



RE-SETTING THE BAR

ARE LAW FIRMS AND COMPANIES DOING ENOUGH TO REMOVE HURDLES FACED BY
WOMEN LAWYERS IN THE WORKPLACE? **VANDANA CHATLANI** REPORTS

Companies and law firms in India and beyond are beginning to view gender diversity, and diversity overall, as a corporate gain – a way to enrich perspectives, foster growth, celebrate difference and support inclusiveness.

The sentiment to create a fair and equal environment seems to be echoed across departments, from human resources (HR) to legal and even senior management. “We are committed to encouraging and building a culture that respects diversity in all forms,” says Tejashree Kumar, the deputy general manager of human resources at Jet Airways.

“We are proud that we have women as key influencers at every level in our hierarchy,” says Mohit Shukla, managing director and head of legal in India at Barclays. In 2015, the bank became a founding member of the UN HeForShe campaign for women, pledging to increase the representation of women in senior leadership by a percentage point a year, embed gender equality in the culture, processes and policies of Barclays, and reach 2.5 million women around the world with financial inclusion programmes.

Women’s empowerment is part of the Spirit to Serve programme run by Marriott Hotels. Sahiba Chait, vice president and senior counsel of the South Asia team, says Marriott partners with non-profit organizations “to develop skills and opportunities for women, support women-owned hotels, purchase from women-owned businesses and provide development and advancement opportunities for our workforce”.

Reliance Life Sciences says it, too, emphasizes the importance of gender equality. “To ensure a culture of respect towards women employees, awareness is created through various internal programmes and training,” says company president KV Subramaniam. “It is mandatory for every employee to attend the sessions, and follow the specified code of conduct.”

CRACKS IN THE GLASS CEILING?

To better understand how women in the legal community are supported by employers, *India Business Law Journal* invited law firms and in-house counsel to share details of the gender dynamics at their places of work. We asked about provisions for equal pay, flexible work arrangements, late night transport, whether law firms and companies had adopted a sexual harassment policy and if that policy was gender neutral, and whether employers provided paternity leave along with crèche and breastfeeding facilities.

A total of 10 companies and 48 law firms submitted their responses. On paper, at least, the feedback was encouraging, with most firms clearly showing consideration for gender equality, ensuring the safety of employees returning home late, and finding ways to support new mothers who are keen to continue their careers.

Virtually every respondent said they were committed to equal pay, even though most admitted they did not have this policy in writing. “Excellence has no gender,” says Bisman Kaur, of counsel at Remfry & Sagar. “Unequivocally, our policy is equal pay for equal work.”

Fidus Law Chambers has a variable incentive as a part of its pay structure to reward lawyers who exceed their billing targets. “This is disbursed quarterly and I am proud to say that the top fee earners in the firm invariably have women in the majority,” says managing partner Shwetaree Majumdar. “Fidus is home to some incredibly talented and meritorious women who are given their due.”

Mathew Chacko, the founder of Spice Route Legal, says that while the firm wholeheartedly endorses pay based on meritocracy, “some of the trickier aspects of equal pay, i.e. how to ensure that maternity (or paternity) does not result in any career impairment, etc., are issues that are being discussed by stakeholders”.

Chacko adds: “Unfortunately, we are an all-male partnership at this stage. We hope that in the next 12 months, we will be cured of this affliction.” The firm aims to introduce both paternity and “pawternity” leave (for pet parents) in the next revision of its employee handbook.

Chacko says Spice Route Legal offers a non-discriminatory, supportive atmosphere for women. However, the fact that the firm is still an all-male partnership “has significant drawbacks, in that some well-intentioned policies designed by the leadership may not be culturally acceptable”. For a brief period, the firm introduced a menstrual leave policy that many of its women colleagues were not comfortable using, says Chacko. “We then pivoted to a gender-neutral work-from-home policy. We have generally learned from our mistake – and now all policies are thoroughly discussed with all stakeholders prior to adoption.”

Some law firms were able to provide reassuring figures on women in senior positions. Women comprise 50% of the senior



Mathew Chacko
Founder
Spice Route Legal

Unfortunately, we are an all-male partnership at this stage. We hope that in the next 12 months, we will be cured of this affliction



Vineetha MG
Partner
Samvad Partners

We are ... very proud of our hyper-inclusive environment. I would even go as far as to say that women are better paid at Samvad than at most other organizations

leadership at ALMT Legal and Dhir & Dhir Associates. At Altacit Global, 80% of the legal staff and 66% of senior leadership are women. At IndiGo airlines, 50% of the legal team, headed by general counsel Priya Mehra, is made up of women. “We also take pride in stating that some of the mission-critical departments, which can be termed as the backbone of our airline, such as the in-flight services department, airport operations, learning academy (iFly), administration team and the project management team for our regional aircraft operations are led by women leaders,” says Mehra.

“Women make up the majority of the workforce at Samvad Partners [67% in total, and 65% of senior leadership]” says partner Vineetha MG. “We are ... very proud of our hyper-inclusive environment. I would even go as far as to say that women are better paid at Samvad than at most other organizations”.

IN SAFE HANDS?

In seeking data on late night transport facilities, we wanted to explore whether firms take responsibility for an employee’s safety when they commuted home after working late. Most law firms said they would reimburse the cost of these journeys, but we were less interested in compensation and more concerned with evidence of firms adopting a proactive approach towards safeguarding their employees. For example, firms such as IndusLaw, Remfry & Sagar and RRG & Associates offer employees a chauffeur-driven company car, while companies such as Standard Chartered provide a shuttle service for employees until 10 pm. Firms that said they didn’t offer late night transport arrangements or simply reimbursed the cost of the

transport home were marked as not having late night transport [see law firm and company tables].

“Safety of women is paramount for the firm,” says Monali Dutta, a principal at Advaita Legal. “We have an empanelled group of reputed transport providers with GPS technology across locations and use these providers for any late night or outstation travel.”

SS Rana & Co offers cab services through its aggregator taxi service corporate account. When a staff member enters their taxi, they record the details of the number plate on an internal WhatsApp group so other team members can keep track of their journey. The WhatsApp group is alerted once the person has arrived home safely.

Luthra & Luthra says it holds the responsibility for transporting its staff home late at night and has a guard on duty who calls to confirm the employee’s safe arrival.

Nitya Tax Associates goes as far as to provide lodging facilities near the office for those who feel uncomfortable travelling home late at night.

For some firms, transportation is not an issue as their employees always leave early in the evening. Jaya Bhatnagar, the founder and chairperson at SiebenIP, says no one works at the office beyond 7.30pm. That’s the same time that women invariably leave Bhasin & Co, says Lalit Bhasin.

Firms such as Kanga & Co, DGS Associates, LEXport and Remfry & Sagar are keen to discourage employees from burning the midnight oil in a bid to foster efficiency and a healthy work-life balance.



Priti Suri
Founder and
Managing Partner
PSA

Nobody scores brownie points by staying late. If people waste time in the day and are inefficient, then they stay late to cover it up. I actually discourage that

COMPANIES

COMPANY	EQUAL PAY	FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS	LATE NIGHT TRANSPORT	POSH POLICY*	GENDER NEUTRAL POSH POLICY	PATERNITY LEAVE	CRÈCHE	FACILITIES FOR NEW MOTHERS
Aon Hewitt	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✓	N/A
Barclays	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A
Elevor Equity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✗	✓
IndiGo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (4 days)	✓	✓
Jet Airways	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Jones Lang LaSalle	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (5-14 days)	✓	✓
Lex Connect Consulting	✓	✓	✗ (Not needed)	✓ (Policy being finalized)	✓ (Policy being finalized)	✓ (5 days, more if needed)	✗	✗ (Not needed)
Marriott	✓	✓ (Case-by-case basis)	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Reliance Life Sciences	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (5 days)	✓ (At Dhirubhai Ambani Life Sciences Centre)	✓
Standard Chartered	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (14 days)	✓	N/A

*PoSH (prevention of sexual harassment)

“[DGS] has a working culture of an ‘early start and an early finish,’” says partner Ameeta Verma Duggal. “We encourage our staff to finish work at a reasonable hour so [they] have time for themselves and their families.” Priti Suri, the founder and managing partner of PSA, says: “Nobody scores brownie points by staying late. If people waste time in the day and are inefficient, then they stay late to cover it up. I actually discourage that.”

PRESSURES OF PARENTHOOD

Maternity leave was not covered in our table since the law states that women working in the organized sector are entitled to 26 weeks (up from the previous 12 weeks) of paid leave as of March 2017. The law applies to companies employing 10 or more people. Women are entitled to 26 weeks of paid leave for their first two children with only 12 weeks of paid leave permitted for the third child. The law puts India ahead of Japan, the US and France in terms of time off for new mothers.

Paternity leave, by contrast, is not mandatory by law. Some law firms don’t offer fathers any paid leave, meaning male employees must clip days from their annual leave to be present for the birth of their child and during the first few weeks of infancy. Other firms say the need hasn’t arisen, but that they would grant paid leave when necessary.

Firms that grant paternity leave offer new fathers between two and 30 days of paid leave. Trilegal also grants paternity leave in the case of adoption and surrogacy, with fathers able to claim up to 12 weeks of paid leave from the date the child is brought home. Khaitan & Co generally offers 14 days of paternity leave, however, single fathers can take 30 days of paid leave from the date on which a child is brought home following surrogacy or adoption.

Paternity leave and support for fathers have important implications for a woman’s career. If fathers can’t help out for very long and there’s a lack of family support, women are easily nudged towards career breaks for at least three to four years until their child can be sent off to school. Although in India, mothers are largely responsible

for taking time off work to look after newborns, young fathers are increasingly expressing a strong desire to be involved in their child's upbringing and perhaps would happily claim a longer period of leave if this were possible and more culturally accepted.

The law also states that companies with more than 50 employees must set up day care facilities for working mothers.

"IndiGo was the first airline in India to open a day care centre for its operating team members at Delhi Airport," says Mehra. Employees can bring children between the ages of six months and six years to the centre on a monthly, weekly, daily or half-day basis depending on their needs.

Vutts & Associates was excited to report that it was building a crèche. "This was one of the considerations for us moving to a new and bigger office," says partner Vaibhav Vutts.

Phoenix Legal, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co, Khaitan & Co and J Sagar Associates all offer a crèche set-up that employees can use. Other firms such as Dhir & Dhir, Trilegal, Fidus Law Chambers and companies like Elevar Equity, IndiGo, Reliance Life

Priya Mehra

General Counsel, IndiGo

IndiGo was the first airline in India to open a day care centre for its operating team members at Delhi Airport

inttl advocare

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS & ATTORNEYS

INTTL ADVOCARE was established in 1991 by Hemant Singh, Managing and Founder Partner as well as a leading IPR lawyer based at New Delhi with branch office at Mumbai. Hemant Singh has handled over 2100 IP litigation cases on various subjects such as trademarks, copyrights, industrial designs, patents etc. The firm has been involved in several landmark judgments delivered by Indian Courts in the field of IP. The firm's team comprises 45 professionals and 40 technical/paralegal/secretarial staff providing effective IPR prosecution and enforcement for their clients in India.

INTTL ADVOCARE has a multi-jurisdictional practice in India, handling IP litigation and prosecution on all India basis and is one of the few IP law firms in India having significant expertise and experience in IP prosecution, enforcement and custom complaints as part of a broad spectrum of professional services in the fields of trademarks, copyright, industrial designs, patents, domain names and cyber squatting, geographical indications, traditional knowledge, unfair trade practices, unfair competition, consumer protection laws, right of privacy and publicity, corporate laws, commercial documentation, foreign collaborations, transfer of technology agreement and franchising, strategizing, IP protection, trade secrets, know-how and breach of confidence, technical collaboration etc.

INTTL ADVOCARE has had the privilege of representing some of the biggest and leading brands in the industry including but not limited to Foods and Beverages, Liquor, Garments, Cosmetics, FMCG, Fashion Accessories, Computer Software, Telecommunication, Media, Electronics, Telemarketing Industry, Pharmaceuticals, Automobiles, Biotechnology etc.



inttl advocare

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS & ATTORNEYS

Head Office: Express Trade Tower, B-36, Sector - 132, Noida Expressway, Noida 201303, NCR Delhi, India

Delhi Office: F - 252, Western Avenue, Sainik Farms, New Delhi 110 062, India

Mumbai Office: 803, 8th Floor "Arcadia", 195 Nariman Point, Mumbai 400021, India

Email: ipcare@inttladvocare.com

Website: www.inttladvocare.com

Sciences, Marriott and Jones Lang LaSalle have dedicated rooms for breastfeeding mothers.

The law firms table shows a number of firms lacking in crèche facilities and spaces designed for nursing mothers. However, there are several reasons for this. Small boutique firms simply don't have the space for such facilities. Others say employees don't require a crèche or a private room for breastfeeding, but that they would happily make arrangements if there was a demand. A few firms and companies such as Jet Airways report that they had considered setting up designated areas for toddlers and nursing mothers, but had yet to implement these plans.

Fidus says it plans to build a crèche once the firm expands. For the moment, it provides a recreation room and a pet-friendly policy so employees can bring their pets to work. Lex Connect Consulting does not have a crèche, but says it has a comfortable room where parents can leave their children for a few hours while they work. LEXport is lucky to have an existing crèche on the ground floor of its building, SS Rana & Co has a tie-up with a day care facility close to its

office and Hammurabi & Solomon gives employees an allowance to use external crèche facilities and the option to coordinate their work to match the crèche's timings.

EXERCISING FLEXIBILITY

Most law firms have become savvy over the years about introducing flexible working arrangements for women lawyers, particularly those with young families. The aim is not just to showcase gender sensitivity, but to retain talented women who can progress up the career ladder.

Phoenix Legal provides the option of a "flexi-career", a "women lawyer-oriented" programme designed to consider the growth opportunities which women lawyers forgo because of family and societal obligations. Women lawyers are supported in taking sabbaticals for higher education during the course of employment and those struggling to cope following maternity leave can opt to work from home for more than a year. "Gender diversity helps the firm to build excellent teams by kindling intellectual inquisitiveness, nurturing

LexOrbis | INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ATTORNEYS

NEW DELHI • MUMBAI • BENGALURU

www.lexorbis.com / mail@lexorbis.com / T: +91 11 2371 6565 follow us on

friendly debate and providing complementary skill sets ...” says Akanksha Bisen, the firm’s practice development manager. “It also enhances good communication, empathy, respect for colleagues and a culture of constant learning.”

Link Legal India Law Services has a “phase back to work” programme, which allows women flexible and part-time options with a reduced number of hours after the end of maternity leave. This is to help new mothers with their transition back to work. “We also allow work from home in scenarios where ... it may not be feasible for the new mother to travel to and from the office for a part-time engagement,” says Kanika Soni, a business development executive at the firm.

Srinath Sridevan, a partner at HSB Partners in Chennai, says the firm is “very supportive of a young mother’s needs” despite not having a crèche. HSB permits new mothers to work on a “flexi-time basis” for six to nine months after the delivery date, until they feel their child can be left with another caregiver.

To assist female crew returning from maternity leave, Jet Airways

gives women the choice to operate only domestic-turnaround flights for six months. “This option ensures the smooth reintegration of women returning to the workplace after leave,” says Kumar.

Lex Connect Consulting is perhaps one of the few companies that offer flexible work arrangements to men. Men are entitled to five days of paternity leave, but vice-president of legal Neelima Ramnath says the company would permit working from home and flexible hours if necessary. “We would be happy to allow the new father every flexibility to ensure that he has things settled on the family front before having to worry about resuming work full time,” she says. “Our philosophy is that work needs to be done, [but] how one manages to achieve it can be personally driven.”

SKS Law Associates even permits employees to work from home when their children have exams, provided there are no pending deadlines to meet.

At PSA flexible arrangements are not encouraged, as Suri believes they can negatively impact work. However, the firm is conscious of different needs and, in some cases, has permitted extended time

“It’s hard to think of areas where Phoenix Legal can improve.

The firm is better than nearly all legal firms...”

-Asia Law Profiles



PHOENIX LEGAL

Phoenix Legal is a full service Indian law firm offering transactional, regulatory, advisory, dispute resolution and tax services. The firm advises a diverse clientele including domestic and international companies, banks and financial institutions, funds, promoter groups and public sector undertakings. Phoenix Legal was formed in 2008 and now has 16 Partners and 75 lawyers in its three offices (New Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai) making it one of the fastest growing law firms of the country.

What distinguishes the firm from its peers is the approach which is:

- ◆ **High Degree of Partner Involvement and Availability** – We assure to our clients, partner involvement in all deals and transactions, at all times.
- ◆ **High Quality Legal Advice** – We deliver services of the highest quality, which are capable of meeting the most exacting standards.
- ◆ **Availability and Responsiveness** – We are proactive in our approach and are available to our clients at all times.
- ◆ **Legal Research and Analysis Based Advisory** – While we do keep abreast of market practices applicable to legal interpretation, they are adopted and recommended only if they are supported by prevailing legal and regulatory framework.

“Phoenix Legal continues to outperform the top 40 in client satisfaction scores...”

-2017 Indian Law Firm Ranking and Report by RSG Consulting

NEW DELHI

1st, 2nd & 3rd Floor, 254,
Okhla Industrial Estate,
Phase III, New Delhi 110 020
T +91 (0) 11 4983 0000
F +91 (0) 11 4983 0099
E delhi@phoenixlegal.in

MUMBAI

Vaswani Mansion,
Office No. 17 & 18, Third Floor,
120 Dinshaw Vachha Road,
Churchgate, Mumbai - 400 020
T +91 (0) 22 4340 8500
F +91 (0) 22 4340 8501
E mumbai@phoenixlegal.in

CHENNAI

Seethakathi Business Center,
9th Floor Office Number 2B, #584-590,
Anna Salai, Chennai-600006
T +91 (0)44 2829 4525
E chennai@phoenixlegal.in

Website: www.phoenixlegal.in

away from the office: (1) where women have had babies and needed more time (five to eight months) post-delivery; (2) when other family members had to confront illness and the primary caregivers were working at PSA; and (3) when family exigencies permitted only part-time work. “In all such situations, we ensured that those positions were kept open for our lawyers,” says Suri.

Lall & Sethi, where three out of four partners are female, is the only firm among all the respondents that prohibits its lawyers working from home except in rare cases. This is “due to the sensitive and confidential nature of our client work”, says COO Mayank Arya.

“The legal profession, with its erratic work schedule and time-sensitive projects can become challenging,” says Sreechith S, the HR manager at IndusLaw. “The firm constantly endeavours to encourage women colleagues to reach their full potential while allowing them to balance their non-work requirements.” But he admits this places a demand on women and their colleagues and notes the fine balancing act that is required to give women flexibility while ensuring they remain respected by clients and colleagues.

TACKLING HARASSMENT

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, also known as the “POSH Act”, jolted companies into taking action to prevent and address harassment in the workplace. Many agree that the law exists as a deterrent and works to dissuade occurrences of sexual harassment at work.

Law firms, too, have drawn up anti-harassment policies, not just for women, but for all employees. Some say these were in place long before the law was enforced.

Suri says harassment of any sort, whether verbal, physical or visual, is not tolerated at her firm. “The policy highlights the responsibility of members at the workplace, including when team members travel for work.”

Dhir & Dhir Associates has worked to uphold discipline and respect by laying down a code of conduct which, among other things, mandates employees to address their colleagues formally, maintain a healthy distance, refrain from using nicknames, and avoid casual conversations or “loose talk”.

“There is a deep and profound sense of respect for women at Jones Lang LaSalle,” says assistant general counsel Alpana Srivastava. “Employees are constantly provided with ethics training to sensitize them with regards to their behaviour towards female colleagues.”

MD&T Partners has an internal “policy on conduct at the workplace” that covers both sexual harassment and workplace harassment, irrespective of gender. “The policy clearly sets out that harassment in any form or manner will not be tolerated by the firm,” says partner Sandhya PV. The firm has a simple, confidential internal redressal mechanism and all new associates and employees are made aware of the policy in detail.

Remfry & Sagar’s harassment policy does not explicitly include harassment experienced by men, however, the firm says its “strong culture of equality” means any incident of harassment “will invite stringent action”. Similarly, SS Rana & Co says it has other



anti-discrimination policies in place that male employees can use to lodge complaints or discuss grievances.

Kanga & Co is currently amending its sexual harassment policy. Partner Preeti Mehta says it will apply “in the near future to both men and women”. SiebenIP does not have a sexual harassment policy, but plans to introduce one.

PLR Chambers also does not have a written sexual harassment policy in place but says it has a “no-tolerance approach to any sexual harassment in the workplace, whether experienced by men or by women”. The firm has not received any complaints of this nature since its launch in 2013, and says that any raised in the future will be dealt with “in the severest of administrative measures and legal/criminal proceedings”.

Little & Co is in a similar position without a written policy. But managing partner Jayendra Kapadia says, “We have a strong culture in which any employee can approach the administrator of the firm and express his or her grievance. The firm then makes inquiries into the complaint and takes appropriate action.”

FOSTERING CULTURE OF RESPECT

Although women have made giant leaps in all spheres of the legal community, there is still work to be done. “Old habits die hard,” says Lucy Rana, managing associate at SS Rana & Co. “Despite earning their place in the workforce, women are still faced with disadvantages, as compared to men.” Rana refers to issues such as marginalization by male colleagues who are not committed to equality and respect for women in the workplace, and pressure on women to work twice as hard as men for the same recognition.

In the field of law, this manifests in a variety of ways. For example, the long working hours and late nights associated with litigation can hamper a woman’s career progression if she also juggles family commitments; women working flexible hours may be perceived negatively; and sometimes women are forced into conventional roles and struggle to command respect as authority figures.

“One challenge is that male staff such as court clerks have problems taking instructions from women,” says Vutts. “This could largely be because of [a culture of] patriarchy. However, over a period of time, we have seen this reducing, especially when the male staff realize that such behaviour is not entertained and that we are all working together as a team with each person playing their part irrespective of gender.”

Sridevan recounts one or two occasions when members of his firm patronized paralegal staff. “We have taken swift remedial action in each case,” he says. “The treatment that junior male employees give to their female peers is largely driven by how they perceive the senior male employees treating their peers,” adds Sridevan. “Female lawyers are lawyers first and foremost.”

But challenges aren’t always about a clash between men and women. “Interestingly, our biggest challenge comes from women themselves,” says Poonam Harjani, a partner at Nitya Tax Associates. “Any gender-based beneficial treatment being considered for women staff is often seen as gender bias, by women themselves.” The firm considered introducing a fixed time for women to leave the office – purely for safety reasons – but this was rejected by female employees who considered it as unequal treatment. “This is indeed a tricky situation for us to crack,” says Harjani.

Several lawyers say cultivating respect for women in the workplace has become easier on account of the rise of women in key leadership positions. “With advancing times, it is no longer a challenge to ensure a culture of respect towards women, especially when senior management is run by women,” says Ranjana Roy Gawai, the managing partner at RRG & Associates.



Ranjana Roy Gawai
Managing Partner
RRG & Associates

With advancing times, it is no longer a challenge to ensure a culture of respect towards women, especially when senior management is run by women



Vaibhav Vutts
Partner
Vutts & Associates

One challenge is that male staff such as court clerks have problems taking instructions from women

“One of the biggest factors in developing a culture of respect at INTTL Advocare is that there has always been strong female leadership,” says Mamta Jha, head of the firm’s litigation department, which is typically a male-dominated practice. Jha says women make up the majority of her team, having “demonstrated exceptional merit” and have been rewarded for it.

J Sagar Associates believes its “fair and egalitarian” work ethos has resulted in an absence of challenges in ensuring a “women-friendly culture”. Gender has nothing to do with it according to joint managing partners Dina Wadia and Shivpriya Nanda, however, they say having two women at the top reinforces this culture.

Indeed, a number of India’s corporate law firms and companies benefit from female leadership. AZB & Partners, J Sagar Associates, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co, Remfry & Sagar, RRG & Associates, Fidus Law Chambers, JusContractus, PSA, DGS Associates, DMD Advocates, ZeusIP and SKS Law Associates are examples of firms led by female managing partners.

Gopa Bhardwaz, a law officer at Aon Hewitt, explains, much also depends on fostering respect across class and community divisions. “Being from the northeast of India and having worked at various organizations, I can proudly say Aon is one of the best places to work for a lady. The legal team has a mix of people from differing locations and with varying religious beliefs, but we all reflect a spirit of oneness.”

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

WOMEN LAWYERS

Trilegal COO Sabiana Anandaraj says the firm has been working towards building an environment to tackle potential issues in the leadership pipeline, as far as women are concerned. “We have seen a greater increase in the number of our women partners – a 67% rise over the last year. Having said that, we recognize the ratio between men and women leaders, which today stands at 87.5:12.5 can further be improved.” The firm recognizes the importance of building a culture to increase participation of women in leadership roles. “We are now seeing ... a real sense of urgency to adopt best practices that

nurture women through the ranks to ensure gender diversity flows right to the top,” says Anandaraj.

Vineetha MG recalls that when she joined the legal profession, women had already made a place for themselves. “In fact,” she says, “I was fortunate to work with some of the best women lawyers and super achievers! In some rare instances, male clients [can be a] bit self-conscious when dealing with a woman. With time though, this reduces since at the end of the day, it is the quality of legal services provided that is important.” ▲

LAW FIRMS

LAW FIRM	EQUAL PAY	FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS	LATE NIGHT TRANSPORT	POSH POLICY*	GENDER NEUTRAL POSH POLICY	PATERNITY LEAVE	CRÈCHE	FACILITIES FOR NEW MOTHERS
Advaita Legal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (10 days)	✗ Not needed	✗ Not needed
Advaya Legal	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓ (14 days)	✗ Not needed	✗ Not needed
ALMT Legal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (7 days)	✗	✓
Altacit Global	✓	✓	✗ (Not needed, don't work beyond 6pm)	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Ashok Dhingra Associates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗ Not needed
Atlas Partners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (7 days)	✗	✗ Not needed
Bhasin & Co	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓ (7 days)	✗	✗ Not needed
DGS Associates	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	Available upon request	✗	✓ Set up when needed
Dhir & Dhir Associates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (7 days)	✗	✓
DMD Advocates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ As much as required	✗	✗ Not needed
EZY Laws	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
Fidus Law Chambers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (14 days)	✗	✓
Hammurabi & Solomon	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓ (5-15 days)	✗	✗

*PoSH (prevention of sexual harassment)

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

WOMEN LAWYERS

LAW FIRM	EQUAL PAY	FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS	LATE NIGHT TRANSPORT	POSH POLICY	GENDER NEUTRAL POSH POLICY	PATERNITY LEAVE	CRÈCHE	FACILITIES FOR NEW MOTHERS
HSB Partners	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
IndusLaw	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (7 days)	✗	✓ Set up when needed
INTTL Advocare	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (7 days)	✗	✗ Not needed
J Sagar Associates	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗ Not needed
JusContractus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗ Not needed	✗ Not needed	✗	✓ Set up when needed
Kachwaha & Partners	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Kanga & Co	✓	✓	✗	✓ (Currently being amended)	✓ (Currently being amended)	Available upon request	✗	✗ Not needed
Khaitan & Co	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (14 days)	✓	✓
Lall & Sethi	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓ (14 days)	✗	✗ Not needed
Legalogic Consulting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓ (3 days)	✗	✓
LEXport	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓ (3 days)	✗ (Crèche on ground floor of building)	✗ Not needed
Link Legal India Law Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (10 days)	✗	✗ Not needed
Little & Co	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Luthra & Luthra	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (3 days)	✗	✗
MD&T Partners	✓	✓	✓ (Case-by-case basis)	✓	✓	✗ (Case-by-case basis)	✗	✗ Not needed
Nehru & Co	✓	✓	✗ (Not needed)	✗	✗	✗ Not needed	✗ Not needed	✗ Not needed
Nitya Tax Associates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓ (7 days)	✗ Not needed	✗ Not needed
Phoenix Legal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (7 days)	✓ Set up when needed	✓ Set up when needed

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

WOMEN LAWYERS

LAW FIRM	EQUAL PAY	FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS	LATE NIGHT TRANSPORT	POSH POLICY	GENDER NEUTRAL POSH POLICY	PATERNITY LEAVE	CRÈCHE	FACILITIES FOR NEW MOTHERS
PLR Chambers	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗ Not needed	✗ Not needed	✗ Not needed
PSA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗ Not needed
Remfry & Sagar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗ Not needed
RRG & Associates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓ (21 days)	✗	✓
Samvad Partners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (21 days)	✗	✓
Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (7 days)	✓	✗ Not needed
SiebenIP	✓	✓	✗ Not needed	✗	✗	✗ Not needed	✗ Not needed	✗ Not needed
SKS Law Associates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Available upon request	✗	✗
Spice Route Legal	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗ Not needed
SS Rana & Co	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓ (2 days)	✗ (Tie-up with daycare facility)	✓
The Legist	✓	✓	✗ Not needed as no late night work	✓	✓	✓ (Based on individual needs)	✗	✗ Not needed
TDT Legal	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓ (Based on individual needs)	✓ Set up when needed	✓
Trilegal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (5 days)	✗ Not needed	✓
United Maritime Law Chambers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗ Not needed
Vohra & Vohra	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗ Not needed	✗ Not needed	✗ Not needed
Vutts & Associates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (15-30 days)	✓	✓
ZeusIP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (14 days)	✗	✓ Set up when needed