WOMEN ON BOARDS IN INDIA

NUMBERS, COMPOSITIONS, EXPERIENCES AND INCLUSION OF WOMEN DIRECTORS

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Study conducted under the support and sponsorship of

FICCI Women on Corporate Boards Mentorship Program

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INDEX

FOREWORD

Prof. Errol D'Souza
DIRECTOR
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This notable report brings out important details associated with female directors on boards. They are younger than male directors by about eight years and retire or leave about 3.2 years earlier to male directors. Unsurprisingly, they are being paid less than their male counterparts – approximately 55 per cent less. On committees of the board, they are more likely to serve as chairpersons of human relations ones – such as Grievance and CSR and are underrepresented in Audit and Risk Management committees.

It is apparent that there are too few female role models for women to follow. Peer role models, it is well known, do engender states of empowerment and encourages women to not be overheard and to speak up at meetings, to ask for a seat at the table, to negotiate fairer compensation, and to not have their suggestions and plans usurped by others. This suggests the need for women to have access to forums, where they can find peer role models and have career discussions. Usually, this idea is associated with providing contacts with mentors. But, given the state of affairs now, it is about time that the support is in the form of "champions" who promulgate the word about a woman's abilities, rather than an access to mentors to play a more advisory role.

We need to recognize too that those women who do emerge as directors on boards may attract outsized attention due to their rarity in such positions. This can result in a sort of halo effect where they are glamourized and subjected to attention that is the opposite of discrimination. Scrutiny of women in business should be no more or no less than that applied to their male colleagues. We have had an Elizabeth Holmes, the youngest female self-made billionaire, who created Theranos and who was later exposed as a sham. Or Birgitte Bonnesen, who became the first female chief executive of a big European bank – Swedbank and was later dismissed for her involvement in a € 135 bn. money-laundering scandal.

I hope this path-breaking study leads to more work by others. It would be good to know, for instance, from an examination of board minutes whether women are relatively more likely to challenge management and to relate that to firm performance. I would encourage board members of organizations in India to introspect after taking a serious look at the contents of this study, and to find ways to include more women on boards, and to ensure that they nurture this representation not just for symbolic purposes.

FOREWORD

Arun Duggal

Co-Founder

FICCI Women on Corporate Boards Mentorship Program

It gives me great pleasure to present the report on 'Women on Boards in India: Numbers, Composition, Experiences and Inclusion of Women Directors'. This detailed study analyses the response of corporate India to the regulatory push towards gender diversity, not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of extent and nature of involvement of women directors on their boards. The report also outlines experiences of women directors so far – whether they have been able to enrich the boards they serve on, challenges they have faced and has the process been fulfilling vis-à-vis their expectations.

The study was undertaken under the aegis of FICCI's Women on Corporate Boards Mentorship Program, which has been focussed on enhancing the gender balance and increasing the efficiency of corporate boards. In addition to undertaking mentorship programs for high potential women professionals and adding to the pool of competent women directors, we were also keen to understand if companies have been able to realize the potential of gender diversity as an actual driver of change and efficiency.

I am grateful to Dr Neharika Vohra, Professor, Organizational Behaviour, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad for undertaking this study and presenting us with insights on how organizations can truly benefit from diversity at the board level.

I do hope you would find the suggestions meaningful and join us in our endeavour to make Indian workplaces truly inclusive.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

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In the face of unequal representation of women in the workforce at all levels, yawning pay gap among genders, lower percentages of women in high paying and male dominated jobs, in India and the rest of the world any attempts to bridge such inequality is welcome. In a bold step the notification dated 1 April 2013 under Section 149(1)(b) of the revised Companies Act, 2013, listed companies and public limited firms beyond a certain size were mandated to have at least one woman as a member of its Board of Directors by 1 April 2015. Additionally, based on the recommendations of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)'s Committee on Corporate Governance chaired by Uday Kotak, SEBI mandated that at least one woman independent director should be appointed in the top 500 National Stock Exchange (NSE)-listed firms by 1 April 2019 and in the top 1,000 listed entities by 1 April 2020.

On the one hand, such mandates have paved the way for India to become one of the first among developing countries to increase women's representation on management boards. On the other, it has given rise to a fair bit of speculation on whether Corporate India would be able to meet the mandate; whether there are enough qualified women to fill the positions; and whether companies will fill these positions to actually meet the purpose it was meant for.

In the context that the mandate has been in effect for the last five years, this study, based on secondary and primary data, undertook to describe the profile of women on boards—their age, education, professional experience, numbers, status on boards (independent vs non-independent), representation in committees etc. post the mandate. Comparisons were made with the men directors. Just having women on the boards would not be sufficient to make a difference. Experience of inclusion and climate of trust has been shown to enhance the contribution of team members. Thus the experiences of women currently serving on the boards were analysed to present what factors facilitated the women directors to contribute towards their roles and the extent to which their expectations were met.

I hope the results of this study will help corporate leaders, regulatory bodies, and researchers in the field to think of implications of how the mandate has impacted board composition, what might be the next regulatory changes, and further actions to be taken by corporates, to inch towards equality among men and women in the spheres of leadership and work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research and practice over the last two decades have established beyond a doubt, the impact that diversity of workforce has on productivity and profitability. In line with various countries taking the initiative to have more women in senior leadership positions, India was the first developing country to announce mandates for Women on Boards in 2013 and reinforce it in 2019.

This gave rise to speculations on adequate availability of qualified and experienced women and also on the companies not following the mandate in spirit by merely selecting women related to the men on the board already or to the company owners to fill quotas. It was also feared this would lead to attenuation of corporate governance.

Using both secondary and primary data, this study was aimed at understanding the response of the industry, in terms of extent and nature of involvement of women directors in boards and the experiences of women directors on degree of expectations met, and enablers and challenges faced in contributing to the boards. PRIME Database, with its repository of 1944 NSE-listed companies, was the source for secondary data for all NSE-listed companies. Nature of directorship (non-independent vs independent), number of boards served on, age profile, educational background, work experience, committees served on, and remuneration received were analysed for the listed directors. Primary data from 192 women directors was collected through a survey of women directors on boards, using multiple channels (e-mails, scanned questionnaire, post etc.). Comparisons were made with the men directors on several dimensions to put the data in perspective.

A NUANCED LOOK AT THE RESULTS REVEALS THAT, THOUGH THE MANDATE TO INCREASE WOMEN ONBOARDS HAS NOT ACHIEVED A RESOUNDING SUCCESS IN BRINGING DIVERSITY TO CORPORATE BOARDS IN INDIA, IT HAS NOT BEEN A DISMAL PICTURE EITHER.

Primary data from 192 women directors

Secondary data of all NSE listed companies

The following are the highlights from our analysis:

Post-mandate trends in appointment

The representation of women on boards worldwide has shown increases when it is mandated or special efforts are made to enhance the number of women on boards.

Overall, the number of women directors has increased post the introduction of the mandate by the Companies Act of 2013, Section 149 (1) in 2013.

A majority of NSE-listed companies (73%) have appointed the minimum mandated requirement of at least one woman director. The average number of women on boards is **1.03**.

About 58% of the women are independent directors and 42% are non-independent directors. Highly educated women are joining the boards – 51% of all women directors hold a master's degree and above and 38% hold bachelor's degrees.

Inorganic growth of women on boards

The steepest growth of 54.9% in women directorship occurred between 2014 (8.2%) and 2015 (12.7%).

In the financial year 2015, an unprecedented number of women directors (497) were inducted into NSE-listed company boards. A spike in the number of same women hired on multiple boards on or near critical dates was observed, where 49 women were hired on 31st March 2015 (the last date of the mandate) and 39 women were hired on 1 April 2019.

Only 76 companies (4.3%) have appointed three or more women directors, while almost 91% of the listed companies have more than 3 men directors.

NIFTY 50 companies have often hired the same women to their boards; Fourteen women hold 5–6 directorship positions across NSE-listed companies; seven women hold seven directorship positions each.

Evidence of skirting the mandate

Of the women who served on more than one board showed 40% of the women directors received their second appointments within six months of the earlier appointment.

Starkly, 15% of the appointments on the next board were made in less than a month of the earlier appointment.

58%
INDEPENDENT WOMEN DIRECTORS

42%
NON-DEPENDENT WOMEN DIRECTORS

54.9%
GROWTH IN WOMEN DIRECTORSHIP BETWEEN 2014 AND 2015

More than 52% of women hired on boards of more than one company less than one month apart were for directorship of a related company.

Relatively younger women (less than 40 years old) are being hired to be on the board. Almost half of these young women were hired as independent directors.

Inequality with men's representation

The number of women directors who hold chairperson roles of the boards is very small. Only 0.7% of independent women directors occupy chairperson roles.

Women's representation in leadership positions in critical committees (such as Audit and Risk Management Committees and Nomination, Remuneration & Compensation) is even lower as compared to their presence on boards (women chair less than 8% of the committees while there are 16.8% women on boards).

Women directors fare poorly on the compensation front (on an average half of what men receive). Functional/performance-linked components like salary and commissions awarded to women are 60% lower than what men receive. The number of share units awarded to female board members is also 52% lower than that of men board members.

The data shows that women join younger, serve for lesser years, and retire younger as compared to men (almost 40% shorter tenure than men). Preoccupation and personal reasons have been cited as the primary reason for discontinuation of directorship by women.

Biases at the industry level

In industries such as energy (13%), power (13%), chemical industries (14%), women's representation on boards was low. Women were better represented in industries such as trading (21%), media & entertainment (20%) and services (19%).

In terms of educational qualifications, the more common disciplines for women directors are commerce, management, and administration, followed by liberal arts. Women with technical and science backgrounds do not rise to the top positions, confirming the worldwide finding that there are fewer women that enter and remain in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

The study reveals that the speculation that implementation of the mandate weakens the board is does not hold ground. However, there isn't much cause for celebration either. The primary data and analysis of secondary data suggest that if organizations want to truly benefit from diversity at the board level, they need to move beyond tokenism and appoint more than one professionally qualified woman as directors and entrust them with meaningful leadership roles within the boards and empower them to perform. Widening the search for women directors, providing equal remuneration, mindfully creating an environment that enables equal participation are some of the steps corporates can take towards bringing in more women and ensuring that they stay long enough to deliver value.

73%

OF COMPANIES HAVE APPOINTED ONLY THE MINIMUM MANDATED REQUIREMENT

THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF WOMEN ON BOARDS IS **1.03**

2015, AN UNPRECEDENTED NUMBER OF WOMEN DIRECTORS (497) WERE INDUCTED INTO NSE-LISTED COMPANY BOARDS

ONLY 76 COMPANIES (4.3%) HAVE APPOINTED THREE OR MORE WOMEN DIRECTORS, WHILE ALMOST 91% OF THE LISTED COMPANIES HAVE MORE THAN 3 MEN DIRECTORS

INTRODUCTION

As India moves to a $5-trillion economy, a foundation of strong corporate governance to foster public and investor confidence by ensuring proper risk management structures and providing stewardship to the management of the company becomes a top priority. Even as regulators, ombudspersons, and the market ecosystem monitor from a distance, the onus to maintain the corporate governance charter from close quarters lies with the Board of Directors. A 2018 Catalyst Report[1] states that diverse boards result in lesser frauds, fewer controversial decisions, and better ratings on corporate social responsibility. Women representation on boards was found to be positively related to accounting returns, monitoring, and involvement of the board in strategy in a meta analysis combining results from 140 studies[2].

A study based on a sample of 1,000 companies operating out of 12 countries showed that, on one hand average profitability of companies was higher by 43% with diverse boards and, on the other, companies with non-diverse boards showed 29% decrease in profitability.[3] Even though gender is not the only dimension of diversity that boards lack, the need to address gender diversity is seen as most urgent because of gross under representation of women when compared to overall gender ratio. In a 2015 report by McKinsey, it was shown that $28 trillion, or 26%, would be added to annual global GDP in 2025 if women participated to their full potential in the economy[4].

1 Catalyst (2018, August 1). Why Diversity and Inclusion Matter: Quick Take. https://www.catalyst.org/research/why-diversity-and-inclusion-matter

2 Cornine, P., Kris, B. (2015). Women on boards and firm financial performance: A meta analysis. Academy of Management Journal, 58, 1546-1571

3 Hunt, V., Yee, L., Prince, S., Dixon-Fryle, S. (2018, January). Delivering through Diversity. McKinsey & Company. https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/delivering-through-diversity

4 Woetzel, J., Manyika, J., Dobbs, R., Madgavkar, A., Ellingrud, K., Labaye, E., Devillard, S., Kutcher, E. & Krishnan, M. (2015, September). The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality Can Add $12 Trillion To Global Growth. McKinsey & Company.

In a response to the paucity of women in top management and the possibility of improving company performance and better protection of shareholder interests, various countries have taken initiatives to increase their numbers in senior management roles. Norway led the initiative by mandating 40% positions for women directors in 2003. Several countries followed suit and introduced regulatory requirements with penalties for maintaining a minimum threshold of women directors on corporate boards, or a mandate to furnish justifications in case of non-compliance. Some countries increased executive attention and monitoring of diversity on boards.[5]

Analysis of the number of women on boards from the top 20 world economies shows that mandates and/or executive attention have positively impacted the number of women directors **(Appendix A)** on boards over the last 10 years. The percentage of women board directors has increased from 10.4% in 2004 to 21.6% in 2018 and the top three countries with the highest number of women directors are those who had set aggressive targets (Corporate Women Directors International (CWDI) 2018 report).[6] As per this report, the top four regions in terms of women representation on boards are the Northern European countries, Western Europe, US and Canada, and Central Europe (35.6%, 23.6%, 20.9%, and 15.5%, respectively) and the lowest four regions are Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America, and Middle East (14.4%, 12.8%, 7.3%, and 0.9%, respectively).

Figure 1 shows the impact of mandates and/or executive attention on increased women representation in the top G20 countries' company boards. The data clearly shows that the increase in representation of women is correlated with increase in special attention to the issue either in the form of mandates or voluntary monitoring.

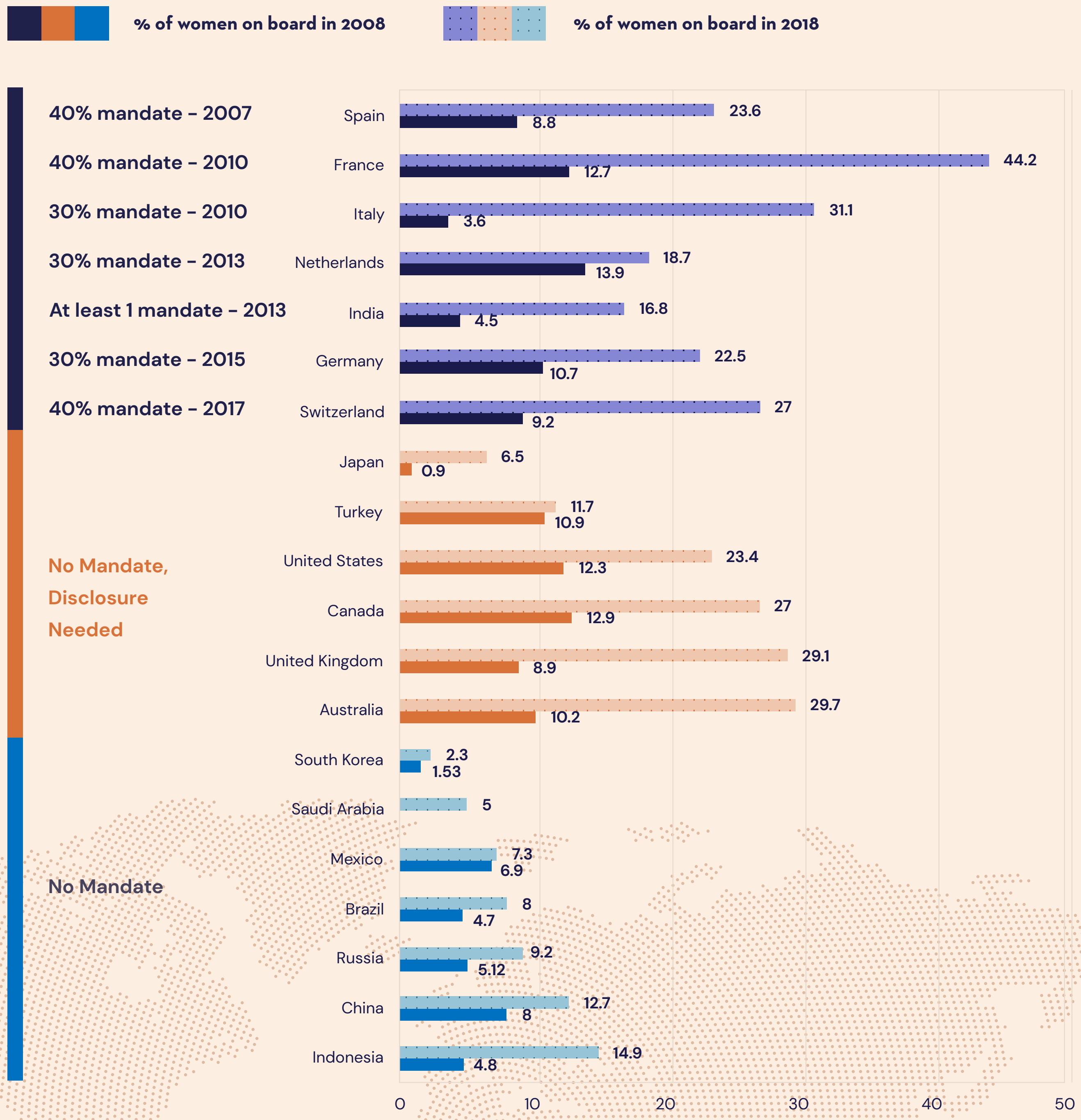
Though conservative when compared to global mandates, India was the first among developing countries to impose a quota for the number of women on boards.[7] The Companies Act of 2013, Section 149 (1) directed every listed company (except those having paid up equity share capital not exceeding ₹10 crores and net worth not exceeding ₹25 crores) and any public company having a paid up share capital of ₹100 crores or more, or, turnover of ₹300 crores, to have at least one woman director on its board by 1 April 2015. In May 2018, SEBI mandated the top 500 companies (in terms of market capitalization) to appoint an independent woman director by 1 April 2019.

[5] Sojo, V. E., Wood, R. E., Wood, S. A., & Wheeler, M. A. (2016). Reporting requirements, targets, and quotas for women in leadership. The Leadership Quarterly, 27(3), 519-536.

[6] Corporate Women Directors International (n.d.). 2018 CWDI Report: Women Board Directors of Fortune Global 200 Companies. Global Summit of Women. https://globewomen.org/CWDINet/index.php/2018-fortune-global-200-companies/

[7] Verma, P. (2018, November 15). India first developing country to have quota mandating at least one woman director on board of listed companies: Report. Economic Times. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/company/corporate-trends/india-first-developing-country-to-have-quota-mandating-at-least-one-woman-director-on-board-of-listed-companies-report/articleshow/66633533.cms?from=mdr

Figure 1 : Impact Of Mandate And/Or Supervision Over 10 Years In G20 Countries



Source: Compiled from various sources

The mandates in India gave rise to speculations on the adequate availability of qualified and experienced women, and whether the companies would follow the mandate in spirit or merely select women related to the men already present on the board or to the company owners, just to have quotas filled. Without empirical evidence, it is difficult to respond to these speculations. This study was designed to carry out an in-depth analysis of the impact of the Companies Act mandate on the number and composition of women on boards in terms of their profile and professional experience, nature of appointment, and tenure. On these dimensions, comparisons were made with the men directors to put the data in perspective. In addition, an attempt was made to understand the actual experiences of women directors including the extent to which their expectations were met and the key challenges faced by them.

Primary data was collected by a survey (**Appendix B**) sent out to all women directors on boards using multiple channels (e-mails, scanned questionnaire, post). This 10-minute survey consisted of five questions—means of appointment to the board; extent to which expectations of serving as a director were met; factors that enabled functioning as directors; challenges faced in fulfilling their responsibilities; and their interest in joining a community of women board members. **Appendix C** details the means of collecting primary data. Of the 192 responses received, 108 were independent directors, 53 were non-independent (of which, 8 held both independent and non-independent positions), and 31 chose not to reveal their name or status.

Secondary data was sourced mainly from the PRIME Database that has a repository of 1944 NSE-listed companies. Data on the nature of directorship (non-independent vs independent), number of boards served on, age profile, educational background, work experience, committees served on and remuneration received was analysed for the listed directors. Data sourced from the PRIME Database for 90% of the women directors was also cross-checked with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs website and the annual reports of listed companies.

The following pages present the study's findings along with insights and key recommendations to increase both diversity and impact of that diversity among Indian company boards.

THIS IS A UNIQUE STUDY - COMBINING PRIMARY DATA FROM 10 PERCENT WOMEN DIRECTORS SERVING ON BOARDS AND SECONDARY DATA OF ALL WOMEN AND MEN DIRECTORS OF NSE LISTED COMPANIES

FINDINGS

COMPOSITION

Numbers of women directors on boards

As of December 2019, of the total 11,251 directors, 1898 (16.9%) are women directors. **Figure 2a** reveals that a majority of companies (73%) listed on the NSE have appointed only the minimum regulatory requirement of one woman director. A mere 76 companies (4.3%) have appointed three or more women directors. Disturbingly, 24 companies listed on the NSE (1.3%) – of which eight are part of the NSE 500 list – have not yet appointed even one woman director.

Only five companies have five women directors on their boards (MSTC Ltd., GIC Housing Finance Ltd., Godrej Consumer Products Ltd., Godrej Agrovet Ltd., and Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Ltd.). This is even more stark when compared to companies with men directors (91% of companies have more than three men directors) and the most prevalent number of men directors in a company is five (see **Figure 2b**). About 6% of NSE-listed companies have more than 10 men directors.

Among the NIFTY 50 companies, 49 companies have 73 women directors occupying 192 directorship positions. Among these 73 women, Fourteen hold 5–6 directorship positions across NSE-listed companies, while seven hold seven directorship positions each.

Figure 2a : Companies' Count And Percentage Of Women On Their Board

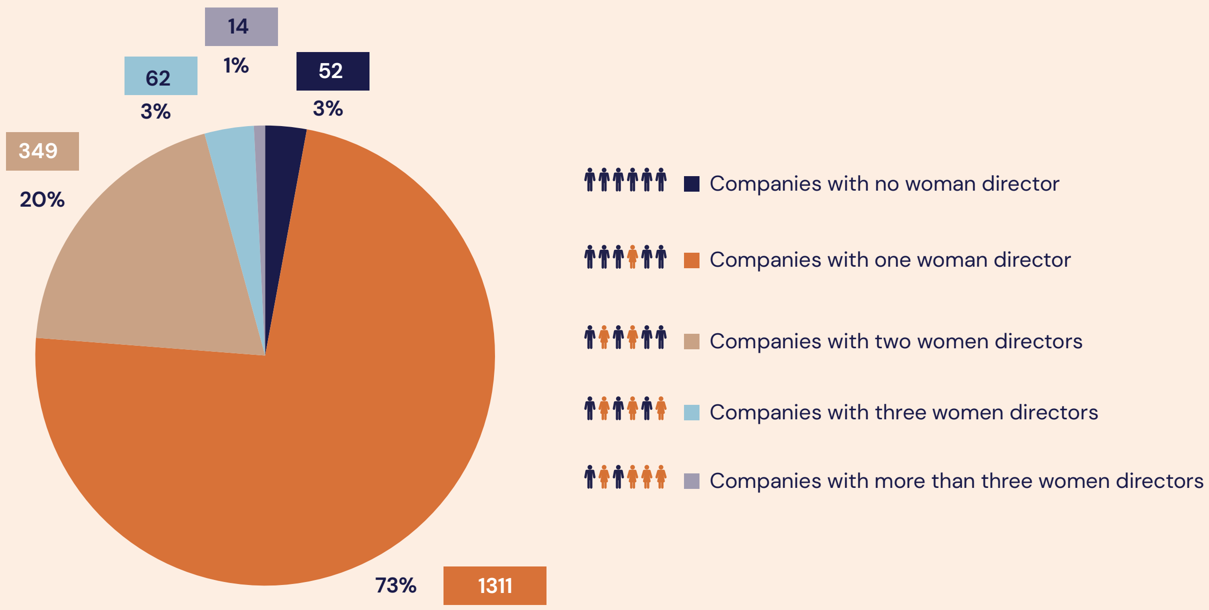
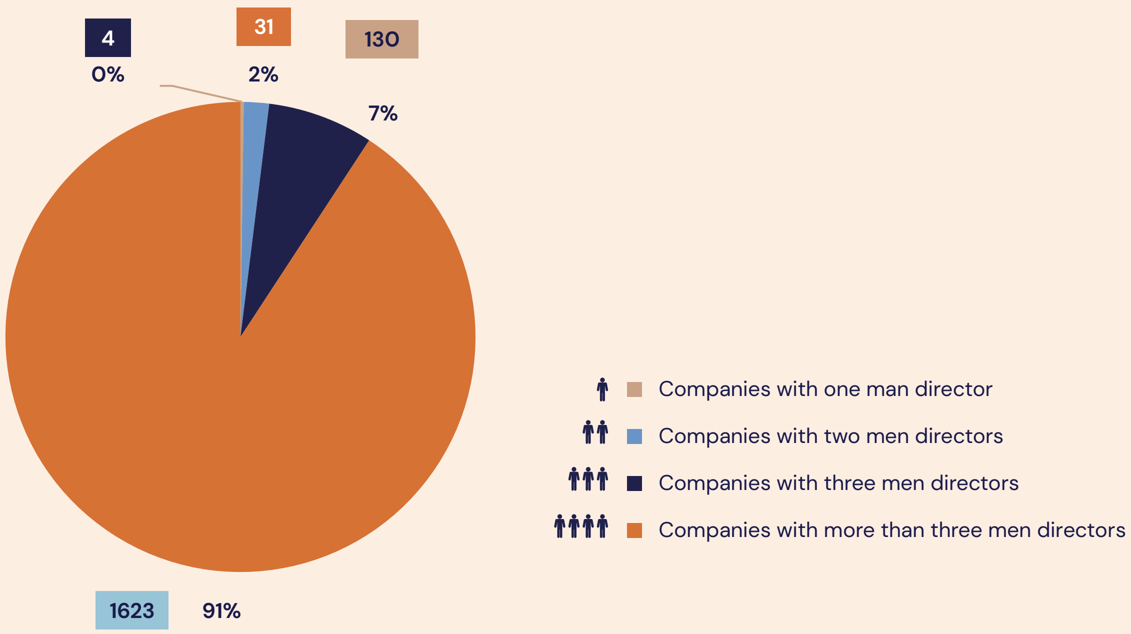


Figure 2b : Companies' Count And Percentage Of Men On Their Board



Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1788 companies listed on NSE as on March 2019

This phenomenon of the appointment of 'golden' shirts/skirts/sarees (men/women who are appointed as directors on several boards) does not augur well for corporate governance. While experienced directors may be able to contribute quickly and bring in diverse experience, the time available to them to oversee so many different companies may be limited.

There are 1311 (73%) companies that have only one woman, 425 (24%) that have two or more women, and 52 (3%) that have no women director on their boards (see **Figure 2a**). The comparison with numbers of men on the boards is stark (**Figure 2b**). The most prevalent number of men directors in a company is as high as five (seen in 21% of companies). This number goes well beyond ten in 6% of NSE-listed companies. The number of companies with only one man director drops as low as 0.2%.

Sparse representation of women on boards may lead to suboptimal contribution of those women owing to either hyper-visibility or invisibility.[8] Research shows that the critical number of a minority group that is required for making a significant contribution within a large group is three.[9] The board climate can perceptually change when the board composition is not tokenistic. The survey data of this study also indicated that the board climate (comprising perceptual factors such as feeling of being heard, valued in the group, and included in the decision-making processes, as shown in **Figure 24**) was seen as an enabler among women director respondents. Given that our data reveals that several companies have more than one woman on their boards (for example, NIFTY 50 companies have on an average 3.91 women on their boards), it provides an opportunity to study the participation levels of women directors in such boards as compared to those that have only one woman director.

COMPANIES THAT HAVE FIVE OR MORE WOMEN DIRECTORS ON THEIR BOARDS

MSTC Ltd.
GIC Housing Finance Ltd.
Godrej Consumer Products Ltd.
Godrej Agrovet Ltd
Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Ltd.

[8] Kramer, V. W., Konrad, A. M., Erkut, S., & Hooper, M. J. (2006). Critical mass on corporate boards: Why three or more women enhance governance (pp. 2-4). Wellesley, MA: Wellesley Center for Women.

[9] Konrad, A. M., Kramer, V., & Erkut, S. (2008). The impact of three or more women on corporate boards. Organizational Dynamics, 37(2), 145-164; Butler, S. R. (2013). A critical mass of women on the board of directors as critical influencers. Available at SSRN 2304828; Agarwal, A. (2018, February 28). India's 'One Woman Quota' on Board of Directors Fails to Bring About Gender Equality. Oxford Humans Right Hub. http://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/indias-one-woman-quota-on-board-of-directors-fails-to-bring-about-gender-equality/

Date of appointment of women on boards

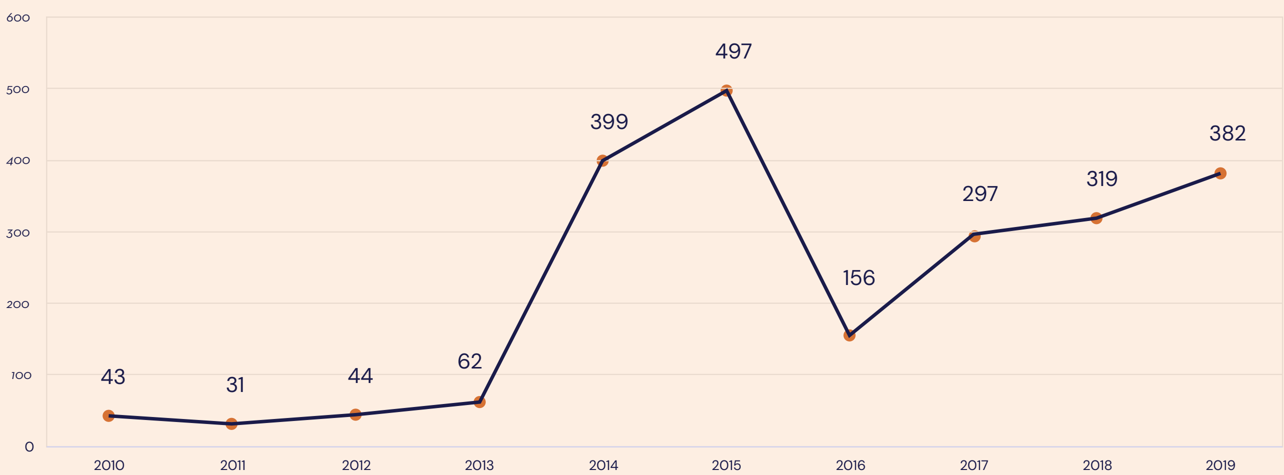
To investigate the response of corporates towards the mandate, hiring patterns by year, date of appointment, and gap between appointments of women directors on two or more boards were analysed in depth.

The year-wise appointments of women directors post the mandate is shown in **Figure 4**. During 2010–19, the percentage of women directorship in India grew at a CAGR of 23.6%, i.e. from 2.3% in 2010 to 20.2% in 2019. The steepest increase of 54.9% in women directorship occurred between 2014 (8.2%) and 2015 (12.7%). In FY 2015, an unprecedented number of women directors (497) were inducted into NSE-listed company boards. The number of appointments in 2014 and 2015 soared again in 2019 (**Figure 3**). Our data also shows that there is a spike in the number of same women hired on multiple boards on or near critical dates—at least 39 women were hired on 1st April 2019 and 49 women were hired on 31st March 2015 (the last dates of respective mandates) to more than one board (**Figure 4**).

The pattern shows that the majority of women directors were hired close to the last date for implementation.

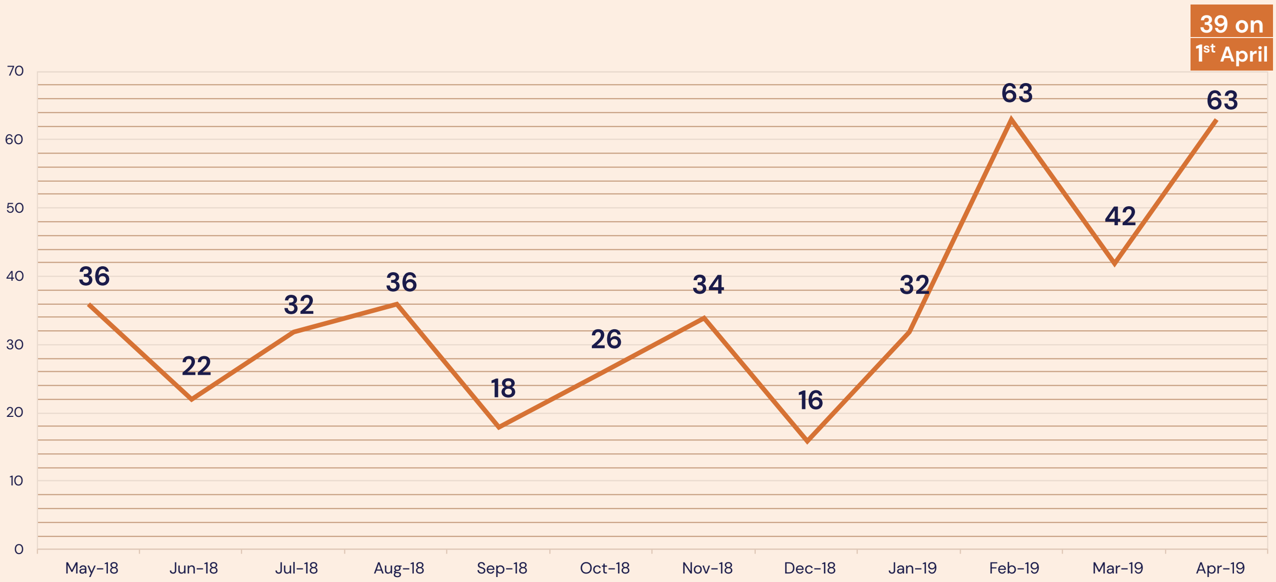
Immediately after 2015, appointment numbers fell significantly. After January 2019, 302 women joined boards as independent woman directors. The spike in 2019 may be attributed to the SEBI's norm for NSE 500 companies – to induct at least one independent woman director on board – coming into effect. The appointments clustering around the cut-off date of the mandate can be seen as either poor planning or as companies not really appreciating the benefit in having women directors and inducting them only to meet the mandate.

Figure 3 : Women Board Directorship: Year Wise Number Of Appointments



Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1944 companies listed on NSE as on October 2019

Figure 4 : Women Board Directorship: Month Wise Analysis Of Appointments Post May 2018



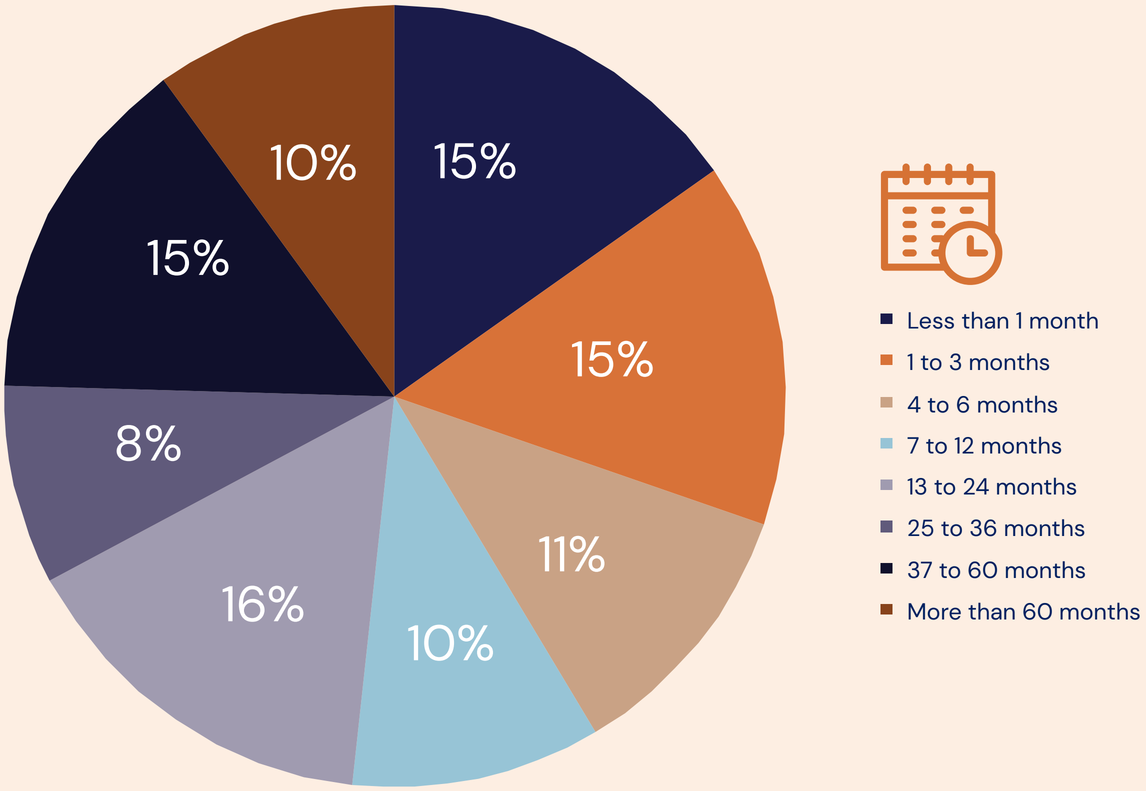
Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1944 companies listed on NSE as on October 2019

We also further analysed appointment dates of women on multiple boards. It does not augur well for good governance that 40% of the women directors received their second appointments within six months of the first one. In fact, 15% of the second appointments took place in less than a month after the first (**Figure 5a**) appointments.

Based on classification provided by the Prime Database, the status and number of women on multiple boards and their professional and family connection were tallied (**Figure 5b**). Only one third of women hired in less than one month were family members (**Figure 5c**).

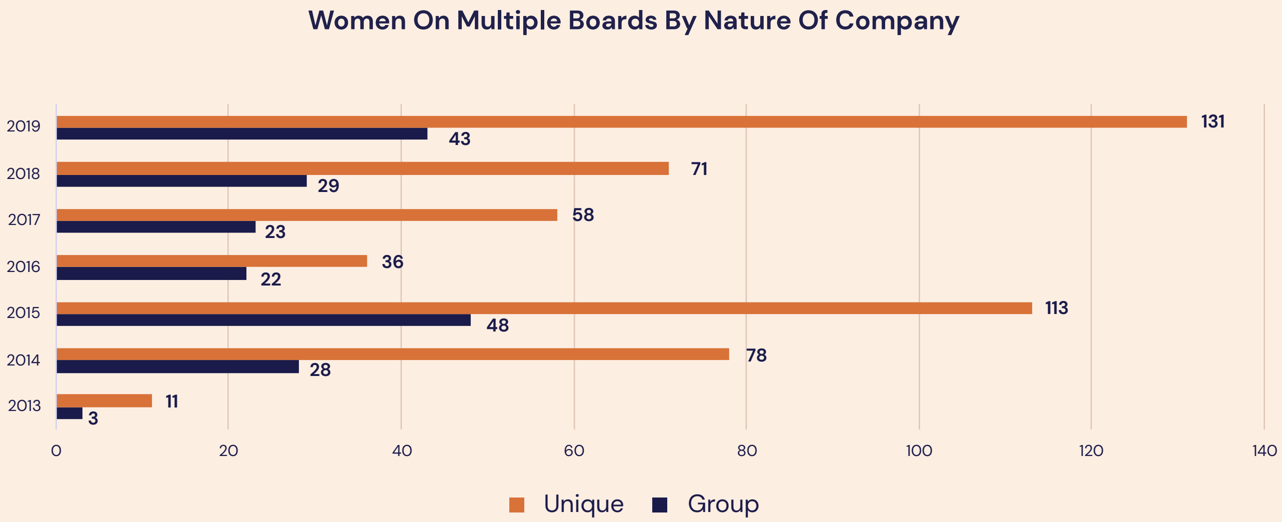
40% OF THE WOMEN DIRECTORS RECEIVED THEIR SECOND APPOINTMENTS WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF THE FIRST ONE. EVEN WORSE, 15% OF THE SECOND APPOINTMENTS TOOK PLACE IN LESS THAN A MONTH AFTER THE FIRST ONE.

Fig 5a : Women On Multiple Boards: Time Lapse Between Appointment To The Next Board

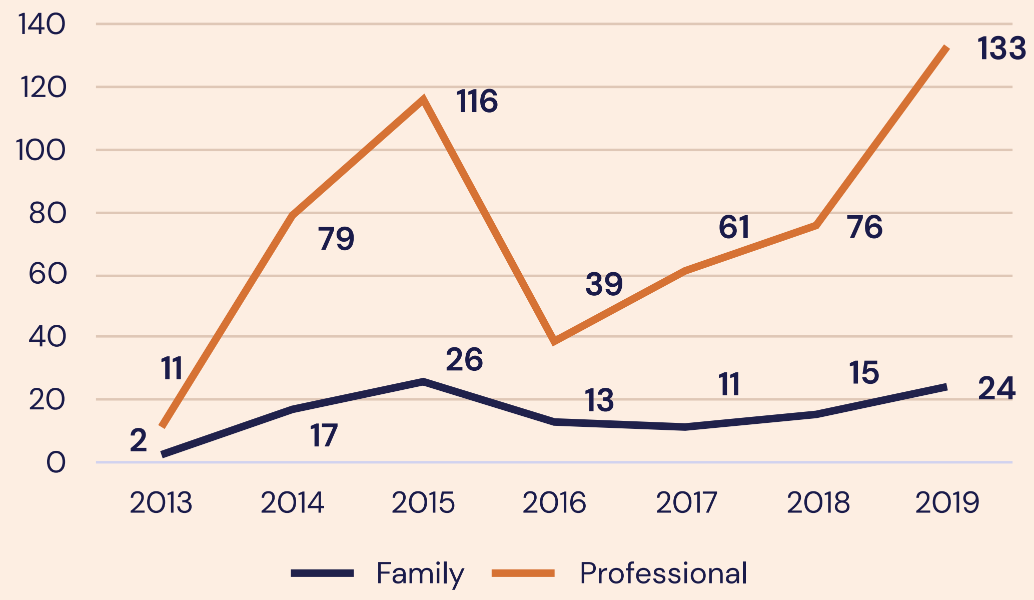


Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1944 companies listed on NSE as on October 2019

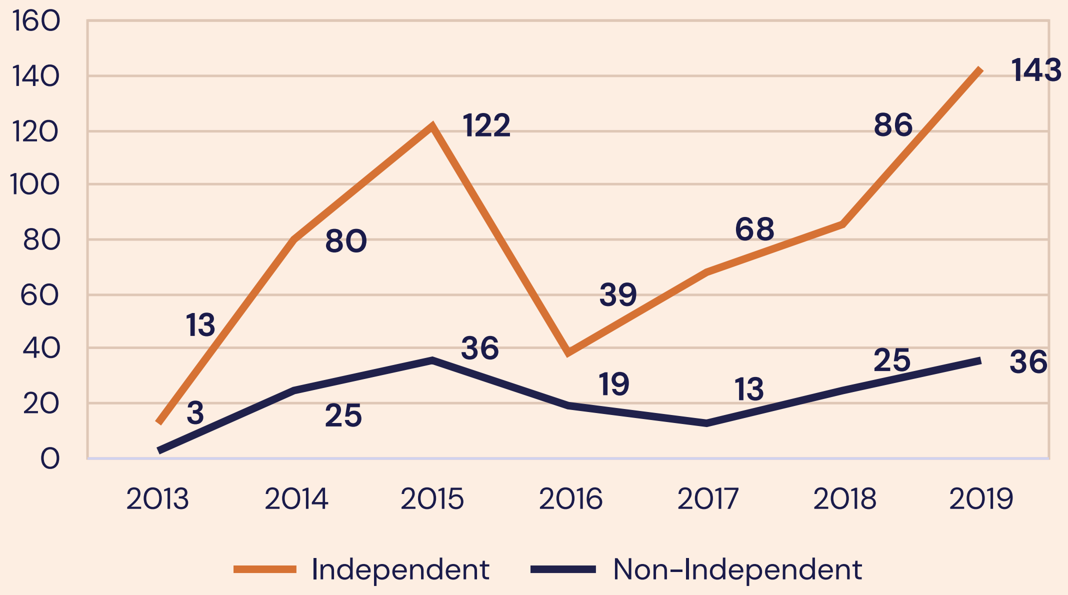
Figure 5b : Women On Multiple Boards By Year



Women On Multiple Boards:
Professional vs Family Affiliation

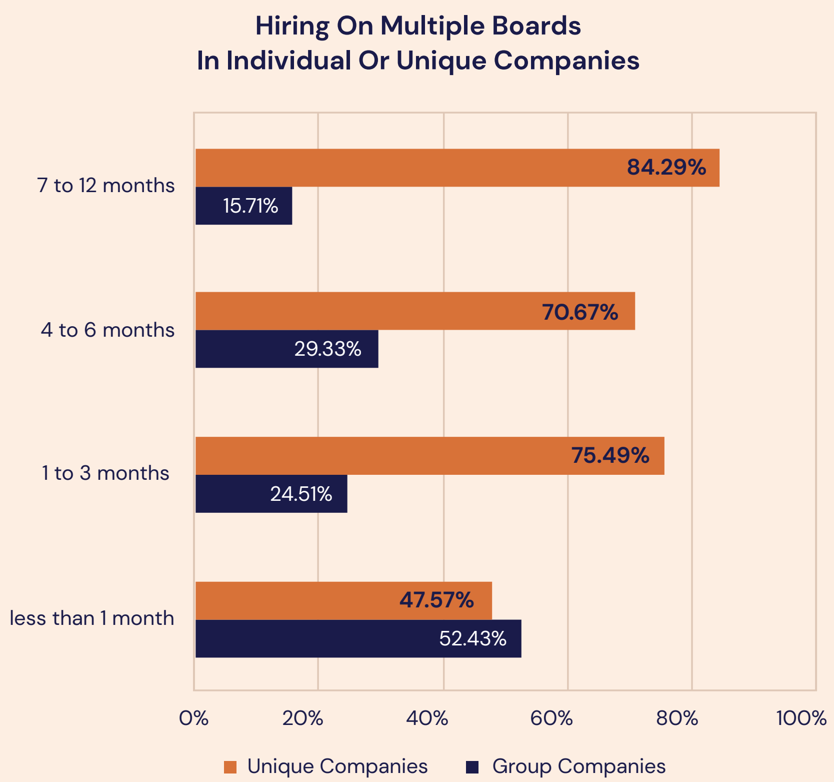


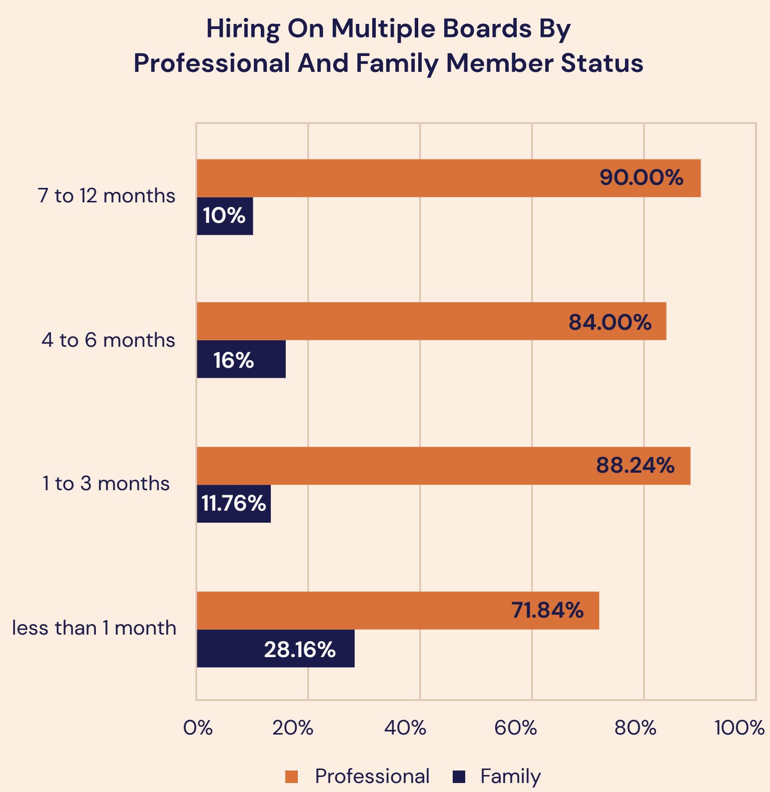
Women On Multiple Boards:
Independent vs Non-independent



Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1944 companies listed on NSE as on October 2019

Figure 5c : Women On Multiple Boards: Date Of Appointment And Nature Of Appointment



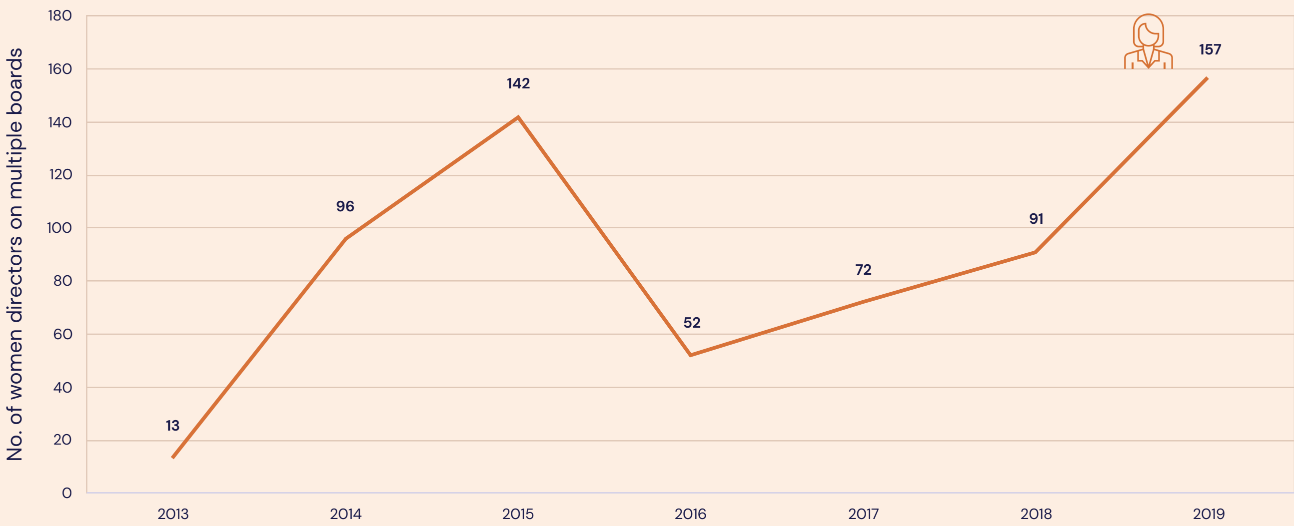


Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1944 companies listed on NSE as on October 2019

In all other cases, the percentage of family members hired to multiple boards was less than 16%. In addition, based on publicly available data, we also classified companies as group/related companies or individual/unique companies[10]. **Figure 5c** shows that more than 52% women – hired less than one month apart to more than one company – were hired to the board of a related company. The time between appointments to two boards and appointment in a unique company, seem positively correlated. While an individual company hiring women who already served on a board of another company indicates that their professional experience or reputation in the network were possibly the decisive factors, a group company doing so could also mean that the company did not want to take a risk and was inducting a known person to the board. Being on multiple boards of companies with the same promoters would hamper the ability of the woman directors to be independent.

However, a trend noticed is that the percentage of women being hired from the existing pool of appointed women directors has increased. In 2019, 40.1% of the appointments were of those women directors who were serving at least on one board. This stands in contrast to the fact that, prior to the Companies Act mandate in 2015, while a total of 402 women served in boards (of which only 95 served as independent directors), post the mandate, only 52 were hired to serve on boards of other companies. Of those appointed to the second board, 19 were appointed in companies owned by the same business group and 33 were appointed to boards of unique companies. Of the 52 second or further appointments, 38 women were appointed as independent women directors. Overall, it can be said that from 2013 onwards, the number of women being hired out of the existing pool is increasing (see **Figure 6**) steadily.

Figure 6 : Number Of Appointments Of Women Directors On Multiple Boards Over Years



Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1788 companies listed on NSE as on Mar 31st 2019

[10] To assess whether the organizations that the women served were group or unrelated we went through the "About Us" and "Leadership Team" in the website of all the companies the woman was a director of. If the about us spoke about the promoters and mentioned other businesses they had started and if the Chairman and MD were the same in the companies we counted them as group companies.

We also examined in detail the status and nature of the boards who have taken in women who were on more than one board. How many of the women who served on multiple boards served as independent or non-independent directors, and whether the multiple boards they served on were companies started/owned by the same business group or were different unrelated organizations? We wanted to test the popular belief echoed among senior corporate leaders – and highlighted in the media – that the mandate will only lead to organizations hiring women they know (among family and friends) and really not result in either diversity of corporate boards or empowering women of potential.

Of the women who served on multiple boards, the majority were independent directors (66.3%), while a fifth served as non-independent directors (20.3%), and a small percentage served as both independent and non-independent directors (13.4%) (see **Figure 7a** for details). Of the women who served on multiple boards, most served on individual/unique companies (65%) than on group company boards (25.9%) (see **Figure 7b** for details). Of those serving on multiple boards, 79.1% were professionals and 20.9% belonged to the family[11] (see **Figure 7c** for details). This shows that women who are on multiple boards are often professionals, serve as independent directors, and were invited to be on companies that were not related. A fifth of the organizations are hiring the same known women (family or friends of the family) into multiple organizations spawned by them. While the belief that organizations would simply hire known women to fill the mandate is not valid in the case of women who get appointed to multiple boards, the incidence of women being hired to multiple boards based on personal connections is still significant.

WHILE THE BELIEF THAT ORGANIZATIONS WOULD SIMPLY HIRE KNOWN WOMEN TO FILL THE MANDATE WAS NOT SUPPORTED, THE INCIDENCE OF WOMEN BEING HIRED TO MULTIPLE BOARDS BASED ON PERSONAL CONNECTIONS WAS SIGNIFICANT

[11] Based on classification given by PRIME Database used mainly for making this count unless we felt that there might be an error in classification and then we cross checked from other sources and redid the classification

Figure 7a : Number Of Women Directors On Multiple Boards: Group vs Unique Companies*

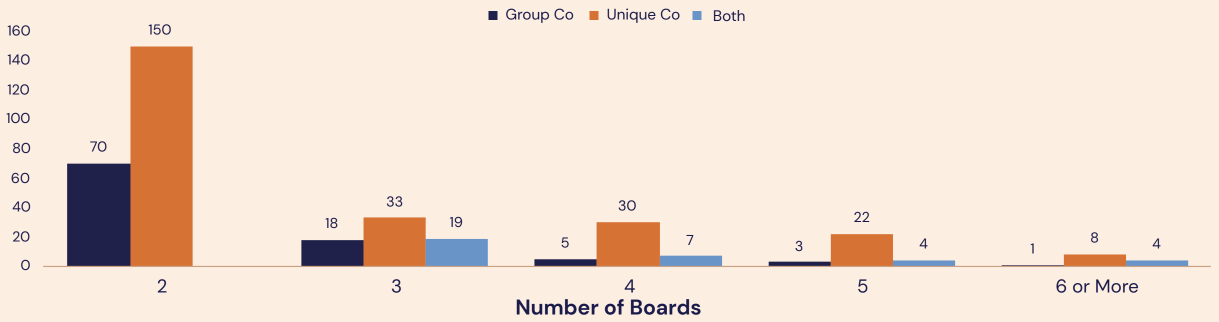


Figure 7b : Number Of Women Directors On Multiple Boards: Professionals vs Family Members*

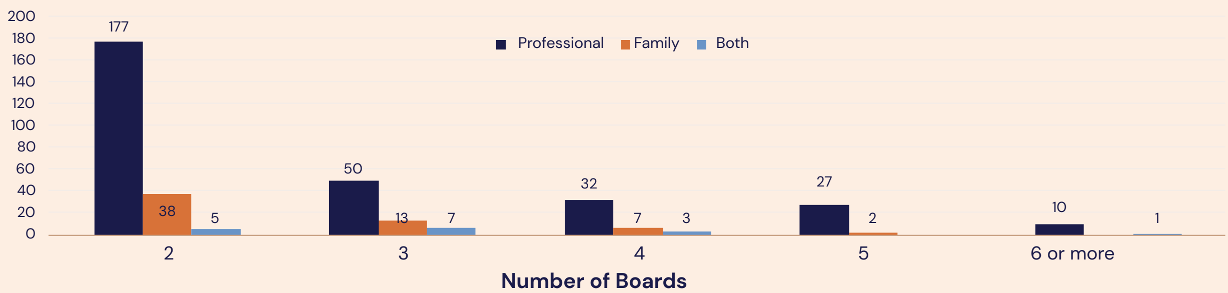
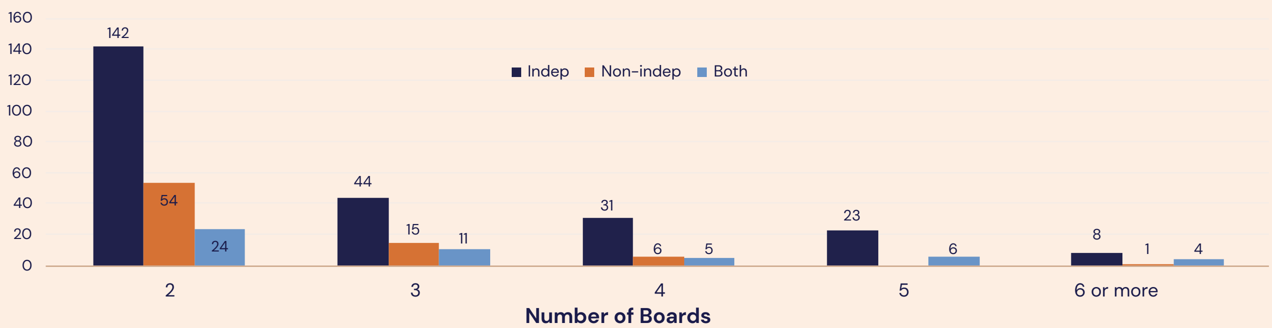


Figure 7c : Number Of Women Directors On Multiple Boards: Independent vs Non-independent*

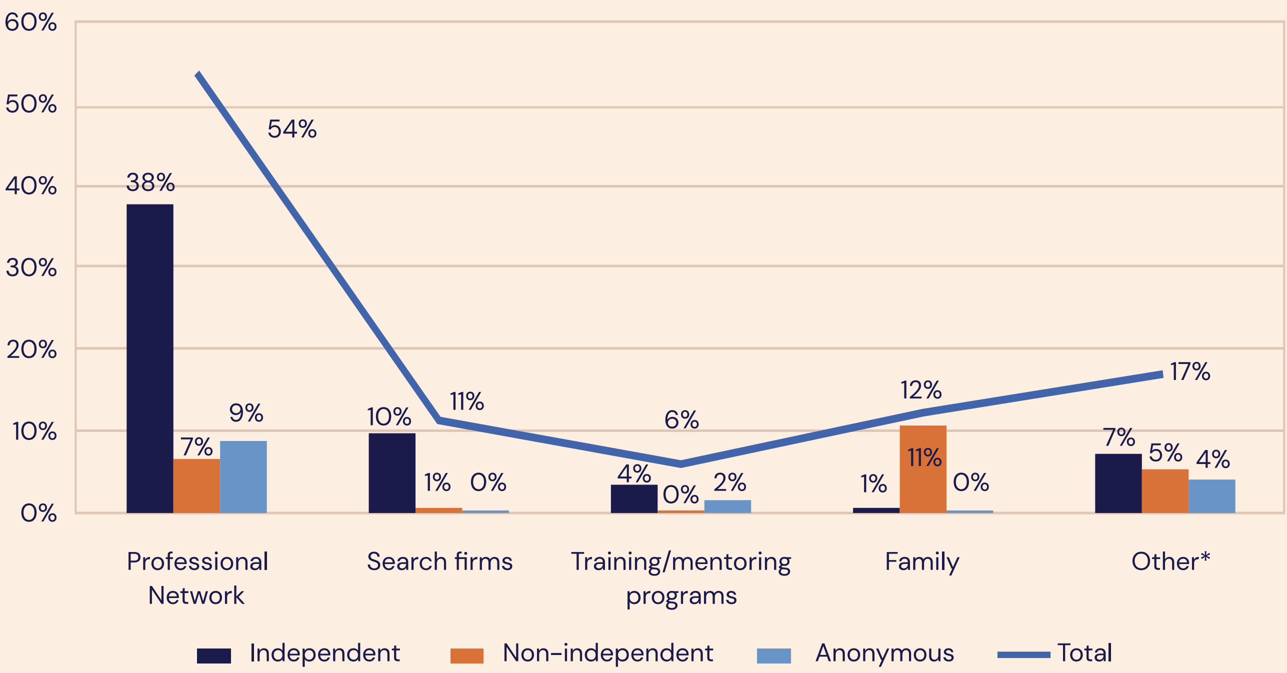


*Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1788 companies listed on NSE as on Mar 31st 2019

Sources of hiring women directors

There is a likelihood that women are being appointed through the existing networks of the board members themselves. Such reliance on networks limits the search for unique women. To test this, in our survey, we asked women who served as directors how they had been appointed to the boards. Women directors indicated that they were primarily hired from their professional networks. Among the 192 survey respondents, more than 50% mentioned that their board appointments came from their professional networks. Nomination from promoters, investors, or government authority was the next common source. The least likely mode of appointment was via search agencies or participation in training and mentorship programmes designed for women to prepare them for board positions (see **Figure 8**).

Figure 8 : Mode Of Appointment Of Women On Boards

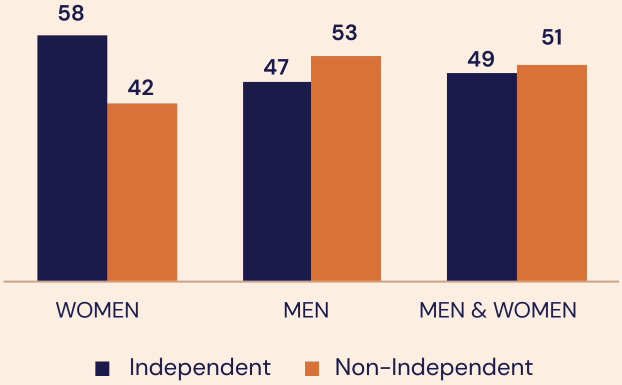


*'Other' includes investor/promoter/Honorary Nominee, Retired Govt. Officials (IAS, RBI, etc.), Ex-senior employees

Source: Based on primary survey of 192 women directors

Type of directorship positions held by of women on boards

Figure 9 : No. Of Independent And Non-independent Women And Men Directors

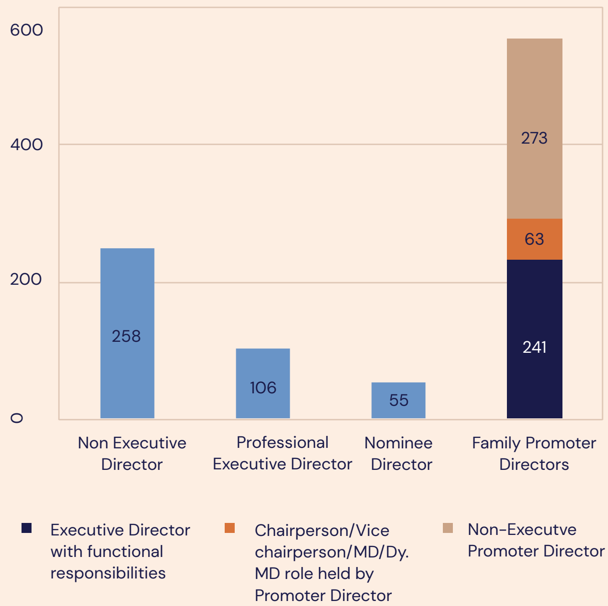


Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1944 companies listed on NSE as on October 2019

Of the total directorship (men and women) positions held in NSE-listed companies, the proportion of non-independent (51%) directors is slightly higher than the proportion of independent directors (49%) on Indian boards (see Figure 9). In contrast, 58% of the women are independent directors and 42% are non-independent directors. 50 women hold both independent and non-independent positions on different boards. Among women directors, part of boards as family members, 16 have been subsequently invited to serve as independent directors on boards of other companies than their own. This may be because of personal networks and family pedigree or because these women are being recognized for their experience and the value they can add to diverse businesses. In either case, this is a healthy trend because experienced women are being asked to serve on boards and this increases the possibility of cross-learning among companies.

An analysis of the nature of positions held by non-independent women directors shows that very few hold executive leadership positions among boards. Among the 928 non-independent directorship positions held by women, 577 are promoter-directors and 531 hold non-executive positions. Only 465 women directors are executive directors of their boards with functional responsibilities, out of which 63 are promoter chairpersons; another 55 hold nominee director positions. Only 106 non-independent women directors are professionals who had held executive positions (such as CFO, CHRO, CTO) within their companies (see Figure 10).

Fig 10 : Distribution Of Board Roles Among Non-independent Women Directors

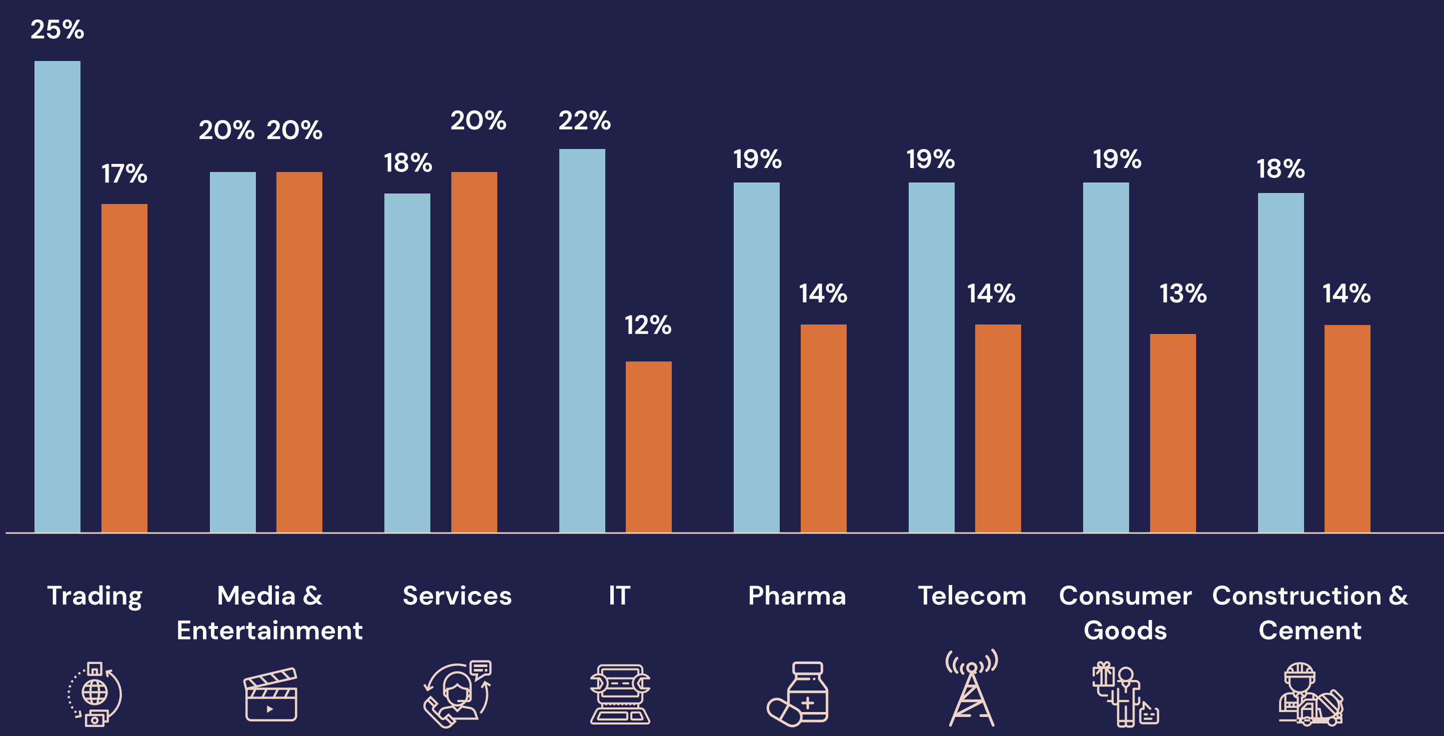


Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1944 companies listed on NSE as on October 2019

The women on boards who hold functional roles within their organizations occupy leadership positions in their companies. The fact that this number is less than 10% indicates that, within the organization, very few women are coming through the ranks to occupy senior management roles in their companies.

WHAT YOU DON'T SEE, YOU DON'T BECOME! WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP SERVE AS ROLE MODELS FOR WOMEN ENTERING THE WORKFORCE AND PROVIDE INSPIRATION FOR OTHER WOMEN TO RISE AND OCCUPY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Figure 11 : Industry-wise Percentage Of Independent & Non-Independent Women Directors



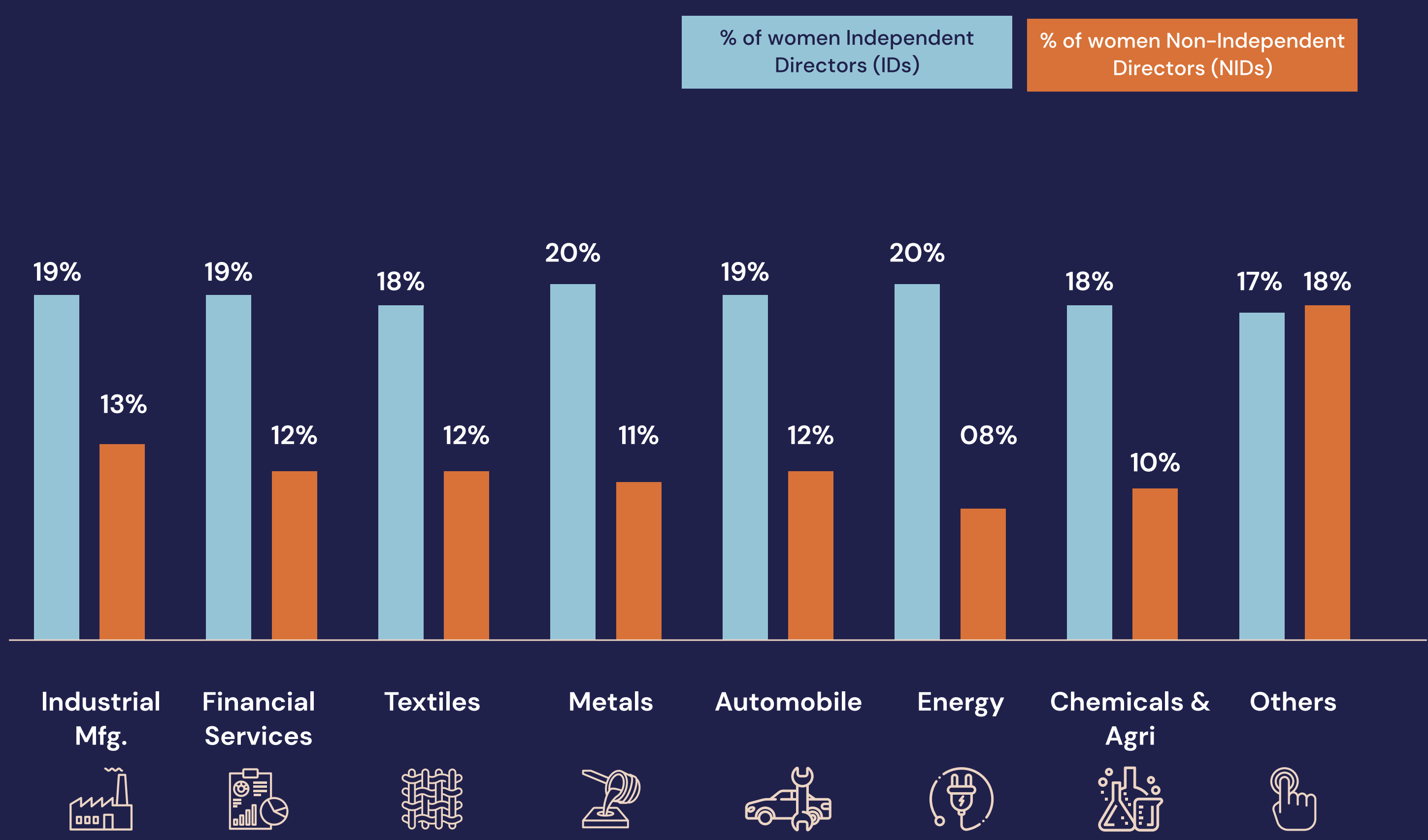
Women directorship by industry

Given that the mandate applies to all industries, it would be expected that the proportion of women directors across industries would be, by and large, equally distributed. The NSE-listed companies were classified into 15 industry categories based on the categorizations available on Thomson Reuters Business Classification (modifications were made as per the context to make the categorization relevant).

The classification was kept broad to be able to see trends, if any.

It was interesting to find that women were represented to a much less extent in industries such as energy (13%), power (13%), and chemicals industry (14%) and found to be represented in industries such as trading (21%), media and entertainment (20%) and services (19%) (see **Figure 11**).

Highest proportion of women independent directors was found in trading (25%) and IT industry (22%). On this score, among the NSE 500 firms, consumer goods and IT sector (22%) were leading. Among the non-independent directors in NSE-listed firms, the lowest proportion of women is 8% for energy industry, and 10% for chemicals industry. As far as non-independent directors go, their highest presence was in the media and entertainment and services industry at 20%.

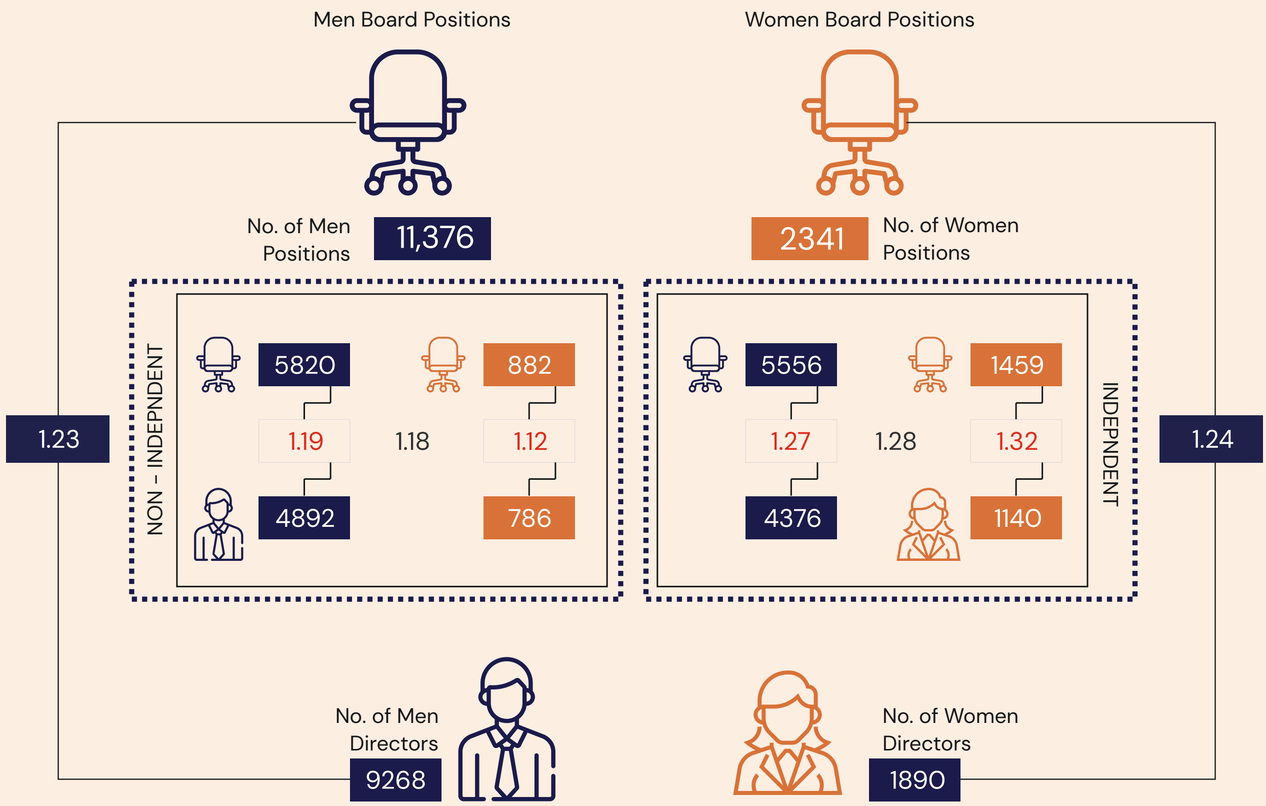


Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1944 companies listed on NSE as on October 2019

Stretch ratio among women directors

Stretch ratio is defined as the ratio of directorships held by a particular group of directors (based on gender, type of directorship etc.) to the total number of directors in that group. This gives an idea of how much a particular group of directors is stretched between various board roles. If the same known women are often hired as directors, the stretch ratio for women would be higher. The stretch ratio analysis (see **Figure 12**) of all NSE-listed companies between men and women in independent and non-independent directorships, provided some interesting insights.

Figure 12 : Stretch Ratio

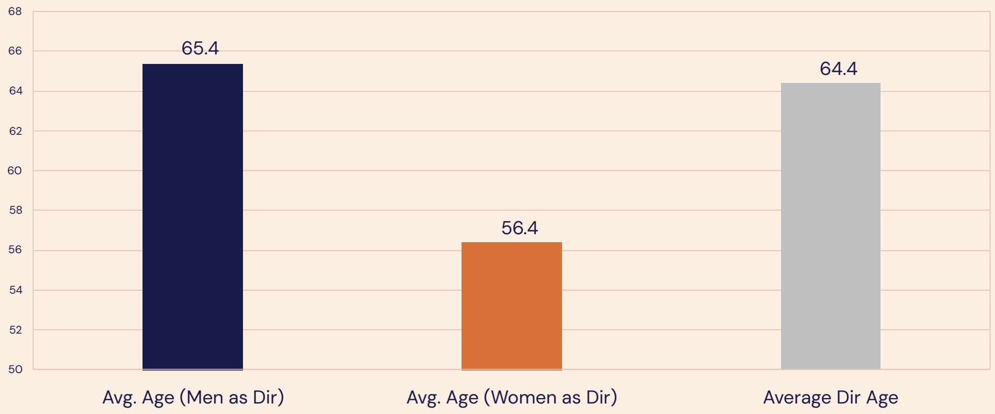


Overall, men and women independent directors are more stretched than non-independent directors (1.28 vs 1.18). Non-independent men board directors are 6% more stretched than non-independent women directors (stretch factor of 1.12 for women vs 1.19 for men). Independent women directors are 3% more stretched than independent men directors (stretch factor of 1.32 for women vs 1.27 for men). Largely, women as board directors are not more stretched than the men directors on NSE-listed firms (stretch factor of 1.24 for women vs 1.23 for men). These findings also add to evidence that companies by and large found new women directors to serve on their boards rather than hiring a few known women into several companies.

Age

Comparison of age composition of women directors with men directors of the NSE-listed firms revealed that the average age of women board directors is 14% lower than the men serving on boards (see **Figure 13**).

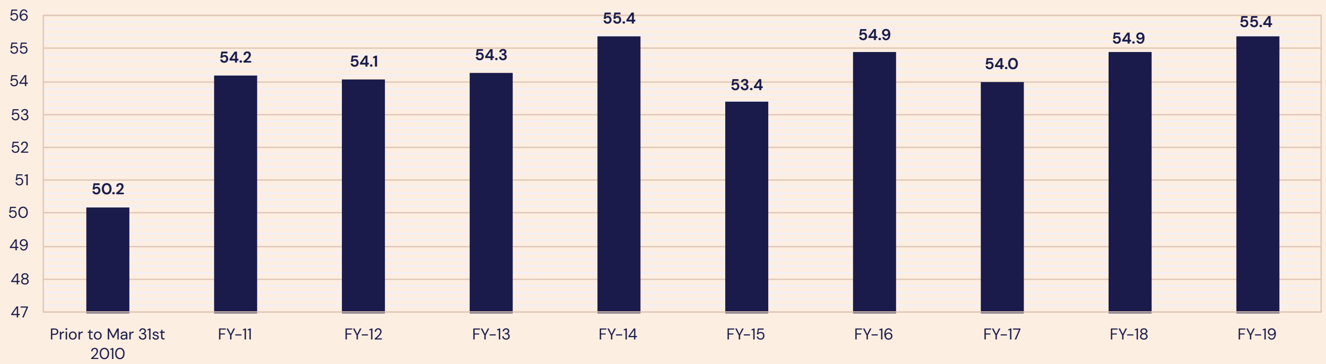
Figure 13 : Age Analysis: Board Directors' Age: Overall View (Men Vs Women)



Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1788 companies listed on NSE as on March 2019

The analysis of average age of women (see **Figure 14)** hired to the boards shows in 2015, at the time of the first mandate coming to effect, this figure (53.4 years) was the lowest in that decade. It is also interesting to note that the average age of women in the era of voluntary induction (pre-2015) was also around 53.6 years. An analysis of directors' ages at the time of appointment shows that standards for age of appointment (both women and men directors) have changed. While the earlier completed engagement lifecycles (of discontinued/completed board engagements) had a larger age difference (5 years) for men vs women, for the current active board members, there is a smaller age difference (1.5 years) at the time of appointment.

Figure 14 : Age Analysis: Average Age Of Women Directors At The Time Of Appointment By Year Of Appointment



Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1788 companies listed on NSE as on Mar 31st 2019

Over the years, board directors' average age has reduced (from 67 to 61.2 years), as can be seen from the difference between average ages for discontinued vs active boards (see **Figure 15**). This data provides evidence that the addition of women to the boards has contributed in one obvious way – younger men have had the opportunity to enter boards as well. One of the problems that have been highlighted in corporate governance has been the age of the members of the corporate boards.[12] The same men have served on the boards for far too long.[13]

We also analysed the profile of the young men and women directors. It may be assumed that the really young members of the board would be family members being groomed to take up leadership positions in their companies. Of the 26 directors aged less than 25 years, 13 were men and 13 were women. It is significant that all 13 men are executive directors and part of the family. In effect, they are possibly being groomed to take over the reins of the family business. Of the 13 women, only 5 are promoter directors; 8 are serving as independent directors. These women, who have recently graduated in Business Administration or Law, are serving on boards as independent directors.

Further analysis also shows that, out of the women who are less than 30 years old, an equal number are independent and non-independent directors. 4% women are below 30 years and 15% are below 40 years of age (see **Figure 16**). While companies might be going out and hiring unique, professional women on their boards, they are also hiring really young women. It bears some reflection on the quality of corporate governance that may be provided by relatively young directors who lack professional experience and are a minority in the board.

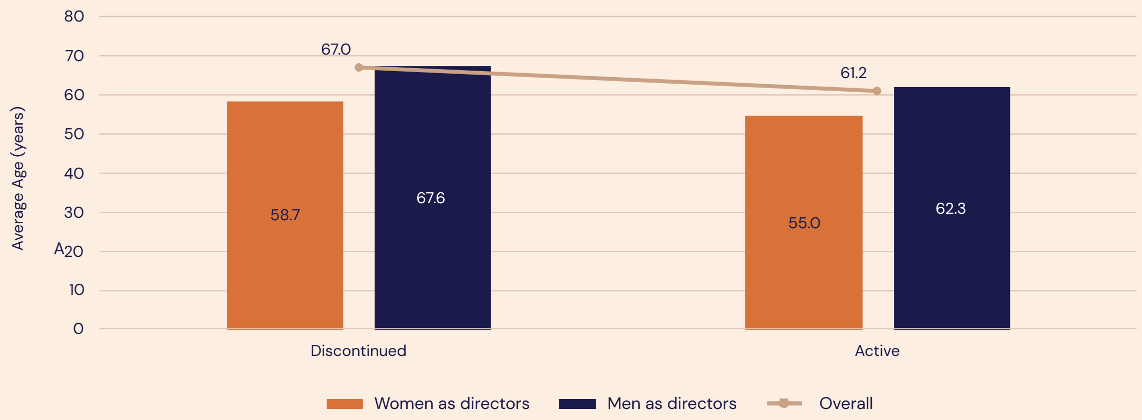
The data on the other end of the tail is also interesting. Men aged above 80 years outnumber women of the same age. One possible reason could be late entry of women into boards as well as earlier exit. Some men directors have joined boards, and stayed on without break—the oldest man director is 95 years old! The relatively younger age of women directors also indicates that when women were sought to serve on boards, some of the experienced, older women were not inducted into boards at that time. The search for and selection of women directors was possibly from a shallow pool. A large number of retired senior leaders, lawyers, retired bureaucrats, and academics were not included in the potential list for women directors. Women (at 53.9 years) serving on boards also quit boards eight years younger than the men (at 61.4 years) (see **Figure 17**). Women leaving younger is not only a function of them joining young. Board membership tenure data shows that, on an average, women serve 4.6 years (more than 40% shorter) as compared to 7.8 years by men. Overall, the data shows that women are joining younger, serving for fewer years, and thus also retiring younger as compared to men.

4% WOMEN ARE BELOW 30 YEARS AND 15% ARE BELOW 40 YEARS OF AGE. WHILE COMPANIES MIGHT BE GOING OUT AND HIRING UNIQUE, PROFESSIONAL WOMEN ON THEIR BOARDS, THEY ARE ALSO HIRING REALLY YOUNG WOMEN

[12] Wilson, N., & Altanlar, A. (2009). Director characteristics, gender balance and insolvency risk: An empirical study. Available at SSRN 1932107

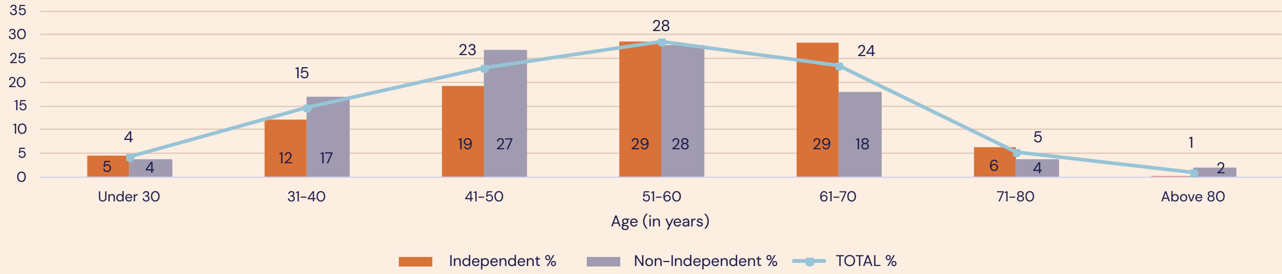
[13] PwC. (2019, March). Age diversity in the boardroom. https://www.pwc.com/us/en/services/governance-insights-center/library/younger-directors-bring-boardroom-age-diversity.html

Figure 15 : Age Analysis: Board Directors' Age By Current Status



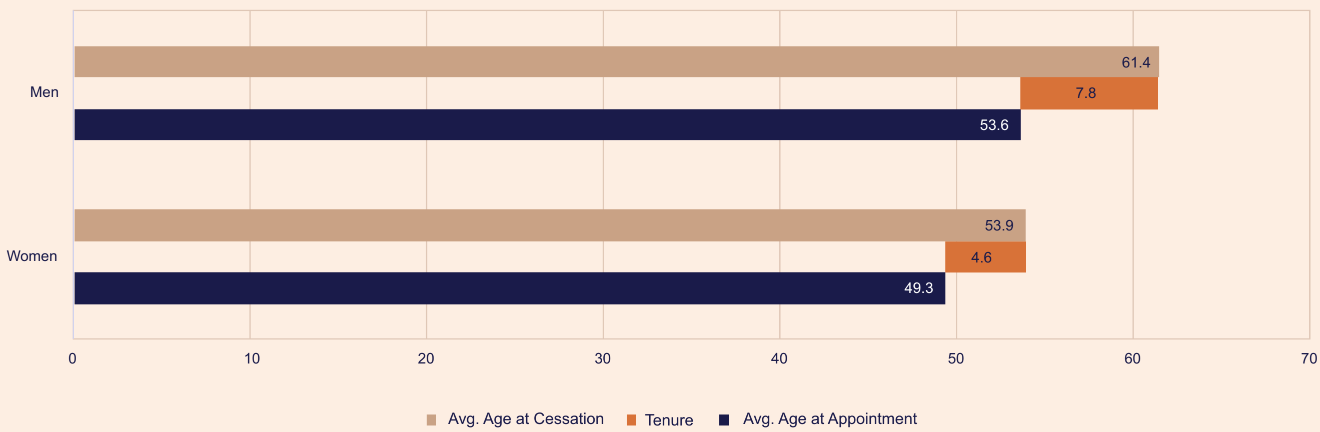
Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1788 companies listed on NSE as on Mar 31st 2019

Figure 16 : Age Analysis Of Women On Boards: Independent Vs Non-independet (In Percentage)



Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1788 companies listed on NSE as on Mar 31st 2019

Figure 17 : Tenure Analysis: Age At Various Stages Of Board Directorship



Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1788 companies listed on NSE as on Mar 31st 2019

Educational qualification of women board members

The voiced fear that unqualified women will be brought in to fill board positions seems to be unfounded. Even the women directors, brought in to represent family interests, are highly educated (almost 51% held master's degrees and 5 % are doctorates); the figure for all women directors with a master's degree is also 51%; 38% hold bachelor's degrees as their highest qualification and less than 2% are diploma holders; +2, or just class X pass (see **Figure 18**). When the educational qualifications of independent women vs non-independent women directors are compared, 12.6% have doctorates among independent women directors and 4.6% among non-independent women directors (see **Figure 19a**).

The most popular disciplines that women directors graduate in are commerce, management, and administration, followed by liberal arts. The surprising finding is that the number of women graduates in science is the least among various educational groups (see **Figure 19b**). When compared to men directors, general graduates among women (29.1%) are slightly higher than among men (26.9%) and fewer technical graduates (such as engineers, doctors) among women (7.4 %) as compared to men (13.1%). The number of men and women directors holding master's degrees and doctorate degrees is very similar (see **Figure 20**). The fact that fewer women (as compared to men) with science and technical degrees occupy board positions is worth highlighting and studying further. Prima facie, it appears that women with technical and science backgrounds are not rising to top positions, underscoring the world phenomenon of fewer women entering and sustaining in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) disciplines.

Figure 18 : Educational Qualification Of Women On Boards In India

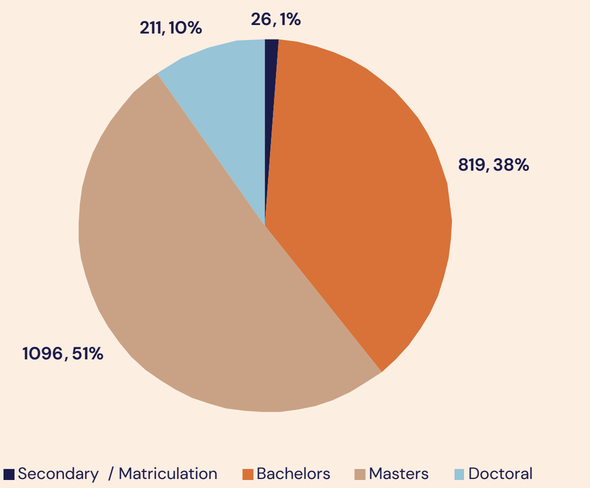
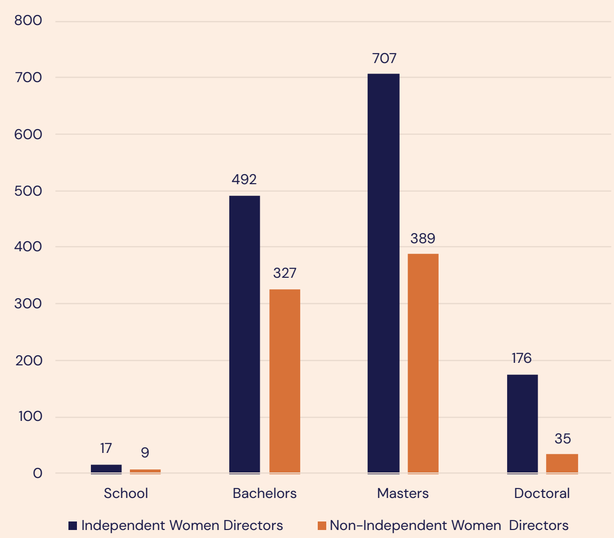
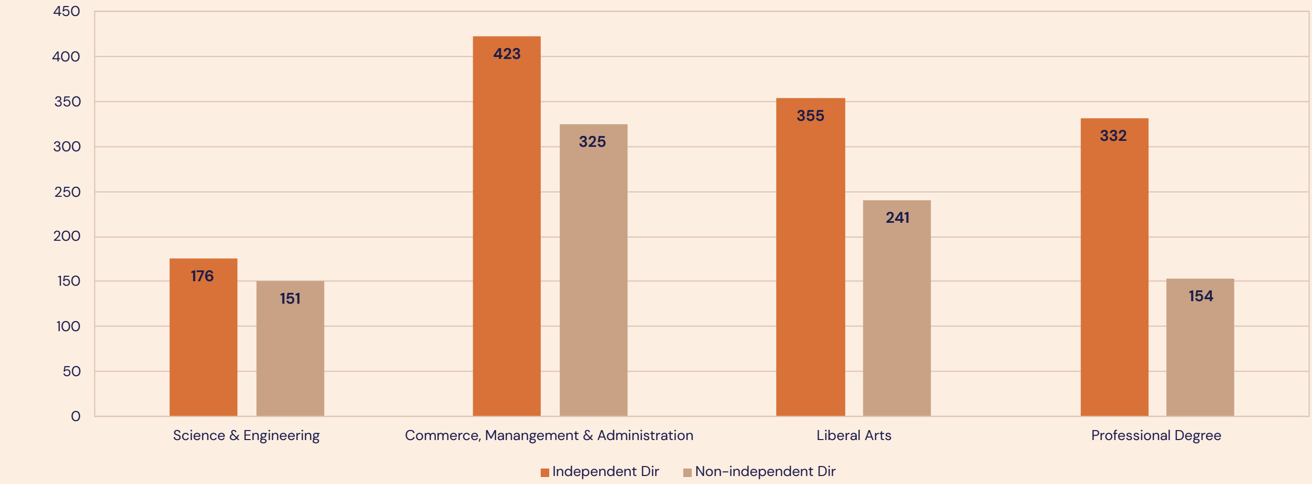


Figure 19a : Degrees Earned By Women Directors– Independent Vs Non Independent



Source: Based on data of 1602 women directors on boards of listed Indian companies (collected from India's Ministry of Corporate Affairs website & Annual reports)

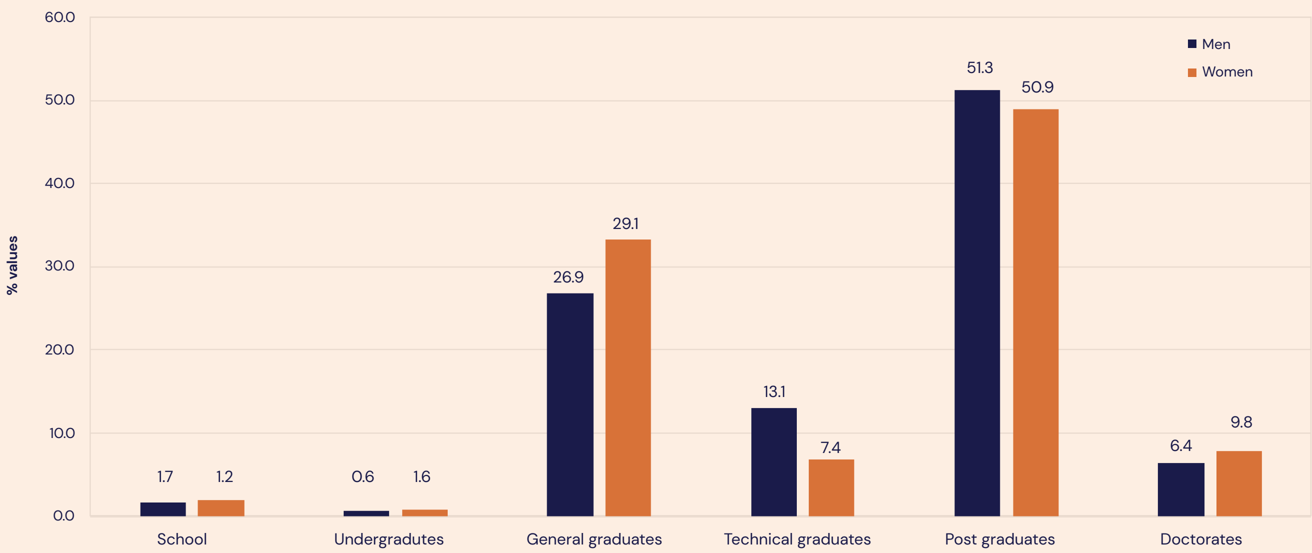
Figure 19b : Field Of Specialization Of Women Directors-- Independent Vs Non Independent



DOMAIN	SUBJECT AREA
Science & Engineering	Natural Sciences (Physics, Chemistry), Engineering, Mathematics
Commerce, Management and Administration	B. Com.; B.B.A.
Liberal Arts	Bachelors in Arts, Literature, Philosophy, Social Sciences
Professional degree	L.L.B; M.B.B.S.; B.D.S.; B.V.Sc.; B.Ed.; C.A; IAS; etc

Source: Based on data of 1602 women directors on boards of listed Indian companies (collected from India's Ministry of Corporate Affairs website & Annual reports)

Figure 20 : Degrees Earned By Men And Women Directors



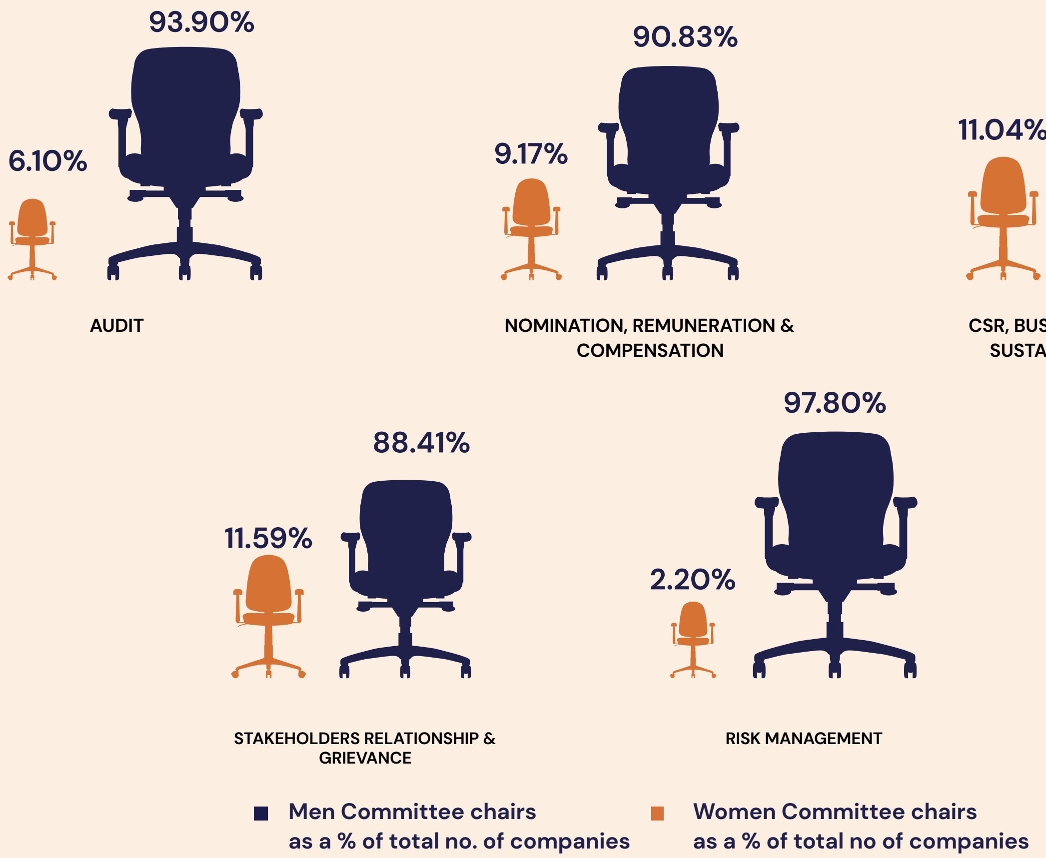
Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1944 companies listed on NSE as on October 2019

Board committee participation

In publicly-listed firms, on an average, women directors were found to participate in 1.9 committees (see **Appendix D**); 780 women directors out of 1898 women directors serve as chairs, which is 41.1% of all women directors but a mere 6.9 percentage of the total number of directors (11,251) serving on boards.

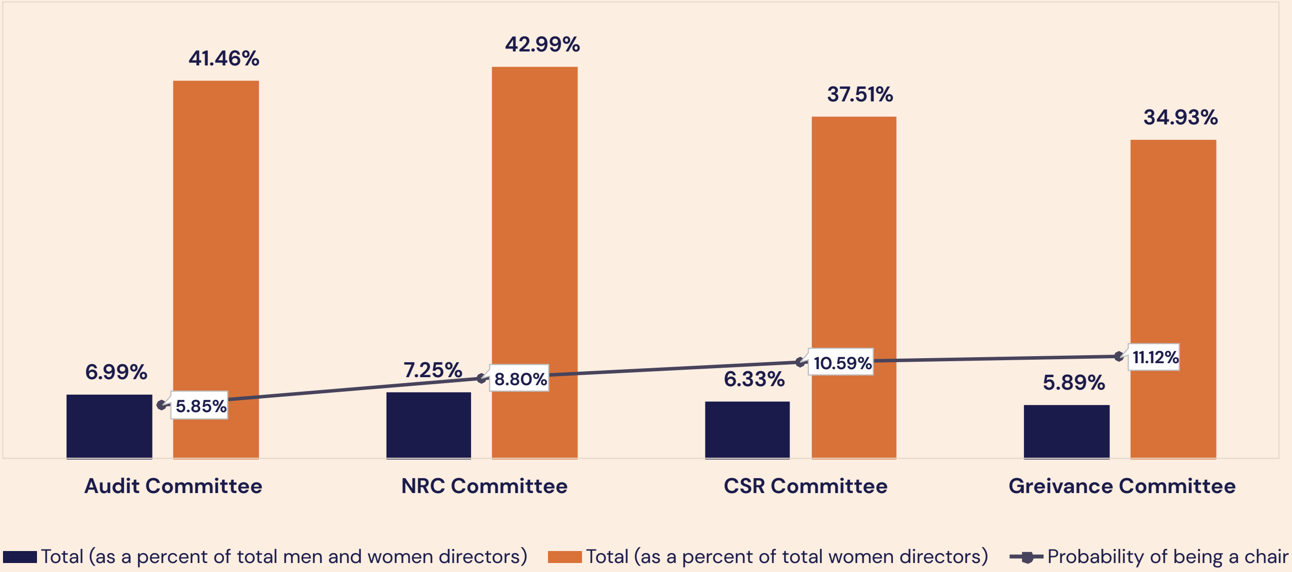
The top three committees where women serve as members included – Audit; Nomination, Remuneration and Compensation; CSR and Business Responsibility; and Sustainable Development committees. The highest proportion of women chairs are seen in Stakeholders Relationship and Grievance committees (11.6%), followed by CSR and Business Responsibility and Sustainable Development committee (11%). While the Audit committee has a significant number of women as members (787), only 111 of them serve as chairpersons on that committee, which is a mere 6% representation in all listed companies (See **Figure 21a**).

Figure 21a : Committee Chairs: Men Vs Women



Source: Based on data of 1602 women directors on boards of listed Indian companies (collected from India's Ministry of Corporate Affairs website & Annual reports)

Figure 21b : Women Participation In Top Four Board Committees



Source: Based on data of 1602 women directors on boards of listed Indian companies (collected from India's Ministry of Corporate Affairs website & Annual reports)

It was also seen that the independent directors are more likely to be members and chairs in the Audit Committee and Nomination and Remuneration Committee. The proportion of independent to non-independent women members is 2:1 for Stakeholder and Grievance Committee and is almost 1:1 for CSR committees. Chairs of Stakeholder and Grievance Committee and Nomination and Remuneration Committee are more often likely to be independent directors (see **Figure 21b** and **Appendix D**).

This data brings forth a possible bias in the selection of board members for committee membership and leadership, often **limiting women's representation to leadership positions in Stakeholder and Grievance Committee and CSR committees and much less** in leadership positions in Audit and Nomination and Remuneration Committees which are seen as critical committees of the board.[14]

[14] Chen, K. D., & Wu, A. (2016). The structure of board committees. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School.

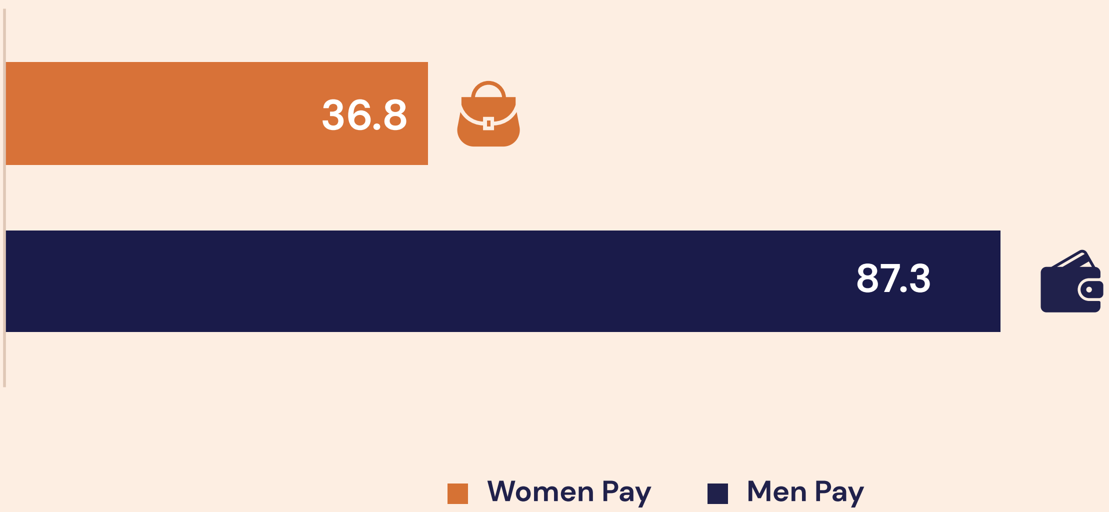
Compensation

Analysis of pay and benefits data of 5,155 directors (men and women included) in top 480 NSE-listed companies shows that women directors are getting paid approximately 55% less (see **Figure 22a**) than men in the same position. While sitting fees is the same for women and men directors (as mandated by regulation), the remuneration difference is seen mainly among non-independent directors.

Functional/performance-linked components like salary and commissions awarded to women are 60% lower than men. The number of share units awarded to women board members is also 52% lower (see **Figure 22b**); 45% of the independent and non-independent women directors were paid annually less than ₹1 lakh and 31.8% of the independent and non-independent women directors were paid between ₹1–10 lakhs. While 50% of the independent women directors are compensated less than ₹1 lakh, the figure is 38% for the non-independent ones. Remuneration of less than ₹ 1 lakh, for the legal responsibilities and the services to be rendered to the board, seems very low. Only 11 independent directors earn more than ₹50 lakhs for their contribution to the boards they serve on. 122 non-independent directors earn more than ₹50 lakhs for their contribution to the board (see **Figure 22c** for details).

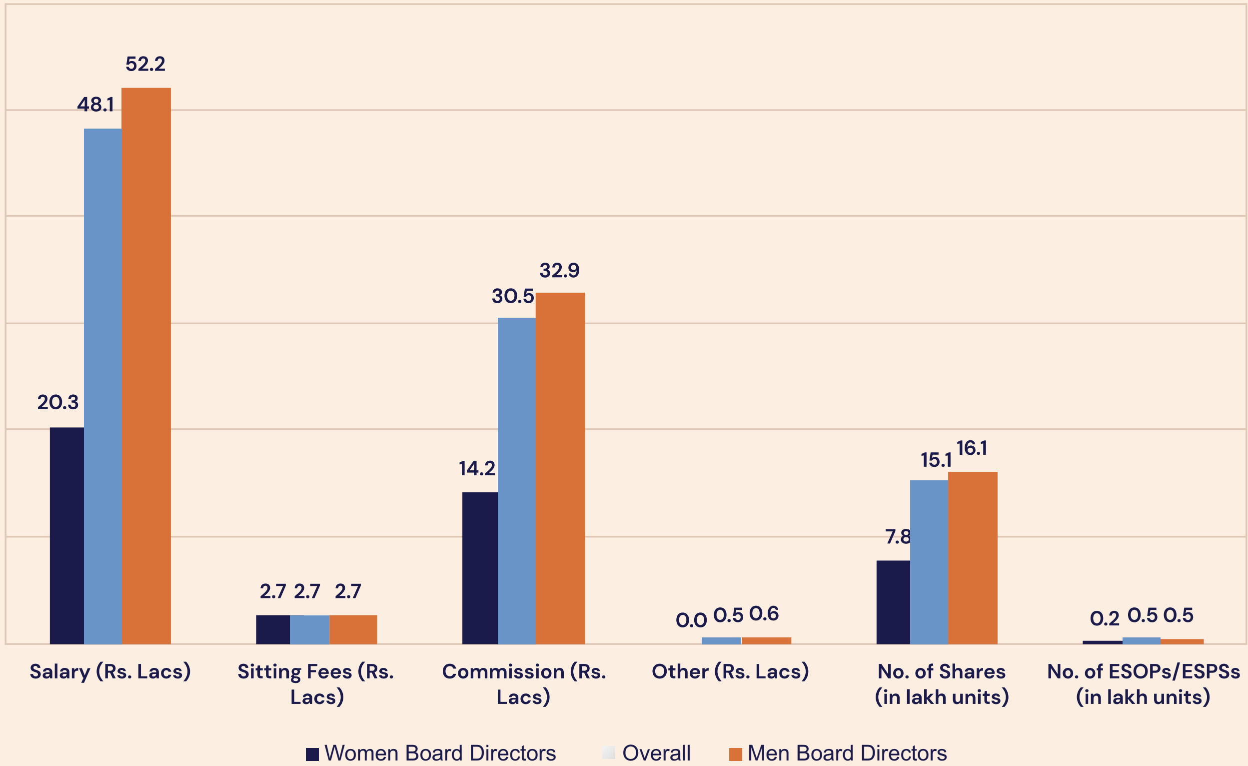
The primary data on women board members also indicated that women were not satisfied with the remuneration offered to them. Both independent and non-independent women directors expressed that at least their expectations on remuneration should be met (See **Figure 25**).

Figure 22a : Average Annual Board Pay – Overall In Lakhs*



Source: Based on remuneration data of 5155 directors in 480 NSE-listed companies
***Does not include board directors earning more than ₹ 10 Cr to avoid outliers from influencing the analysis**

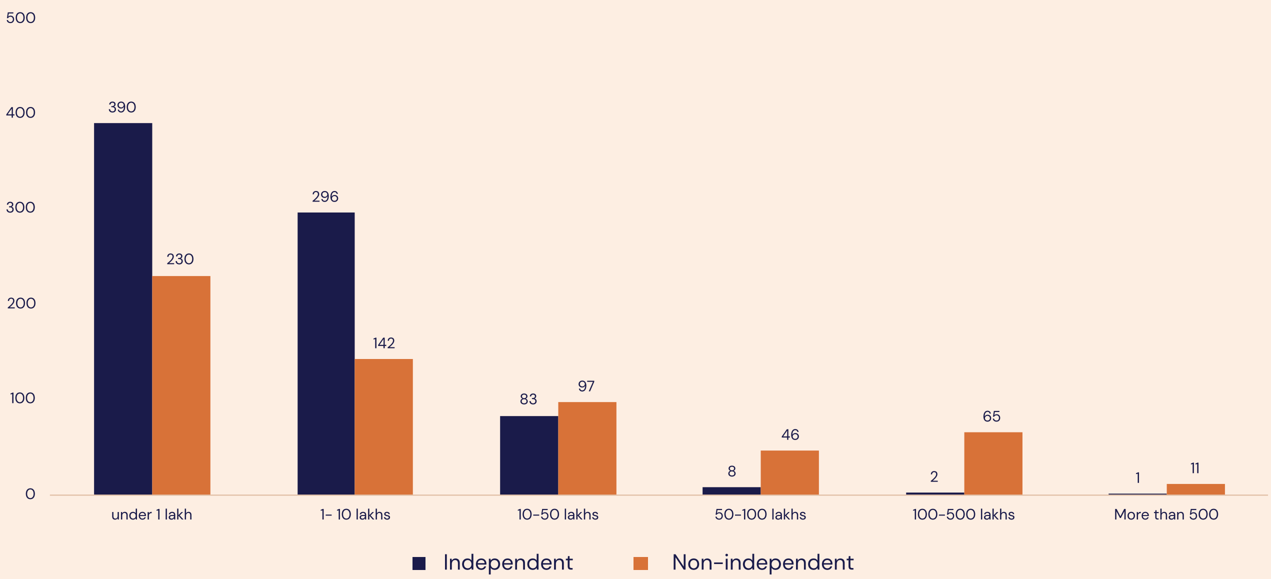
Figure 22b : Remuneration Break-up



(ESOPs - Employee Stock Ownership Plan, ESPSs - Employee Stock Purchase Scheme)

Source: Based on remuneration data of 5155 directors in 480 NSE-listed companies
***Does not include board directors earning more than ₹ 10 Cr to avoid outliers from influencing the analysis**

Figure 22c : Compensation Analysis – Independent And Non-independent Women Directors



Source: Based on data of 1377 women directors on boards of listed Indian companies (collected from India's Ministry of Corporate Affairs website & Annual reports)

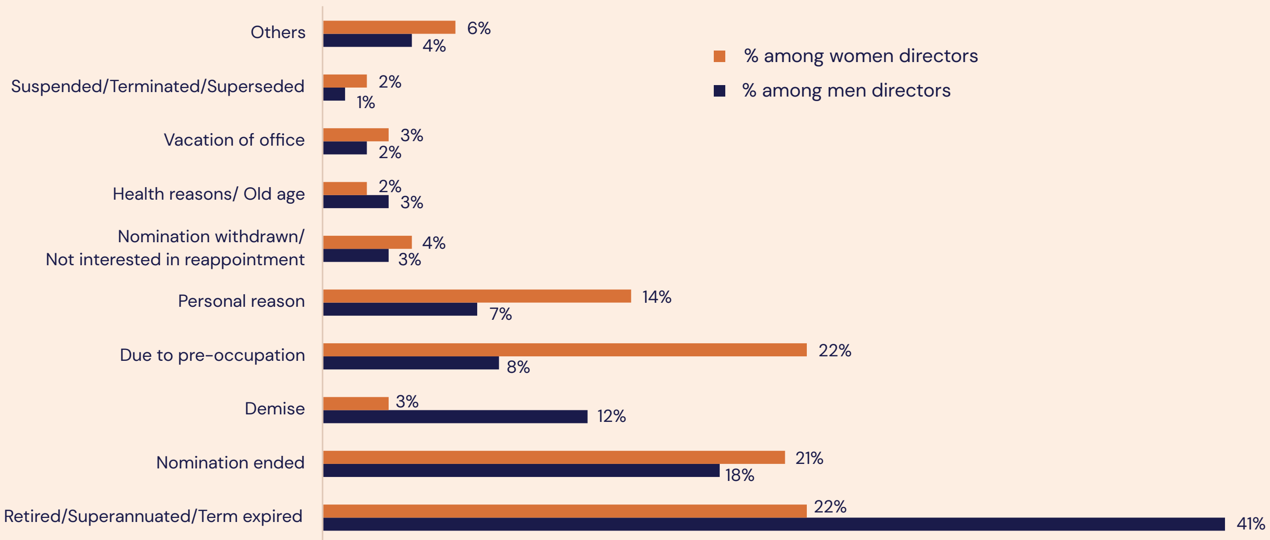
Cessation

The percentage of men directors discontinuing directorship duties due to reasons such as retirement, infirmity, and demise is disproportionately higher than that of women directors. But the reasons for cessation of women directorships are more or less equally split between retirement, ending of nomination, and preoccupation (see Figure 23). The data shows that as many women do not continue in directorships until retirement age or demise as men do.

The percentage of women who discontinue directorship due to preoccupation and personal reasons is more than double that of men (36% for women vs 15% for men). The stretch ratio of men and women directors is not very different; so, it is not possible to say that women leave because a smaller pool of women fill many posts. While we do not have data to explain the reasons for the same, it is possible that dynamics of board functioning may make a certain group uncomfortable and thus they may leave boards much before their tenure gets over. We are mindful that to be able to really understand the reasons behind women leaving early, it will be necessary to do a focused study of such women.

We conjecture that the women are possibly citing politically-correct reasons (preoccupation, personal reasons) for quitting directorial positions. Preoccupation could be a front for not saying many things such as not finding it meaningful to be in the role, not being able to contribute, not being heard in the board, having differences with the board leadership etc. It could also mean that the company had appointed the woman director as a stop-gap arrangement and when they found someone more suitable, there was a transition with mutual consent. In the primary data collected from the women directors, it was found that women endorsed that board climate was an enabling factor for them to perform their duties on the board. Needless to say, all of the above is mere speculation and requires further investigation and an in-depth study. In this study, however, it is important to flag that women are leaving prematurely and giving "pre-occupation" as a reason.

Figure 23 : Cessation Analysis: Reasons For Cessation From Directorship Given By Men And Women



Source: NSE-Prime date base of 1788 companies listed on NSE as on March 2019

Enablers in fulfilling board of directors role

Enabling factors that help board members fulfil their role can be classified under three heads, viz., personal (prior experience, formal skills and training, personal network, access to a coach/mentor), board-related dynamics (value given to diverse views, decision-making processes in the company), and regulatory factors (need for regulatory compliances, presence of external governing bodies). The survey asked the women directors to share their views on what factors they found enabling for their work on boards.

Women directors agreed that the key enablers of self-rated performance were relevant education and experience, and the value given to a diverse voice (see **Figure 24**). The next three enablers were related to the functioning of the company – the existing decision-making processes in the company (openness, transparency, and timely sharing of information), value given to diversity of views in the board (diversity included, gender, age, experience etc.), and presence of governing bodies such as SEBI, MCA, etc. which provides comfort that processes are followed and the interests of the various stakeholders are taken care of.

The presence of statutory requirements by regulators and governing bodies which are often spoken about as onerous are seen as enablers to some extent. The regulators and governing bodies can, on the one hand, add caution to the company decision-making and, on the other hand, strengthen the hands of the director to insist on certain actions and decisions. Research also shows that attention needs to be paid to the culture of inclusiveness to derive benefits from diversity in a group.[15] Women directors agreed that the culture of the board – where all voices are heard – is enabling.

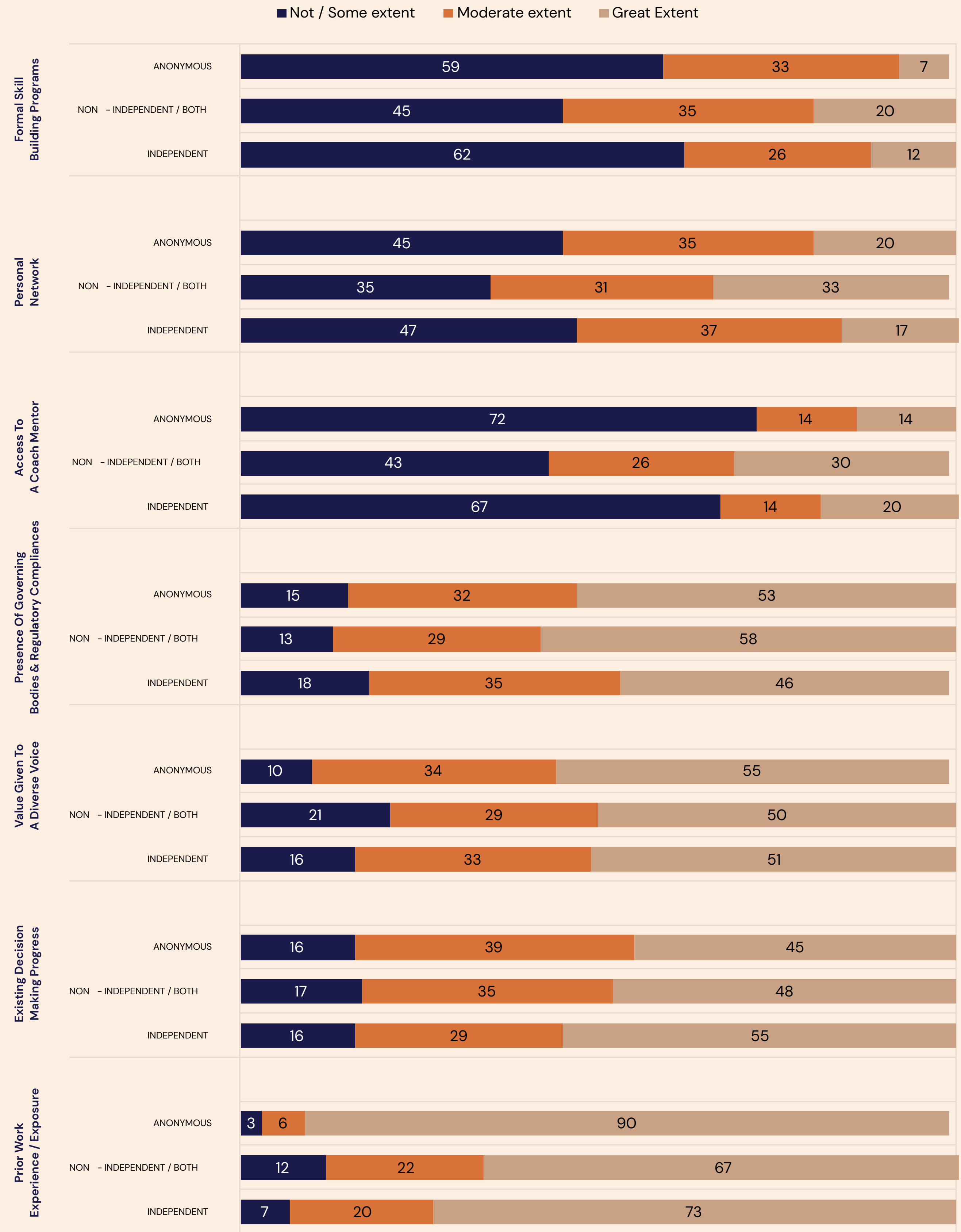
One of the surprising findings was that the lowest-rated enablers having were a mentor, skill-building programmes, and a personal network. Given the general belief and accompanying research[16] that mentoring can help the minority group overcome some of its liabilities of otherness and foreignness, we had expected women directors would find supportive mechanisms to be helpful in enabling them to function well in their environment.

Maybe this was because of the nature of the sample. Our sample comprised largely of independent women directors with considerable experience in their fields. Thus, for them, mentors and skills would be less important. Possibly, these two factors would be more relevant for the younger, first-time, less-experienced directors who are still finding their feet in the ecosystem. Not acknowledging personal network as an enabler may also be attributed to the social stigma associated with having a network and the belief that it is not professional to climb the ladder with the help of personal contacts. Four women perceived the word network in a negative light and suggested use of a better word to convey the meaning better in the note they sent with the survey.

[15] Creary, S., McDonnell, M. H., Ghai, S., & Scruggs, J. (2019). When and why diversity improves your board's performance. Harvard Business Review, Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2019/03/when-and-why-diversity-improves-your-boards-performance

[16] Tong, C., & Kram, K. E. (2013). The efficacy of mentoring-the benefits for mentees, mentors, and organizations. The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of the Psychology of Coaching and Mentoring, 217-242; Jeong, S., Irby, B. J., Boswell, J., & Pugliese, E. (2018). Editor's overview: Outcomes and benefits of mentoring. Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 26(4), 355-357.

Figure 24 : Enablers In Fulfilling A Board Of Directors Role: Perceptions Of Women Directors

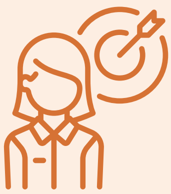


Source: Based on primary survey of 192 women directors

Meeting of expectations of women directors

The survey asked the women the extent to which their expectations around serving on the boards had been met. The highest level of satisfaction was with respect to broadening perspectives (75.5%) and learning (74.5%). Expectations around remuneration (62% reporting as moderately met or not met) and contribution to the industry (40% reporting as moderately met and 23% reporting as not met) were least met (see **Figure 25**).

For expectations to be met, the locus of control of expectations is either internal or external. Interestingly, expectations around acceleration of learning (broadening of perspective, learning, and growth) have an internal locus of control and women respondents are satisfied with those. While for another set of expectations around gaining recognition, increasing visibility, remuneration etc., the locus of control is external, and these are the expectations that are least met among the women directors. There is also some evidence for the disillusionment among the women directors in not being able to meaningfully contribute to the industry as a part of their role. The inability to contribute to the industry might be reflective of the style of decision-making and functioning of corporations and/or the isolated nature of the role of director itself. While a director may make a contribution to the specific company that they are part of, there are hardly any mechanisms to contribute to the industry as a whole.



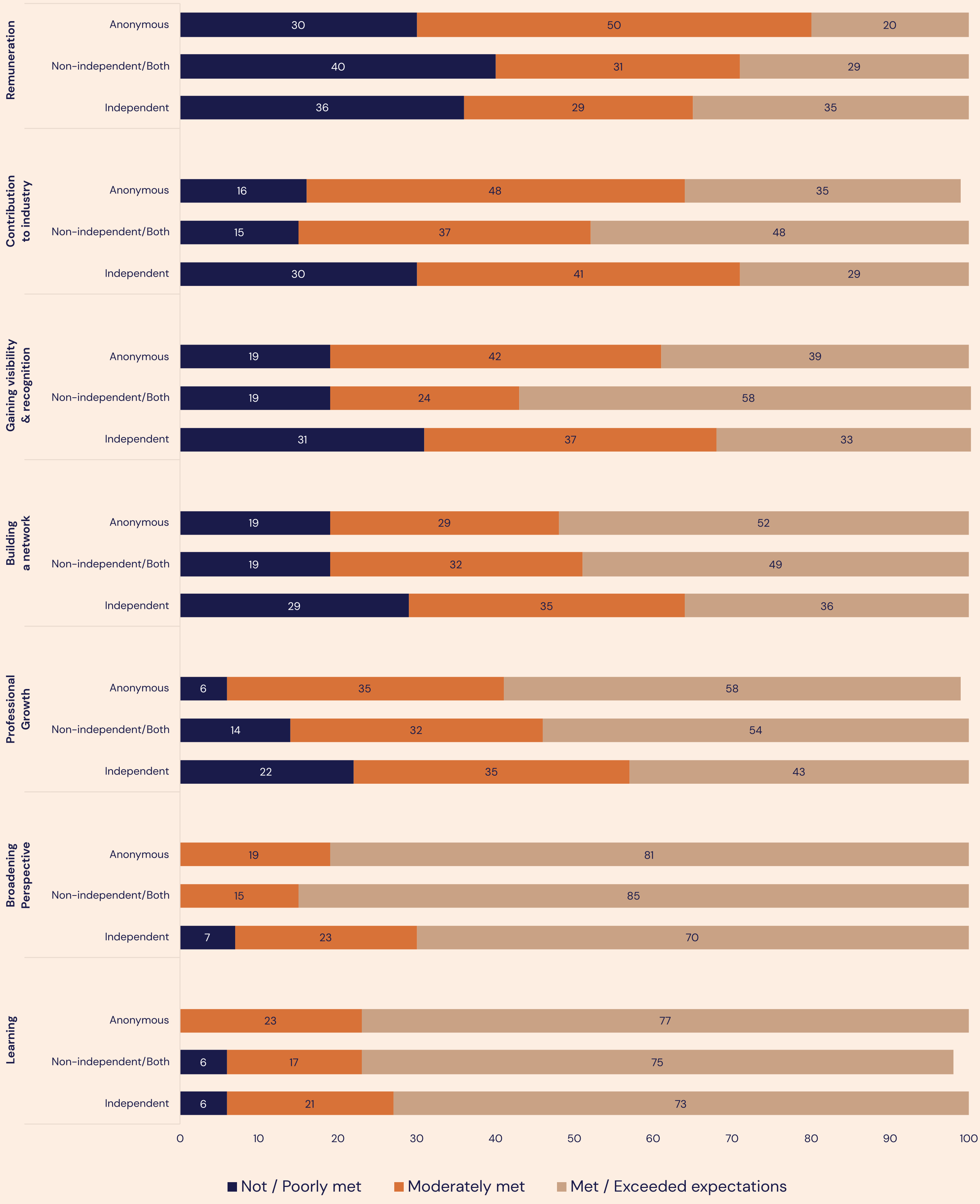
Need-gap expressed by women directors included industry exposure and opportunities to create on-ground impact.

Expectations of women directors that were met included - broadening perspective and learning.

Expectations that were least met were remuneration and ability to contribute.

Key enablers of performance were found to be relevant education and experience and the value given to their voice.

Figure 25 : Expectations Held By Women Directors With Respect To Director Role And Extent To Those Being Met



Source: Based on primary survey of 192 women directors

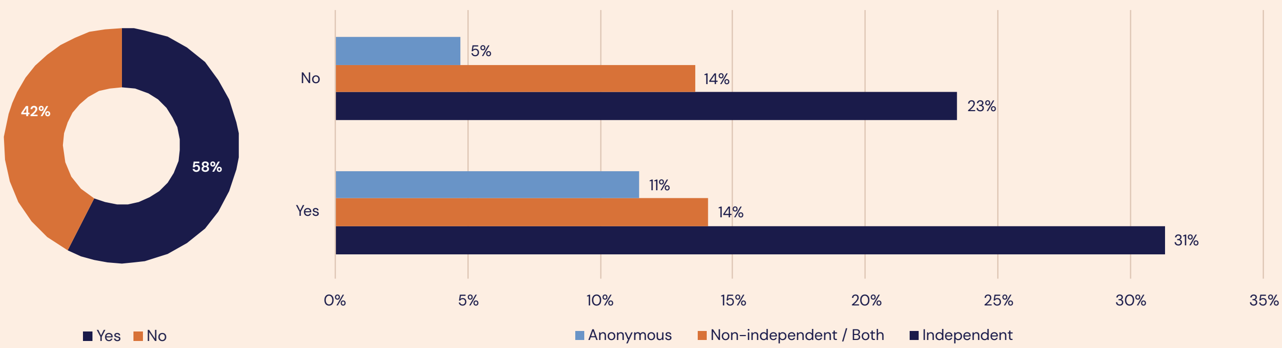
Challenges faced by women directors

The survey revealed that more than 50% of the respondents experienced onerous regulatory pressure and heavy liabilities in their roles. Several women directors also mentioned that it seemed more onerous because they had little immunity and very few ways to protect themselves from the associated risk (see **Figure 26**).

Another challenge that was commonly shared by the women director respondents was the difficulty in overseeing the firm's operational matters. This included specifics such as limited access to the firm's operational data in board meetings, and limited time available to review and comment on operational issues, and, at times, the rather short duration of the meetings.

A quarter of the respondents also reported challenges in overseeing the firm's leadership/management decisions. They highlighted specific challenges such as the board's limited access to the company's decision-making process and no mandate or culture of taking board approval for many critical decisions in the firm. Robust decision-making processes of the company is possibly the most enabling factor for directors to play their role of protecting shareholder interest and providing governance oversight to the company. Combining insights from enabling factors and challenges shared by women directors it appears that trust in decision making processes of the company is essential. Thus organizations may be well advised to consciously build trust among its board members.

Figure 26 : Perception Of Legal Responsibilities: Responses Of Women Directors



Source: Based on primary survey of 192 women directors

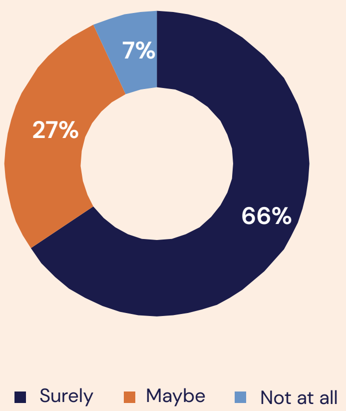
Interest to join a community of women in boards

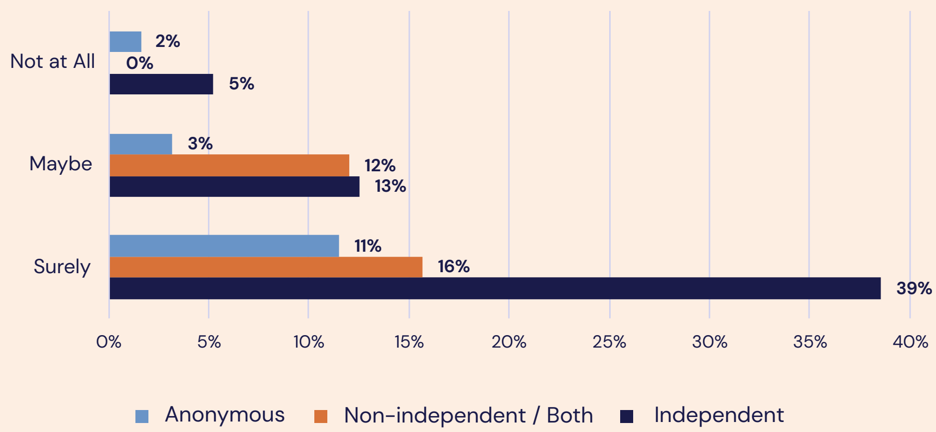
Globally, groups such as the 30% Club[17] and the Women Corporate Directors (a foundation inspiring visionary boards worldwide) are examples of communities of women directors with global presence which are involved in advocacy, support, and awareness building among the relevant groups. To understand if such a group was needed in India, we asked our respondents if they would want to join a community of women directors. While 7% women did not want to join any such community, 27% were unsure; 66% said they would be keen to join a community of women in boards (see **Figure 27**). Newly-joined board members were more likely to want to be part of such a community.

Of the nearly 7% respondents who were disinclined to join a community of women in boards, most were appointed on the board via professional networks and search firms. These women also rated "access to a coach/mentor" very low as an enabler for their own role as a board director.

Some of the women also said that they already felt a little dissatisfied that they were on the board because of the quota. Being part of a 'women only' club or body would seem to signal that they were somehow deficient. Some also mentioned that they would be able to learn and grow their network more if they were part of a mixed rather than a single gender group. While these arguments are relevant, the formation of a community of women directors with the appropriate objective can go a long way in strengthening the presence of women on boards.

Figure 27 : Interest To Join A Community Of Women In Boards





Source: Based on primary survey of 192 women directors

[17] 30% Club is a global campaign started in the UK by Dame Helena Morrissey in 2010. It is now led by Chairs and CEO's to increase gender diversity at board and senior management levels.

THE WAY FORWARD

The positive correlation between the diversity of a board and key business parameters like Return on Investment and lower probability of insolvency in studies across the globe affirms the assertion that diversity in board creates a positive impact on the organization. But despite the pick-up in appointments in 2015 in women directorship in India, Indian corporates still have to traverse a long way to create impact. In fact, disappointingly, women occupy a meagre 16.8% of all board positions in public-listed Indian companies. Furthermore, barely 4% of public-listed companies' boards have three or more women which is postulated as the “critical mass” that any group needs to make a transformative impact on the groups they are part of. Indian women directors lag behind men in most key parameters such as key positions within the board (only 4% of chairpersons being women, of which, only 0.8% are independent women directors); opportunities to chair or be part of key committees (women chairing less than 8% of the committees); remuneration (women directors being paid 50% lesser); and tenure (women having almost 40% lesser tenure).

Arising from the analysis of Indian public firms' macro data on board memberships, and the primary research conducted on 192 survey respondents, the following recommendations are made towards building diversity and reaping its full potential. The women directors through the survey have indicated that there is a clear need-gap felt by women board members in getting industry exposure and opportunities to create an on-ground impact. While the women appreciate how board memberships boost their network, personal learning, and the broadening of their perspectives, the key areas of concern such as a board director's overbearing liabilities, limited transparency in organization's dealings and decisions, and lack of inclusive climate continue to persist.

THE PROBLEM WITH MANDATES IS THAT THEY ARE OFTEN TREATED AS THE CEILING FOR NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO CAN BE INCLUDED IN THE CATEGORY IN THE GROUP.

CORPORATES ARE ADVISED TO TREAT MANDATES AS GUIDELINES FOR EARLY ACTION.

Moving beyond tokenism

In a study on inducting independent directors and grey directors (directors hired to merely fill the quota – those who do not really qualify to be directors) and their effect on the performance of family firms in India post the mandate, it was found that independent directors had a positive effect on performance.[18] The study specifically showed that even one real independent director made a positive impact on the performance of family-run companies.

Given the widely available evidence that women leaders bring a variety of positive outcomes for corporations and societies, it is imperative that Indian boards appoint more women who bring in rich professional experience, to add to the pool of Indian leadership talent at the top echelons of corporate India.

Also, women may be entrusted to lead important committees of the board, such as chairing the audit committees or risk committees. Indian corporates need to move beyond their own unconscious biases and age-old practices to create a more equal footing for women directors for an impact. Dearth of women cannot be an argument for not bringing in more women. The fact that more than 1057 unique women have served and retired as independent directors indicates that the talent pool is large enough to pick from.

Boards need to widen their search for women directors

Qualitative review of the data and the primary survey responses show that there is a fair amount of reliance on closed networks in hiring of directors. While this may be understandable as being less risky compared to inducting strangers into the board, such behaviour also limits the number of women who are considered for the position of board leadership. Board recruitment searches can be widened by going beyond the traditional methods of searching for possible candidates and relying on formal search agencies or mandating invitation of at least one or two unknown women to be board members. Research shows that there is an increase in the number of women who get hired by insistence on at least receiving and considering a certain proportion of women résumés. Similarly, it may be helpful for Nomination and Remuneration Committees to at least ask for and consider five or six new candidates before making a decision on whom to induct into the board. Deliberate search would help to increase diversity in the quality of both men and women board members.

[18] Sarkar, J., & Selarka, E. (2015). Women on board and performance of family firms: Evidence from India. Available at SSRN 2730551.

Mandate may need to be bolder

There seem to be two ways in which countries are achieving a higher proportion of women on boards. One is through the mandates set by the regulator and the other is through consistent monitoring of the company or industry bodies of diversity on boards and in senior management positions. One of our findings is that, in most countries, corporations responded to meet the target set (see **Figure 1**). In India, given the spike in appointments in 2015 and then in 2019, and that 73.6% companies have appointed only one woman director, shows the same response to the Companies' Act and the SEBI mandate. Thus, it may be argued that the regulator in India needs to set a bolder target for women on boards to achieve higher numbers. However, introducing targets alone is not the best option. Changes can also be brought in by implementing changes in attitudes of the key decision-makers of the company and the larger society.[19] The region-wise CWDI data for 2018 also shows that the number of women on boards also overlaps with the extent of masculinity and patriarchy norms prevalent in the society.[20]

Northern European countries who have the lowest gender gap index have the highest number of women on boards, while the Middle-Eastern countries with the highest gender gap have among the lowest number of women on boards. Though the overlap is not perfect, the trends are fairly consistent.[21] Norway not only set targets for women on boards but has also set targets for women in public and political positions[22] thus leading to holistic inclusion of women on all fronts. Voluntary initiatives like the 30% Club – launched in the United Kingdom in 2010 and since have expanded to 14 other countries/regions – where stakeholders like the boards, investors, and governments work together to achieve gender parity, could also play an important role beyond regulatory mandates in increasing the representation of women on Indian corporate boards.

Treat women as equal

Even though it takes time to achieve equality, it would make sense to offer women the same remuneration, shares, and performance-linked bonuses for corporate directorships. Most women felt that their expectations around remuneration on boards were not met. While women may not join boards to make it their primary means of earning their living, remuneration is also seen as a signal of how their work is valued.

[19] Institutional Shareholder Services, Inc. (2017, January 5). Gender Parity on Boards Around the World. Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance. https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2017/01/05/gender-parity-on-boards-around-the-world//

[20] Waring, K. (2019, February 15). How to Get More Women in the Boardroom. Ernst & Young. https://www.ey.com/en_us/assurance/how-to-get-more-women-in-the-boardroom

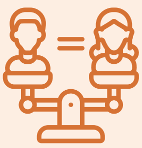
[21] Global Gender Gap Report (2020, February 20). Wikipedia. Retrieved February 22, 2020 from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Gender_Gap_Report

[22] Foster, A.R. (2017). A quest to increase women in corporate board leadership: Comparing the law in Norway and the U.S. Washington International Law Journal, 26(2), 381-412. https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1755&context=wilj

Attend to majority-minority dynamics

There is ample research to show that while diversity is a metric, inclusion is a process. Achieving inclusion will require all board members to be more aware of their treatment of women on boards. Women as a minority on the board have experiences of exclusion from socializing and even from decision-making and being subjected to inappropriate behaviours, which indicates that women directors are noticed more for their gender than their individual contributions.[23] The phenomenon of 'mansplaining' is widely documented.

Often points made by women will be considered trivial or only heard when a man supports or repeats what the woman said. While research on group processes shows that when groups use enquiry and brainstorming to discuss they include diverse opinions and reach better decisions in practice, groups often listen to the majority and the minority are expected to either advocate their point of view strongly or go along with the majority. Boards may be able to exploit the potential of all its members if they are mindful of emergent group dynamics and pay attention to processes of inclusion of diverse voices. A qualitative research study highlighted the role that the chairperson of the board played in addressing inclusion – by creating processes and opportunities in the meetings for women directors to express views and through feedback outside the boardroom.[24] The majority group members need to pay attention and take the first step to help the minority group members feel like that "they belong" without the need to give up their uniqueness.



THE MANDATE IS A NUDGE. THE AIM CAN BE NOTHING MORE OR LESS THAN EQUALITY ON BOARDS.

[23] Kakabadse, N. K., Figueira, C., Nicolopoulou, K., Hong Yang, J., Kakabadse, A. P., & Özbilgin, M. F. (2015). Gender diversity and board performance: Women's experiences and perspectives. Human Resource Management, 54(2), 265-281.
Kramer, V. W., Konrad, A. M., Erkut, S., & Hooper, M. J. (2006). Critical mass on corporate boards: Why three or more women enhance governance (pp. 2-4). Wellesley, MA: Wellesley Centers for Women

[24] Srinivasan, V., & Rejie, G. (2013). Building the women directorship pipeline in India: An exploratory study. IIM Bangalore Research Paper No. 427. Available at SSRN 2346109.

CONCLUSION

Introduction of the Company Act of 2013 mandate, that directed every listed company to have at least one woman director on its board by April 2015 and further strengthening of this directive by the Security and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in 2018, to appoint an independent director by 1st April 2019, has gained mass compliance, but Indian companies still have a long way ahead to become truly inclusive workplaces. While the regulatory push has ensured minimum numbers are met (the average number of women on boards is 1.03), most boards have stopped at including one woman and very few companies have gone beyond having three women as board members. Our probing beyond the weak green signs of diversity on boards has another story to tell.

Indian women directors lag behind men on most key parameters like key positions within the board, opportunities to chair or be part of key committees, remuneration, and tenure. There is a disturbing trend of appointing fairly young women who have yet to gain corporate experience as part of boards (both non-independent and independent). Number of women reaching the boards through their executive roles in the company are also very low. In a subtle manner, remuneration offered and choice of committees they chair also hints at how their work and presence are valued. These and many other findings highlight that women on board are primarily being invited to meet regulatory norms rather than for their experience and talent. Rama Bijapurkar labels it aptly as, "Jugaad of Inclusion"[25] done by the corporates. What started as an endeavour to include capable and qualified women on corporate boards has only reached a point where a woman has been added to a majority male board. Merely bringing a woman on board as compliance defeats the entire purpose of the regulation – to add diverse views and perspectives to the decision making by the board.

Our findings also indicate that women board directors did not feel that they were able to contribute to the best of their ability or they were fully included in the boards they served on. The majority members play a critical role to take the first step to help the minority group members feel like "they belong" without the need to give up their uniqueness. While diversity is an attainable metric inclusion is a mindful process. Gender will always be constitutive in organization logic, underlying assumptions and the practices, until inclusion embraces equity beyond patterned differences.

[25] Bijapurkar, R. (2020, February 10). Jugaad of Inclusion: Why quota for women board directors is failing to bring about real change. The Economic Times. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/company/corporate-trends/view-quotas-for-women-in-corporate-boards-fail-to-bring-about-real-change/articleshow/74033806.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

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APPENDIX A

Representation of women on boards in G20 countries in 2008 and 2018

S. No.	Country	Percentage of women on boards in 2008	Percentage of women on boards in 2018	Regulator Stance
1	United States	12.3	23.4	No direct mandate but SEC requires disclosures of diversity policy and monitoring of it.
2	China	8	12.7 [26]	No mandate
3	Japan	0.9	6.5 [27] [28]	No mandate for women on board but intention to increase women representation in senior leadership positions in 2013
4	Germany	10.7	22.5 [29]	30% in 2015
5	United Kingdom	8.9	29.1	No direct mandate but voluntary disclosures required, public naming of companies with no women on boards
6	France	12.7	44.2 [30]	40% in 2010
7	India	4.5	16.8	At least one woman in 2013
8	Italy	3.6	31.1	30% in 2010
9	Brazil	4.7	8.0	No mandate
10	Canada	12.9	27.0	No direct mandate but there is a disclosure requirement for women on boards else there is a need to explain

11	Russia	5.12	9.2	No mandate
12	South Korea	1.53	2.3	No mandate
13	Spain	8.8	23.6	Target of 40% has been included since 2007 with the guidance provided more detailed until 2012. Comply or explain.
14	Australia	10.2	29.7 [31]	Since 2012 companies have to report on the gender diversity in their boards. Penalties are applied if self-set targets are not met.
15	Mexico	6.9	7.3	No mandate
16	Indonesia	4.8	14.9 [32]	No mandate
17	Netherlands	13.9	18.7 [33]	30% in 2013
18	Saudi Arabia		5.0 [34]	No mandate
19	Turkey	10.9	11.7 [35] [36]	No direct mandate till 2012. Thereafter, comply or explain if there is no woman on the board. For 2016, 25% target is given
20	Switzerland	9.2	27.0	30% in 2018 (mandate only set in 2018)

[26] https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/21f19cfe-9cce-4089-bfc1-e4c38767394e/Board_Gender_Diversity_in_ASEAN.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=mMOqVBn

[27] https://www.msci.com/documents/10199/36ef83ab-ed68-c1c1-58fe-86a3eab673b8

[28] https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Companies/Japan-Inc.-scrambles-to-find-female-directors

[29] https://www.msci.com/documents/10199/36ef83ab-ed68-c1c1-58fe-86a3eab673b8

[30] https://fortune.com/2018/12/03/board-diversity-france/

[31] https://aicd.companydirectors.com.au/advocacy/board-diversity/statistics

[32] https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/21f19cfe-9cce-4089-bfc1-e4c38767394e/Board_Gender_Diversity_in_ASEAN.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=mMOqVBn

[33] https://www.tias.edu/docs/default-source/Kennisartikelen/female-board-index-2018.pdf

[34] https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Companies/Japan-Inc.-scrambles-to-find-female-directors

[35] https://www.msci.com/documents/10199/36ef83ab-ed68-c1c1-58fe-86a3eab673b8;

[36] http://research.sabanciuniv.edu/25068/1/Women_on_board_Turkey_2014_2nd_Annual_Report.pdf

APPENDIX B

Survey Questions

Q1 How did you get appointed as a board member? (Select multiple if applicable)

- ☐ Professional network
- ☐ Search firms
- ☐ Training/mentoring programs
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q2 As a board member, you would have expectations on several dimensions. Rate on a five point scale the degree to which the following expectations have been met

- ☐ Learning
- ☐ Professional growth
- ☐ Broadening perspectives
- ☐ Growing my network
- ☐ Increased visibility
- ☐ Gaining recognition
- ☐ Contribution to industry
- ☐ Remuneration
- ☐ Overall
- ☐ Other if any (please specify)

Q3 Rate on a five point scale the extent to which the following factors have enabled you to fulfill your responsibilities as a board member

- ☐ Presence of governing
- ☐ Liabilities as a director
- ☐ Regulatory compliances
- ☐ Formal skill building programs
- ☐ Personal network
- ☐ Prior work experience/ exposure
- ☐ Access to a coach/ mentor
- ☐ Being included by fellow board members (being heard, treated as an equal and as an insider)
- ☐ Existing decision making processes
- ☐ Value given to a diverse voice (diversity due to gender, experience, expertise, age, etc
- ☐ Other if any (please specify)

Q4 Do you find the legal responsibilities on Directors to be onerous?

- Please describe your concern
- Please provide your suggestions to reduce this burden, if any.

Q5 Do you wish to be a member of a community of women board members?

Brief profile information

Q6 Your age (in years)

Q7 Your education level - (For example, B.A., C.A, MBA etc.)

Q8 Please enter your board membership detail: For each Company you are on the board of
Name of the company
Date of joining (DD/MM/YYYY
Type of membership (please select all those applicable)

- ☐ Independent
- ☐ Executive
- ☐ Nominee
- ☐ Related to founder / CEO

Q9 Please list all the committees that you chair

Please list all the committees that you are a member of

Q10 Your annual compensation (Rs. lakh)

APPENDIX C

Primary Data Collection from Women Directors

Multiple rounds were used to collect primary data. In the first round, the survey was sent out as an e-mail to 1,400 e-mail IDs obtained from the PRIME Database and shared by personal contacts of the various members of the team collecting the data. Another 2,000 plus e-mails were also sent to the company secretaries of all the listed companies (e-mail IDs shared by PRIME Database) with a request to forward to the women directors.

Three reminders were sent over six weeks. Respondents had the option to either fill the questionnaire online or fill a hard copy, scan, and return. Using the online questionnaire, 79 women directors responded directly; 19 were received as scanned copies of the filled-in survey. To ameliorate the low response rate, a physical copy of the survey was mailed to the company secretaries of all the companies via Speed Post – 1100 physical surveys were sent out thus. Using the postal route, 94 women directors responded. Thus, a total of 192 responses were received from women directors.

APPENDIX D

Board Committee Participation Details

Committee	Position	Independent Directors (ID)	Non Independent Directors (NID)	In committees	Committee members as % of no of total directors	Committee members as a % of total no of women directors	Committee Chair as % of total no of women directors	Committee Chair as % of total no of Companies
Audit	Members	580	96	676	6.99%	41.46%	5.85%	6.10%
	Chairs	109	2	111				
Nomination, remuneration & compensation	Members	499	150	649	7.25%	42.99%	8.80%	9.17%
	Chairs	162	5	167				
CSR, business responsibility & sustainable development	Members	288	223	511	6.33%	37.51%	10.59%	11.04%
	Chairs	124	77	201				
Stakeholders relationship & grievance	Members	274	178	452	5.89%	34.93%	11.12%	11.59%
	Chairs	173	38	211				
Risk management	Members	105	64	169	1.86%	11.01%	2.11%	2.20%
	Chairs	27	13	40				
Shares, bonds, debentures, securities	Members	32	50	82	0.83%	4.90%	0.58%	0.60%
	Chairs	7	4	11				
General	Members	34	28	62	0.60%	3.53%	0.26%	0.27%
	Chairs	2	3	5				
Human resource	Members	28	21	49	0.57%	3.37%	0.79%	0.82%
	Chairs	9	6	15				
Banking & finance	Members	17	26	43	0.46%	2.74%	0.47%	0.49%
	Chairs	5	4	9				
Vigilance, governance and ethics	Members	22	7	29	0.33%	1.95%	0.42%	0.44%
	Chairs	6	2	8				
Strategy and business development	Members	14	8	22	0.21%	1.26%	0.11%	0.11%
	Chairs	2	0	2				

Source: Based on data of 1602 women directors on boards of listed Indian companies (collected from India's Ministry of Corporate Affairs website & Annual reports)

ABOUT IIM, Ahmedabad

The establishment of Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad in 1961 was the outcome of an innovative initiative with multiple stakeholders such as the State Govt., Industrialists, and the Central Govt. IIMA has since grown on to become an internationally-recognized institution with 110 full-time faculty engaged in research, consultancy, teaching and training.

'Vidya Viniyogadvikasa'-- 'development through the distribution or application of knowledge'-- is the motto which has guided the IIMA, enabling it to develop a reputation for excellence and leadership in management education. IIMA's vision is to be recognized as a premier global management school operating at the frontiers of management education and practice while creating a progressive and sustainable impact on society.

The Institute delivers on this vision through its focus on:

- Promoting excellence in scholarship by encouraging high-quality research, distinctive teaching, and meaningful contribution to knowledge-creation.
- Educating and nurturing leaders of institutions and entrepreneurial organizations and supporting them in their efforts to create high-quality talent and value.
- Making an impact on the world of policy and practice through continuous engagement with alumni and prominent stakeholders, decision-makers and leaders across the spectrum, including government, businesses and non-governmental enterprises.

IIMA's scope is much wider than that of a traditional business school. Its research and training activities extend to broader areas of concern to society. Some of the centres which work specifically on such concerns include:

- The Ravi Matthai Centre for Educational Innovation
- The Centre for Innovation, Incubation, and Entrepreneurship
- The Centre for e-Governance
- The Centre for Management in Agriculture
- The Public Systems Group
- The Centre for Management of Health Services

IIMA faculty have written more than 5,500 cases for teaching in their long duration programs. The Institute has graduated more than 13,000 postgraduate managers from its five long-duration programmes (including current and discontinued programs), in addition to producing 378 doctoral students. 971 faculty members who now serve in management schools in India and neighbouring countries have attended the faculty development program at IIMA. In addition, tens of thousands of managers working in the industry, bureaucracy, and schools have undergone continuous education programs at IIMA through its executive education programme.

The research efforts and contribution of IIMA to knowledge creation is substantial. Vikalpa -- The Journal of Decision Makers published by IIMA focuses on applied research and reflections relevant to practicing managers and academicians. As of 2019, IIMA faculty and students have contributed substantial research output in the form of 4,792 articles in journals, 655 books, 466 monographs, 2,742 working papers, and several book chapters. The faculty has presented more than 4,000 papers in conferences around the world.

The Institute grows from strength to strength each day and hopes to contribute in established and uncharted domains.

ABOUT FICCI- Women on Corporate Boards Mentorship Program

'Women on Corporate Boards Mentorship Program' is aimed at enhancing gender balance and increasing the effectiveness of corporate boards. The program was founded by Mr. Arun Duggal and Ms. Anjali Bansal in 2013. Under this program, experienced and respected Board chairmen, directors, corporate leaders and senior professionals coach and mentor qualified, high potential women to take up board positions. The participants are selected from diverse backgrounds and go through a meticulous screening process. The program's participants currently serve on 150 boards, some of them as Committee Chairs. Right from its inception, the program has been steered by very capable chairpersons, who have put all their energies behind its success. It is presently being chaired by Mrs Meera Shankar, Former Ambassador to U.S.A and Germany.

The program is a unique program in the world. It is not a training program but fosters mentoring, passing on valuable corporate governance experience from experienced Board Members to women leaders starting their Board career. It has had broad support from corporate India, with seasoned and highly statured board directors as mentors who have contributed their time and insight; and partnership of leading legal and accounting firms for content and convening. The mentee group comprises of accomplished women leaders from corporate, financial institutions, professional from accounting and law, government and academia. Over the past few years it has developed into a vibrant community of women board directors and is promoting peer learning and best practice sharing.

The program is administered by FICCI, the largest and oldest apex business organisation in India. Its history is closely interwoven with India's struggle for independence, its industrialization, and its emergence as one of the most rapidly growing global economies.

A non-government, not-for-profit organisation, FICCI is the voice of India's business and industry. From influencing policy to encouraging debate, engaging with policy makers and civil society, FICCI articulates the views and concerns of industry. It serves its members from the Indian private and public corporate sectors and multinational companies, drawing its strength from diverse regional chambers of commerce and industry across states, reaching out to over 2,50,000 companies.

FICCI provides a platform for networking and consensus building within and across sectors and is the first port of call for Indian industry, policy makers and the international business community.

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When I embarked on this study, I had thought this was going to be a quick study and I could turn it around in three months. However, I had underestimated. It has taken more than eleven months to complete the study. It would have taken much longer if I did not have the support of several people working on this study.

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Change is slow.

Nothing but strategic and persistent attention can achieve it.

Equal number of men and women candidates may be considered before deciding on the best candidate to fill board positions

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“Critical Mass” is important!
It is recommended that boards strive to have at least three women on boards

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Diversity on boards maybe achieved by nominating women but inclusion of women may only be achieved by change in mindsets of all board members

For further information please email to neharika@iima.ac.in