



Pink Collar Skilling

Unleashing the Women Power in Real Estate Sector

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Foreword



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The fast-paced vaccination drive, low-interest rates on home loans, and several positive initiatives from the government have helped Real Estate Sector make a swift recovery.

The construction sector is the 2nd largest employer in the country, contributing 9% to the country's GDP. It is estimated that around 57 million people are employed in the Construction Sector, out of which only 7 million are women. Further, there is a huge dearth of women in higher management and technical roles in the real estate sector of India.

Despite its huge contribution to the GDP, the construction workforce remains among the least skilled in the country, limiting the growth potential of the sector as well as the millions of workers engaged in it.

The report by World Trade Center and Primus Partners highlights the unrecognized role of women in the workforce, the issue of wage inequality still deeply prevalent, and the need for skilling and other reforms to make the Real Estate workforce more diverse and inclusive.



Aarti Harbhajanka

**Founder and Managing Director
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Foreword

The real estate sector has long been perceived as a male-dominated one; however, the contribution of women to its growth is invaluable as women form the backbone of the construction workforce and play an important role.

Recent years have seen an increasing number of women take up leadership roles in major Real Estate Organizations in the country. However, despite such progress, there are many areas in need of improvement. Despite the increasing numbers, there remain very few women in leadership positions or technical and managerial roles. Even women in the informal construction sector earn nearly 30-40 percent less than their male counterparts, and the Covid-19 pandemic has only worsened this, disproportionately affecting working women.

The Thought leadership prepared by World Trade Center in collaboration with Primus partners aims to shed light on the role and importance of women in the construction sector, the current disparity in the wage gap, a look at India in comparison to other developed nations, existing policies from the government in place to encourage the participation of women in the workforce and recommendations for actions to be taken at the level of the Centre, State as well as at that of the Industry.

We hope that due importance will be given to the role played by women in the workforce and that the positive trend of more women joining the Real Estate Sector in technical and managerial roles will continue and gain further momentum.

Executive Summary

The report by World Trade Center and Primus Partners presents an overview of the Pink Collar workers in the country, especially in the real estate and construction segment. The objective of the report is to shed light on issues preventing greater female participation in the real estate sector and measures to change this trend to create a truly diverse and inclusive space for all.

Currently, India's Female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) stands at 25.1% according to the annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) in 2020-21, which is an improvement over a few years ago but is below the global average. In the domestic construction and real estate sector, which employs 57 million workers, 50 million of the people employed are men, and only 7 million are women. Further, the informal women workers engaged in construction in India earn 30-40 per cent less than their male counterparts highlighting the gender inequality prevalent in the construction and real estate sector in India.

The report highlights International best practices for enhancing female participation in real estate and construction, looking at (a) Australia, (b) Japan, (c) New Zealand, (d) China, (e) Peru, the Indian Government's initiatives to encourage women's participation in the construction sector and suggests a ten-step roadmap for bridging the gender divide in the real estate sector.

This report provides a ten-step roadmap for addressing the gender gap in Real Estate sector in the country. The report thus captures the present state of the pink-collar workers in the country and provides recommendations for bridging the gender gap in the real estate and construction sector.



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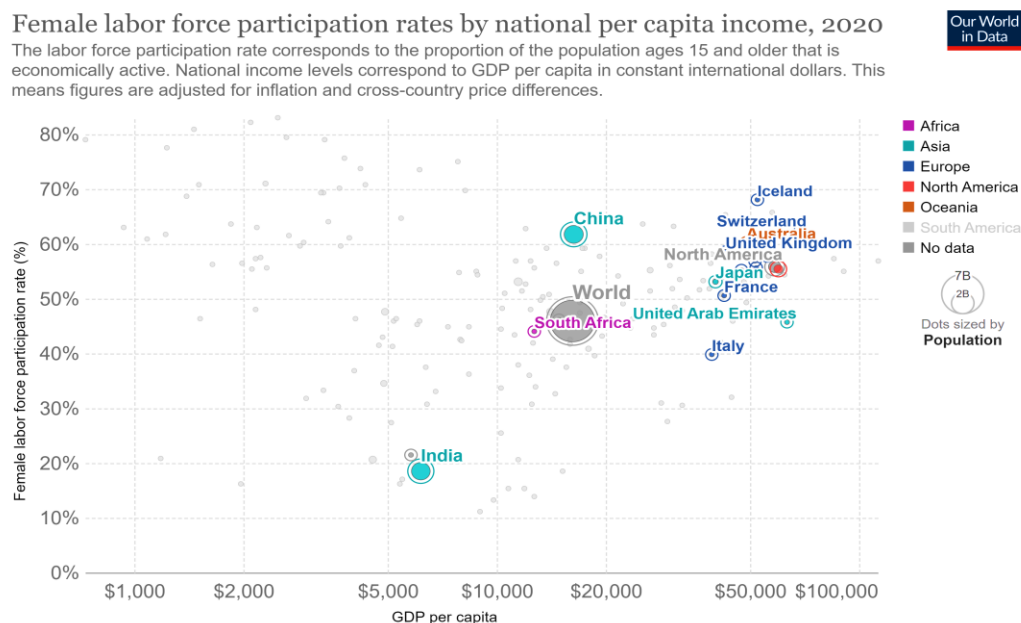


1. Pink Collar Workers

The term “Pink Collar” came into existence after the Second World War, in the mid-1940s, to define jobs that were predominantly done by women, such as nursing, teaching, secretarial and clerical work, etc. The term became popular in the 1970s through the works of the American author Louis Howe. Her book “Pink Collar Workers: Inside the World of Women’s Work”, published in 1977, explored the experiences of women in the labour force. Generally, these occupations fall under the “Service” category and majorly comprise childcare, nursing, teaching,

These jobs are often less paid than white-collar and blue-collar jobs and require less training and fewer career development opportunities. While the classification of blue-collar and white-collar was based on factors such as social class and Industry, pink-collar categorisation is based on gender. A study conducted by New York Times found that more men have flocked to female-dominated occupations like nursing, teaching, etc., in the last two decades.

As per Business Insider, Nurses, elementary and middle school teachers, social workers, counsellors, HR professionals etc., are jobs where women constitute a majority of the workforce.



Female labour force participation is a catalyst for economic growth. Many developed countries in North America and Europe have female labour force participation in the range of 50-70%. In



comparison to the global average of 46% (in 2021), India's female workforce participation rate, however, remains low at 19% (in 2021).

In the healthcare sector, women form over 81% of nurses, whereas only 30% of doctors are women. Education (44.6%), IT/BPOs (37.6%) and Financial Services (31.1%) were some of the sectors where female labour force participation is high. However, the proportion of the female workforce is very low in sectors such as Transport (13.7%), Construction (16.5%), Manufacturing (22.6%) and Trade (23.6%).



2. Pink Collar Workers in Real Estate & Construction

The Real Estate Sector in India has been traditionally male dominated, but an army of invisible women remains the backbone of the workforce. They work as Helpers, concrete mixers, diggers, stone breakers and brick haulers but are never considered skilled enough to work as masons or carpenters.

As per a report released by Godrej Properties, a leading real estate developer, in collaboration with Dasra, it is estimated that the sector employs 57 million workers, a total of 50 million men and 7 million women. Further, these informal women workers in India's construction sector earn 30-40 per cent less than their male counterparts.

The starkness of gender inequity can be seen in the on-ground realities. Women are not only more likely to be engaged in the informal economy but also comprise a significantly higher number of informal workers within the formal sector. An added layer of vulnerability and time poverty surfaces from their burden of doing most of the domestic and care work.

In Real Estate Sector, there are a negligible number of women in Managerial Roles. The glass ceiling acts as a barrier for the few women employed in the space

The workforce in the construction industry can be classified into four levels: Leadership, technical, Semi-skilled labour and unskilled labour. Across industries, the representation of women on the corporate board stands at only around 17.3%, but when it comes to the construction sector, the figure is much lower. Only 1-2% of women reach top-level management positions in this Industry.

The number of women engaged in other technical and managerial roles (architects, civil engineers, supervisors) stood at just 1.4%. Out of this, less than 2% reach leadership positions. In India, 47.6% of licensed architects are women, with a gender pay gap of 15% in the field. The effect of the glass ceiling and gender disparity is evident from the smaller number of women working in this Sector.

Even in Mid-level and semi-skilled roles, including Site Supervisors, Contractors, surveyors, Carpenters, Plumbers, Painters and Masons, women's participation is very low. Women are mainly employed in the lowest paying and most hazardous tasks (like lifting heavy loads), including Brick Kiln Workers, Quarry Workers, Slab Pouring, Stone Shaping, Load Carriers, and Assistants. These jobs are labour intensive, cause health hazards and are not well paying.

The Construction Sector employs the largest number of casual labourers, with close to 84% of the workers in the sector employed as casual labourer's, which is characterised by unstable employment earnings and shifting workplaces. More than 80% of jobs in the sector are constituted



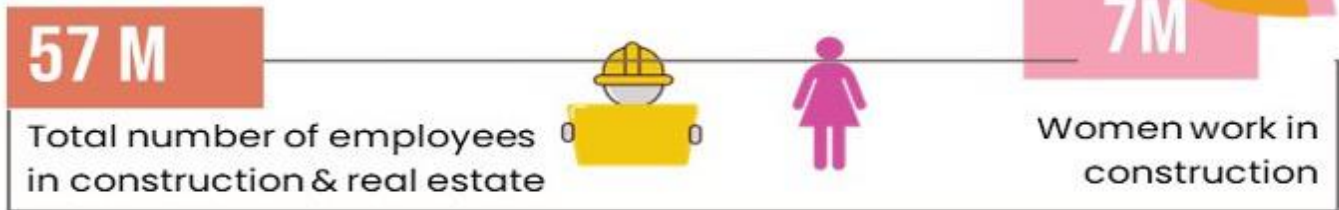
by a minimally skilled labour force, and the rest comprising of technical roles such as engineers, clerical roles etc.

But the situation of female workers in this category is worse than their male counterparts. They are paid less (~30% less, in some cases, it is less than 40-50%) and are often allowed to work only half the month. Most of these women are illiterate and work as stone breakers, concrete mixers etc., under very hazardous conditions.



WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

Facts & Statistics Related to Women in Construction and Real Estate Sector in India



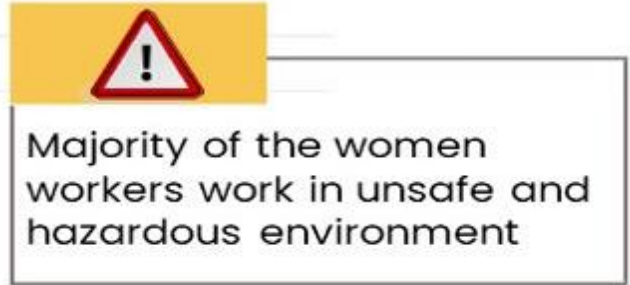
Women representation in corporate boards of construction companies is negligible at 1-2%



Women participation in technical roles (engineers, architects, supervisors etc.) is 14%



47.6% of licensed architects in India are women. Moreover, a gender pay gap of 15% exists in architecture



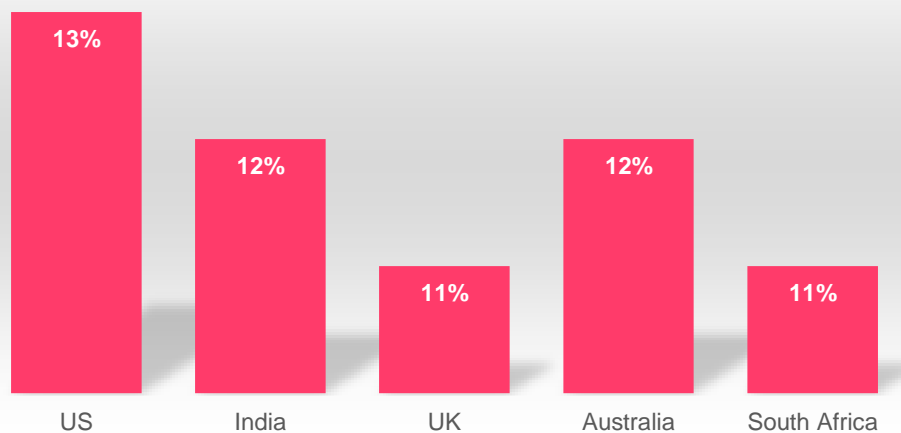
Note: Recommended minimum wage is Rs. 375 per day OR Rs. 47 per hour



3. International Benchmarking: Pink Collars in Real Estate and Construction

Globally, the Construction Industry is perceived as male-dominated due to the small representation of women. This is true for developed and developing nations alike.

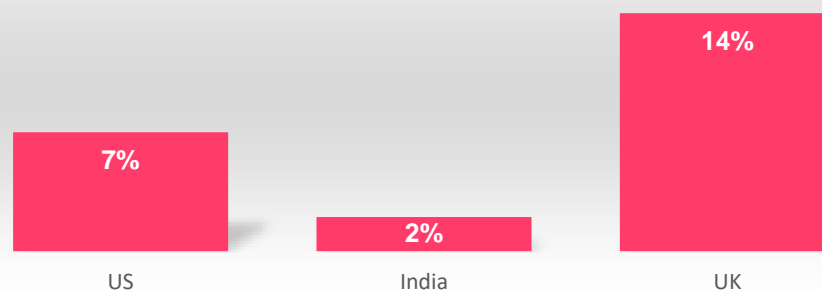
Proportion of Women Workers in Construction Sector



As can be observed, In USA, UK, Australia and South Africa, women constitute about 11-13% of the Construction Labour Workforce.

At the executive level also, women are under-represented in construction companies.

Proportion of Women Executives in Construction Companies



USA

As per the US Bureau of Labour Statistics, only ~13% of payroll employees in the Construction Industry are women. This remained stagnant since the 1990s. Under the self-employed category, the proportion is 10%.

Women are more likely to fill administrative/ office roles in the construction industry, whereas the representation of men is higher in roles such as transportation, extraction, maintenance, repair and construction.

On a positive note, the median full-time wage for women in construction is \$46,808 per year, in comparison to \$43,394 for female workers across all industries.

The gender pay gap in the US construction industry is less (3.7%) as compared to the national gender pay gap (19%)

Female representation in executive roles in construction companies is 7%

UK

According to Guardian, the UK has a lower proportion of female engineers as compared to other European nations.

89% of UK's onsite construction workers are male. Women constitute only 11%, and out of this, 87% are limited to desk and secretarial roles.

Only 14% of executive roles are filled by women, and they earn 38% less than their male counterparts.

The gender pay gap is 20% in this Industry.

It should be noted that between 2018 and 2020, the number of women in top management roles in the industry has increased by 9%.



Australia



Female worker representation in the construction sector was 12%. (as of 2018)

The majority of them took up administrative or secretarial roles

The pay gap in the construction sector comes in at 30.6%. In actual dollars, women in construction can only expect to earn \$6.94 for every \$10 earned by their male counterparts.

South Africa



According to Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) survey in 2018, only 11% of construction industry professionals were women.

About 25% of the biggest construction firms are at least 51% owned by women.

New Zealand



As per Stats NZ, 13% of construction workers are women, which drops to just 3-4% when considering those working on tools.

Most women are employed in technical or managerial roles in the construction industry.

As of 2019, the Average gender pay gap in New Zealand across all sectors was 11.8 per cent, with the construction and infrastructure sector being four per cent female, with a wage gap of four dollars an hour.



China



As of the end of 2018, 14% of all construction workers in China were women.

China's gender pay gap is slightly higher than the global average, at 21%, as per the International Labour Organization in 2018.

Japan



Japan has a negligible number of women involved in construction across verticals.

The Construction Industry in Japan has only about 3% of its workers as women.

Women in construction in Japan earned 30 per cent less on average than their male counterparts, according to a 2016 government report.

Bangladesh



Women mostly work as construction labourers on site, appointed to do simple tasks, being considered unskilled, cheap, available, and flexible labourers.

As per a study, male jogalis (helpers) in Dhaka reported earning BDT 450 (USD 5.29) a day, while women jogalis reported earning just BDT 400. (USD 4.71).

South Korea



Female construction workers comprise 10.4 per cent of the construction industry, according to research by Statistics Korea.

In South Korea, the construction industry had the worst gender gap, with the discrepancy amounting to 43.6 per cent.



4. Global Best Practices adopted for enhancing participation in Real Estate and Construction

4.1. Building Equality Policy – Australia

The Victorian government launched the Building Equality Policy (BEP), applying to new government projects that mandate female representation in at least three per cent of each trade role, seven per cent of each non-trade position and 35 per cent of management, supervisor and specialist labour roles with the aim of disrupting gender stereotypes in the country's most male-dominated Industry.

Under the policy, the Victorian government will create training and employment opportunities for women through government procurement on building, infrastructure, civil engineering, and any other capital works projects.

The Building Equality Policy aims to address the structural barriers faced by women through three steps. The suppliers would be required to:

- Meeting project-specific gender equality targets.
- Engage women as apprentices and trainees
- Implement Gender Equality Action Plans (GEAPs)

4.2. Japan Public Works Contracting

Japan's Construction Ministry has been taking steps to encourage more women to join the industry by awarding public works projects to selected companies that employ women, hiring consultants to hold seminars for construction executives, and taking surveys of female workers, among others.

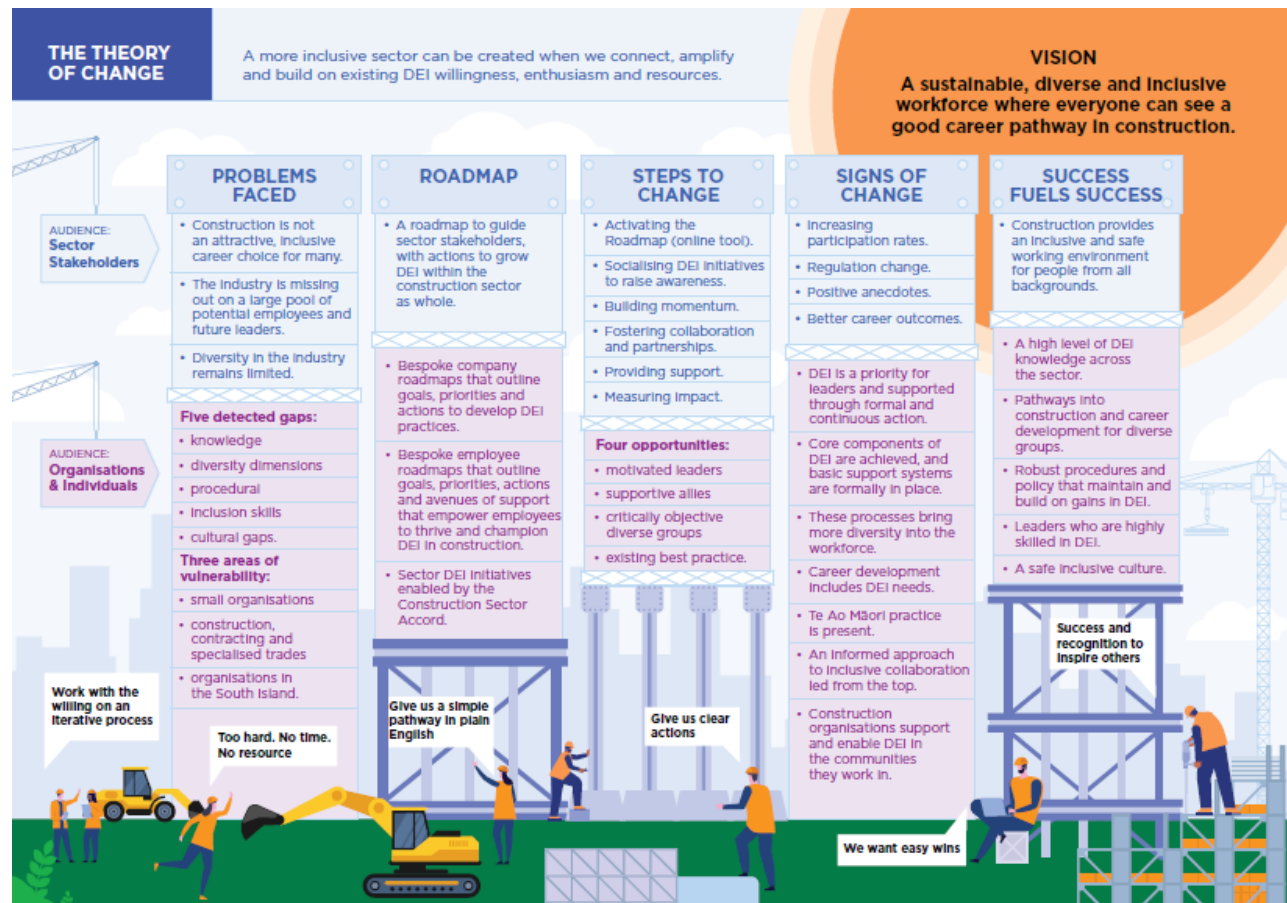
The Construction Industry in Japan had also provided female workers with portable toilets and dressing rooms on construction sites and rolled out a campaign to get young women interested in different positions in the industry. Many companies also provide subsidized childcare, shorter work hours and parental leave to their employees.

The government has also been working to continuously improve working conditions for workers and make it easier for women to enter the Construction Industry.



4.3. Diversity in Construction Initiative – New Zealand

The New Zealand government launched the Diversity in Construction initiative to build a roadmap to better invest in and promote diversity, equity and inclusion in the building and construction sector.



4.4. Vocational Training – China

Provinces in China have vocational and technical schools that provide free training programs under the auspices of the local government to help female residents seek new jobs.

The vocational and technical schools have helped to open up new horizons for women in the Construction Industry, with more young women in China now opting to take training courses for electricians and excavators than courses focused on embroidery, makeup and hairdressing. Not only do such courses present new employment opportunities but also better-paying ones.



4.5. Female Quota and Gender Training- Peru

In Peru, the rural roads maintenance program set a female quota of 10% in micro-enterprises, along with gender training for stakeholders in the project. The implemented measures led to female participation increase from 3.5% to 24%, and decision-making roles for women seeing an increase in the enterprises that received gender training.



5. Indian Government Initiatives

Some of the major policies/initiatives by the government to encourage women's participation not only in Real Estate Sector include:

5.1. National Crèche Scheme

The National Crèche Scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme that aims to ensure that women parents are able to take up gainful employment by providing a safe, secure, and stimulating environment for their children. By providing a safe and convenient space for kids, the scheme helps parents, especially women, take up more opportunities for work in different sectors.

Most Creches have unfortunately not been functional since the outbreak of COVID-19 to prevent the spread of the pandemic. However, with the majority of the population now vaccinated with two or even three doses of the COVID vaccine and the economy fully reopened, the state and central governments have restarted the scheme. Further, to make benefits universally available, the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) will now include the National Creche Scheme, among others, under the umbrella ICDS.

The Construction Sector will be one of the biggest beneficiaries of the national creche scheme, as the responsibility of a child delays the return of most working women to their workplace. Onsite creches have played an essential role in encouraging more women to take up work in the construction and real estate sectors. Countries such as Japan, among many others, have creches and other play sites on or near construction sites to make it easier for women to work.

The Delhi Government recently launched the starting of “mobile creches” where children of construction workers will get better day-care facilities with modern services at the sites.

The scheme has also encouraged state governments to roll out guidelines and begin with the implementation of the scheme.

5.2. E-Shram Portal

The Covid-19 pandemic had a disproportional impact on daily wage workers and street vendors and brought forth the importance of efficient delivery of various social security schemes of the government to the most vulnerable sections of society.

Most construction workers in the country today lack social security benefits that provide maternity, health, and pensions in their home states. Currently, women employed in low-skill construction work have to work through most of their pregnancy and resume work soon after giving birth.



In this regard, the e-shram portal has the potential to be a game changer. The portal is a National Database of Unorganized Workers (NDUW) that will be seeded with Aadhaar and integrated with the “one nation, one ration card” scheme to extend the benefits of the various social security schemes of the Government to the workers.

- As of 3rd June 2022, the portal has registered around 28 crore unorganised workers.

The requirement of an Aadhaar-linked phone number will help to address the issue of efficient delivery and weeding out fake registrations to a large extent, and ensuring funds reach the correct beneficiaries.

However, the Government would need to work through the technology-related barriers for workers to get them registered on the portal.

There is a need for more Construction Worker's Welfare Boards to take the lead in organising special camps for workers' registration in different states for the benefit of Construction Workers and the overall Sector.

5.3. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)

The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) was launched in June 2015 with the aim of providing affordable concrete houses to economically weaker sections and low and middle-income groups (LIG and MIG).

To promote women's empowerment, the government decided to register the houses built under the scheme, preferably in the name of women residents, providing them with ownership rights. The scheme has helped raise standards of living and provided women with the encouragement to now focus on seeking employment and accomplishing other goals.

- **As per a study by the State Bank of India (SBI), 94 lakhs of 123 lakhs houses built under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) scheme are either in women's names or jointly owned by them.**
- In addition, ownership patterns from bank credit disbursements are also showing a significant improvement in female borrowers in new disbursements in FY22 in tier 3 & 4 districts.



6. Ten Step Roadmap for Bridging the Gender Divide in Real Estate Sector

IMF Study states that “India's GDP can expand by a whopping 27 per cent if the number of female workers increases to the same level as that of men.”

Similarly, a study by International Labour Organization (ILO) reveals that women who represent 50 per cent of the world's adult population and one-third of the official labour force receive only one-tenth of the world's income and own less than one per cent of the world property. In India, As per the NFHS Survey 2020-21 by Government, the percentage of women who had a house or land registered in their name (alone or jointly) was 22.7% in 2020-21. The imperativeness of bridging the Gender Divide in the Real estate sector across all levels is an absolute no-brainer.

The economic arguments for Gender equality across the skills pyramid are indisputable and hard-hitting.

- India currently languishes at rank 120 of 131 countries in female labour force participation rate (FLFPR). The impact of gender parity in the Indian workforce can potentially add \$770 billion of additional GDP (a 27% increase) by 2025.
- Indian women currently contribute 17% to GDP (as against 40% in China), less than half the global average.
- Women made up a mere 27% of the workforce in 2017 in India. Between May-August 2018, the FLFPR nose-dived to 10%, according to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy. In other words, men have taken 90% of the 36 million new jobs created in India since 2015.

Therefore, this section provides a detailed roadmap for gender mainstreaming in Real Estate Sector.

6.1. “Open the Door”: National Campaign for Gender Inclusion and Overcoming Bias

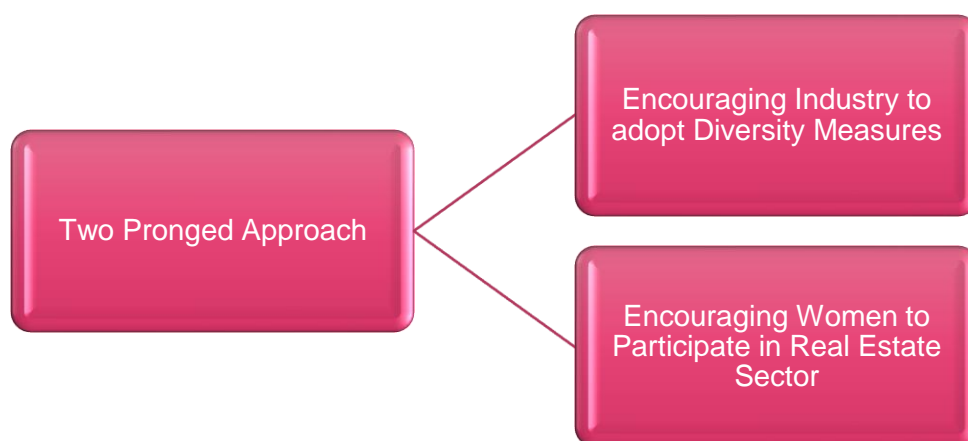
It is often said that “Men make houses, Women make Homes”. This adage highlights the importance of participation of women in Real Estate Sector, developing dream homes for citizens across the country.

There is a need to launch an “Open the Door” National Campaign for enhancing participation of Women in Real Estate Sector. As with any complex problem, the solution to the sector's diversity



challenges will not be one silver bullet. The success will lie in our ability to work cohesively across stakeholders over the upcoming years. There is a need to launch an all-encompassing National Campaign to raise awareness of importance of Gender Participation in Real Estate Sector.

The National Campaign should adopt a Two-Pronged Approach: Firstly, Encouraging Industry to adopt Diversity Measures and Secondly, Encouraging Women to participate in this revolution.



1. Encouraging Industry to Adopt Diversity Measures

There is a need to develop awareness and commitment among the industry to enhance Gender Diversity in the Sector. The Awareness Campaign can focus on Benefits to the Organisation in embracing diversity initiative which includes:

- a. **Financial Benefits:** A McKinsey study found that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 21% more likely to have financial returns above national industry means, and companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 33% more likely to have financial returns above national industry medians. This is a significant return on investment. Further, Organisations that embrace diversity will create cost advantages through reducing employee churn, lost productivity and complaints.
- b. **Workforce Benefits.** Organisations with a reputation for inclusive practices will find it easier to recruit and retain talent.
- c. **Marketing Benefits.** An organisation with Diversity Culture embedded is well placed to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse market and clients requiring commitment to Diversity in the procurement process.



- d. Problem-solving Benefits. Diversity of perspectives in problem-solving produces better decisions.
- e. Structural Benefits. Diverse and inclusive organisations are less determinant and less standardised and therefore more agile.

2. Encouraging Women to participate in Real Estate Sector

Even though women form the backbone of the construction workforce and are increasingly seen at the highest levels of management of Real Estate companies, there remains a perception of the real estate industry being male-driven.

There is a need for a concerted national campaign to raise awareness of the need for more women to consider the construction industry as an attractive and viable career option. Greater representation of women in construction will likely benefit everyone in the Industry.

An effective awareness campaign to build awareness and overcome bias among the general public must target the specific barriers to attracting, recruiting and retaining women. An awareness campaign must also involve men within the Industry as part of the solution to contribute to changing the present perception of the Real Estate Sector while building partnerships with industry associations and increasing coordination between the central, state governments and employer associations.

To encourage the participation of women in the construction industry, Japan rolled out a campaign to get young women interested in different positions in the sector.

Currently, the real estate industry is missing out on talent from other sectors and must work with the government and other major organisations to dispel the notion of the real estate sector being male-dominated to be able to attract more female talent at the managerial and technical levels.

Therefore, “Open the Door” Campaign shall work on developing the will of all stakeholders in driving gender inclusion in Real Estate Sector.



6.2. All Women Crew Lighthouse Housing Projects

Government should undertake at least five Lighthouse Housing Projects across the country, which shall be developed by all Women crew. This will indeed be a mission that showcases 'Nari Shakti' in its real spirit.

All Women crews are today involved in some of the most complex projects and developments taking place in the country.

Case Study: All Women – Managed Luxury Taj Wellington Hotel

Taj Group launched Taj Wellington Mews Chennai which is India's first all women-managed luxury Hotel. The Taj Wellington Mews, Chennai managed by an all-women team is indeed a proud testament to the Group's commitment towards improving the gender balance in the organization and sector.



Taj Wellington Mews has 112 spaciouly and luxuriously appointed rooms, led by a woman General Manager and a team of over 100 women across all operations and other departments. In addition to providing growth opportunities for women employees within the Company, the property also generates employment locally.

Case Study: Ola Future Factory – All women crew manufacturing scooters

Ola Futurefactory, among the world's largest scooter manufacturing facilities, is being run entirely by a crew of women, which shall be 10,000+ at full scale. The 24 billion rupee (\$325 million) "Futurefactory" in the southern state of Tamil Nadu will churn out 2 million units a year in an early stage.

As can be seen from the various examples, women have demonstrated the capability of working across different skill levels in different sectors.

Therefore, it is proposed that at least five lighthouse housing projects should be undertaken across the country, with an all-women crew for implementation. Women shall be responsible for planning, architecture, construction, marketing etc.



These projects shall mark a huge milestone in Real Estate Industry and demonstrate 'Women's Skill set in different aspects of the Construction Process.

6.3. Gender Inclusion in Government Contracts

Governments are one of the largest spenders in construction projects. There is a need for Government to adopt affirmative policies in selection of supplier for the construction projects.

Several International Governments, including Australia and Japan, give preference in public contracts to Suppliers which have greater women workforce.

In Australia, Suppliers must meet the following minimum onsite gender equality targets:

- **Trade Covered Labour:** Women are required to perform at least 3% of the contract works' total estimated labour hours for each trade position.
- **Non-Trade Construction Award Covered Labour:** Women are required to perform at least 7% of the contract works' total estimated labour hours for each non-trade Construction Award covered labour position.
- **Management/Supervisory and Specialist Labour (Staff):** Women are required to perform at least 35% of the contract works' total estimated labour hours for each staff position.

Suppliers are required to provide women with equal access to the diverse roles available onsite. Suppliers are encouraged to set aspirational targets that exceed the minimum requirements.

Further, the Government plans to increase the target to keep pace with the supply of women workers. This will ensure that the changes to the targets and requirements are realistic, achievable and reflect the needs of Women.

Similarly, Japan Government also gives preference to Contractors with greater women preference. Therefore it is proposed that Government should look at some initiative to incentivise builders and real estate companies with preference in government construction contracts to firms with a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

As Government Organisations are among the largest buyers of materials on public procurement portals and the biggest spenders on infrastructure and housing development, they can consider giving preference to companies with a minimum percentage of women in the workforce.



6.4. Gender Quality Monitor: Transparency through RERA

Government of India enacted the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act 2016 on 26th March 2016 and all provisions came into effect from 1st May 2017. RERA aims to transform the Real Estate Sector, leading it into an era of greater transparency and professionalism, wherein all stakeholders' interests are protected and trust and confidence is established. RERA endeavours to promote transparency, accountability, financial discipline, customer centricity and compliance in Real Estate Sector in the country.

One of the key thrust areas of RERA is Transparency. In order to transform Real Estate Sector, transparency in information and transactions is the first need that requires to be addressed. With this objective, RERA ensures that maximum information is available for public view online including Information on Registered Projects, Registered Agents, Judgements, Orders etc.

Details of all the Registered Projects are available online for citizens including:

- Sanctioned plans, layout plans, along with specifications, approved by the competent authority
- Proposed Plan, Proposed Layout Plan of the whole project and Floor Space Index proposed to be consumed in the whole project, as proposed by the promoter
- Proposed Number of building(s) or wing(s) to be constructed and sanctioned number of the building(s) or wing(s).
- The stage wise time schedule of completion of the project, including the provisions for civic infrastructure like water, sanitation and electricity.
- Quarterly update of the list of number and types of apartments or plots, as the case may be, booked
- Quarterly update of the list of number of covered parking as well as list of number of garages for sale;
- Quarterly update of the list of approvals taken and the approvals which are pending subsequent to commencement certificate, quarterly update of the status of the project; and such other information and documents as may be specified by the regulations

In order to strengthen Gender Inclusion measures in Real Estate Sector, it is proposed that in addition to the current disclosures under RERA, Developers should include information on the percentage of women workers working on construction sites, the presence of required facilities such as proper toilets, availability of working creches, etc., which will help to build a more inclusive workforce.

Such Indicators of Gender Inclusion and Quality, available publicly for all real estate projects in India, shall catalyse changes in Real Estate Sector.



6.5. Investment funds for women-led companies in real estate

India is undergoing a massive start-up boom with more than 100 unicorns (\$1 billion valuation) operating in the country. In the Real Estate Sector, many new age prop-tech companies have disrupted the market bringing new innovations and technologies to the Industry, silently working to transform the Real Estate Sector.

While there are a few venture capital firms that focus on women-led companies and start-ups, the Real Estate Sector 'is not among the biggest beneficiaries of funding from such firms. While a separate firm for focussing on women-led real estate companies may not be needed, industry associations, along with the state government, can consider a special fund to promote more new-age women-led companies in the Real Estate Sector.

Such a special fund for investing in such new age Real Estate companies led by women would serve the twin objectives of promoting newer age prop-tech companies bringing innovative technologies to the sector and promoting young female talented leaders in the domestic Real Estate Sector.

6.6. Skilling across levels

Most women working in the Construction Industry in India today are employed as daily wage labourers or engaged in jobs as concrete mixers, diggers, stone breakers, and brick haulers, among other unskilled jobs. Not only do these jobs not pay very well, but they also entail health risks for the workers involved.

- As per the National Skill Development Corporation, 83.3% of the total construction force in India is unskilled, and with new technologies being implemented in the construction sector, the demand for skilled construction labour is set to increase after the COVID-19 outbreak.

There is an urgent need for the Government Real Estate Industry bodies and prominent developers in the Industry to work on developing a roadmap for the Skilling of Women in the Sector that would help to open up more avenues of growth within the Construction Sector.

Skill training workshops and programmes in the fields of carpentry, plumbing and other more specialised fields, specifically for women, can help women construction workers move up the value chain from majorly working as daily wage labourers to transitioning to more technically advanced roles.



Further, CSR funds can also be employed to train construction workers that currently remain unskilled and help the country address its skill gap challenges and achieve the ambitious skilling targets set by the government of India.

- Several provinces in China have vocational and technical schools that provide free training programs for women with courses for becoming electricians and excavators, among other technically skilled vocations.

While the majority of women in construction today are employed in lower level unskilled jobs, there is an underrepresentation of women in managerial and senior executive roles as well with less than 2% of women in leadership positions in the sector.

At the executive level, encouraging faster adoption of technology and imparting sector specific knowledge such as dedicated courses on marketing of real estate for women realtors and executives, including digital marketing can help lead the sector's transition into a more technology oriented and sustainable segment.

Development of a mentor mentee programme wherein women at more senior executive levels are able to coach and provide guidance to new joiners in some of the challenges peculiar to women in the sector and the best practices to overcome them

Further, skilling educational programmes on real estate incorporating aspects of environment, water and transportation into a broader urban planning framework can aid the development of the real estate sector as Climate change becomes a key factor in the coming years.

6.7. Gender Sensitive Training

Gender Sensitivity Training for the construction workforce at large is essential for creating an environment that is inclusive. A diverse workforce will also help encourage more women to think of and consider joining the Construction and Real Estate Industry. Due to the prevailing image of the sector as being male-driven, Real Estate Industry associations and developers must work together to change the current perception of the Sector.

- South Korea has instituted several norms to prevent sexual harassment on construction sites, including providing gender sensitivity training for workers who may not be used to seeing women on construction sites.
- Article 13 of the Act on Equal Employment and Work and Support for Men and Women highlights that sexual discrimination education in construction sites is mandatory in South Korea.



- In Peru, gender training for stakeholders led to a massive increase in female participation and 'women's decision-making roles saw an increase in the enterprises that received gender training.

While greater awareness around gender sensitivity and diversity has led to more opportunities for women in the workforce, sustaining and building on this momentum to create a truly inclusive workplace will be key to ensuring women continue to remain in the workforce and contribute to the economy.

6.8. Pay attention to Safety & working conditions at Project Construction Sites and in operation areas

The 'country's fast-paced urbanisation drive has led to a rise in demand for low-skilled workers in the construction sector. However, the majority of workers at construction sites still complain of a lack of clean toilets, water, and the availability of basic safety equipment.

- Unfortunately, most women construction workers work as concrete mixers, diggers, stone breakers, and brick haulers and are more prone to hazards and exposure to construction pollution.

The Real Estate Industry has a key role in enforcing basic standards of safety and sanitation by working with the builder community and other industry associations in the country to improve working conditions for Construction Workers in India, from big national level players to small domestic ones.

- In South Korea, many Women Construction Workers face problems of ill-fitting safety equipment due to the equipment initially being designed for men, causing inefficiency and safety issues in the workplace.
- In South Korea, Article 32 of the Ministry of Employment and Labour's Rules on Occupational Safety and Health Standards states that employers are obligated to provide workers with protective equipment that meets the working conditions.
- In Japan, many prominent construction companies have provided female workers with portable toilets and dressing rooms on construction sites to improve sanitation and safety standards.

6.9. Priority Queue for project approvals for organisations with better Gender Ratio

Gender disparity in the Real Estate Industry has long been an issue not just in India but around the world. While efforts to correct this disparity through government schemes have resulted in an



improvement with more women now joining the Sector, there remains a long way to go for the Industry to achieve gender parity.

Many real estate corporations worldwide have taken steps to improve gender ratios within their organisations, with a study by Harvard Business Review showing that companies with women occupying one-third of the leadership positions are 15 per cent more profitable than those without women in leadership roles.

To encourage domestic builders to improve the gender ratio, the government can consider providing building approvals on priority or have a priority queue for projects with a minimum percentage of women within the organisation. This will encourage developers to improve the gender ratio within organisations.

6.10. Carers Innovation Fund

Many women in India are the primary caregivers at home, handling not only children but elders while managing the house's affairs. The responsibilities render them unable to find the time to work

- In the United Kingdom, the Department of Health & Social Care came up with a grant of up to £500,000 to voluntary groups, charities, SMEs and commercial organisations to support accessible, carer-friendly communities and public services.

In the wake of the pandemic, India could also consider a similar fund for primary caregivers, supporting companies that come up with innovative caregiving solutions. This could be done through a competition along the lines of the government's Aatmanirbhar App Innovation Challenge.



Conclusion

India's real estate and construction segment has traditionally been male-dominated, and while significant progress has been made in improving the gender gap with more women now joining the sector in executive roles, there remains a long way to go before gender parity can be achieved in the real estate and construction sector.

There is a need to comprehensively study and adopt some of the global best practices currently in place by the domestic real estate sector and draw up a detailed roadmap for gender mainstreaming in the Real Estate Sector.

With several government initiatives in place to improve the gender ratio of working women and a growing awareness among real estate and construction companies on the benefits of a more diverse workplace, the coming years will truly be ground-breaking for the real estate and construction sector in India.

Our recommendations look at the vast number of issues that hinder the participation of women in the real estate sector. These include improving safety conditions at work sites, providing gender sensitivity training, introducing skilling initiatives for women across levels, and specialised innovation and investment funds, among others, that will be easily implementable in the Indian scenario for bringing gender equality in the real estate sector.



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About Primus Partners

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Our core strength comes from our founding partners, who are goal-oriented, with extensive hands-on experience and subject-matter expertise, which is well recognized in the industry. Our core founders form a diverse cohort of leaders from both genders with experience across industries (Public Sector, Healthcare, Transport, Education, etc), and with varied specialization (engineers, lawyers, tax professionals, management, etc).



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