reasons for attrition better opportunity in terms of career progression and remuneration was the prime factors that prompted the male employees to leave. In case of women employees even though these reasons were present the major factors that prompted them to leave was marriage and child care. Relocation due to spouses job transfer was another main factor. These factors rarely or was not at all present in case of men employees.

Thus among men, a better opportunity is the pulling factor but in case of women familial commitments and associated gender roles remains the prime reason for leaving the job voluntarily. The societal and physical aspects act as a compulsion urging many women to leave their jobs. Apart from this women on their own accord decide to forgo career and opt to be a full time home maker (New York Times, 2003).

Thus, we can see that though gender stereotypes are being broken in Indian IT and ITES industry, the gender role expectations still has a firm hold.
6.11. Gender Pay Gap

Gender pay gap is defined by Eurostat as ‘the difference between average gross hourly earnings of male-paid employees and of female-paid employees as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of male-paid employees. A survey across sixty-three countries by Income Data Services Analysis reveals that, despite decades of anti-discrimination legislation and changes in company rhetoric; women find their pay cheque contains on average sixteen per cent (average gender pay gap is 15.6 per cent) less than male co-workers. The existence of the gender pay gap reveals gender discrimination and occupational segregation in the workplace.

There are several factors that are responsible for the wage/pay discrimination. These factors individually or in combination accounts for the existing disparity in pay among the male and female gender for similar work. The prominent ones are Personal, Job, Firm Institutional characteristics and Social norms and traditions. Personal - Age, Education, Job Tenure, Children and Labour market experience. Job - Occupation, Working Time, Contract-type, Job Status, Career Prospects and working conditions. Firm Characteristics- Sector, firm size, recruitment behaviour, and work organization, gender suggestion by occupation or sector. Social Norms and Traditions - Education and training systems, wage bargaining, industrial relations, parental leave arrangements and provisions for child care.

Prejudices and stereotypes too is a contributory factor in pay discrimination. Researchers argue that the ‘influence of prejudices and stereotypes on job evaluation methods serves to reinforce and maintain gender pay disparities’, with ‘traditional job evaluation methods overlooking or undervaluing important aspects of female jobs.

According to several sources, the difference in wages between men and women has shrunk substantially by about half over the past several decades. Regarding the prospects of attaining an equitable balance, a paper by Michael Shannon and Michael Kidd project the future trends in "male-female wage gap", based on current trends in educational attainment and labour force participation predicting that though the wage gap will continue to close, a wage gap of approximately 22 percent will still exist in 2031.
6.11.1. Gender Pay Gap – Indian Scenario

The gender pay gap scenario in the rest of the world is present in India too. Women are paid on average 40% lower than men for the same work in India (UNCTAD’s – India Project, 2008). In India, inequality in the workplace is founded on social inequality. Although women have always worked, their work has traditionally been afforded less market value than men's. Men folk were considered as the breadwinners. Women’s income was hence forth considered marginal. It took decades, facing oppositions and breaking the traditional norms for women to enter the realm of workplace and even after that disparity in earnings exists. When women began entering the labour force, they were directed toward jobs which replicated their work in the home.

This led to a devaluation of their capacity as workers, since qualities relating to their job performance were often presumed to be a result of "natural" ability rather than skill. This presumption of inherent ability or talent came to affect the way jobs were evaluated when pay equity legislations and policies were developed. Even on governmental front, it took nearly 30 years after independence in 1947 for Indian legal system to accord women the right to equal pay. Indian constitution in principle is against any wage or pay discrimination on the basis of gender and this stand is made clear in the Indian constitution. Article 39(d) of the Constitution ensures equal pay for equal work without any discrimination. It further urges that the State shall direct its policy, towards securing equal pay for equal work for both men and women engaged in same work or work of similar nature. This directive principle was brought into enforcement by the enactment of the Equal Remuneration Act in 1976. As Equal remuneration is the major legislation in India to keeping check the pay gap among genders. The main provisions of the Act (Act 25 of 1976 amended by Act 49 of 1987) are the following

- **Duty of employer to pay equal remuneration to men and women workers for same work or work of a similar nature** -- No employer shall pay to any worker, employed by him in an establishment or employment, remuneration, whether payable in cash or in kind, at rates less favourable than those at which remuneration is paid by him to the workers of the opposite sex in such establishment or employment for performing the same work or work of a similar nature.

- **No discrimination to be made while recruiting men and women workers** -- On and from the commencement of this Act, no employer shall, while making recruitment for the
same work or work of a similar nature, [or in any condition of service subsequent to recruitment such as promotions, training or transfer], make any discrimination against women except where the employment of women in such work is prohibited or restricted by or under any law for the time being in force:

- **Advisory Committee** -- For the purpose of providing increasing employment opportunities for women, the appropriate Government shall constitute one or more Advisory Committees to advise it with regard to the extent to which women may be employed in such establishments or employments as the Central Government may, by notification, specify in this behalf.

- **Power of appropriate Government to appoint authorities for hearing and deciding Claims and complaints** -- The appropriate Government may, by notification, appoint such officers, not below the rank of a Labour Officer, as it thinks fit to be the authorities for the purpose of hearing and deciding the complaints and claims with regard to contravention of any provisions of this Act.

Equal Remuneration Act is the primary legislation in the area of wage equalization in India. The rationale behind Equal Remuneration Act is to undo any disparity that exists in payment based on gender. But in spite of allegiance to an International Convention (ILO Equal Remuneration Convention), having a specific legislation in force the reality remains that women still get underpaid in Indian workplace. Gender Gap Report (2009-2014) by World economic forum attests this fact. India continually finds its place among the countries gender gap exists the most.

### 6.11.2. Gender Pay Gap – Indian IT And ITES Sector.

While looking into existence of pay disparities in Indian IT and ITES sector, I came across research studies vouching the existence of disparities and others asserting the gender neutrality in the sector. No lawsuits resolved or pending alleging pay differentials based on gender was found in Indian IT and ITES sector. The ILO report: Linking up with global economy: A case study on Bangalore software industry though it purports Indian software industry to be highly male dominated, in terms of remuneration, according to the study, women are paid at an equal pay-scale. Similar thoughts are revealed in the by Dr. Rashmi Banga (UNCTAD) stating that the
wage gap between male and female employees is minimal in IT industry, as compared to any other industry (Banga, 2008).

The nature of work in IT ITES industry doesn’t leave much scope for discrimination as it is intellectual in nature and hence the dictum equal wage for equal work can be easily applied. To further analyse, Indian IT and ITES sector and pay gap the sector is examined in the light of the three economic theories on Gender Wage Gap - Human capital theory, Dual Labour market theory and Reserve army theory.

6.11.3. Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory attributes income differences to variations in education, experience and commitment to the labour force. Today avenues in education are open for women to pursue and this has helped in reducing the gap in educational level. The number of women opting technical and engineering courses and entering IT and ITES sector has shown an increase over the years. Qualification in terms of education is the qualifying criteria at the entry level irrespective of gender in IT sector. Women employees with their better comparable education, technical training should have more bargaining power in IT ITES sector which is applicable in the matter of remuneration. Since at the entry level both male and females have the same qualification, does the second and third variables – experience and commitment to labour force contribute to the pay difference?

6.11.4. Dual Labour Market Theory

Dual Labour market theory suggests that the workforce is divided into primary and secondary sectors, the first consisting of skilled, unionized, well-compensated, and stable jobs, and the second consisting of temporary, low-paying jobs with little upward mobility, and few benefits. In our society, generally women are more concentrated in this second category of – Temporary, low-paying jobs with little upward mobility, and few benefits. This is the exact scenario in India where majority of women are employed in unorganized sector and pay differentials based on gender is widespread. Indian IT and ITES sector falls in the first category of jobs - skilled, well compensated and stable jobs so does experience and break in tenure contribute to the pay gap?
6.11.5. Reserve Army of Labour Theory

The reserve army of labour theory proposes that the structure of capitalism depends on the existence of a cheap, expendable, renewable pool of workers. Pay gap theorists suggest that, women make up this reserve army. According to this theory pay differentials occurs as majority of women belong to this reserve army of workers, which usually temporary and replaceable deals with routine low responsibility activities.

Do women in IT industry fall in to this category of reserved labour?

Introducing the topic in two focused interviews gave some interesting insights. The women employees said that they hadn’t thought much about pay equity and that they thought that their pay is equitable .When probed further whether their male counterpart who had their same qualification and entered the workforce around the same time had comparable compensation, the answers were twofold. The majority of women employees who had the opinion that their compensation matches their qualification were new entrants or did not have any substantial break in their career. The other group responded that majority of their male counter parts – college mates or men colleagues who joined the IT workforce along with them are in higher positions and have acquired more experience in terms of number of years worked. This group said that they don’t match their male-counterparts in terms of compensation.

Based on these I reached the inference that disruption in tenure which leads to women employees being bypassed during promotions has a role to pay in the formation of pay disparity.

6.12. Harassment at the Workplace

Harassment in workplace transgresses into various forms. Harassment is considered to be sexual harassment if it is of a sexual nature. It ranges from unwelcome attention, mild transgression and annoyances of sexual nature to serious abuses which can even involve forced sexual activity (Dziech 1990, Boland 2002) Sexual harassment is reckoned as a form of illegal discrimination and abuse - sexual and psychological.
6.12.1. A status check on sexual harassment – Indian Scenario

In Indian workplace even now, organizations and employees are reluctant in openly addressing the issue of sexual harassment. Indian organizations are yet to get over the awkwardness associated with acknowledging and addressing this issue. The sensitive nature and the ambiguity in the dynamics of relationships and interactions makes things complicated for the organization in identifying such behaviours.

The prevailing attitude is that “sexual harassment happens only in other countries and cultures, but statistics from related studies prove it otherwise. A survey by the National Women’s Commission reports that 46.58% of women report sexual harassment in the work place; only about 3.54% report the matter to authorities at the organization; 1.4% reported it to the police.

A study by Sakshi, an NGO, carried out on a cross-section of organizations in private, public and unorganized sectors in 2004 highlighted the existence of sexual harassment (80 per cent of the woman responded that sexual harassment existed at their workplace). This was mainly attributed to the lack of zealousness in implementing and fostering awareness about Vishaka Guidelines. (Only 23 per cent said they were aware of the Vishaka guidelines). In the survey, only 20 per cent of the respondents said that the guidelines had been adopted by the organization they worked for. 66% of these said that the institutions had not effectively implemented these guidelines.

While looking into sexual harassment and related scenarios in Indian workplace one astounding factor is the scarcity or lack of proper information/figures based on which a conclusion can be reached. The question here is whether this is due to the non-existence of sexual harassment incidents/cases or due to inadequate redressal measures, lack of transparency/inadequacy of the system or sexual harassment laws.
6.12.2. Sexual Harassment Laws in India

Till recently Indian workplace relied on the provisions of certain sections of Indian Penal code (IPC)\(^8\) and on the Supreme Court guidelines and rulings in the landmark judgment of Vishaka vs. State of Rajasthan\(^9\) to resolve any case/issue relating to sexual harassment at workplace. Adequacy and thoroughness of these laws in dealing with the intricacies of Sexual harassment was often questioned.

6.12.3. The Working Women’s Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Work Place Bill

To address these concerns THE WORKING WOMEN (PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACES) BILL, was prepared in 2006 and introduced to provide for the prevention of sexual harassment or exploitation of working women at their work places by their employers, superiors, fellow colleagues or by anyone who is directly or indirectly connected with such work place through deterrent punishment and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The bill was passed by the parliament on November 4, 2010. Both public and private sectors, whether organized or unorganized with at least ten women employees comes under its purview this bill.

According to the bill "sexual exploitation or harassment" includes any unwanted or unwarranted gesture or verbal sexual advances, sexually explicit and derogatory statements or remarks, avoidable and unwarranted physical contacts, wilfully touching or patting, suggestive sexual remarks, sexually slanted and obscene jokes, vulgar comments about physical appearance, indecent invitations, use of pornographic material, demand for sexual favours, demanding sexual

---

\(^8\) Section 209, IPC - Obscene acts and songs Indian Penal code, Section 354, IPC - Assault or criminal force to a woman with the intent to outrage her modesty. Section 376, IPC – Rape Section 509, IPC - Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman, The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (1987)

The Indecent Representation of women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 focuses attention on sexist advertisements and hoardings. This was in response to public protests against the way the media was projecting the image of women in degrading and undignified ways

\(^9\) Vishaka vs. State of Rajasthan- This was the first time in 1997; the Supreme Court defined sexual harassment, identified it as a separate illegal behaviour and set out guidelines for instituting an anti-sexual harassment policy at the workplace.
favour by making telephone calls or sending SMS, threats of physical assault or molestation on refusal by the women workers by their male superiors, colleagues or anyone who for the time being is in a position to sexually exploit or harass the working women at any work place. The Bill prohibits sexual harassment of any working woman and includes not only women who are employed but also any woman who enters the workplace, as a client, customer, apprentice, daily wageworker or in ad-hoc capacity (Such as a student or researcher). The responsibility of implementation of the bill lies with Central government in case of its own establishments and State governments in case of establishments under them as well as the private sector establishments falling under their territory. The bill contains

- Provision for complaints and redressal machinery
- Penalty provisions on employers who fail to comply with the bill
- Prescribed timelines for the completion of the enquiry and implementation of the recommendations of the committee.
- Safeguards to protect the woman in question from possible threat and aggression by providing options for interim relief or transfer
- Safeguards in case of false or malicious complaint of sexual harassment

The bill mostly endorses the Vishaka guidelines but along with that takes into account additional dimensions like not the act itself but also any behaviour that pose as a threat or creates a hostile working environment.

6.12.4. Sexual Harassment at the IT & ITES workplace

Indian IT and ITES industry in the initial years of its inception did not focus on implementing measures to address sexual harassment. But as the industry grew, its significance and exposure grew along with it, with the policies being more structured and comprehensive. One thing to be kept in mind is the global environment in which IT and ITES organizations operate. Management should be well versed with the state of affairs in terms of the legal and procedural aspects not only in India but also of those countries in which they have their presence. Lack of proper machinery and pro-activeness in dealing with sexual harassment will lead to ramifications for the organization.
An instance is the Infosys sexual harassment lawsuit (Sexual harassment lawsuit filed by Reka Maximovitch in the Alameda Superior County court, Oakland, US in December 2001 against Phaneesh Murthy – Head of Sales and Marketing, communication and product services division of Infosys which was settled off the court). In light of Infosys harassment suit, NASSCOM framed guidelines for broad ethical norms to help companies adopt ethical practices and deal effectively if situations arise. Though official data regarding sexual harassment in IT and ITES is not available an NGO “Unites Professionals India” which serves as a redressal forum for IT and ITES employees in an all India survey conducted by them stated that eighty percent of women respondents confirmed that they were victims of sexual harassment. Female employees responded that they are aware that the company has a sexual harassment policy but majority of them are not aware about the procedure of the redressal machinery.

Having an anti-sexual harassment stance and policy is definitely the right way to go. But another aspect to look into is that whether the initiatives to create a harassment free workplace stop at the juncture of policy making or does it go all the way with effective awareness creation and transparent redressal measures. Instances like the suicide of two female employees in two IT and ITES organizations puts forth the question whether the sexual harassment redressal measures are effective. Close on the heels of two incidents of suicides by female tech employees of leading IT companies in Bangalore, apex industry body NASSCOM has decided to take stock of the situation and put in place a set of policy and practices for IT companies to follow in such cases.

6.13. Safety and Security

Safety and security of women in workplace has always been a matter of much deliberation. The earlier Acts and laws in India, in regard to safety and security of working women catered to job situations in the traditional setting. To ensure the safety and security of working women; they

10 The debate on sexual harassment at workplaces has come to the fore after MJ Sonia, an employee of Nokia Siemens, committed suicide on September 26 and named two of her senior male colleagues in her suicide note as being responsible for the extreme step by her. (Nokia claims to have a functional redressal cell and cites that reason behind the incident is not related to harassment). There was another in incident in Mysore in which a female employee ended her life on similar notes.
were prohibited from working during late evening and night hours. Factories Act 1948, section 66 states that “No woman shall be required or allowed to work in any factory except between the hours of 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. (extended to 9 p.m. for women in fish curing)”. Such Acts though with the intention to protect the safety and security of working women began to look less protective and more restrictive as new avenues of work opened for women. This set off a safety Vs right to work debate with employers, labour unions, women groups pitching in. Several court judgments (Tamil Nadu GO, April 2000, exempting Software Industries from the Chapter II provisions of Tamil Nadu Shops and Establishments Act 1947, Madras High Court judgment in R. Vasantha vs. Union of India, 2001) decided that denying nightshift for women would be an infringement on their constitutional rights. Instead of restrictive measures companies were urged to adopt safety guidelines. To address the changing nature of work and in order to provide flexibility in the matter of employment of women during night, The Factories Act amendment bill 2005 (Bill no 104 of 2005) was introduced. This amendment bill substituted the original provisions(section 66 of Act 63 of 1948) of factories Act 1948 thus allowing employment of women workers between the hours of 7 P.M. and 6 A.M in special economic zones, textiles and IT sector (especially call centres).The amendment makes it contingent that employer provides “adequate safeguards in the factory as regards occupational safety and health, equal opportunity for women workers, adequate protection of their dignity, honour and safety and their transportation from the factory premises to the nearest point of their residence”. But even after the passing of amendment and establishment of safety guidelines the safety of working women still poses as a source of apprehension.

6.13.1. Safety/ Security and Indian IT and ITES sector

Indian IT and ITES sector is perceived to have a harmonious and safe work atmosphere which was generally corroborated by the female employees working in the sector. The working hours in this industry often includes long work hours and night shifts especially in the ITES sector. These companies provide their employees transportation which includes pick and drop facility from their residence to office. Concerns about safety and security arose after the reported incidents like murder, rape and assaults of women employees while returning home from work. (Rape and murder of Prathiba Srikanth Murthy in 2005, Bangalore HP Global Soft Call centre, Jyoti Choudhry Wipro's call centre Spectramind, Pune, assault on Naina Pujari, Jigisha Joshi call
Both these incidents happened while using the company’s allocated mode of transportation. Due to the increasing number of employees, transportation is an operation that is often outsourced to outside contractors which dilutes the control company administration directly has on the day to day operations. In the above mentioned incidents the perpetrators turned to be the staff of the transportation companies.

The incidents fuelled a nationwide outpouring on this issue from various quarters – Employees, Family members and Women’s associations which led to discussions in this regard involving Government, Organizations, National Commission of Women, NASSCOM and stressed that organizations consider the matter of safety as a priority and take steps to ensure the security of its women employees is never compromised. Following these debates National Commission of Women in discussion with police, women activists and senior ministers from Ministry of Information Technology developed guidelines to ensure safety of women working night shifts in BPO’s. National Commission of Women’s report “Interaction and consultation on the issue of protection to the women employees of call centres” guidelines suggests measures to ensure safety in transport, additional checks to be installed, good practices to be followed in house, gender friendly measures. This includes Installation of GPS, Breath analyser test, and surprise checks, posting a security guard in cabs, educating women employees on basic safety precautions, background checks on cab drivers, internal hot lines, and SMS services.

Organizations in the sector are establishing safety guidelines in to ensure safety and security of their women employees. These safety measures will be successful only if coupled with continuous monitoring and constant vigil on the part of the organizations. Majority of the women employees responded that feel safe and secure in their working environment, including travelling to the job, that they are more aware and alert and that their organisation is responsive to any concerns regarding safety and security.

6.14. Gender Inclusivity Efforts in Indian IT/ITES sector

Organizational policies and practices relating to gender are often framed to combat the ongoing and unresolved issues and problems women encounter at workplace. The roots of these problems
are often confounded in the discriminatory societal attitude, under developed legal system and lack of proactive measures in organizations. It includes and is not limited to previously discussed issues like Unequal remuneration, Sexual harassment, Gender stereotyping, Unequal representation in upper echelons of management, Attrition, Work- family life balance, Long and odd working hours, Safety/Security concerns, and Work pressure/Job Demand. With the increasing significance of women in workforce it is imperative for organizations in IT and ITES sector to address the different facets of this diversity dimension. A review of the gender related organizational policies and practices of the organizations in the sector will definitely provide us with insights into the level of gender inclusiveness in the industry.

To achieve this, the inclusivity policies and initiatives of 50 organizations in the study is categorized. Along with the findings I have included as example the organizations that have good management practices in the specific category. The gender related policies/practices in the organizations is categorized under the following headings.


Employment decisions ranges from Recruitment, Hiring, Promotions, and Compensation. An organization by providing equal opportunity irrelevant of gender creates a positive environment where skills, qualification and the right-fit gains dominance. Some organizations without jeopardizing quality, consciously aim to increase the number of women employees by resorting to recruitment strategies like assigning target gender ratios at all levels, scouting women institutes for campus placement etc. E.g.: IBM, Microsoft, Ajuba,

6.14.2. Leadership Development

Organizations focus their resources on development of their female workforce. This not only helps in promoting an equitable distribution of genders along the corporate rung but also helps women employees reach their maximum potential. Leadership development, Training and Management development programs, Mentoring program (Formal and Informal), Showcasing successful managers and Inspirational programs provide the aspiring young women with perspective, confidence and required knowledge to move forward in their career. E.g. Cisco - Accenture, ADP, Aricent, CSC India, Microsoft, Ajuba, Genpact- We mentor, Infosys, TCS – The WOW woman at TCS, Wipro – Women of Wipro

Organizations put a lot of thought in helping women balance their work and family life through the various support systems. Organizations in IT and ITES sector are going a long way from the mandatory maternity leave to make it easy on women employees in coping with their dual role and responsibilities. Flexible working schedules like flexi timings and telecommuting options and work at home options, Alternate career paths, Paid holidays and sabbaticals, Child care centres and nursing stations, Parenting workshops, Counselling and help lines are the different ways in which IT and ITES sector try to balance out the family pressure. E.g.: Cisco, Accenture, IBM, ADP, Aricent Convergys, HP, Ajuba, and Infosys


Many organizations invest in the health and well-being of their employees – both physical and mental. Being a woman, female employees have a different set of biological requirements. Organizations while designing Health and Wellness program should take into account this factor. Support systems like Wellness programs, Access to general physician/ gynaecologist, Special lounge for pregnant women to relax and rest, Counselling for financial, Social and emotional concerns, Fitness programs, dedicated medical cabs for expectant mothers comes under the purview of health and well-being. E.g. – Cisco, Accenture, CSC, Microsoft, Ajuba (Svasth – corporate wellness program), HCL – MITR (24/7 counselling for social, financial and emotional concerns).

6.14.5. Safety and Security

Providing a safe and secure environment is a basic requirement which is not limited to the gates of the organization. Ensuring safety and security is critical especially due to the nature of working hours, especially in ITES sector where safety is a concern due to frequent night shifts. Precautionary measures like Safety audits, Company sponsored transportation, Escorts to ensure safety at night shifts, Assigning security supervisors, Periodic workshops and Programs on self-defence, Monitoring of cabs and other transportation vehicles, Helpline and SMS services are adopted by organizations. E.g. Cisco, Aricent, CSC India, Global logic, HP, Ajuba and HCL – self defence program.

It is now mandatory for all organizations in India to abide by the provisions of Prevention of Sexual Harassment act 2010. Along this organizations form their policies which usually include redressal procedure and action committees with a work atmosphere that doesn’t tolerate harassment of sexual nature. Apart from committees dealing with sexual harassment, some organizations have grievance redressal forums and women councils. E.g. IBM, Microsoft, HP, Ajuba, Infosys are some organizations that have well framed polices in this regard.

6.14.7. Networks and Forums

Women networks, Forums and Councils provide multiple platforms for mentoring and coaching, counselling, communication, leadership development, support and sharing. E.g.: Cisco - Women’s Action Network, Accenture (India)- Vaahini, Convergys – Global Women’s Network, CSC, IBM, HP, Global Logic, Microsoft, Ajuba (shakti), Genpact - Genwin, HCL – Women first council, Infosys- IWIN Women’s Inclusivity Network).


For any endeavour to be a success the key factor is communication. Newsletters, Periodic Surveys, Face to face interactions, Town halls, Web chats, Open door policy, Feedback forums, Women centric blogs and portals all functions as channels of communication and feedback. Ajuba, Genpact.

6.14.9. Community Outreach

Organizations are extending their gender inclusivity programmes outside their organizational boundaries towards the society with the intention of educating, training and providing career orientation especially in areas of science and technology. E.g. Cisco India – Girls in Technology, IBM, Accenture, Aricent, Ajuba,
Examining the extent of these policies in the organizations in the study revealed the following results

It is clear that organizations in the sector are increasingly becoming aware about gender diversity. 82% of the organizations in the study have gender inclusivity policies and practices. Analysing the inclusivity practices revealed that larger organizations with greater employee strength and scale of operations have well established policies in regards to gender. All organizations which fall into the category high profile companies with employee strength greater than 80,000 had well designed inclusivity practices addressing in all the above categories. In case of large scale companies 82% had policies addressing all these categories. The percentage diminishes in the case of medium and small sized companies.

Anti – sexual harassment policies
Regarding gender inclusivity measures, providing harassment free work atmosphere is where majority (70%) of the organizations have policies on.
Work-life Balance

Another area of focus is the policies relating to work life balance (60%), health and well-being (40%). In this regard, majority of organizations concentrate on providing flexible timings, telecommuting and childcare centres.

Examples for best practices

- **Ajuba** – Corporate wellness programme called Svasth, Maternity leave (paid) Flexible arrival / departure, Telecommuting Alternate career paths, Satellite offices, Sabbaticals, Child care centres, Flexible arrival/departure timings, Parenting workshops.

- **Infosys** – Nursing stations, Stay connected: A program that lets women stay connected with technology as well their own projects when women go on their maternity or sabbatical making it easy to commence work, Part time employment, Crèche facilities for women employees, Parenting and counselling sessions, New mothers can also avail the option of reduced hours of work, half day/half work week, Flexible work schedules, Extended maternity leave.

- **TCS** – TCS offers its women associates the option of long leave for medical reasons, as an extension of maternity leave and for other family commitments, flexible work timing, Family assistance.

- **Accenture** – Flexible Work Arrangements, Maternity Returnees Program to ease the transition, child care, Wellness rooms with nursing stations.

- **Microsoft** – Welcomes applications from pregnant female candidates, Parental Leave policy, Flexible work schedules.

Safety and Security

Safety and security is another area where most of the organizations have policies (60%). Mostly these measures confer to the transportation provisions made, but some organizations go an extra mile.

Organizations with best practices in this area

- **Ajuba** - Escorts are provided to ensure women’s safety in night shift, Periodic workshops on self-defence.
- **HCL** - Self defence programs for women employees, stringent safety measures and precautions in place to guarantee protection of women employees, vetting of cab drivers, escort for women employees picked up first or dropped last, signing of duty slips, checking of vehicles by security supervisors, monitoring of cab radios and connectivity to police stations, Special safety audits

**Councils, Networks and Leadership programmes**

Around 30% of the organizations have networks or women’s council. Around 50% of the companies have leadership councils and women’s network. Cisco - Women’s Action Network, Accenture (India)- Vaahini, Convergys – Global Women’s Network, CSC, IBM, HP, Global Logic, Microsoft, Ajuba (shakti), Genpact - Genwin, HCL – Women first council, Infosys- IWIN Women’s Inclusivity Network) are some examples.

Community outreach, usually as a part of CSR, forms yet another area which supplement the gender inclusivity efforts in IT and ITES sector.

### 6.15. Observations and Suggestions

Gender is one of the prominent diversity dimensions in the IT and ITES industry. In the light of facts discerned from the instances in the previous sections, we can see that in Indian IT and ITES sector variable factors – environment (socio-cultural, legal, attitudinal shifts in the society, third party associations and organizations, Inherent characteristics of the industry plays an important role in deciding the gender inclusivity in the sector. Several factors concerning gender in the sector – increasing number of women in workforce, breaking out of stereotypes and opting for technical positions and jobs that involve long hours reflects the changing attitude in the society regarding women’s choice of education and work field. The impact of the legal framework is discerned in the enforcement of laws designed to check discrimination on the basis of gender. Many gender policies for example, anti-sexual harassment measures in the organizations are framed in concurrence to the legal framework. Also while looking into the presence of glass ceiling and attrition among women, the effects of social pressures, familial commitments and
gender role delineation is evident. Safety and security is an issue of prime importance in this sector due to the odd working hours, attributed to the industry characteristics.

Apart from the environment and industry characteristics, the effect of third party organizations – professional bodies and NGO’s is felt in shaping the gender inclusivity in Indian IT and ITES sector. NASSCOM plays a pivotal role in furthering gender inclusivity in the sector. The effect of other NGO’s like Vishaka and forums like Women’s Council and the International gender treaties, lead to the inference that along with the environment and organizational outlook, professional bodies too impact the inclusivity in the sector.

The research provides a report on the current status of the industry. Indian IT and ITES sector fares well in terms of representation of women but how these numbers are dissipated among the levels of hierarchy in organization tells us a different picture. The research ascertains the existence of glass ceiling and the employee perspective provides insight on the different factors that acts as hindrance to career advancement which results in glass ceiling. It reveals that there is disagreement among the men and women on the role of gender plays in the advancement of career. Also the research was able to highlight that the effect of major life events affect men and women differently. Female participants felt that flexible work timings helped them to continue with the job but working from home and working in flexible hours lead them to be less visible and might be one reason which affects the advancement. In regards to attrition, among men, a better opportunity is the pulling factor but in case of women familial commitments and associated gender roles remains the prime reason for leaving the job. Though women employees are aware of the anti-sexual harassment stance and policies in their organization they are unaware about the actual mechanisms of the redressal machinery. Thus delving into matters of Gender representation, Glass Ceiling, Pay Gap, Attrition, Sexual Harassment and Safety and security helped in taking stock of the inclusivity in the sector.

The next step in the research was collecting information on the inclusivity efforts that the organizations are currently focusing on. This revealed that gender is one of the focal points in inclusivity endeavours that organizations partakes. But these initiatives vary in magnitude and depth of the gender policies. The majority of organizations with focused gender inclusivity
outlook are multinational corporations who typically have larger resources and exposure. Regarding gender inclusivity measures, providing harassment free work atmosphere is where majority of the organizations have policies on. Another area of focus is on policies relating to work life balance, health and well-being. In this regard, majority of organizations concentrate on providing, flexible timings, telecommuting and childcare centres.

The research through its findings provides insights that can help in framing organizational policies. The findings details the effect of gender roles and major life events has on the various aspects like career advancement, gender gap, attrition. These findings will help the organization while planning wholesome inclusivity endeavours.