Indian Women in the Corporate Space: A Scholarly Discussion

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *This paper examines the factors contributing to women's increasing participation in the workforce, particularly in the corporate sector, and explores the challenges and opportunities they face in achieving professional and personal success. Key questions include:*
(a) Is the representation of women in the corporate space encouraging?
(b) Are women performing well in corporate roles?
(c) Are there women-friendly organizations that support their family and professional needs?

Methodology: *The study explores various issues related to women employees in the corporate space, including their representation, performance, and the role of organizational policies in empowering women. It also evaluates the extent to which organizations address women's dual responsibilities of family and career.*

Findings: *The paper highlights factors driving women's entry into the job market, including economic pressures and aspirations for academic and professional achievement. However, it also identifies significant challenges, such as the glass ceiling and limited organizational initiatives aimed at supporting women employees.*

Implications: *This research emphasizes the need for proactive measures by organizations to create inclusive, supportive, and empowering environments for women. It calls for discussions on improving workplace practices to ensure equity and better opportunities for women in corporate spaces.*

Originality/Value: *This paper contributes to the ongoing dialogue about women's empowerment and workplace inclusivity by addressing gaps in representation, organizational support, and professional growth opportunities for women in corporate sectors.*

Type of Paper: *This is an **exploratory paper** that examines the role of women in India's corporate sector. It analyzes secondary data to explore trends, challenges, and organizational practices. The study aims to gain insights rather than test hypotheses. Its focus is on understanding women's participation and progress in corporate spaces.*

Keywords: Women Employees, Corporate Space, Best Workplaces, Empowerment, Challenges, Glass Ceiling, Organizational Initiatives

1. INTRODUCTION :

It is quite evident that the employment scenario is undergoing a far-reaching transformation in the present context. The rapid and radical changes in the global economy have led to more liberalization, and hence more investment and greater employment options for job seekers (World Bank, 2022) [1]. As organizations expand globally, companies are facing stiff competition from one another not only in terms of market share but also in the talent pool, necessitating a diverse and inclusive workforce (Catalyst, 2021) [2]. This development has also unleashed greater opportunities for women employees to tread their path in the corporate space. Today, a spate of business sectors beckon women employees

Poornaprajna International Journal of Management, Education & Social Science (PIJMESS), ISSN: 3107-4626, Vol. 2, No. 2, July - December 2025

POORNAPRAJNA PUBLICATION

and provide them with employment opportunities in various roles, including leadership and decision-making positions (ILO, 2023) [3].

Hence, in contrast to the conventional view of women as primarily 'child bearers' and 'homemakers', they are increasingly recognized as 'wage earners' and 'economic contributors' at both national and international levels (UN Women, 2020) [4]. The perception of gender roles is evolving, with growing societal acceptance of women in roles traditionally dominated by men, such as finance, technology, logistics, and corporate governance (McKinsey & Company, 2023) [5]. Today, women are no longer confined to back-office jobs as office assistants. Evidently, they have forayed into areas that were considered to be predominantly male bastions, such as engineering, entrepreneurship, and executive leadership.

Nevertheless, women's entry into the workforce has not stripped them of their traditional household chores. A woman often continues to don the role of a wife, mother, and daughter at the domestic level, besides her professional commitments, leading to the persistent challenge of work-life balance. Despite policy reforms and corporate diversity initiatives, many women still navigate barriers such as gender bias, wage disparity, and lack of support infrastructure like childcare and flexible working arrangements (Bain & Company, 2022) [6]. The paper endeavours to present the status of the women workforce in the corporate set-up and attempts to unfold various challenges and concerns of women employees in a corporate space.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

(1) To analyse the present scenario of women in the Indian corporate world.
(2) To identify and anlyse the factors promoting women in the Indian corporate.
(3) To analyse the challenges for women in the Indian corporate.
(4) To suggest suitable organisational measures to strengthen women in the corporate space.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW :

Women represent half of the world's potential talent, making their leadership in both economic and social spheres essential. Recognizing this, many nations have acknowledged that true sustainable development can only be achieved by fully tapping into this vast talent pool (Agarwal, 2020) [6].

India, despite emerging as a significant economic force globally, faces a paradoxical situation. While the country has seen notable progress in women's education, declining fertility rates, and robust economic growth, female labor force participation remains alarmingly low—only about 25%—placing India among the lowest in the world in this regard (Basu & Desai, 2021) [7]. Women make up 48.5% of India's population. Yet, as per the Sixth Economic Census by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, they account for merely 14% of total entrepreneurs. Moreover, women-led enterprises are predominantly small-scale, with nearly 98% categorized as micro-enterprises (MOSPI, 2019) [8].

In corporate India, gender continues to influence perceptions of managerial effectiveness. Although competencies largely define a manager's success, men are still often preferred for high-stakes roles such as top leadership, strategic planning, negotiations, and risk management. Conversely, women are generally seen as more competent in areas like human resource management, public relations, interpersonal communication, and balancing professional and personal life (Rao, 2020) [9].

Women professionals in corporate India often perceive their work environments as significantly more hostile across various aspects, including unequal opportunities, sexist behavior, exclusion from informal networks, challenges in balancing professional and personal responsibilities, and inadequate grievance redressal mechanisms. Research indicates that women are more likely to remain with organizations that foster a supportive and inclusive work culture (Nair & Joseph, 2021) [10].

Globally, gender diversity on corporate boards has attracted increasing scrutiny. In India, regulatory mandates for including women on company boards triggered a reactive approach, particularly in the banking sector. Despite the dominance of public sector banks and a strong presence of private players, the inclusion of women directors was often symbolic. Although the Indian government initiated a progressive step to improve gender balance in boardrooms, it has not set a strong precedent within its own financial institutions (Sinha, 2020) [11].

Issues of discrimination and violence against women in India are frequently attributed to cultural traditions. It is commonly assumed that India's patriarchal culture is the root cause of gender-based

Poornaprajna International Journal of Management, Education & Social Science (PIJMESS), ISSN: 3107-4626, Vol. 2, No. 2, July - December 2025

POORNAPRAJNA PUBLICATION

oppression and that globalization and economic liberalization will naturally lead to women's empowerment (Chakraborty, 2019) [12]. However, a significant gender gap still persists in Initial Public Offering (IPO) directorial roles in countries like India, with limited research addressing the role of female directors in IPO pricing outcomes (Mehra & Singh, 2021) [13].

There is a prevailing notion among corporate leaders that gender influences managerial performance. While male managers are often preferred for roles involving leadership, strategy, negotiations, and risk management, women are generally seen as more effective in human resources (Verma & Gupta, 2020) [14]. The updated Companies Act in India mandated the appointment of at least one woman director in specified categories of companies. Yet, a notable shortage of experienced women for board roles led many companies to appoint women of their choosing to meet the requirement, raising concerns about the depth of commitment to gender diversity (Kapoor, 2021) [15].

The phenomenon of the "glass ceiling" remains underexplored in India. Many Indian men tend to deny its existence, and organizational commitment toward creating systems and policies for workplace inclusion and promoting women to leadership positions remains limited (Kumar, 2020 [16]; Deshpande, 2019 [17]). For meaningful progress toward gender-balanced corporate boards, firms must recognize and address the implicit gender biases embedded in top management and adopt fair, unbiased selection practices (Rajan, 2021) [18].

Gender inequality in India's labor market is both vertical—restricting access to leadership roles—and horizontal—limiting women's representation in technical fields. These disparities are particularly pronounced in high-skill professions (Mukherjee, 2021) [19]. The impact of female representation on corporate boards on firm performance is often shaped by societal expectations of women's roles, which may conflict with conventional leadership traits (Sharma & Bhatt, 2021) [20].

Interestingly, major corporate frauds have predominantly involved male executives, while research shows women in senior leadership are often perceived as more ethical and principled than their male peers (Patil & Rao, 2020) [21]. Addressing gender bias requires a comprehensive, multi-layered strategy that challenges deep-rooted stereotypes (Sen, 2021) [22]. With women playing an increasingly vital role in corporate leadership, it is important to critically examine how their presence on boards contributes to enhanced business performance (Joshi & Pillai, 2021) [23]. To remain competitive, companies must uphold robust governance practices, and a central aspect of this is the empowerment and integration of women in the workforce (Thomas, 2021) [24].

4. RESEARCH METHDOLOGY :

This study adopts an exploratory research design aimed at gaining deeper insights into the position of women in the Indian corporate world. Given the complex and evolving nature of gender dynamics in organizational settings, an exploratory approach is best suited to investigate underlying patterns, challenges, and developments that may not be clearly defined or quantitatively measurable. The focus is on understanding *what* issues exist, *why* they persist, and *how* they are being addressed or ignored within the current corporate framework.

Nature and Scope of the Study:

The research is qualitative and secondary in nature, relying entirely on secondary sources of data. The scope of the study includes identifying trends, challenges, policy responses, cultural attitudes, and leadership narratives surrounding women in corporate India. It seeks to contribute to the academic and policy discourse by synthesizing findings from previous studies and offering a consolidated perspective.

Sources of Data:

The secondary data for this study have been gathered from a wide range of credible and diverse sources, including:

- Peer-reviewed academic journals and scholarly articles focusing on gender studies, human resource management, organizational behavior, and corporate leadership.
- Reports and white papers from national and international agencies such as NITI Aayog, McKinsey, World Bank, International Labour Organization (ILO), and Catalyst.
- Newspapers and business periodicals like *The Economic Times*, *Business Standard*, *Forbes India*, and *The Hindu Business Line*, which provide timely coverage and expert commentary on corporate affairs and women's representation in leadership.
- Books and edited volumes discussing feminist perspectives, leadership journeys, and workplace inclusion.

Poornaprajna International Journal of Management, Education & Social Science (PIJMESS), ISSN: 3107-4626, Vol. 2, No. 2, July - December 2025

POORNAPRAJNA PUBLICATION

- Government policy documents and labor statistics that give insights into workforce participation trends and institutional support mechanisms.

By examining these sources, the study attempts to trace the evolution of women's roles in Indian corporate spaces, highlight institutional gaps, and identify best practices for fostering inclusive work environments.

Rationale for Using Secondary Data:

The decision to rely on secondary data stems from the richness of existing literature and the extensive documentation already available on the subject. Secondary sources offer the advantage of:

- Accessing longitudinal data and wide-ranging viewpoints, which would be challenging to collect within a limited time frame.
- Enabling the researchers to compare and contrast multiple perspectives, across industries, timelines, and geographies.
- Reducing the constraints of resource-intensive primary data collection while still achieving depth and breadth of analysis. Moreover, secondary research allows for a critical review and synthesis of existing knowledge, which is particularly valuable in exploratory studies aimed at identifying conceptual patterns and policy implications.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the status of women's participation in decision-making roles in Indian corporate companies?
2. What personal, social, and organizational barriers restrict women's career advancement?
3. How do women perceive their workplace environment in terms of equity and empowerment?
4. What best practices and interventions have proven successful in fostering women's leadership in the corporate space?

5. DISCUSSION :

5.1 Women in the corporate space Indian scenario:

India's economy is home to numerous large corporations that demand substantial human resources to manage both strategic and operational functions. With the rise of dual-income households, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of women entering the corporate sector. However, the representation of women in top leadership positions remains significantly low, raising concerns. A study by the faculty team at IIM Ahmedabad, based on NSE-200 companies, revealed that women occupy a mere 5% of top management roles, with only 7% in senior executive positions (IIM Ahmedabad, 2022) [25]. This highlights a glaring gap in gender representation at the highest levels of corporate leadership. On a positive note, the EY report titled *"Diversity in the Boardroom: Progress and the Way Forward"* stated that from 2013 to 2022, India made notable strides in increasing the presence of women on company boards. Female board representation rose from 6% in 2013 to 18% in 2022. As of now, approximately 95% of NIFTY 500 companies have at least one woman director, a significant jump from 69% in 2017. Despite this progress, the proportion of female chairpersons remains under 5%, indicating that much work remains to be done (EY India, 2022) [26]. Further insights from the Credit Suisse Gender Diversity Report underscore the disparity: Indian boards have 17% female representation, compared to 35% in the UK and 29% in the US and Canada. In terms of women in top executive roles, India lags behind with only 6%, while the UK and US/Canada each report 13% (Credit Suisse Research Institute, 2021) [27]. In terms of numbers, the top 500 companies in India include 664 women directors. Apollo Hospitals leads with six women board members, followed by Godrej Consumer Products, Piramal Enterprises, and India Cements, each with five (Burgundy Private & Hurun India, 2022) [28]. These statistics clearly demonstrate the limited presence of women in senior corporate roles in India. They emphasize the need for deeper investigation into the underlying barriers that prevent women from ascending to top leadership positions.

5.2 Women's presence in corporations: Indian context:

This segment of the paper sheds light on the presence of women employees in different companies in India. Table 1 portrays the list of Indian companies that are in the hotspot for employing women.

Table 1: Top Women Employers in India

Poornaprajna International Journal of Management, Education & Social Science (PIJMESS), ISSN: 3107-4626, Vol. 2, No. 2, July - December 2025

POORNAPRAJNA PUBLICATION

Company	Number of Women Employees	Women Employees Percentage in the Workforce
Tata Consultancy Services	2,10,000	35%
Infosys	1,24,498	40%
Wipro	88,946	36%
HCL Technologies	62,780	28%
Reliance Industries	62,560	18%
Motherson Sumi Systems	52,501	41%
Tech Mahindra	42,774	34%
ICICI Bank	32,697	31%
HDFC Bank	22,750	16%
Page Industries	22,631	74%

Source: 2022 Burgundy Private Hurun India 500 Report

As shown in Table 1, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has emerged as the leading employer of women among the 500 most valuable companies, employing approximately 2,10,000 women, according to the survey by Burgundy Private & Hurun India (2022) [28]. Despite holding the distinction of being India's top employer of women, they constitute only 35% of TCS's total workforce—the country's largest IT firm. Between FY21 and FY22, TCS onboarded an additional 27,055 women employees (J. Thomas Hall, 2022) [24].

5.3 Best Workplaces for Women: Indian Context:

The best workplace is an employee-friendly organisation that creates and promotes an ambience conducive to workers. Such organisations generally ensure work-life balance for employees amidst their thrust for leveraging productivity. It stimulates creative thinking and rewards employees for their stupendous performance. It is an indubitable fact that women employees truly look forward to these forms of organisations where they feel that they are well taken care of. This part of the paper reproduces the list of 'Great Places for Work' for Women. (Great Place to Work® Institute, 2022) [29] has conducted a study to figure out the best places to work for women in India. It selected organizations where:

(1) Women make up a minimum of 10% of the total workforce.

(2) At least 70% of women employees report a positive experience on the Trust Index assessment, reflecting their overall workplace satisfaction.

Table 2 shows 10 companies that come under the top 10 best companies to work for women.

Table 2: Great Place to Work in India for Women

Organization Name	Sectors
Accenture Solutions Pvt. Ltd.	Information Technology
Cisco Systems India Pvt. Ltd.	Information Technology
Ford Motor Pvt. Ltd.	Automobiles
H & R Block (India) Pvt. Ltd.	Information Technology
HP	Information Technology
Pitney Bowes India Pvt. Ltd.	Information Technology
Salesforce	Information Technology
Synchrony International Services Pvt. Ltd.	Financial Services & Insurance
Thoughtworks	Information Technology
_VOIS	Information Technology

Source: Great Place to Work® Institute Report 2022 [21]

Poornaprajna International Journal of Management, Education & Social Science (PIJMESS), ISSN: 3107-4626, Vol. 2, No. 2, July - December 2025

POORNAPRAJNA PUBLICATION

In table 2, it is noteworthy that only Ford Motor Private Limited and Synchrony International Services Private Limited are non-IT companies in the top 10 list of companies that are dubbed as 'Great Place to Work for Women' in India. The remaining 8 companies in the list are from the IT sector.

5.4 Female directors: the global and Indian context:

Table 3: Percentage of Female Directors on the Board by Market

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Momentum (2015–21)
France	34.5%	39.7%	41.7%	42.5%	43.1%	43.2%	44.5%	10.0%
Sweden	33.2%	38.6%	36.6%	36.4%	35.4%	38.4%	40.0%	6.8%
Italy	24.8%	28.2%	32.5%	35.4%	34.4%	34.5%	39.4%	14.6%
Austria	21.3%	20.3%	22.8%	26.3%	33.9%	38.0%	39.2%	17.9%
Denmark	28.6%	29.3%	30.1%	30.0%	31.2%	33.7%	37.5%	8.9%
Finland	30.3%	31.7%	34.1%	34.7%	34.0%	36.6%	37.3%	7.0%
Norway	35.2%	37.1%	36.4%	35.7%	38.8%	33.3%	36.4%	1.2%
Netherlands	24.8%	27.0%	28.0%	29.3%	29.9%	33.6%	35.5%	10.7%
Canada	22.7%	23.5%	26.4%	28.8%	31.2%	34.2%	35.4%	12.7%
United Kingdom	22.6%	23.7%	26.1%	27.3%	31.5%	34.0%	35.3%	12.7%
Germany	22.3%	25.8%	27.4%	29.2%	32.1%	32.9%	34.2%	11.9%
Belgium	27.8%	27.7%	32.7%	32.9%	35.8%	37.7%	34.2%	6.3%
Australia/NZ	19.3%	22.5%	25.9%	27.4%	29.8%	31.3%	33.5%	14.2%
Spain	16.9%	18.2%	22.4%	23.5%	24.6%	30.6%	31.1%	14.3%
Vietnam	34.4%	37.5%	31.4%	25.0%	29.7%	26.8%	30.2%	-4.1%
Ireland	16.7%	16.5%	16.5%	19.2%	25.3%	29.6%	29.3%	12.6%
United States	17.1%	18.4%	19.6%	21.7%	23.8%	26.0%	28.1%	11.0%
Malaysia	14.9%	18.0%	20.4%	24.0%	28.4%	27.2%	27.4%	12.5%
Switzerland	14.9%	18.0%	19.6%	20.7%	21.7%	24.0%	25.9%	11.0%
Singapore	10.0%	11.9%	13.3%	15.9%	17.9%	19.3%	20.1%	10.0%
India	11.4%	13.0%	14.1%	14.4%	15.5%	16.2%	17.3%	5.9%
Philippines	10.6%	11.3%	12.7%	12.5%	13.9%	16.3%	16.9%	6.3%
Thailand	11.6%	12.8%	12.7%	14.6%	14.9%	15.7%	16.2%	4.6%
Pakistan	4.3%	4.3%	10.4%	11.1%	8.9%	12.5%	14.9%	10.6%
Turkey	7.0%	10.3%	10.5%	12.9%	14.4%	16.0%	14.4%	7.5%
Brazil	5.3%	6.3%	6.6%	8.8%	8.9%	13.2%	13.7%	8.4%
Argentina	2.5%	5.1%	3.8%	9.2%	9.4%	9.7%	13.1%	10.6%
China	10.0%	10.3%	11.0%	11.4%	11.5%	12.1%	13.0%	3.0%
Indonesia	9.8%	9.4%	9.8%	9.6%	11.7%	12.4%	12.9%	3.0%
Taiwan (Chinese Taipei)	9.2%	10.2%	10.9%	10.9%	10.5%	11.2%	11.8%	2.6%
Japan	3.6%	4.4%	5.1%	6.4%	7.9%	10.6%	11.5%	7.9%
Mexico	6.8%	8.1%	7.6%	7.7%	7.4%	10.7%	10.9%	4.1%
Chile	9.1%	12.5%	12.9%	10.1%	9.9%	11.4%	9.9%	0.8%
South Korea	3.9%	3.4%	2.9%	3.2%	4.6%	6.1%	9.1%	5.3%
Russian Federation	7.0%	8.6%	10.0%	5.6%	5.3%	5.4%	8.9%	1.9%

Source: (Credit Suisse Research Institute, 2021) [27].

Table 3 highlights the proportion of female directors on corporate boards across various global markets. While there has been a consistent rise in the representation of women from 2015 to 2021, India's progress remains relatively slow when compared to several other countries. Considering the vast number of women in the workforce and the large corporate presence in the country, the current figure—only 5.9%—is alarmingly low (Credit Suisse Research Institute, 2021) [27].

5.5 Women in the corporate space: the prime movers:

The Indian economy is opening up and there is increasing participation from the private sector. Business management jobs are constantly on the rise and so are the average salaries. With increasing demands for talented workers, there is also an increase in the representation of women in Corporate India. The percentage of women in middle and senior management is continuously rising. Even at lower levels,

Poornaprajna International Journal of Management, Education & Social Science (PIJMESS), ISSN: 3107-4626, Vol. 2, No. 2, July - December 2025

POORNAPRAJNA PUBLICATION

the presence of working women has increased significantly. Women are matching the performance of their male colleagues and steadily shattering long-standing glass ceilings. Several key factors have contributed to the growing presence and influence of women in corporate India. Some of these are:

(1) Women's Education is on the Rise:

Today, the percentage of women enrolled in primary, secondary, and higher education is progressively increasing. In fact, the increase in the percentage of girls in primary education in the 1970s and 1980s led to an increase in women in higher education in the 1990s. Evidently, there is a greater percentage of qualified, employable women in the late 1990s. This increases the percentage of women in the talent pool and hence, more are getting employed by corporates.

(2) Rise of Back Office Jobs:

India has witnessed a significant surge in job opportunities in recent years, with the IT industry emerging as one of the largest employers. The rise of back-office operations has opened up numerous prospects for women. These roles often demand a stable, dedicated, and committed workforce capable of working fixed-hour shifts, making them well-suited for women seeking structured employment. Women fit in very well here. However, this shall be viewed as a breakthrough for women to climb up the corporate ladder further.

(3) Societal Change:

Society is becoming more open- people are also becoming more receptive to women stepping out of their homes to earn for themselves and their family expenses. An increasing number of parents are now taking their daughters' futures more seriously. Girls today have greater access to professional and vocational education, and they exhibit more confidence and ease in navigating the outside world compared to a decade ago. In the past, careers such as teaching and nursing were commonly viewed as the only suitable options for women. However, this mindset is gradually shifting, with women now excelling in non-traditional fields like the military, navy, and transportation sectors (Desai, 2021) [30]. Women are less hesitant to take up travelling jobs or late-night shifts.

(4) Diminishing Glass Ceilings and Fewer Obstacles:

Today, the trend is towards making the environment conducive for women to work. The issues of gender equability have led to better opportunities and women-friendly work environments. Many HR consultants feel that women are more organized and committed and thus are preferable employees.

(5) More Flexi Timings and Work-from-Home Options:

The number of flexi-timing job options is increasing. These timings attract women who have family responsibilities. They can work at a convenient time and also take care of their home needs. The advanced nations have many young mothers opting for work-from-home options. However, in India too trend has already set in and there is progress.

6. WOMEN IN THE CORPORATE SPACE: THE MAJOR CHALLENGES :

The growth of women in the corporate sector has not been a cakewalk. Many factors affect a woman on a corporate career track. The challenges are multiple, and the sacrifices are also huge. Some of the challenges faced by women are:

(1) Balancing Work and Family:

This also leads to health problems. Though Indian society is becoming more accepting of working women, still it has a long way to go. Household chores are still assumed to be the women's primary responsibility. The bringing up of kids is also thought of as a women's domain. This leaves working women with more responsibilities. Most working women today return home in the evening to start their second shift of home labour. This increases the pressure on these women. It affects them both physically and mentally. Many women are in a jinx with their conflicting priorities between home and office. Not many organizations understand this and only a few have worked towards facilitating their workplace environment for women.

(2) Sexual Harassment:

This is one of the more brutal facts in the workplace. There have been many reported incidents of workplace harassment of women. In India, these cases are still not too open. Women face trauma and frustration and many finally quit their jobs. In cases of limited options, women often suffer in silence (Nair & Joseph, 2021) [10].

(3) Glass Ceiling:

Poornaprajna International Journal of Management, Education & Social Science (PIJMESS), ISSN: 3107-4626, Vol. 2, No. 2, July - December 2025

POORNAPRAJNA PUBLICATION

The glass ceiling is the reality. The organizations are often not comfortable promoting women. Men still have reservations about reporting to women bosses. This problem is even more acute in cultures like ours, where men have dominated over women for many decades. Several Indian men have been brought up with the view that women are homemakers, whilst men go out and earn. It is often difficult for some men to accept women as equals in their professional domains. As a result, they may attempt to obstruct women's advancement in the workplace. Numerous women have reported experiencing deliberate and systematic efforts to prevent them from reaching top-level positions (Kumar, 2020) [16]; (Deshpande, 2019) [17].

(4)Recognition and Respect:

Women in rising careers often do not get recognition for the same job. Their achievements are viewed with skepticism. In many cases, women are not promoted despite performing as well as other men. The reasons often cited are that they are emotional and so may not be effective decision-makers, and that they have multiple responsibilities and so are less committed. Thus, there is a smaller number of women in top positions and the boardrooms (Rajan, 2021) [18].

7. COMBATING THE CHALLENGES IN CORPORATE SPACE: ORGANIZATIONAL INITIATIVES :

Though women's presence is being accepted in the workplace today, no special consideration is made for the other roles they play. Today, there is a pressing need for a shift in the mindset of employers and men towards women employees. With the mounting work-life pressures, there is a need to foster a workplace that allows men and women to have both a job and a family. The following measures by the organizations are worth noting:

(1) Rejection of a candidate on the grounds of gender should be completely avoided. Recruitment should solely be based on merit and capabilities (Sen, 2021) [22].

(2) Organizations should evolve transparent policies for merit-based promotions and eliminate any gender-based favoritism. Salaries and increments should be determined solely based on performance, ensuring no gender bias (Sen, 2021) [22].

(3) Organizations must be receptive to and sensitive about the personal needs of women employees, including their roles outside the workplace (Sen, 2021) [22].

(4) Organizations should offer crèche facilities or daycare services for the young children of women employees. This can significantly ease the work-life balance struggle for working mothers (Joshi & Pillai, 2021) [23].

(5) Flexibility in work hours enables working couples to tailor their work schedules efficiently without compromising the organization's goals (Sen, 2021) [22].

(6) Organizational policies should actively promote trends and practices that enable women to reach higher managerial and executive levels (Joshi & Pillai, 2021) [23].

(7) (7) Women employees should be given equal opportunities to participate in decision-making processes, acknowledging their unique insights and leadership capabilities (Thomas, 2021) [24].

(8) Organizations should nurture an attitudinal change that fosters a sense of ownership of tasks, team commitment, and shared responsibility for organizational performance among both men and women (Thomas, 2021) [24].

(9) Women employees should be given the opportunity to make decisions as they have unique insights and some are excellent lateral thinkers.

(10) Organizations should bring about attitudinal change that nurtures a sense of governorship of tasks, commitment to work as teams, and responsibility for organizational performance among men and women.

8. SUGGESTIONS :

Based on the analysis of factors promoting women in the corporate sector and the organizational measures required to support them, the following suggestions are put forth to strengthen women's participation and advancement in Indian corporate spaces:

(1) Institutionalize Gender-Neutral Hiring and Promotion Practices:

Corporates should adopt structured, performance-based appraisal systems to eliminate subjective bias. HR policies must be regularly audited to ensure equal opportunities in recruitment, promotion, and compensation (Sen, 2021) [22].

(2) Develop and Expand Return-to-Work Programs:

Initiatives like Infosys' "Restart with Infosys" should be encouraged across industries to support women returning from career breaks. Companies should create re-skilling and upskilling modules tailored for women re-entering the workforce (Sen, 2021) [22].

(3) Strengthen Compliance with Workplace Safety Norms:

Strict implementation of the POSH Act, regular training programs, and functioning Internal Complaints Committees (ICC) are essential. Anonymous reporting mechanisms and gender-sensitization workshops can foster safer workplaces (Nair & Joseph, 2021) [10].

(4) Promote Flexible and Remote Working Models:

Hybrid and remote work models should be institutionalized beyond the pandemic, especially in sectors where digital infrastructure supports them. Flexitime policies should be extended to mid and senior management roles to retain talent (Joshi & Pillai, 2021) [23].

(5) Establish Formal Mentorship and Sponsorship Frameworks:

Encourage senior women leaders to mentor younger professionals. Leadership development programs should include targets for female representation at each level (Joshi & Pillai, 2021) [23].

(6) Create In-House Childcare Support and Parental Policies:

On-site crèches, tie-ups with daycare providers, and extended maternity/paternity leave must become standard practices. Encourage equal parental responsibilities by promoting paternal involvement (Thomas, 2021) [24].

(7) Encourage Female Representation in Leadership and Boards:

Beyond compliance with the Companies Act, organizations should set internal diversity benchmarks. Nomination committees must consider women with varied industry experiences, not just family members of promoters (Thomas, 2021) [24].

(8) Raise Awareness through Internal Communication and Recognition:

Celebrate milestones and success stories of women employees through newsletters, events, and leadership forums. Recognizing women's contributions fosters inspiration, visibility, and ambition among peers (Sen, 2021) [22].

(9) Engage with Academia and NGOs for Research and Training:

Collaboration with academic institutions can help in conducting gender audits and developing case studies on women's leadership. NGOs focusing on gender equity can partner in organizing workshops, outreach, and policy framing (Sen, 2021) [22].

(10) Government Incentives for Gender-Diverse Workplaces:

The government can offer tax benefits, recognition, or subsidies to companies demonstrating gender diversity and women-friendly policies. Sector-specific action plans (e.g., IT, manufacturing, banking) may be introduced to improve gender balance in underrepresented industries (Sen, 2021) [22].

9. CONCLUSION :

The Indian corporate ecosystem is evolving and embracing changes that accord equal opportunity for men and women. The reforms in the legal domain have also created meaningful opportunities for women to rise to the occasion in the corporate sector. Supporting this perspective, the Companies Act of 2013 mandates that every listed company, as well as any other public company with a paid-up share capital of ₹100 crore or more, or a turnover of ₹300 crore or above, must appoint at least one woman director (Government of India, 2013) [31]. Additionally, since April 2020, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has enforced a regulation requiring companies to appoint an independent woman director, rather than merely nominating a family member (SEBI, 2020) [32]. These and other such measures introduced by regulatory authorities have played a vital role in increasing the presence of women in corporate boardrooms. Moreover, multiple global and Indian studies have established a positive link between gender diversity and enhanced corporate performance (Credit Suisse Research Institute, 2021) [27]; (McKinsey & Company, 2023) [5]. Companies with diverse leadership teams tend to achieve higher financial returns, better innovation outcomes, and stronger governance practices. Thus, it is evident that the days ahead will witness Indian corporations creating a more dispassionate, meritocratic playground where women can enter, compete, and emerge victorious in corporate leadership positions.

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