



## Workplace Gender Equality Moves in Right Direction, Parity Still 'Out of Reach'

The biggest obstacle women face is the first step up to management.

Ratio of promotions to first-level manager by gender and race



Source: 2019 McKinsey & Company and Learn.org Women in the Workplace study

A [report](#) from McKinsey cites the step up from entry level jobs to management roles as being a 'broken rung' in the path toward workplace gender equality. At certain levels, this goal of equality still seems out

of reach even as businesses are increasingly showing that they are committed to gender diversity. It is [affecting the whole pipeline](#). The report draws attention to some areas of notable improvements. One of the biggest ones being made in representation at the C-suite level. The proportion of women in these roles has increased by +24%. Companies are also increasingly committed to giving women the flexibility to work from home (up +30%), they are seeing more senior leader accountability (+18%) and they are showing better commitment to gender diversity overall (+13%). However, there are also plenty of examples of little or no change. For instance, here has been little positive movement in the representation of women of colour across US businesses.

## Do Lawsuits Improve Gender and Racial Equality at Work?

A [recent research](#), published in the American Journal of Sociology, looks at whether lawsuits bring about gender and racial equity, especially when accompanied by market pressures, press coverage, and mandated policy changes. [A few stories of change](#) don't necessarily mean litigation is, in general, an effective tool for fighting harassment and bias in companies. By most accounts, diversity gains have levelled off over the last decade and high-profile companies continue to rack up fines for discrimination. In an analysis of 171 high-profile lawsuits filed against private companies from 1997 to 2008, the study examined how the verdicts and settlements affected subsequent levels of gender and racial diversity in management. And, whether lawsuits led to measurable gains in managerial diversity. It was found that lawsuits did have equity-enhancing effect, but the conditions of the legal resolutions mattered considerably.

## Women's Empowerment a 'Game Changer' for Sustainable Development

The global goal of a sustainable future for all cannot be achieved until women, girls and young people gain control over their own bodies and lives, said UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed at the [three-day summit](#) held in Nairobi recently. The summit, held to mark 25 years of the landmark International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held that there are still too many women being left behind. The power to choose the number, timing and spacing of children is a human right that can bolster economic and social development, Amina Mohammed said.



## A Drive to Combine Sustainability and Women's Empowerment



A [social enterprise in Kerala](#) combines sustainability and women's empowerment by upcycling saris and cloth. These are a group of women in Muhamma, near Alappuzha, who tailor a utilitarian product line from saris that would have ended up as a pollutant in the Vembanad Lake. In 2017, Sanju, a staffer at Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment

(ATREE) in Muhamma, learnt from the panchayat president that pollution of the Vembanad lake was affecting the livelihoods of local women. These women depended on clam digging and fishing for sustenance, the dwindling population of which impacted their lives. Cloth and plastic pollution were the culprits. As he listened, Sanju suggested upcycling of cloth as a possible solution. Stepping in, ATREE started a project and trained local women to make bags out of saris. For now, 95% of their raw materials are saris, but they intend to include denims and T-shirts as well.

## India Inc: Women got only 37 out of every 100 new jobs created in FY19

Women form less than 10% of the workforce in many companies. Gender equal policy seems to be missing at most [Indian companies](#), reducing the share of women in new hires to less than half.

