

MOST
PREFERRED
WORKPLACE
FOR WOMEN
2024-2025
CERTIFIED

Empowering Women Through Inclusion

BS MARKETING INITIATIVE

CREATING A WORKPLACE CULTURE WHERE WOMEN THRIVE

> **Team Marksmen's Most Preferred Workplace for Woman puts organisations championing the cause of women in the workplace front and center**

We've seen a lot of strides made in recent years when it comes to increasing the participation of women in the workforce. Recent reports show that from 2021 and 2023, women's workforce participation in India steadily increased, reaching 26 per cent, but has since plateaued in 2024.

Boosting these numbers is vital, as it is not just essential for retaining skilled female talent, but also driving the national growth agenda and making the most of the surging talent pool that India has at its disposal.

Inflexible work cultures, invisible barriers, and deeply entrenched and unconscious biases against women in the workplace are just some of the reasons that these numbers have stalled.

There are a few organisations, though, that truly champion the idea of diversity in the workplace. By crafting a workplace culture that nurtures women at all levels and creates pathways for growth and success, they have earned the right to be acclaimed as a Most Preferred Workplace for Women.

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TRANSFORMING THE ORGANISATIONAL LANDSCAPE

> **Sudakshina Bhattacharya, President and Chief Human Resources Officer, HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Ltd., delves into the ways the organisations builds an equitable, inclusive workplace**

Building an Equitable Workplace starts by giving every individual a voice to express. There is a deep belief in the power of everyone to bring change and transform the landscape of their organization.

This is channeled through "Love All", our call to action in building an inclusive workplace within HDFC ERGO and in the greater corporate community across India. This is India's first open-source movement for DE&I harnessing the diversity of the

nation with a single thought - diversity is a transformation of the mind; inclusion is a knock on the heart.

It begins with Sensitivity, a key value of the organization - building businesses on empathy with an understanding of the needs of all. Project SHAKTI has ensured the promotion of a gender balanced organization addressing unconscious bias and promoting allyship among employees.

It also finds space in the connects

we do under Sharing Circles where women from across the organization come together in authentic dialogue on their experiences in the organization and beyond. This also helps to find homogenous cohorts and share challenges, supporting in the reveal of their whole self.

Aspiration meets opportunity here at HDFC ERGO. Our development portfolio is inclusive, spreading across bands and demographics. This is best displayed in the collaborative design effected between WeLead and Winspiration. These initiatives have crafted a growth mindset within our women colleagues, enabling them to both be part of a healthy diversity leadership pipeline and mentor those next-in-line. Beyond this, role specific efforts like Nari Shakti have seen once male-dominated ecosystems becoming homes of inspirational stories that see women breaking new ground in the industry.

"Love All" is the story of inclusivity, and through our future ready initiatives, we have been able to cultivate a strong and diverse talent pool enriching all that we do here at HDFC ERGO.



KAUVERY GROUP OF HOSPITALS: A PREFERRED WORKPLACE FOR WOMEN

> **Dr. S. Manivannan, Founder & Managing Director of Kauvery Group of Hospitals, emphasizes how fostering an enabling and empowering work environment helps women reach new heights of success.**

Kauvery Group of Hospitals has been recognized for creating a workplace that empowers women at every level. With women making up nearly 72% of its workforce, Kauvery exemplifies a strong commitment to providing opportunities for women from diverse backgrounds, enabling them to thrive in their professional journeys.

Creating Opportunities for First-Time Women Employees

An impressive 65% of the women employed at Kauvery are first-time employees. Many of these women come from rural backgrounds, lower socio-economic strata, and are often first-generation graduates. Kauvery actively recruits these women directly from colleges, offering them structured training programs that transform their lives. This initiative ensures that women, not just in medical roles, but in other crucial areas like lab technicians, are given the opportunity to develop professionally.

The hospital provides appropriate training across various fields of medicine, and women now constitute close to 40% of Kauvery's doctors. This focus on inclusivity ensures that women are represented throughout the healthcare ecosystem, from clinical to operational roles.

Safe and Supportive Environment

Kauvery's dedication to creating a safe and supportive environment has been a key factor in empowering its female employees. The hospital's policies and work culture ensure that women can focus on their careers without concerns about their safety or well-being. Whether at the entry level or in senior management, women are supported in their professional growth, which is vital in a sector that demands constant learning and adaptability.

Flying Angels Program: Recognizing Nurses

A unique initiative by Kauvery is the "Flying Angels" program, where the hospital recognizes its best-performing nurses with a one-day flight trip. For many nurses, this is their first experience traveling by air, making it a memorable reward. This program showcases the hospital's appreciation for its nursing staff and their dedication to providing excellent patient care. Nightingale, the first-of-its-kind journal in India, features articles exclusively authored by talented nurses from Kauvery Group of Hospitals.

Career Competency Development Program

Kauvery's Career Competency Development Program (CCDP) has been another game-changer. This 60-day training program focuses on hospital management and is aimed at fresh graduates from rural and underprivileged backgrounds. So far, 3,000 graduates have completed the program, with 75% of them being women. These women receive training in various aspects of hospital operations, giving them the skills needed to succeed in healthcare management.

Many of the women trained through CCDP have secured positions within Kauvery Hospitals, while others have been placed in healthcare institutions outside the



group. This initiative demonstrates Kauvery's commitment to offering women sustainable career opportunities beyond medical roles.

Leadership Led by Women

Women are not only present in large numbers in Kauvery's workforce, but they also hold key leadership positions. The hospital's Head of Human Resources is a woman, and several women occupy senior leadership roles, ensuring that women have a voice at the highest decision-making levels.

This representation at senior levels highlights the hospital's commitment to gender diversity and the development of women leaders within the healthcare sector.

An Inspiring Success Story

One of the most inspiring examples of Kauvery's focus on empowering women is the story of a housemaid who, through internal training, became a certified dialysis technician. This transformation shows Kauvery's dedication to offering opportunities to all, regardless of their background. It is a testament to the hospital's belief in the potential of every individual and the power of education and training to change lives.

A Legacy of Growth and Empowerment

Kauvery's remarkable journey from a 30-bedded facility to a healthcare giant with over 9,500 employees across 12 hospitals in six locations has been driven by its inclusive culture. By offering postgraduate courses in 20 specialties and recruiting women from rural backgrounds, Kauvery has created a safe and nurturing environment that empowers women to succeed. Kauvery's recognition as a preferred workplace for women underscores its role as a leader in healthcare, not only in terms of medical achievements but in creating opportunities for women across the organization.

ENSURING WOMEN THRIVE AND REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

> **Poppy Sharma, CHRO, Central Bank of India, outlines the initiatives through which the organisation supports female career development**

In a significant move to foster gender equality and empower women in the workplace, Central Bank of India has launched a series of innovative programs aimed at supporting the career development of its female employees. Recognizing the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment, the Bank is committed to ensuring that women can thrive and reach their full potential.

Among the key initiatives is the "Women's Leadership Training Program", designed to equip women with essential skills to navigate their careers effectively. This specially curated program facilitates professional growth and leadership development, empowering participants to excel in their roles. The training program covers a range of topics including effective communication, decision-making, conflict resolution and strategic thinking. These skills are essential for women to build confidence in their abilities and take on more responsibility within the Bank.

The Bank has also introduced a "Mentorship Program", connecting women employees with experienced mentors in senior positions. This initiative provides invaluable guidance, support, and career advice, helping women to achieve their professional goals. For women, having such a mentor who understands the unique challenges they might face within the Bank can be especially empowering. Under this program, women are not only able to gain insight into how to advance their careers but also develop the confidence to face new challenges.

Understanding the importance of personal and professional development often go hand-in-hand, the Bank offers a "Sabbatical Leave Policy" that allows women to pursue advanced degrees or take time off for personal reasons without impacting their career progression. This policy is designed to recognise the importance of continuous learning and personal growth, while also acknowledging the need for work-life balance.

In a further commitment to inclusivity, Central Bank of India has established "All-Women Branches" across its 90 Regions. Women branch heads receive specialized training to enhance their leadership capabilities, ensuring they can effectively lead and inspire their teams. The creation of all-women branches not only highlights the bank's commitment to providing opportunities for women in leadership but also serves as visible representation of the Bank's dedication to gender equality. Women-led branches are expected to be catalysts for other women employees in the Bank toward moving into leadership roles.

To accommodate the personal and family needs of its female employees, the Bank has implemented "Flexible Transfer Policies". Women are given priority in transfer requests, especially those seeking to join spouses or families. Additionally, female employees on maternity leave or with young children are exempt from mandatory transfers, promoting a more adaptable work environment. These flexible transfer policies not only make it easier for women to balance their personal and professional lives but also reflect



the bank's understanding of the unique challenges faced by working mothers.

Recognizing the challenges faced by women returning from maternity leave, the Bank offers "Post-Maternity Counselling" through its Employee Assistance Program. This support is designed to help women to cope with emotional & physical challenges that are mainly associated with returning to work after having a child. The program has covered mental health resources, health tips, and childcare information; therefore, facilitating a smoother transition back to the workplace. By offering post-maternity counselling, the bank is addressing the unique needs of its female employees and creating supporting environment.

Above all, Bank has taken further steps in fostering safe and respectful workplace for women employees by implementing robust measures under the Prevention of sexual harassment (POSH) Act. Under this policy, the bank has set up internal compliant committees at the Regional, Zonal & central level in such a manner that every woman employee has access to a confidential and impartial committee to report any incidents of harassment with their working environment. The bank ensures that all reported cases are investigated with utmost seriousness with

strict actions taken against any offenders, emphasizing zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment.

Our commitment to gender equality is reflected in our comprehensive policies that ensure parity across all levels of the organization. While we maintain fairness in treatment, we also recognize and address the unique needs of our women employees, from enhanced maternity benefits to strict guidelines against workplace harassment.

By embedding these initiatives, our Bank is not only complying with legal obligation but also makes it a prime example of creating a safe work culture, especially for women, as there is both safety and empowerment for women. All policies formulated in the bank are in compliance with government guidelines and regulations, ensuring consistent implementation across all branches and offices. This dedication to fairness and equality empowers women employees to pursue their careers with confidence and support.

Central Bank of India aims to inspire other organizations to prioritize women's empowerment in the workplace, contributing positively to the ongoing discourse on gender equality.



Empowering Women Through Inclusion

BS MARKETING INITIATIVE

GENDER PARITY IN ACTION: WELSPUN LIVING AS THE SUSTAINABLE LOOM FOR THE WORLD

> **Dipali Goenka, MD & CEO, Welspun Living Limited**, details how equality is a necessary thread in the tapestry of a prosperous and sustainable world order



With the right support and mentorship, each of us has the potential to excel and make a meaningful impact. When I joined Welspun Living after years as a homemaker, I noticed something that resonated deeply: while our consumers and primary decision-makers were predominantly women, the textile industry itself was male-dominated - an imbalance that I felt needed to be addressed to reflect our audience and values more closely.

I launched our premium brand SPACES in 2003, an initiative to weave women's perspectives and voices into every level of the business—from the boardroom to the production floor.

At Welspun Living, with robust mentorship and initiatives like 'Women of Welspun' and 'Allyship' that champion diversity and inclusivity, I am on a journey to create a culture where diversity and inclusivity can thrive. Today, I'm proud that women represent nearly 27% of our workforce, and I am committed to achieving 50%.

This journey has not only transformed the workplace culture but has sparked new ideas and innovations that keep us moving forward. To every leader, I encourage you to make gender

diversity a strategic priority—not just to reach a target but to unleash creativity, drive growth, and build workplaces that genuinely connect with both employees and consumers.

If I could start this journey as a homemaker and reach where I am today, then so can you. Embrace diversity, and let it transform your organization and the impact you make.

SHATTERING THE GLASS CEILING

> **Lalitha M Shetty, Vice President - HR, Omega Healthcare**, chalks out the unique challenges women in HR face, and how they can be overcome



In today's evolving workplace, women in HR play a critical role in shaping organizational culture and driving talent strategies. However, they continue to face unique challenges rooted in societal expectations and workplace dynamics. Balancing career and personal responsibilities, navigating gender biases, and overcoming the glass ceiling limit opportunities for growth. Women are often perceived in "soft" or "supportive" roles, despite their strategic contributions, leadership capabilities and subject matter expertise.

These challenges are compounded by the demands of a fast-paced work environment, which can lead to burnout, particularly for women in people-centric roles. To address this, organizations must create robust support mechanisms that empower women to thrive.

At Omega Healthcare, we're committed to breaking these barriers. Our 'Roshni' initiative, which supports women who represent 47% of our workforce in India, empowers them through structured mentorship, leadership development, and networking opportunities. This program focuses on building skills and creating a pipeline of female leaders equipped to take on managerial and senior roles. We ensure gender parity through transparent promotion pathways, encouraging women to step into leadership roles.

Omega fosters a flexible work culture, adopting hybrid models and family-friendly policies, such as extended maternity leave. Over 80% of women return post-maternity, supported by our "CradletoDesk" initiative, which ensures care and reintegration for returning mothers.

Our commitment extends to mental health support, employee assistance programs, wellness resources, and initiatives that address physical, emotional, and financial well-being. A zero-tolerance policy on discrimination

and gender-neutral policies further reinforce our inclusive environment.

At Omega, we believe that true engagement comes from comprehensive support. By fostering an inclusive, empowering workplace, we ensure women HR professionals not only overcome obstacles but lead with impact, both personally and professionally.



THE ACT IMPERATIVE

AUTHENTICITY, CONSISTENCY, AND TRANSPARENCY

28th
MAR. 2025
Mumbai

Join us as we honor the brands shaping India's business landscape with trust and innovation. Let's celebrate those who lead with purpose, and foster lasting connections.



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