FICCI

BUILDING CARING CORPORATIONS:
A WORKPLACE CARE PLAYBOOK



INTRODUCTION

Globally, women participate in the labour force at significantly lower rates than men. In 2025, the global female labour force participation rate stood at 41.2%, reflecting a persistent gender gap across industries and leadership levels. India, however, has shown notable progress—women's employment nearly doubled between 2017–18 and 2023–24, with the female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) rising from 23.3% to 41.7% during this period.

At the same time, the world faces a major childcare deficit. According to World Bank estimates, over 350 million children below primary school age globally require childcare but lack access. In India alone, as per the 2011 Census, nearly 140 million children under six need reliable childcare arrangements. While many children aged 3–6 are enrolled in early childhood education, disparities in quality, access, and affordability persist, especially for families living in poverty who face challenges related to nutrition, health, housing, and early learning.

Childcare is therefore not only a developmental necessity for children—ensuring their health, safety, and intellectual growth—but also a powerful enabler of women's economic empowerment. One of the primary reasons for women's lower participation in paid work is the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work that they shoulder, from childcare to elder care and domestic responsibilities. In India, women aged 15–64 spend three times more time on unpaid domestic and care work than men, limiting their ability to engage fully and continuously in the workforce.

Expanding access to affordable, safe, high-quality childcare is thus essential not just for child development, but for transforming women's economic roles—from unpaid caregivers to active contributors to household income and national productivity. As India positions itself within an increasingly globalised economy, strengthening childcare systems becomes a foundational step for unlocking women's potential and building an inclusive, future-ready workforce.



FOREWARD

Mr Harsha Vardhan Agarwal
President, FICCI
Vice Chairman and Managing Director
Emami Limited

Women are integral to India's economic progress, yet globally they remain underrepresented, accounting for only 41.2% of the workforce in 2025. India has shown strong momentum, with the female Labour Force Participation Rate rising from 23.3% in 2017–18 to 41.7% in 2023–24. Sustaining this growth demands addressing a key constraint: the disproportionate burden of unpaid childcare borne by women.

With nearly 140 million children under six, India faces a significant childcare gap that limits women's ability to engage fully in paid work. The Government of India has introduced progressive measures to bridge this gap. The Code on Social Security, 2020, strengthens maternity entitlements and mandates crèche facilities for establishments with 50 or more employees. The Palna Scheme under Mission Shakti is expanding safe crèche services for working mothers, while national skilling efforts such as Skill India and sector-focused programmes are equipping women to participate in emerging and formal sectors.

FICCI has been at the forefront of advancing women's empowerment through policy advocacy, industry partnerships, and platforms such as the FICCI Women Empowerment Summit, FICCI FLO, and our wider diversity and inclusion initiatives. We continue to encourage industry to strengthen childcare infrastructure, adopt gender-responsive workplace practices, and promote women's leadership.

As India positions itself within a rapidly globalising economy, robust childcare systems are essential—not only for children's early development but also for enabling women to shift from unpaid caregivers to active economic contributors. This playbook on care policies and facilities in India and across the globe underscores the need for a stronger childcare ecosystem and coordinated action across government, industry, and civil society.

FICCI remains committed to building an inclusive and equitable workforce where women lead, contribute, and shape India's growth story.



FOREWARD

Ms Jyoti Vij
Director General
FICCI

Women are central to India's economic and social transformation. Female labour force participation has risen, women-owned enterprises now constitute nearly 20.5% of MSMEs, and around 76,000 start-ups are women-led—signalling a growing ecosystem that recognises women as growth drivers.

FICCI has consistently championed women's economic empowerment through sectoral committees, national initiatives, and policy advocacy. From enabling workplace policies to strengthening skills for Industry 4.0 and promoting entrepreneurship, FICCI provides a platform to accelerate gender-inclusive growth.

Government reforms such as the Code on Social Security, 2020, the PALNA childcare scheme, and national skilling programmes have further strengthened women's ability to participate productively in the workforce. A key enabler is robust, affordable care systems. FICCI's Care Playbook offers models, best practices, and actionable steps for organisations to build care-supportive ecosystems that enhance women's retention, productivity, and career progression.

Care also represents a significant entrepreneurial opportunity. Women can leverage their expertise to create sustainable enterprises in childcare, eldercare, or specialised care services, generating income, creating jobs, and professionalising the care economy.

Challenges remain—greater participation in high-growth sectors, access to digital tools, and stronger caregiving support are needed. FICCI remains committed to fostering inclusive policies, promoting women-led innovation, and amplifying women's voices to ensure their economic participation becomes the norm, not the exception.

TABLE OF **CONTENTS**

International Care Policies 3

Apollo Health and Lifestyle Limited (AHLL) 26

Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Limited 30

Gainwell Commosales Private Limited 35

Lloyd Metals and Energy Limited 43

Novartis Healthcare Private Limited 51

Oil India Limited 56

Subros Limited 64

Tata Steel Limited 73

Tech Mahindra Limited 81

Tide 90

Reference 94

INTERNATIONAL CARE POLICIES

Australia

Australia's Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system has its roots in preschools established during the 1890s to support children affected by poverty, followed by day nurseries for single working mothers. From the 1950s onwards, rising demand for early learning led to sector growth and increased financial support from Commonwealth, state, and territory governments.

The Australian Child Care Act of 1972 was a landmark reform, contributing to a nearly 40% rise in women's workforce participation since the 1950s. Australia has also been a pioneer in linking funding to quality, with federal reforms in the 1990s enabling children from lower-income families to access early learning. The introduction of the National Childcare Accreditation system made Australia the first country to connect ECEC funding with quality standards.

Subsequent initiatives, including the Universal Access National Partnership Agreement, Early Years Learning Framework, National Quality Framework, and Child Care Subsidy, have further expanded access and improved the quality of education and care, ensuring more Australian children benefit from strong early learning foundations.

Government Policies:

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) policies are structured across federal, state, and territory levels, focusing on quality, access, and equity through the National Quality Standard. Key initiatives include increasing government investment, ensuring access to quality programs for children in the two years before school, supporting families, and implementing targeted policies for First Nations children and disadvantaged groups. The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) is central to the quality assessment and rating system

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Australia does not directly run most childcare centres but supports access, affordability, and quality through a combination of funding, subsidies, regulation, and frameworks:

- The Child Care Subsidy is a financial support program that reduces childcare costs for families.
- Subsidy eligibility is based on family income, hours of work or study, and type of childcare service, encouraging mothers to return to employment after childbirth.

- The CCS covers a significant portion of childcare fees, making high-quality services more accessible, especially for low- and middle-income families.
- From 5 January 2026, all CCS eligible families can get at least 72 hours of subsidised childcare each fortnight, or 3 days per week. These changes are known as the 3 Day Guarantee.

Paid Parental Leave scheme

- Primary carers, typically mothers, are entitled to 18 weeks of paid leave at the national minimum wage.
- An additional 2 weeks of partner pay encourages shared caregiving responsibilities.
- PPL supports women in balancing family and career, enabling smoother reintegration into the workforce.

From 1 July 2025, the amount of Parental Leave Pay available to families increased to 120 days, or 24 weeks, based on a 5-day work week, for children born or adopted. Both the following have also increased:

- The number of days reserved for your partner
- The number of days you can take at the same time as another parent.

Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Acts (2023 and 2024)

- Flexible Unpaid Parental Leave (from 1 July 2023):
  - ❑ Up to 100 days of a 12-month entitlement can be taken over 24 months.
  - ❑ Parents can take concurrent unpaid leave for up to 8 weeks.
  - ❑ Pregnant employees may start flexible unpaid leave up to 6 weeks before the due date.
- “Baby Priya's Law” (2025):
  - ❑ Prevents cancellation or refusal of employer-funded paid parental leave in cases of stillbirth or neonatal death.
- Secure Jobs, Better Pay (2022 reforms):
  - ❑ Flexible working arrangements and extended unpaid parental leave for carers.
  - ❑ Breastfeeding added as a protected attribute under discrimination rules.

National Quality Framework (NQF) for Childcare

- The NQF sets rigorous standards for early childhood education and care, ensuring high-quality, safe, and developmentally appropriate learning environments. Key features include:

- Curriculum Standards: A structured yet flexible approach emphasising play-based learning, cognitive and social development, and school readiness.
- Educator Qualifications: Minimum qualification requirements and ongoing professional development for childcare staff to maintain quality standards.
- Health and Safety: Comprehensive regulations on hygiene, child-to-staff ratios, and safe infrastructure.
- By maintaining these high standards, the NQF builds confidence among parents, especially working mothers, that their children are receiving quality care. This, in turn, enables women to participate in the workforce, knowing that their children are safe, nurtured, and developing in a supportive environment.

Germany

Origin and development:

Germany's childcare system has evolved from a welfare-focused service into a universal, education-oriented model that supports both child development and parental employment. Historically, West Germany offered limited, part-time kindergarten for ages 3–6, while East Germany provided near-universal daycare to enable women's full employment. After reunification in 1990, the two systems were harmonised through major national reforms.

Key milestones such as the Day Care Expansion Act (2005) and the Childcare Funding Act (2008) established a legal right to childcare from age one (effective 2013), driving a nationwide expansion—especially for children under three.

ECEC operates within a federal system: the federal government sets legal standards, states define implementation frameworks, and municipalities handle planning, service delivery, and co-funding. Fees are subsidised and income-based, ensuring broad affordability.

Today, childcare in Germany functions as both an educational foundation and a core family policy tool, promoting early learning, social inclusion, and gender equality. Ongoing reforms continue to improve quality, workforce capacity, and equitable access, making childcare a central pillar of Germany's social infrastructure.

Early Stages (Post-War to 1990s):

- In East Germany (GDR), early childhood education was strongly promoted as part of women's full employment policy — resulting in near-universal daycare coverage.
- In West Germany (FRG), childcare remained limited, with kindergartens offering part-time care mainly for 3–6-year-olds, while care for children under 3 was scarce.
- The reunification of Germany in 1990 triggered reforms to harmonise access and quality.

Expansion and Policy Reforms (2000s Onwards):

- The Day Care Expansion Act (TAG, 2005) initiated a national push to increase the number of daycare places, especially for children under 3 years.
- The Childcare Funding Act (KiföG, 2008) established a legal right to a childcare place for all children aged 1 and above.
- These reforms transformed childcare from a voluntary municipal service into a core component of Germany's welfare and education system.

Modern Framework:

- Childcare in Germany is considered both a child's right and a support for working parents, promoting gender equality and early learning.
- Governance is shared among federal, state, and municipal levels:
- The federal government sets national legal standards under the Social Code Book VIII (SGB VIII).
- The Länder (states) legislate their own childcare laws and quality frameworks.
- Municipalities are responsible for planning, financing, and providing local childcare services.
- Public funding ensures that fees are income-based, and most families access heavily subsidised care.

Government Policies:

Child and Youth Welfare Services Act (Sozialgesetzbuch VIII):

It establishes the core legal framework for early childhood education and care (ECEC), covering daycare centres and childminding services. The Act sets binding goals and principles across federal, state, and municipal levels, with municipalities responsible for planning, funding, and ensuring every child's legal entitlement. As Germany's central child and youth welfare law, it defines the state's duty to promote children's well-being, development, and participation.

Key features include:

- Services to support families, children and young people in upbringing, development and participation.
- A duty to protect children and adolescents from threats to their welfare and to coordinate child protection services.
- Rights of children and young people to participate in decisions affecting them (e.g., Article 8 SGB VIII) and to choose among service providers.

- The requirement for inter-agency cooperation, so that youth welfare services work with schools, health services, social insurance, employment agencies, etc. (§ 81 SGB VIII)
- Implementation through municipalities, with the Länder (states) and federal authorities sharing responsibilities under the federal structure.

Childcare Funding Act (Kinderförderungsgesetz, KiföG):

It introduced a legal right to childcare from age one, effective August 2013, and guaranteed full daycare entitlement for all children aged 3–6. Enacted in 2008, the KiföG marked Germany's shift toward universal ECEC, replacing targeted support and requiring municipalities and providers to significantly expand places, especially for children under three.

i. Childcare Quality Act (KiTa-Qualitätsgesetz):
   - Came into effect on January 1, 2023, building on the 2019 Act on Good Early Childhood Education and Care.
   - Provides about €4 billion in funding (2023-2024) to improve quality and access to daycare services across all federal states.
   - Aims to enhance reconciliation of family and work life and ensure uniform standards nationwide.
   - Addresses seven key quality action fields such as staff qualifications, inclusion, and pedagogical standards.

ii. Federal Programs Supporting Childcare:

   Kita-Einstieg (2017–2022) helped over 100,000 children and families access daycare and funded training for nearly 500 staff. *ProChildminding* strengthened family-based childcare by improving childminder qualifications and supporting 47 project locations across Germany until 2022.

iii. Parental Leave and Family Benefits Policies:
   - Parents are eligible for parental leave (Elternzeit) under German law, during which their employment status is protected, and they may reduce working hours while caring for a child.
   - Alongside leave, the state provides parental allowance (Elterngeld) to compensate for income loss when parents stop or reduce work to care for their newborns.
   - Parental allowance consists of different types: basic allowance (for up to ~12–14 months) and “Plus” allowance that allows part-time work and extends payment duration.

- Family benefits also include child benefit (Kindergeld) for all children, irrespective of income, along with other supports such as child supplement, tax relief for parents, and allowances for single-parent families.
- There are three variations: Basic Parental Allowance, Parental Allowance Plus, and the Partnership Bonus.
- Basic Parental Allowance can be shared between both parents for up to 14 months (each parent must take at least 2 months) for a child's first year.

Norway

Norway's early childhood system began as a targeted service for disadvantaged families, with childcare coverage below 5% in the late 1960s. The 1972 Kindergarten White Paper set the path toward universal barnehage, emphasising child development, reduced family burden, and women's workforce participation. Rapid expansion from 2003–2009 made kindergarten a legal right, and by 2020, over 90% of children aged 1–5 were enrolled. The system is now characterised by strong political commitment, national financing for municipalities, strict regulation for affordability and quality, and a play-based pedagogical framework focused on holistic development. Key challenges include aligning kindergarten and school pedagogy and ensuring consistent quality nationwide, but Norway's model remains a global benchmark for universal access, gender equality, and developmental outcomes.

Workforce development:

Kindergarten staff must hold specialised qualifications aligned with national Framework Plans, focusing on social pedagogy, child development, and learning through play. Continuous professional development is mandated to maintain quality standards. Recruitment, especially for under-3 age groups, and improving staff-child ratios are current policy priorities.

The Ministry of Children and Equality (Norwegian Barne- og likestillingsdepartementet, abbreviated BLD) holds the chief jurisdiction over child welfare issues and is responsible for developing regulations and guidelines.

Implementation of child guarantee

Early Childhood Education and Care: Statutory right to kindergarten (barnehage) from age one to school start at six years. Municipalities must guarantee sufficient places and apply fee regulations.

Education & Inclusion: Strong emphasis on inclusive pedagogy. Support is available for children with special needs.

Healthy Meals & Healthcare: Most kindergartens provide nutritious meals adhering to national guidelines, with regular health checkups coordinated via municipalities.

Adequate Housing & Family Support: Coordinated social policies include family allowances, child benefits, and parental leave schemes to support families' well-being.

Government Policies

Family Allowances and Child Benefits:

Comprehensive family support includes monthly child benefits, tax credits, and subsidies accessible through municipalities and national welfare agencies. Programs assist vulnerable families and promote social equity.

The government policies emphasise a strong infrastructure for childcare that includes paid parental leave, universal or highly subsidised childcare, and individual rather than joint taxation.

These policies are framed as critical social infrastructure, analogous to roads or power grids, enabling both parents to participate in the labour market and helping promote gender equality.

Key dimensions of this policy landscape include:

- Paid parental leave: offers extended leave for parents, often with some days reserved specifically for fathers to encourage shared caregiving.
- Universal/supported childcare: Childcare is universally available or heavily subsidised; cost burdens are kept low and fees often capped based on income and number of children.
- Tax and social insurance framework: Individual taxation is used to prevent reinforcing traditional gender roles, and social insurance provisions tie benefits to work and residence.
- Gender equality focus: These policies aim to reduce gender pay gaps, enable full-time employment for women, and challenge traditional divisions of labour at home and at work.
- Ongoing reforms: The Nordic states continue to adjust parental leave systems (e.g., more non-transferable days, wider family definitions) and refine childcare access to reflect diverse family forms and reduce inequality.

These coordinated policy efforts illustrate how childcare infrastructure is treated as a strategic investment in both social welfare and economic participation in the Nordic model.

Right to Access Early Childhood Education and Care:

Kindergartens operate under the Kindergarten Act, securing the legal right to a kindergarten place from age 1 until compulsory school starts at six years.

- All children under school-age (0–5 years) have a statutory right to a place in a kindergarten (barnehage) from the age of one year.
- Municipalities are obligated to ensure sufficient places are available and must treat privately-operated kindergartens on par with municipal ones in terms of public funding.
- The institutions must provide both childcare and early learning/education, enabling parents to work or study and supporting equality between genders.
- The legal framework is set out in the Kindergarten Act (Norway) (Act no. 64 of June 2005, effective Jan 2006), which defines the right of children to kindergarten places and the municipal funding responsibilities.

This ensures that access to early childhood education and care is treated as a universal right in Norway, embedded in law and implemented at the local level.

Affordability and Financial Support Measures:

National maximum fee limits and subsidies ensure affordability, spreading costs between parents, municipalities and the government

Parental Leave and Related Allowances:

Norway offers one of the world's most comprehensive parental leave systems, built on strong gender equality principles. Parents who have worked for at least six of the past ten months are entitled to paid parental benefits, choosing either 49 weeks at full pay or 59 weeks at 80% pay. The leave includes a mother's quota (three weeks before birth and six weeks after), a father's quota reserved exclusively for fathers or co-parents, and a shared period that parents can divide as they choose. Parents may also take graded leave, combining part-time work with partial benefits for up to three years, and each parent has the right to an additional 12 months of unpaid leave. Pregnancy benefits cover mothers unable to work before birth, and adoptive parents receive similar entitlements. This flexible and well-funded system supports early child development, promotes shared caregiving, and enables high maternal employment.

Parents are entitled to a total of 12 months' leave in connection with the birth and after the birth. These 12 months include the mother's right to leave for up to 12 weeks during the pregnancy and six weeks of leave reserved for the mother after the birth. In addition to the first 12 months, each of the parents is entitled to one year of leave for each birth. Adoptive parents and foster parents have equal rights to leave, from the date on which the care of the child was transferred.

Legal Right to Kindergarten (Barnehage)

- Under the Kindergarten Act (Norway) (Act no. 64 of June 2005, effective January 2006), every child under school age who resides in a municipality has a legal right to a place in a kindergarten from the age of one year.
- Municipalities are responsible for providing kindergarten places, ensuring compliance with regulations, and treating privately-operated kindergartens equally in terms of public funding.
- Public grants and parental fees must benefit the children attending kindergarten, reinforcing the public-access obligation.

Inclusivity and Health Support:

- The system includes support for children with special needs and provides nutritious meals adhering to national guidelines.
- Health checkups and coordinated services support child well-being.

Sweden

Origin and Development

Sweden is internationally recognised for building one of the world's most comprehensive care ecosystems—one that supports citizens from early childhood to old age through universal access, strong public financing, and a rights-based approach. Rooted in the Nordic welfare philosophy, Sweden's model integrates education, health, social protection, and family support into a seamless continuum. This system has evolved over a century and is anchored in values of equity, inclusion, gender equality, and human dignity. Together, Sweden's early childhood education and care (ECEC) system and its eldercare architecture demonstrate how long-term policy commitment, decentralised governance, and sustained investments can create a society where individuals can fully participate in the economy while also receiving the care they need across their lifespan.

Sweden's early childhood education system emerged in the late 1800s and early 1900s, driven by urbanisation and industrialisation that created a growing need for childcare. A dual system evolved:

- Part-day preschools for wealthier families, focused on early learning.
- Full-day childcare centres for children from low-income and single-parent households.

A major shift occurred in 1968, when the government set up the *Commission on Child Care (Barnstugeutredningen)* to reform this fragmented structure. Its landmark 1972 report proposed a unified, integrated system combining care, learning, and social development

for all children aged 1–7. This marked the beginning of Sweden's universal childcare model, closely linked to parental leave and child benefits.

Through the 1970s, Swedish ECEC adopted a social pedagogy philosophy, emphasising play, communication, child participation, and holistic development—drawing on the ideas of Jean Piaget and Erik Erikson. Bridges between preschool and compulsory school were strengthened, and by the 2000s, preschool education had become a formal part of Sweden's education system.

Today, Sweden has among the highest preschool enrolment rates globally:

- 89% of 2-year-olds
- 95% of 5-year-olds
  attend preschool, reflecting universal availability and high societal trust in the system.

Summary of the Current ECEC System

- Universal access from age one, reinforced by generous parental leave.
- A national curriculum (Lpfö 18) emphasising play-based learning, inclusion, democracy, and smooth transitions to school.
- Governed by municipalities and independent providers under national guidelines.
- Capped parental fees (maxtaxa) ensure affordability.
- Strong focus on equity, especially for migrant children, multilingual learners, and children with disabilities.
- Sweden consistently ranks at the top of OECD and UNICEF assessments of early childhood systems.

Workforce Development

- Preschool teachers hold university-level degrees in early childhood education.
- National curriculum mandates inclusive, child-centred pedagogy.
- Regular professional development is compulsory.
- Current reforms prioritise:
  - ❑ Improved staff–child ratios
  - ❑ Recruitment of multilingual and special-needs educators
  - ❑ Strengthened quality assurance and continuous improvement

Main Government Policies in ECEC

A. Making Childcare Affordable and Universal

- Maxtaxa (Maximum Fee System): Caps the childcare fee based on family income and size.
- Free preschool hours for all children aged 4–5 (since 2003).
- Legal integration of ECEC under the Ministry of Education (1996), ensuring coherence across schooling stages.
- Access granted to all children—including those whose parents are unemployed.

This shift reframed childcare as a child's right, not a parental privilege, leading to more equitable access and stronger labour force participation, especially for women.

B. Sweden's 1975 National Preschool Reform

A foundational reform that:

- Made preschool a universal entitlement.
- Required municipalities to provide 525 hours of free preschool/year for all six-year-olds.
- Expanded access for children aged 1–6, especially those with working or studying parents.
- Strengthened women's labour force participation, paving the way for gender-equal work–care divisions.

C. Parental Leave, Child Benefit and Support Measures

Sweden's parental leave system is among the most generous globally:

- 480 days of paid leave per child, shared equally (240 days each).
- 90 days per parent are non-transferable to promote gender equality.
- Leave can be taken until the child is 12 years old.
- Income-based compensation for most days; fixed rate for the rest.
- "Double days" allow both parents to receive benefits simultaneously during the child's first year.
- Parents can work part-time (50% or 75%) while receiving partial benefits.
- Temporary leave for care of a sick child (VAB) provides paid leave until age 12.
- Pregnancy benefits support women in physically demanding jobs.
- Automatic child allowance (barnbidrag) helps families meet living, food, and education costs.

D. Right to Early Childhood Education

- Preschool available universally from age 1.
- Compulsory schooling begins at age 6.
- Governance through the School Act, with oversight by the National Agency for Education (Skolverket).

E. Benefits of Sweden's ECEC Model

1. Affordable childcare reduces poverty and supports working families.
2. Paid parental leave boosts gender equality and job continuity.
3. Universal preschool enhances school readiness and child development.
4. Integrated models support inclusion and lifelong learning.\
5. Migrant families benefit from language-rich, culturally sensitive settings.
6. Recognised internationally for lowering child poverty and increasing intergenerational equity.

Singapore

Origin and development:

Singapore's childcare system has evolved from a small, welfare-oriented service into a coordinated national early childhood ecosystem. Before the 1970s, childcare was mainly custodial support for low-income families, provided by welfare agencies to help mothers work. As female labour participation increased and the economy industrialised, childcare shifted from welfare to essential social and economic infrastructure. The establishment of the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) in 2013 marked a major milestone, integrating regulation, planning and workforce development across childcare and kindergartens. Since then, Singapore has expanded capacity, strengthened public-private partnerships, improved workforce standards, and introduced unified quality regulation through the Early Childhood Development Centres Act 2017. Significant subsidy enhancements and fee caps for government-supported operators have made services more affordable and accessible. Today, Singapore's childcare sector is a key pillar of its care economy—focused on affordability, accessibility and quality, while supporting parental employment, social mobility and family wellbeing.

Government policies:

Baby Bonus Scheme:

The Baby Bonus Scheme, a key component of Singapore's Marriage & Parenthood Package, helps reduce the financial burden of raising children and supports family formation. It offers families a cash gift, a Child Development Account (CDA), and government matching of parents' savings to encourage long-term investment in a child's early needs.

Key elements:

- Cash Gift: For Singapore Citizen children born on/after 18 Feb 2025 — S$11,000 for the 1st and 2nd child; S$13,000 for the 3rd and subsequent child.
- Child Development Account (CDA): A dedicated savings account with a First Step Grant (e.g., S$5,000 for the first child) plus dollar-for-dollar government matching up to a set cap.
- Eligibility: Child must be a Singapore Citizen; parents must be lawfully married to receive full benefits. Applications close on 31 December of the year the child turns 12.
- Use of CDA Funds: For approved childcare, preschool, healthcare and education expenses until age 12; unused funds move to the Post-Secondary Education Account.

Preschool Subsidies:

The Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) provides subsidies for Singaporean Citizen children enrolled in ECDA-licensed infant care, childcare centres, and eligible kindergartens.

- Basic Subsidy: Available to all enrolled children, regardless of income.
- Additional Subsidy: For working applicants (≥56 hours/month) who meet household income or per-capita income thresholds (e.g., household income ≤ S$12,000 or per-capita ≤ S$3,000).
- Subsidy Levels: Vary by programme; for full-day infant care, basic subsidy is up to S$600/month, with additional subsidies for eligible working parents.
- Payment Flow: Subsidies go directly to preschools; parents pay only net fees. Eligibility is reviewed periodically.
- Means Testing: Conducted through the national HOMES system, based on gross household or per-capita income.

These measures keep preschool fees affordable and support working parents, especially in larger households.

Childcare Leave:

Singapore's Ministry of Manpower provides statutory childcare leave for eligible working parents, with entitlements depending on the child's citizenship.

1. Parents of Singapore Citizen children (under CDCA):

- 6 days of paid childcare leave per year until the youngest child turns 7.
- Requires at least 3 months of continuous employment.
- Payment:
  - ❑ First 3 days: employer-paid at full gross pay.
  - ❑ Next 3 days: government-paid (reimbursed up to S$500/day incl. CPF).

2. Parents of non-Singapore Citizen children (under the Employment Act):

- 2 days of paid childcare leave per year, fully employer-paid.
- 3-month employment requirement.

3. Key conditions:

- Child must be below 7 (calendar year basis).
- Leave is per parent, not per child.
- Leave may be prorated if employment starts mid-year or the child turns 7.

4. Additional rules:

- Leave must be used for child-related needs only.
- No carry-over of unused leave.
- Employers cannot deny childcare leave if the criteria are met.

Legal basis: Child Development Co-Savings Act (CDCA) and Employment Act.

Fee Cap Reductions and Subsidy Enhancements for Preschool:

Singapore is making preschool significantly more affordable by lowering fee caps in government-supported preschools and enhancing subsidies for families.

Key measures:

- Lower fee caps: Since Jan 2023, full-day childcare fees for Singapore Citizen children have been reduced by S$40 (to S$680 for Anchor Operators and S$720 for Partner Operators). A further S$30 cut from Jan 2026 will bring caps to about S$610 (Anchor) and S$650 (Partner) before subsidies.

- Higher subsidies: All citizen children receive basic subsidies, while means-tested additional subsidies for families with working mothers now range from S$80 to S$467/month, depending on household income.
- More affordable preschool places: The government is expanding Anchor and Partner Operator capacity so that about 80% of children can access these lower-fee, high-quality preschools by the end of 2025.

These measures aim to reduce costs, widen access, and support working families through affordable, quality childcare.

Medisave Maternity Package & Healthcare Subsidies for Children:

Medisave is Singapore's national medical savings scheme, allowing individuals to set aside part of their income to pay for their own or approved dependants' hospitalisation, day-surgery and selected outpatient needs, as well as healthcare in old age. Withdrawal limits are set to ensure members retain sufficient savings for future medical needs and generally cover most subsidised inpatient and outpatient costs.

What Medisave can be used for:

- Premiums: Pay for MediShield Life, Integrated Shield Plans (up to withdrawal limits), and Elder Shield/Care Shield Life for oneself or approved dependants.
- Inpatient care: Hospitalisation and day-surgery expenses in Singapore. Outpatient care: Under MediSave500/700, can be used for chronic disease treatment, vaccinations and health screenings.
- Long-term care: Covers hospice and palliative services, day rehabilitation, home-based care; severely disabled individuals may withdraw monthly under *MediSave* Care.

Japan

Origin and development:

Japan's childcare system has transitioned from family-based care to a structured, publicly supported model shaped by the Child Welfare Act and subsequent expansions of state responsibility. Since the 2000s, policy has focused on improving work–family balance and increasing women's labour force participation, driving major growth in childcare supply, affordability, and quality. A key milestone was the 2015 Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing, which broadened access, standardised service quality, and strengthened financial support for families.

A central national goal has been to eliminate waiting lists for licensed childcare centres (hoikuen). From 2013, the “zero waiting list” initiative boosted capacity through expanded funding, incentives for private providers, and coordinated municipal planning, resulting in new facilities, diversified service options, and improved regional availability.

Overall, reforms aim to support parental employment, enhance early childhood development, and close access gaps. Policy is led by the Cabinet Office and MHLW, with municipalities overseeing implementation.

Government policies:

Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing:

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) of Japan outlines a policy framework called the "Comprehensive Support System for Children and Child-rearing" which aims to integrate and coordinate services across childcare, after-school care, parental support and family policy.

Key elements include:

- Revisions to the Act on Next-Generation Support and amendments to the Child Welfare Act strengthened child protection and family support.
- A comprehensive planning approach—including the General After-School Child Plan and "zero waiting list" initiatives—expanded access to licensed childcare.
- Life-cycle support for families, from infancy through school years, integrates childcare, after-school services, leave provisions, and child-allowance reforms to improve work–family balance.

Free Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) policy:

The policy covers various institution types, including kindergartens, day-care centres, certified early childhood education centres, municipal care services and corporate childcare establishments.

- Children aged 0 to 2 years, free provision applies only to households exempt from municipal resident tax (i.e., lower income households) in licensed childcare settings.
- The policy provides free tuition/usage fees for children aged 3 to 5 years attending kindergartens, day-care centres or centres for early childhood education and care.
- Certain costs remain outside the free coverage (e.g., transportation expenses, meals, event fees, non-staple foods). For example, households with annual income ≤ ¥3.6 million have exemptions for side-dish/ snack fees; from the third child onwards, fees for non-staple foods are exempt.
- For children using unlicensed childcare institutions, free care subsidies apply under specified conditions: ages 3–5 up to about ¥37,000/month; for 0–2-year-olds from tax-exempt households up to about ¥42,000/month.
- The eligible period for the free tuition begins from the fiscal year April 1 after the child turns 3 and ends once the child enters elementary school.

Childcare leave & family leave frameworks

The Act on Childcare Leave, Caregiver Leave, and Other Measures for the Welfare of Workers Caring for Children or Other Family Members (Japan) enables workers to take leave from employment to care for young children or family members in need of care, and places obligations on employers to accommodate such leave and related work-life balance measures.

Key features include:

- Child-care leave: Eligible workers (excluding daily temporary workers) who have been employed at least one year may take leave until their child reaches one year of age (or up to 14, 18 or 24 months in special cases such as unavailability of nursery admission).
- Care-giving leave (family member care): Workers caring for a family member needing constant care (due to injury/illness/disability) may take up to 93 days per family member, split into up to three instalments.

Additional provisions:

- Leave for illness/injury of a child before primary-school age: up to five days/year (or ten days if two children) in half- or full-day increments.
- Reduction of overtime and late-night work for workers with children under three or family caregivers: Employers must limit overtime to no more than 24 hours per month / 150 hours per year when the worker takes care of a young child or family member requiring care.
- Employers must establish systems such as reduced working hours (e.g., principle of six hours per day) or flex-time for workers with children under three or those caring for family members.

The law places obligations on employers to inform workers about the system, document leave rules in employment regulations, and consider worker circumstances when reassigning work or relocating the worker's job in a way that would hinder care responsibilities.

"Zero Childcare Waiting List" acceleration projects & local supply plans:

Japan's "Zero Children on Waiting List" policy aimed to eliminate childcare shortages and support women's workforce participation by rapidly expanding nursery capacity. The government built new facilities, increased subsidies, and made childcare free for children aged 3–5 (and for younger children from low-income families from 2019). Municipalities received targeted funding to scale up services and meet local demand. While the initiative successfully reduced waiting lists nationwide, Japan's declining birth rate has since created oversupply in several regions, leading to under-enrolment and closures.

Key aspects

Goal: Eliminate childcare waiting lists and boost female employment.

Measures:

- Facility expansion- Added capacity for hundreds of thousands of children.
- Introduced free preschool and daycare for ages 3–5, and for under-3s in low-income households.
- Increased financial and administrative support to local governments to build and operate new centres

Child Allowance/cash supports & means-tested subsidies:

According to the official policy page of the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, on "Policies supporting children and child-rearing", the government is strengthening financial support for families with children through expanded child allowances, cash supports and means-tested subsidies.

Key elements:

- Universal child allowance: ¥15,000 per month for children up to age 3 and ¥10,000 for ages 3 through high school, regardless of income; ¥30,000 for the third child onward.
- Birth-related support: The childbirth lump-sum allowance increased from ¥420,000 to ¥500,000 (FY 2023), with subsidies for first obstetric visits for low-income women.
- Higher education support: Expanded tuition reductions and grant scholarships, especially for multi-child households and students in science, engineering, and agriculture.
- Work–income reform: Measures address the "¥1.06 million income barrier" so second earners can work more without losing benefits.
- Housing support: Around 300,000 family-oriented housing units to be developed over 10 years, with preferential fixed-rate loans from FY 2024, particularly for larger families.
- Stronger targeting: Enhanced means-testing and subsidies to support vulnerable and multi-child families.

Workforce development:

- Workers & qualifications: ECEC staff must meet statutory qualification standards, with national guidelines issued by the MHLW for teacher training and curriculum. Professionalisation measures include enhanced training pathways and mandatory in-service training.

- Supply challenges & responses: Japan has expanded childcare staffing through subsidies, wage support, and local government incentives for recruitment and training. However, shortages—especially in urban areas—remain a major constraint and continue to affect waiting lists. National efforts focus on improving recruitment, career progression, and working conditions.

India

Origin and development:

In India, where a large proportion of women shoulder disproportionate caregiving responsibilities, supportive childcare policies are essential for ensuring that women can remain in or re-enter the workforce. Over the years, the Government of India has introduced a range of legislative, welfare, and workplace policies aimed at easing childcare burdens and promoting gender-responsive work environments. This document provides an overview of key childcare-related policies and provisions—such as maternity leave, crèche facilities, workplace support systems, and public early childhood care services—that enable women to balance work and caregiving responsibilities.

Workforce Development:

India's childcare workforce is drawn from multiple systems, each serving different segments of the population: Anganwadi workers and helpers under the ICDS form the largest cadre, delivering nutrition, health services, and early childhood education to low-income and informal-sector families; private preschool teachers and caregivers operate across play schools, daycare centres, and early learning centres, though their quality and standards vary widely due to limited regulation; corporate crèche caregivers, employed by organizations mandated to provide childcare under the Maternity Benefit Act, represent a growing and increasingly professionalized segment but still require standardized training; and community childcare workers, often engaged through NGOs, self-help groups, or cooperatives, support rural and low-income families through localized childcare models.

Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended 2017)

The Maternity Benefit Act (MBA) is India's primary legislation supporting working mothers in the formal sector.

Key Provisions

- Paid Maternity Leave:
  - ❑ 26 weeks of paid leave for the first two children.
  - ❑ 12 weeks for the third child onward.
  - ❑ 12 weeks for adoptive mothers (child below 3 months) and commissioning mothers.

- ❑ Protection from dismissal during maternity leave.
- ❑ Nursing breaks for breastfeeding.

- Work-from-Home Option: Employers may offer remote work arrangements after maternity leave, depending on job requirements.

Palna Scheme for Childcare and Creches

The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme (RGNCS), launched in 2006 to provide affordable childcare for working mothers, was renamed the National Crèche Scheme in 2017. Under the Government's Mission Shakti guidelines, it has now been reorganised as the Palna Scheme, operating under the Samarthya sub-scheme to enhance women's safety, empowerment, and workforce participation.

Palna provides daycare services for children aged 6 months to 6 years of working mothers who are employed for at least 15 days a month or 6 months a year. It supports both urban and rural women.

The scheme offers two childcare models:

1. Anganwadi-cum-Crèches – integrating existing Anganwadis with crèche services.
2. Stand-Alone Crèches – formerly under NCS, running 7.5 hours a day, 26 days a month.

Each crèche must ensure:

- Holistic child development
- Nutrition, rest, early learning, and play activities
- Minimum staffing: one worker, one helper, and access to a doctor for every 25 children

Fees range from ₹100–₹200 per child per month, with a subsidised rate of ₹20 for BPL families.

The scheme follows a 60:30:10 funding model (Centre: State: NGOs). Crèche workers and helpers are honorary positions; while they do not receive salaries, the scheme provides an honorarium based on the crèche type.

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP)

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to modernise India's education system to meet 21st-century learning needs. A major focus is Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), recognising that 85% of brain development occurs before age six. For the first time, early childhood education is formally included from age three, supported through a play-based, activity-driven learning approach.

NEP introduces a new 5+3+3+4 structure, replacing the 10+2 system and integrating ECCE into the foundational years (ages 3–8). Implementation involves coordinated efforts across key ministries.

To achieve universal ECCE access, the policy prioritises strengthening Anganwadis. These centres will be upgraded with improved infrastructure, child-friendly spaces, play materials, and trained ECCE educators. ECCE will be delivered through:

- Standalone Anganwadis
- Anganwadis co-located with primary schools
- Pre-primary sections within schools (ages 5–6)
- Standalone pre-schools

Children in Anganwadis will also engage with nearby primary schools to ensure a smooth transition into formal schooling. Integrating Anganwadis into school complexes will enhance collaboration among teachers, parents, and communities.

By elevating early childhood education, NEP 2020 lays a strong, inclusive foundation for lifelong learning and improved educational outcomes across India.

Code on Social Security, 2020: Towards Universal and Inclusive Social Protection

The code merges nine existing Social Security Acts into one framework, ensuring universal social protection for organised, unorganised, gig, and platform workers. The social security framework includes several pro-women provisions designed to support working mothers and help them balance employment with caregiving responsibilities.

- Women are entitled to 26 weeks of paid maternity leave (12 weeks for adoptive or commissioning mothers), ensuring income security during childbirth and early childcare.
- Work-from-home arrangements, wherever feasible, offering greater flexibility for new mothers.
- Certification requirements for pregnancy, delivery, miscarriage, or related conditions have been simplified—allowing ASHA workers, ANMs, midwives, or registered medical practitioners to issue proof—reducing procedural barriers for women.
- Women are eligible for a medical bonus of ₹3,500 (If an employer does not provide pre- and post-natal care).
- Women have the right to two nursing breaks daily until the child turns 15 months,
- Establishments with 50 or more employees must provide a crèche facility, allow women four daily visits, and, if unable to set up a crèche, pay a minimum crèche allowance of ₹500 per month per child (up to two children).

Paternity Leave (Limited Provisions)

While maternity provisions are robust, paternity leave remains limited.

- Central Government employees: entitled to 15 days of paternity leave.
- Private sector: no mandatory requirement—provision varies by employer.

Public Childcare Support: Anganwadi & Early Childhood Education

India's public childcare system primarily supports low-income and informal sector families.

ICDS & Anganwadi Centres

Under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme, Anganwadi Centres offer:

- Early childhood care and education (ECCE)
- Supplementary nutrition
- Health check-ups and immunisation support
- Pre-school learning for 3–6-year-olds

These services help working mothers, especially those in the informal sector, reduce the burden of full-time childcare.

Other Acts

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

It legalises support for childcare in the unorganised sector, by including the provision for crèches. It recognises both the work-related rights of women, as well as their right to provide adequate nutrition and care for their infants.

Factories Act, 1948 – Crèche Provisions

- Crèche facilities in factories employing 30 or more women (state rules may vary).
- A crèche within a suitable distance or on the premises
- Basic standards for safety, caretakers, and space.
- 4 visits per day by the mother
- Qualified staff and necessary infrastructure

This applies largely to manufacturing and industrial workplaces.

Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996

For construction sites:

- Mandatory on-site crèche facilities where 50 or more female workers are employed.
- Welfare boards may provide funds for childcare support.

This is important because construction has one of the highest numbers of women in the informal sector.

Adoption and Surrogacy Leave

The MBA extends protections beyond biological mothers.

Entitlements

- Adoptive mothers (child below 3 months): 12 weeks of paid leave
- Commissioning mothers: 12 weeks of paid leave
- Central government rules provide additional leave options for adoptive parents.

Employee State Insurance (ESI) Benefits

For eligible insured women employees:

- 26 weeks of maternity leave with full wage compensation
- Medical care expenses related to childbirth
- Confinement and sickness benefits

This ensures income security for women in organisations covered under ESI.

Welfare Measures for Informal Sector Workers

Most Indian women work in the informal sector and often lack formal maternity benefits.

Key Schemes

- PM Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY): Partial wage compensation for pregnant and lactating mothers.
- Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY): Incentives for institutional deliveries and maternal care.
- Anganwadi childcare services: Provide free ECCE and nutrition support.

Tax Incentives

- Employers can claim deductions for expenses incurred in providing crèche and childcare facilities.
- No direct tax benefit for parents—an area for policy strengthening.

APOLLO HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE LIMITED (AHLL)

A. Company Snapshot

Name of the Company: Apollo Health and Lifestyle Limited (AHLL)

Sector: Healthcare and Wellness
Size of Workforce: 6,000+ employees across 23 states in India

Contact Person: Mr. Devi Prasad Dash, Chief Human Resources Officer
Email: deviprasad.dash@apollohl.com
Mobile: +917680855432

Apollo Health and Lifestyle Limited (AHLL), a part of the Apollo Hospitals Group, stands as India's leading integrated retail healthcare provider. Through its diverse formats—Apollo Clinics, Apollo Dental, Apollo Sugar, Apollo Diagnostics, Apollo Dialysis, Apollo Spectra, Apollo Fertility, and Apollo Cradle—the organization delivers comprehensive preventive and specialty healthcare across both urban and semi-urban India.

With a workforce exceeding 6,000 employees-comprising doctors, nurses, paramedical professionals, and support staff-AHLL embodies Apollo's mission of "Touching a Billion Lives." The organization recognizes that true healthcare excellence is achieved not only through medical expertise but also through the wellbeing, inclusion, and empowerment of its people.

Anchored in its "Tender Love Care" philosophy, AHLL continually invests in initiatives that foster wellness, diversity, and cultural intelligence. One such flagship initiative, "Stronger Together," was launched to create a workplace where every individual—regardless of gender, religion, or cultural background—feels valued, respected, and empowered. The program reflects AHLL's belief that diversity is not just a moral responsibility, but a strategic enabler of innovation, empathy, and organizational growth.

B. The Challenge

Healthcare is a people-centric industry that thrives on compassion, collaboration, and emotional resilience. At AHLL, a workforce spread across 23 states brought together diverse cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds. While this diversity enriched the organization, it also surfaced subtle challenges in inclusion and belonging.

- **Internal surveys and engagement conversations revealed key gaps**
  - ❑ Women employees, particularly those in mid-career or regional roles, felt underrepresented in decision-making and leadership forums.

- ❑ Employees from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds often hesitated to integrate fully into team networks, citing cultural inhibitions.
- ❑ Differences in communication styles occasionally led to misunderstandings, affecting collaboration and trust.
- ❑ These insights indicated the need to strengthen cultural intelligence—the ability to relate and work effectively across cultural contexts—while nurturing psychological safety and equitable participation.
- ❑ Women, forming 46% of AHLL's workforce, were especially impacted. Many balanced demanding professional roles with caregiving responsibilities, often experiencing burnout and exclusion from growth conversations. The leadership recognized that without addressing these systemic barriers, both engagement and innovation would suffer.

- The challenge, therefore, went beyond gender representation—it was about creating an ecosystem where diversity of thought, culture, and identity became a source of collective strength. AHLL aspired to build a workplace where every employee could say with conviction:

"I belong here, and I matter."

This aspiration laid the foundation for "Stronger Together"—a structured, organization-wide intervention to foster inclusion, respect, and belonging across all layers of the company.

C. The Intervention

1. Objectives

- To enhance cultural intelligence and mutual respect among diverse teams.
- To increase visibility and participation of women in leadership and engagement platforms.
- To foster inclusion of religious and cultural minorities in organizational initiatives.
- To build a culture of allyship, where employees actively support and advocate for one another.

2. Design & Implementation: Launched in early 2024, Stronger Together was implemented as a phased initiative under AHLL's Learning and Organizational Development framework.

- **Phase 1 – Assessment & Design (Jan–Mar 2024):** Through focus groups, pulse surveys, and listening circles, AHLL identified the key barriers to inclusion. The insights shaped a tailored intervention combining awareness-building, dialogue, and actionable programs.

- **Phase 2 – Awareness & Sensitization (Apr–Jun 2024):** Interactive workshops on "Cultural Intelligence at Work" were conducted across regions, facilitated by internal champions and external DEI experts. Over 1,200 employees participated in these sessions—both virtually and in person-covering topics such as unconscious bias, microaggressions, and inclusive communication.
- **Phase 3 – Engagement & Empowerment (Jul–Dec 2024)**
  - ❑ **Women Circles:** Peer-led forums promoting self-advocacy, wellbeing, and career growth.
  - ❑ **Open Dialogues:** Informal cross-cultural discussions that built mutual understanding and empathy.
  - ❑ **Inclusive Leadership Training:** Conducted for 150 managers, embedding inclusive decision-making and behavioral practices.
  - ❑ **Storytelling Campaign – "My Culture, My Strength":** Employees shared personal stories celebrating diversity and belonging, amplifying authentic voices across the organization.

3. **Partnerships & Resources:** The program was led by HR in collaboration with Business HR Partners, and a network of identified champions. Internal digital platforms such as Apollo Rewire and Soch were leveraged to sustain communication, engagement, and storytelling.
4. **Communication Strategy:** Regular newsletters, leadership messages, and success stories were circulated to sustain enthusiasm. The initiative was personally championed by Mr. Devi Prasad Dash, CHRO, ensuring inclusion was seen as a leadership mandate rather than an HR initiative.

D. The Impact

Quantitative

- 500+ employees actively participated in workshops and dialogue sessions.
- Women's participation in leadership development programs increased by 12% within six months.
- The Employee Inclusion Index (from internal surveys) rose from 84% to 86%.
- Inter-team conflicts related to cultural misunderstandings dropped by 22%.

Qualitative

- Employees reported a visible cultural shift—one marked by openness, trust, and empathy.

- "For the first time, I felt my cultural background was celebrated, not sidelined," shared one employee.
- Women leaders expressed increased confidence in voicing opinions and leading initiatives.
- Teams across regions displayed greater collaboration, respect, and unity of purpose.

Stronger Together redefined inclusion not as a compliance metric, but as a lived experience—strengthening both the emotional and operational fabric of AHLL.

E. Key Success Factors

- **Leadership Commitment:** Consistent sponsorship from the CHRO and leadership team made inclusion a business priority.
- **Grassroots Engagement:** The use of employee champions created local ownership and sustained energy at the ground level.
- **Integrated Communication:** Storytelling, recognition, and internal campaigns reinforced inclusive behaviors across the organization.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Inclusion outcomes were linked to key business metrics like engagement, retention, and patient care quality.
- **Collaborative Design:** Partnerships with DEI experts and internal stakeholders ensured balance between awareness and action.

F. Insights & Reflections

- The Stronger Together journey was not without challenges. Initial skepticism from certain employee groups, managing program schedules around clinical shifts, and navigating cultural sensitivities require careful and empathetic management.
- AHLL overcame these hurdles through co-creation and continuous feedback, tailoring sessions to local contexts and reinforcing inclusion as a collective, ongoing commitment.
- The biggest realization was that inclusion is not a campaign- it's a culture. Building psychological safety and cultural intelligence takes sustained effort, but the returns are invaluable.
- Today, Stronger Together continues to evolve-empowering employees to bring their authentic selves to work. It stands as a testament to AHLL's belief that when diversity meets empathy, healthcare becomes truly holistic.

APOLLO HOSPITALS ENTERPRISE LIMITED

A. Company Snapshot

Name of the Company: Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Limited

Sector: Health Care
Size of Workforce: Over 33500 employees across India

Apollo Hospitals was established in 1983 by Dr. Prathap C Reddy, renowned as the architect of modern healthcare in India. As the nation's first corporate hospital, Apollo Hospitals is acclaimed for pioneering the private healthcare revolution in the country. Apollo Hospitals has emerged as Asia's foremost integrated healthcare services provider and has a robust presence across the healthcare ecosystem, including Hospitals, Pharmacies, Primary Care & Diagnostic Clinics and several retail health models. The Group also has Telemedicine facilities across several countries, Health Insurance Services, Global Projects Consultancy, Medical Colleges, Medvarsity for E-Learning, Colleges of Nursing and Hospital Management and a Research Foundation. In addition, 'Apollo 24/7' – an online consultation portal and Apollo Home Health provide the care continuum.

The cornerstones of Apollo's legacy are its unstinting focus on clinical excellence, affordable costs, modern technology and forward-looking research & academics. Apollo Hospitals was among the first few hospitals in the world to leverage technology to facilitate seamless healthcare delivery. The organization embraced the rapid advancement in medical equipment across the world and pioneered the introduction of several cutting-edge innovations in India. Recently, Southeast Asia's first Proton Therapy Centre commenced operations at the Apollo Centre in Chennai.

Since its inception, Apollo Hospitals has been honoured by the trust of over 150 million individuals who came from 140 countries. At the core of Apollo's patient-centric culture is TLC (Tender Loving Care), the magic that inspires hope amongst its patients. As a responsible corporate citizen, Apollo Hospitals takes the spirit of leadership well beyond business and has embraced the responsibility of keeping India healthy. Recognizing that Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are the greatest threat to the nation, Apollo Hospitals is continuously educating people about preventive healthcare as the key to wellness.

B. The Challenge

- Ensuring the safety and well-being of women employees in a complex healthcare environment was a pressing concern.

- Especially where the Women employee ratio is over 56%, the need for a structured, comprehensive approach to address safety, mental health, and empowerment was evident.
- Women employees across various departments and shifts, particularly those working night duties.
- Women post pregnancy returning to work

C. The Intervention

- To establish a robust safety framework for women employees in hospital settings, an initiative was launched with the release of the 'PINK Book', a comprehensive guide outlining safety protocols. The PINK Book initiative includes policies on zero tolerance for harassment, CCTV surveillance, ergonomic improvements, mental health support, and a platform for expressing safety concerns.
- To empower women through self-defence training and awareness, Apollo in collaboration with internal safety committees and external partners, including the local police department enabled series of Self-Defence workshops. The initiative was communicated through internal Infographic, posters, and leadership briefings. Training sessions and self-defence workshops were conducted in phases across hospital units.
- To reinforce women safety, rights and responsibilities, Apollo launched Digitized POSH training module and made it mandatory. To facilitate clear understanding among support staff including housekeeping, security, and other blue-collar members, Apollo Hospitals developed a POSH learning module in five regional languages, ensuring its reach and accessibility to every individual across the organization.
- Handholding new mothers, supporting during pregnancy and enabling return to work post-pregnancy
- 'Intrapreneur Excellence for Women' session focussed on empowering women team leaders

D. The Impact

Quantitative

- Over 18000 Women employees safety at the Hospital premises + patients & visitors.
- 2000+ women members participated in Self-Defence session
- >25% reduction in attrition ratio due to multiple interventions

- Enabling support model for our returning mothers: 91% members rejoined after Maternity Leaves. Out of 490 women who went on Maternity Leave, we have 445 women who have resumed work and continued service
- 220+ Women emerging leaders from 10 units, aged 25–45, from diverse socio-economic and professional backgrounds participated in Intrapreneur Excellence workshop conducted in phase manner.

Qualitative: Employee testimonials, culture changes, morale improvements

- These programs, which include robust policies, awareness campaigns, and practical self-defence training, have created an environment where safety and respect are prioritized. Employees now perceive the workplace as a secure and inclusive space, fostering trust and confidence across all levels.
- The introduction of self-defence training sessions has been particularly impactful. These sessions empower women with practical skills to protect themselves, instilling a sense of independence and resilience. Beyond physical preparedness, the training has sparked conversations about personal safety, gender sensitivity, and mutual respect, reinforcing the organization's commitment to employee well-being.
- Culturally, these initiatives have shifted the narrative from passive safety measures to proactive empowerment. Employees feel that the company genuinely values their security, which has strengthened loyalty and engagement. Men and women alike have embraced these programs, creating a collaborative atmosphere where safety is seen as a shared responsibility rather than a gender-specific concern.
- Morale improvements have been evident across teams. This positive sentiment has translated into higher participation in wellness programs, improved team dynamics.
- In essence, the comprehensive women safety initiatives and self-defence training have done more than improve safety, they have transformed workplace culture. By prioritizing respect, empowerment, and inclusivity, the organization has cultivated a positive environment where employees feel valued, secure, and motivated to contribute their best.
- The Intrapreneur Excellence for women workshop in collaboration with Champion Woman Team from Global Adjustments Foundation

Outcomes of Intrapreneur Excellence session

- Enhanced leadership confidence and self-awareness among participants.
- Introduced mindfulness practices for improved mental clarity.

- Fostered a culture of peer appreciation and emotional connection.
- Encouraged adoption of new habits and leadership behaviours.
- Strengthened interdepartmental collaboration through shared experiences.
- Established a supportive and dynamic atmosphere for open dialogue.
- Apollo has consistently supported employees' families during unforeseen circumstances, and women team members have expressed their gratitude through internal forums.

Feedback

- A participant shared, 'This is the beginning of a new version of me.' The session helped her rediscover her strengths and inspired her to take on new responsibilities with confidence.
- During the peer appreciation segment, a participant expressed, 'I didn't know how powerful appreciation could feel until today.' The emotional impact of being recognized by peers left a lasting impression, reinforcing the importance of acknowledgment in the workplace.

E. Key Success Factors

- **Strong leadership commitment:** Leadership commitment was the cornerstone of this initiative. Senior management not only endorsed the initiatives but actively championed them, sending a clear message that safety is a non-negotiable priority. By allocating resources, and communicating the importance of these programs, leaders fostered a culture of trust and accountability. Their visible involvement reassured employees that these efforts were not symbolic but deeply embedded in organizational values.
- **Comprehensive policy design for Women Safety:** Policies form the backbone of any safety framework. Our approach involved designing clear, actionable guidelines that addressed multiple dimensions of women's safety from workplace conduct and reporting mechanisms to emergency response protocols. These policies were communicated transparently and reinforced through regular awareness sessions, ensuring that every employee understood their role in maintaining a safe environment. The emphasis on inclusivity and zero tolerance for harassment strengthened confidence and encouraged proactive participation.
- **Collaborative partnerships:** were key success factors. Building strong ties with local law enforcement agencies added an extra layer of assurance. Regular consultations helped align our internal safety protocols with legal standards and best practices. Police-led

workshops and safety drills educated employees on situational awareness and emergency handling, bridging the gap between organizational measures and community-level security. These partnerships also ensured swift intervention in case of any external threats, making our safety framework comprehensive and responsive.

F. Insights & Reflections

- **Implementation Challenges – Diverse group/ shift:** Rolling out safety training across multiple units presented several operational challenges, which were addressed through a structured and thoughtful approach. One of the primary hurdles was coordinating training across diverse locations and departments. To manage this effectively, we adopted a phased implementation strategy. Instead of attempting a simultaneous rollout, training was scheduled in stages, allowing each unit to receive focused attention. This approach minimized disruption to daily operations and ensured consistency in delivery and quality.

  Another critical challenge was ensuring staff participation. Given the dynamic nature of work schedules, achieving full attendance required careful planning. The solution lay in scheduling sessions during shift overlaps, which allowed employees from different shifts to attend without compromising productivity. This flexibility demonstrated organizational commitment to employee convenience and reinforced the importance of the training.

- **Engagement to ensure effectiveness:** Finally, maintaining engagement throughout the sessions was essential to ensure the training's effectiveness. Hands-on demonstrations, scenario-based exercises, and role-playing activities were incorporated to make the sessions relatable and impactful. These techniques not only enhanced learning but also empowered participants with real-world skills, fostering confidence and preparedness.

  The outcome was more than just skill development, it strengthened the culture of safety, boosted morale, and demonstrated a clear commitment to employee well-being.

Returning Mother Moments



Pink Book Launch



GAINWELL COMMOSALES PRIVATE LIMITED

A. Company Snapshot

Name of the organization: Gainwell Commosales Private Limited

Sector: Heavy Engineering and Infrastructure
Size of workforce: 2500

Contact Person: Ms. Saroni Bhattacharya, Additional General Manager-HR
Email: bhattacharya@gainwellindia.com

Gainwell is dedicated to designing, manufacturing, marketing, and maintaining best-in-class equipment that serves critical sectors such as infrastructure, energy, mining, and defence, catering to both domestic and global markets. This mission is rooted in the company's commitment to driving excellence in every product and service it delivers, ensuring that its offerings meet the highest global standards.

Gainwell's core business activities are diverse, reflecting its expertise across various sectors and its commitment to delivering comprehensive solutions to its clients. At the heart of its operations is the sale of Caterpillar machines, engines, and parts across India, Bhutan, and Nepal. The company offers an extensive range of products that cater to the construction, mining, energy, and transportation industries. Gainwell's portfolio includes heavy machinery, industrial engines, and precision parts, ensuring that customers have access to top-tier equipment tailored to their specific needs.

In addition to its product offerings, Gainwell has formed strategic partnerships with global Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), allowing it to provide innovative, technology-driven solutions. These collaborations enable Gainwell to stay ahead of industry trends, offering cutting-edge products and services that are aligned with the evolving needs of its customers.

Further expanding its influence, Gainwell has made significant inroads into the railways, defence, oil and gas, and underground mining sectors. Its expertise in these critical industries allows Gainwell to deliver specialized solutions that address the unique challenges of each sector. Whether it's providing advanced machinery for railway infrastructure, supporting defence projects, or offering solutions for the oil and gas industry, Gainwell is dedicated to fostering growth and innovation.

B. The Challenge

As Gainwell continues to strengthen its position as an inclusive and future-ready organisation, an important insight emerged from internal assessments and employee engagements: women employees required a more structured and personalised ecosystem of support to help them realise their fullest potential. This understanding shaped the foundation of the women-centric health and wellness strategy. The challenges identified were not gaps, but opportunities for enhancement in line with Gainwell's value of Caring.

- **Enhancing Holistic Well-Being Support for Women**

  Gainwell's women workforce spans diverse functions-from office-based teams to field and operational roles across locations such as Greater Noida, Kolkata, Asansol, and regional sites. Insights from employee connect sessions revealed that women at different career stages-whether young professionals entering the organisation or mid-career women balancing leadership growth with personal responsibilities-sought more structured platforms for physical wellness, emotional resilience, personal safety awareness, and work–life integration. This presented an opportunity to further enrich Gainwell's existing well-being ecosystem with specialised, women-focused interventions.

- **Strengthening Preventive Health & Mental Wellness Engagement**

  Existing wellness initiatives at Gainwell were appreciated, yet women employees expressed interest in more continuous and preventive health dialogues. Many preferred safe, confidential, and supportive spaces to discuss stress, emotional balance, lifestyle health, and career-related concerns. This insight underlined the potential to expand wellness conversations from periodic sessions to a sustained, preventive care model that empowers women to proactively manage their well-being.

- **Building a Gender-Sensitive, Future-Ready Support Framework**

  With evolving workplace expectations and a growing pool of talented women professionals, Gainwell recognised the importance of moving beyond traditional HR support and designing a comprehensive, gender-sensitive care framework. The aim was to strengthen aspects such as career confidence, emotional safety, leadership readiness, and workplace security-creating an environment where women can thrive, grow, and contribute meaningfully to the organisation's success. This shift aligned closely with Gainwell's commitment to inclusion, employee development, and long-term organisational sustainability.

C. The Intervention

The primary objective of the intervention was to build a holistic, sustainable, and women-centric well-being ecosystem at Gainwell- one that strengthened physical health, emotional resilience, workplace safety, work–life balance, and career empowerment. Aligned with Gainwell's core value of Caring, the initiative aimed to ensure that every woman employee felt supported, confident, and valued across all stages of her personal and professional journey.

To achieve this, the organisation launched an integrated Holistic Health & Well-Being Program for Women, built around four strategic pillars: Physical Health & Preventive Care, Mental & Emotional Well-Being, Work–Life Balance & Safety, and Leadership & Empowerment. While these pillars defined the strategy, the depth and relevance of the initiatives implemented became the true differentiator of the intervention.

- **Physical Health & Preventive Care**

  Gainwell emphasised preventive healthcare and accessible wellness solutions for women across offices, plants, and field locations. The initiatives were consolidated into two high-impact clusters:

  - ❑ Women-Centric Fitness & Lifestyle Programs, including yoga, cardio, and Zumba sessions designed around women's physical needs, hormonal balance, and energy management.
  - ❑ Preventive Healthcare Support, including regular health check-up camp and an enhanced Executive Health Policy to encourage proactive health monitoring.

- **Mental & Emotional Well-Being**

  This pillar marked a major milestone with the rollout of Gainwell's first-ever Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in partnership with Silver Oak Health. The EAP offers confidential, 24×7 access to comprehensive support services including:

  - ❑ Diet and nutrition guidance
  - ❑ Legal and financial counselling
  - ❑ Stress, relationships, and work-life consultations
  - ❑ Digital resources through webinars, podcasts, expert sessions, and self-help modules

Alongside this, Gainwell strengthened dedicated psychological support through "OORJA", a confidential one-to-one counselling service with certified female psychologists, focused purely on mental and emotional health.

Additional emotional wellness initiatives included:

- ❑ Mindfulness and self-care sessions such as "Be Your Own Valentine"
- ❑ Ayurveda-based workshops promoting natural stress and sleep management
- ❑ Women Mentor–Mentee circles fostering emotional balance, confidence, and guided career conversations

- **Work–Life Balance & Safety**

  Recognising the diverse personal and professional responsibilities of women, Gainwell introduced multiple initiatives aimed at safety, balance, and supportive policies. The organisation strengthened personal safety awareness through Self-Defence training programs, empowering women to feel confident in workplaces, commutes, and field locations.

  Digital safety was enhanced through Cybercrime Awareness Sessions conducted in collaboration with the Surajpur Police (Ladies Wing) under Mission Shakti, equipping women with the knowledge to navigate online risks.

  To support work–life integration, Gainwell implemented

  - ❑ Alternate Saturdays Off, enabling better rest and personal time
  - ❑ 26 Weeks of Maternity Leave with personalised return-to-work support and a "Goodie Bag" for new mothers
  - ❑ Adoption Leave to support new parents welcoming a child
  - ❑ Paternity Leave, reinforcing shared caregiving responsibilities and inclusive family support
  - ❑ A strengthened Whistleblower & Ethics Framework further enhanced psychological safety and transparent grievance redressal.

- **Leadership & Empowerment**

  Gainwell believes in enabling women not only to succeed but also to lead. Under this pillar, the organisation implemented:

- The (S)Hero Program, a specialised development journey designed to enhance leadership persona, inner confidence, communication, and workplace navigation skills for high-potential women employees
- The GOLD Program for Women Leaders, focusing on authentic leadership, collaboration, communication, and influence, supported by assessments, coaching, and hands-on projects

These initiatives were supported by continuous learning sessions, confidence-building workshops, and leadership mentoring, enabling women to progress into future-ready roles.

D. The Impact

The intervention delivered strong, measurable, and cultural impact across Gainwell, reinforcing our commitment to an inclusive, equitable, and future-ready workplace for women employees.

Quantitative

- 40% increase in women's participation in health and wellness programs between 2021 and 2024, driven by structured preventive care, focused well-being initiatives, and region-wide accessibility.
- 12% rise in satisfaction and engagement among women employees, as captured through periodic engagement pulse checks and the AWAZ Survey.
- 8% reduction in absenteeism supported by improved health practices, flexibility initiatives, and early-intervention mechanisms.
- 14% improvement in employees' sense of belonging and workplace inclusivity, highlighted in the AWAZ Survey 2024.

Women's attrition data from June 2024 – May 2025 also reflected greater stability and stronger retention trends, signalling enhanced trust, confidence, and emotional security within the organisation.

Qualitative

- Employee feedback demonstrated a distinct shift in confidence, emotional well-being, and workplace security:
- Women reported higher confidence and self-worth through structured wellness programs and the self-defence sessions conducted across locations.

- The availability of confidential emotional support through Oorja and the introduction of Gainwell's first-ever Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in partnership with Silver Oak Health significantly strengthened psychological and emotional resilience. Employees shared that the EAP's expanded services-diet and nutrition guidance, legal and financial counselling, and specialised well-being experts-made help-seeking more comfortable and approachable.
- Employees experienced a greater openness toward accessing mental and emotional support, owing to the confidential nature of the services and proactive awareness sessions.
- The mentor–mentee framework and community-led initiatives created stronger peer support networks, particularly for women in early and mid-career stages.
- Tools such as the Amber Chatbot and GCPO Hotline created safe, accessible channels for raising concerns, leading to a cultural environment where employees felt more secure and supported.

Leaders observed clear behavioural improvements across teams-higher energy levels, enhanced morale, and visible shifts toward empathy, respect, and inclusive leadership practices. They also reported more active participation from women in discussions, projects, and cross-functional initiatives.

Strengthened Organisational Culture

Beyond well-being, the intervention significantly enriched Gainwell's development ecosystem:

- **Work–Life Balance:** Enhanced policies such as adoption leave, paternity leave, flexible working practices, and parental support mechanisms created a more inclusive and family-supportive environment.
- **Leadership & Empowerment:** Programs such as (S)Hero, designed exclusively for high-potential women leaders, and the GOLD Program, which emphasises authenticity, collaboration, and communication, accelerated women's leadership readiness and created visible role models across functions.

Overall, the initiative strengthened Gainwell's employee experience framework-deepening trust, enhancing well-being, and driving a more inclusive workplace culture where women feel supported, empowered, and valued at every stage of their journey.

E. Key Success Factors

The success of the intervention was driven by several critical enablers:

- **Leadership Commitment:** Strong sponsorship from senior leadership and the Group Chief People Office ensured that women's health and well-being remained a strategic priority rather than an HR initiative alone.
- **Integrated Program Design:** The holistic structure integrated physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being instead of isolated activities, creating a sustained behavioural change.
- **Partnership Ecosystem:** Collaborations with certified psychologists, law enforcement agencies, healthcare providers, wellness coaches, and digital platforms like Silver Oak strengthened the program's credibility and reach.
- **Safe Feedback Infrastructure:** Platforms such as Amber Chatbot, GCPO Hotline, and the Sampurna Women Happiness Dipstick Survey created trust and psychological safety, encouraging honest participation.
- **Technology Enablement:** The Silver Oak platform ensured 24×7 accessible support, webinars, counselling, and self-help content.
- **Employee Involvement:** Women leaders as DEI ambassadors and peer mentors created strong ownership and grassroots advocacy.
- **Continuous Measurement:** Use of surveys and data dashboards enabled timely course corrections and demonstrated tangible value to leadership.

F. Insights & Reflections

- The implementation journey offered several meaningful insights that reshaped Gainwell's approach to employee care, inclusion, and well-being. One of the earliest challenges was the natural hesitation employees felt-particularly women-when discussing topics such as emotional well-being, personal safety, or confidentiality. There were also practical constraints: time pressures in operational roles, varied regional contexts, and the need to sensitise both managers and teams. These concerns were addressed through consistent reassurance, strong communication, and visible leadership involvement. Storytelling by senior leaders, repeated emphasis on confidentiality, and the presence of trained external experts gradually built trust and encouraged participation.

- A core learning from the initiative was that employee care cannot be treated as an isolated activity or a once-a-year campaign. Real impact emerges only when well-being is woven into the organisation's daily rhythm-through leadership behaviour, support systems, communication practices, and policy design. Initiatives that balanced emotional connection with structured, practical support consistently delivered the strongest results.
- The journey also highlighted the value of collaboration. Partnering with credible external institutions enhanced employee trust and helped provide specialised care that internal teams alone could not have offered. The integration of data-through participation metrics, AWAZ Survey insights, and qualitative feedback-proved invaluable. It not only validated the impact but also strengthened leadership conviction and ensured continuity of investments.
- Ultimately, the most profound reflection was this: when women feel safe, supported, and valued, the entire organisation benefits. Their stability leads to stronger engagement, more meaningful participation in development programs, and higher retention. The initiative reaffirmed Gainwell's belief that nurturing women's well-being is not just a responsibility-it is a strategic enabler of organisational culture and long-term performance.

LLOYD METALS AND ENERGY LIMITED

A. Company Snapshot

Name of the Company: Lloyd Metals And Energy Limited

Sector: Mining and Metals
Size of Workforce: 6500

Contact Person: Mr. Dilip H. Burade, Deputy General Manager-CSR
Email: dhb@lloyds.in

B. The Challenge

1. What was the key problem, gap, or need you identified in employee care?

The key problem, gap identified at Lloyds Metals And Energy in employee care centers around occupational health and safety, skills gap, risk of human rights violations, and fostering an inclusive workplace culture. The company operates in the mining and metals sector, where employees face significant hazards from machinery, chemicals, and challenging environmental conditions; effectively managing these risks is critical to prevent accidents and ensure well-being.

a) Occupational Health and Safety Concerns

- Employees at Lloyds Metals are exposed to physical safety risks and health hazards that must be carefully managed to avoid incidents and regulatory non-compliance.]
- A weak safety culture or inadequate safety systems may result in absenteeism, lower morale, and operational disruptions.
- The company recognized a need for comprehensive training, robust policy implementation, and frequent safety drills, aiming for a zero-accident workplace.

b) Human Rights and Workplace Fairness

- Lloyds Metals faces risks related to labor standards such as worker exploitation, unsafe working conditions, discrimination, and violations of community rights.
- Addressing this gap requires clear human rights policies, due diligence across all operational and supply chain activities
- Frequent training and awareness programs have been introduced to cultivate respect for human rights, gender equality, and prevent harassment.

c) Inclusion and Employee Motivation

- The company identified the need for a more inclusive, merit-based, and motivating culture that shares ownership through ESOPs with all levels of employees.
- Efforts have been made to flatten structures, empower employees, and offer benefits to both executives and workers.

2. Who was most affected (demographics, teams, etc.)?

The most affected groups at Lloyds Metals And Energy Limited were mine and plant workers, particularly those in frontline operational roles, as well as employees from remote, naxalite and tribal areas in Gadchiroli and surrounding regions.

Key Demographics Affected

- **Mine and Plant Workers:** Over 80% of company-wide employee benefit schemes, such as ESOP allotments, went to these workers, highlighting both their representation and vulnerability regarding occupational risks.
- **Residents from Tribal/Remote Areas:** Many affected workers originated from historically underserved regions, making them more susceptible to workplace safety issues and in need of greater protection.
- **Younger and Aging Employees:** Youth make up around 45% of the workforce, while about 30% are aged over 50, both groups requiring tailored training and health interventions.

Impacted Teams and Roles

- **Workers and Frontline Teams:** Exposure to hazardous machinery, chemicals, and difficult physical environments made frontline mineral extraction and plant operation teams the most at risk of injury or health concerns.
- **Women in Non-Traditional Roles:** With policies encouraging women to take on roles like heavy machinery operation, these individuals are subject to new occupational and cultural risks not previously encountered in such environments.
- **Contract Labor and Surrendered Maoists:** The company also provided employment to surrendered Maoists and contract staff, who face integration, safety, and skill development challenges unique to their backgrounds.

C. The Intervention

1. What were the main objectives?

The main objectives of Lloyds Metals And Energy Limited are on becoming India's leader in iron and steel, achieving sustainable growth, operational excellence, and positive community impact.

- Core Strategic Objectives
- Market Leadership
- Sustainability
- Innovation
- Operational Excellence
- Customer Centricity
- Employee Development
- Financial Performance
- Community Impact

2. How was it designed and implemented? (Include timelines, stakeholders involved, partnerships, and communication strategies.)

Timeline and Phases

- **2023–2025:** LMEL progressively rolled out major infrastructure (e.g., the Konsari pellet plant and slurry pipeline began after clearances in late 2023 and were completed by mid-2025, slightly exceeding the initial 18-month window). Employee stock options, workforce development, and safety initiatives were launched and expanded within similar two-year periods, with annual targets reviewed and adjusted per results.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Safety drills, R&D spending, community projects, and CSR activities followed annual review cycles, ensuring ongoing performance measurement.
    - ❑ Stakeholders Involved
    - ❑ Leadership & Promoter Group
    - ❑ Middle Management & HR
    - ❑ Workforce
    - ❑ Institutional & Community Partners
    - ❑ Industry Collaborations

- Government & NGOs

- **Digitalization:**
  - Adoption of HR digital tools and direct communication platforms improved feedback capture, especially for shift workers and remote teams.
  - Describe the policy, program, or support system implemented (flexible work, elderly care, childcare, parental leave, wellness initiatives, etc.)
- **Employee Stock Option Plan (ESOP):**
  - Inclusive ownership program benefiting executives and shopfloor employees
  - Encourages alignment with company growth and long-term commitment
- **Wellness Initiatives:**
  - Emphasis on physical and mental health programs
  - Workplace safety training and accident prevention
  - Facilities and support for differently-abled employees
- **Learning and Development:**
  - Continuous skill development and leadership training
  - Merit-based growth with flat organizational culture
- **Gender Inclusion and Support:**
  - Women empowerment in male-dominated roles
  - Temporary leave policies for pregnancy-related illnesses
  - Paternity support and family-friendly practices
- **Parental Leave:**
  - Supportive parental leave ensuring 100% retention
  - Encouragement of work-life balance
- **Grievance Redressal and Communication:**
  - Transparent grievance and whistleblower policies
  - Open communication channels for employee feedback

- **Equal Opportunity and Accessibility:**
  - ❑ Compliance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016
  - ❑ Non-discriminatory policies across gender, caste, age, and ethnicity
- **Safety Management:**
  - ❑ Rigorous adherence to occupational health and safety standards
  - ❑ Frequent safety drills and awareness programs

These programs collectively foster a supportive, inclusive, and safe workplace at Lloyds Metals And Energy Limited.

3. What resources or partnerships were needed?

- Capital and Funding
- Strategic Industry Partnerships
- Infrastructure and Technology Resources
- Human Resources and Skill Development
- Government and Regulatory Engagements
- Community and Social Partnerships

D. The Impact

Quantitative Outcomes

- **Participation Rates:** Over 2,700 employees have benefited from the Employee Stock Option Plan (ESOP), including 1,700 executives and 1,500 workers.
- **Retention Data:** The ESOP scheme is designed to reduce attrition by motivating employees, contributing to a lower attrition rate, although exact retention percentages were not explicitly provided.
- **Productivity Improvements:** Commissioning of advanced infrastructure like the 85 km iron ore slurry pipeline has optimized logistics, reducing transportation dependency on roads and improving operational scalability.
- **Absenteeism Reduction:** LMEL prioritizes health and safety programs aimed at minimizing workplace accidents and absenteeism, but specific absenteeism rate reductions were not disclosed.

Qualitative Outcomes

- **Employee Testimonials:** Employees describe LMEL as a supportive and motivating workplace, highlighting good management, trained seniors, positive work atmosphere, and strong staff support.
- **Culture Changes:** LMEL operates an organizational structure fostering freedom, trust, and accountability, empowering employees at all levels to take initiative, solve problems, and lead.
- **Morale Improvements:** The inclusive ESOP program is viewed as a fair and motivating benefit, increasing employees' sense of ownership and belonging.
- Career growth opportunities through continuous skill development and leadership coaching have enhanced motivation and loyalty.
- These outcomes reflect LMEL's holistic approach to employee engagement and operational excellence, boosting workforce participation and morale while improving productivity and safety.

E. Key Success Factors

What made the intervention work? (Leadership buy-in, technology, policy design, etc.)

- **Strong Leadership:**
  - ❑ Committed top management embedded employee well-being and sustainability into business strategy
  - ❑ Empathetic and transparent communication promoted trust and morale
- **Inclusive Policy Design:**
  - ❑ Comprehensive Employee Stock Option Plan (ESOP) covering all employee levels to foster ownership
  - ❑ Safety, wellness, gender inclusion, and family support policies aligned with international standards
- **Advanced Technology Adoption:**
  - ❑ Use of innovative mining and steel manufacturing technologies to improve efficiency and reduce environmental impact
  - ❑ Digital tools enhanced communication and training, especially for remote workforce

- **Strategic Partnerships and Community Engagement:**
  - ❑ Collaborations with government, NGOs, and local communities ensured compliance and social responsibility
  - ❑ Inclusion of tribal populations and surrendered Maoists through training and employment initiatives
- **Empowering Organizational Culture:**
  - ❑ Flat structure encouraging initiative, accountability, and continuous learning
  - ❑ Focus on leadership development and skill enhancement for workforce motivation
- **Robust Monitoring and Feedback:**
  - ❑ Use of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) frameworks for agile policy refinement
  - ❑ Balancing quantitative data with employee feedback for sustained organizational health

F. Insights & Reflections

Challenges faced and how you overcame them?

- **Challenge:** High Occupational Safety Risks and region specific challenges Operations in mining and metal production exposed workers to hazards from machinery, chemicals, and environmental factors.

  Solution: Implementation of rigorous safety protocols, continuous safety training, 100% participation in safety drills, and adherence to ISO 45001 standards to reduce accidents and absenteeism

- **Challenge: Integrating a Diverse Workforce**

  Inclusion of tribal populations, surrendered Maoists, and contract labor presented challenges around skill gaps, cultural integration, and trust-building.

  Solution: Comprehensive training programs, local community engagement, supportive workplace culture, and merit-based inclusion policies helped build trust and employee loyalty.

- **Challenge: Scaling Infrastructure and Operations**

  Developing large-scale pellet plants, pipelines, and steel plants within ambitious timelines posed logistical and regulatory challenges.

Solution: Strategic partnerships (e.g., acquisition of Thriveni Earthmovers), close government collaboration for clearances, and phased project execution ensured timely delivery.

- **Challenge: Employee Retention and Motivation**

  Attracting and retaining talent in a competitive industry with potentially hazardous work conditions.

  Solution: Employee Stock Option Plans (ESOP), flat organizational culture promoting empowerment, inclusive policies, and wellness initiatives enhanced retention and morale.

- **Challenge: Environmental Sustainability**

  Minimizing carbon footprint and ecological impact amid resource-intensive operations.

  Solution: Partnerships with renewable energy firms, adoption of clean energy projects, and strict environmental management policies aligned with national and global standards.

- **Challenge: Communication Across Hierarchies**

  Ensuring effective communication between management and frontline workers in remote locations.

  Solution: Use of digital platforms for direct feedback, regular town halls, and open grievance redressal mechanisms improved transparency and engagement.

  LMEL addressed its complex challenges through a blend of robust safety practices, inclusive human resource strategies, strategic partnerships, and sustainability commitments, enabling steady growth and workforce stability.

NOVARTIS HEALTHCARE PRIVATE LIMITED

A. Company Snapshot

Name of the Company: Novartis Healthcare Private Limited

Sector: Pharmaceutical
Size of workforce: 8608

Contact Person: Saswati Samantara, Director HRBP, DEI & Culture
Email: saswati.samantara@novartis.com,

B. The Challenge

1. What was the key problem, gap, or need you identified in employee care?

- **Flexible Working:** During the pandemic, we transitioned to virtual working to stay safe and adapt to a new work model. As a people-centric organization, we have always prioritized the well-being of our employees. Post-pandemic, as we all navigated new ways of working, our commitment to maintaining work-life balance remained steadfast and we shifted to hybrid work model. While we recognize and respect the diverse personal choices and flexible arrangements our team members have adopted. Our goal is to provide unwavering support to every associate, ensuring they thrive in a hybrid work environment.
- **Promote Gender Equity:** By offering equal parental leave to all parents regardless of gender or sexual orientation, we aim to promote greater equity for both birthing and non-birthing parents. This approach empowers everyone with the flexibility and opportunity to make the right choices for their families, fostering a more inclusive and supportive workplace.]

2. Who was most affected (demographics, teams, etc.)?
All the associates of Novartis

C. The Intervention

1. What were the main objectives?

a) Hybrid working objectives:

- **Promoting connectedness:** Foster meaningful team interactions to reduce isolation and boost emotional well-being.

- **Team-first mindset:** Focus on collective success to strengthen team cohesion.
- **Relationship building:** Enable cross-functional collaboration and informal learning for innovation.
- **Clarity & accountability:** Define roles clearly to reduce stress and enhance productivity.

b) Equal Parental leave objectives:

- **Inclusive care:** Empower all parents to participate in caregiving without bias.
- **Work-life balance:** Offer flexibility during key family moments.
- **Cultural change:** Normalize leave for all parents to build an empathetic workplace.

2. How was it designed and implemented? (Include timelines, stakeholders involved, partnerships, and communication strategies.)

The hybrid work model launched in 2023 with global and local leadership support, dedicated resources and FAQs were made available on the P&O Hub. Equal parental policy was rolled out in 2019. We have dedicated resources on equal parenting leave and training for employees and line managers to support them throughout this journey. Both policies were shared as a company-wide communication and posted on viva engage.

3. Describe the policy, program, or support system implemented (flexible work, elderly care, childcare, parental leave, wellness initiatives, etc.)

- **Flexible Working: Our Commitment to Hybrid Working:** Novartis supports a hybrid working model that promotes work-life balance, team building, and a sense of belonging. Employees benefit from flexible hours, both in-office and remote, enabling effective time management and productivity. Associates work 12 on-site days per month (around three days per week), blending collaboration with flexibility. Exceptions are provided for personal or extenuating circumstances, allowing continued remote work when needed.
- **Equal Parental Leave:** We celebrate life's milestones and support our associates through transformative experiences like parenthood. Our Equal Parental Leave policy offers up to 26 weeks of paid leave to all parents, birthing and non-birthing regardless of gender or sexual orientation, following childbirth, surrogacy, or adoption. The policy also supports women's physical and emotional well-being during and after childbirth, miscarriage, or medically necessary abortion, fostering equity and inclusion.

- **Wellness Initiatives:** At Novartis, our wellness programs are designed to support the overall wellbeing of employees based on following activities:

a) Physical Wellness Activities: We offer a wide range of physical wellness programs that promote movement, fitness, and preventive care:

- ❑ **Gym Access:** Our Hyderabad site provides free access to a fully equipped health club, supported by on-site physiotherapists, dieticians, and fitness trainers.
- ❑ **Annual Gym Events:** These events encourage community participation and fitness awareness.
- ❑ **Daily Hybrid and Virtual Yoga Sessions:** Accessible both on-site and remotely.
- ❑ **Annual Yoga Events and International Yoga Day Celebrations:** These special events promote mindfulness and flexibility.
- ❑ **Pranayama and Meditation Sessions:** Focused on breathwork and relaxation.
- ❑ **Marathon Participation:** Organized to promote endurance and team spirit.

b) Mental and Emotional Wellness Services

- ❑ **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** 24/7 confidential support for stress, emotional wellbeing, financial concerns, and more. Includes webinars on psychosocial risk management and other related topics.
- ❑ **Sound Bowl Healing:** These sessions use sound therapy to promote relaxation and emotional balance
- ❑ **Mental Health First Aiders & ERGs:** Peer-led support networks fostering inclusion and safe spaces.
- ❑ **Preventive Health & Safety:**
- ❑ **Energized for Life (EfL):** Monthly occupational health sessions focused on injury prevention, ergonomic awareness, and healthy lifestyle choices.
- ❑ **Annual Health Checkups:** Free preventive screenings for all employees.

4. What resources or partnerships were needed?

Partnerships within the P&O team, Legal, REFS (Real Estate & Facilities Services), and the Data Analytics team were essential for the successful implementation of these policies.

5. How was it rolled out (communication, training, timelines)?

These policies were rolled out through P&O communications. Resources and guides were made available on the P&O Hub, and training sessions were provided to all employees and line managers to support the implementation. The rollout was supported by clear timelines and messaging across global and local locations.

D. The Impact

- **Quantitative:** Participation rates, retention data, productivity improvements, absenteeism reduction, etc.

  Our overall well-being score, which captures work-life balance and associates' perceptions of well-being as a company priority, has increased over the years. As per the latest Q2 2025 data, India stands at 80, representing a 12.68% increase over the overall company score of 71. We were at 77 in August 2024, compared to 72 in August 2023 and 2022. This reflects a strong sense of well-being among our India-based associates.

- **Qualitative:** Employee testimonials, culture changes, morale improvements Our quarterly "Our Voice" survey conducted via GLINT, along with the SPARK peer recognition platform, has significantly enhanced employee voice and appreciation. Personalized growth opportunities evolved performance management, and inclusive benefits such as equal paid parental leave have contributed to higher engagement and retention. Leadership development and global well-being offerings further reinforce a supportive and empowering environment.

E. Key Success Factors

What made the intervention work? (Leadership buy-in, technology, policy design, etc.)

- Leadership support and thoughtful policy design have been key drivers of the success of these interventions. Hybrid working gives employees the flexibility to balance professional and personal responsibilities by offering the freedom to choose where and how they work.
- A key enabler of this model is Activity-Based Working (ABW), which recognizes that different tasks require different settings. Employees can select workspaces that best suit their needs—whether collaborating in open areas or focusing in quiet zones—supported by user-friendly technology and a culture of autonomy.
- We also use data insights to monitor how hybrid working is being embedded across the organization. Key indicators are reviewed at both global and country levels to measure adoption. These insights help identify where change interventions may be required.

Exceptions are also provided, with a reduced number of office days, to support flexibility for associates in cases of personal or extenuating circumstances.

- With the Equal Parental Leave policy, attrition has reduced over the years. Our 2024 maternity data show a remarkable 97.3% return-to-work rate, highlighting the effectiveness of our evolving support systems and the flexibility offered to associates returning from maternity leave.

F. Insights & Reflections

Challenges faced and how you overcame them?

- Change often comes with challenges. When the hybrid work policy was implemented, many employees had been working remotely for an extended period, and it took time to transition them to the hybrid work model. To support this shift, we provided a three-month transition period, especially for those who had relocated away from office locations during the pandemic.
- The requirement for employees to be on-site for 12 days per month, with the remaining days remote, initially conflicted with the team-first mindset. To address this, we empowered managers to decide which days their teams would be together in person, ensuring alignment with team needs and collaboration goals.
- For employees facing challenging commutes or struggling to accommodate non-work commitments, we offered flexibility to optimize commuting times. This included the option to adjust work start and end times, helping them manage their responsibilities more effectively.
- With the Equal Parental Leave policy, returning to the office after six months of leave can be overwhelming for new parents. The transition back to work posed emotional and logistical challenges. To support them, we introduced a buddy system and provided tailored resources for line managers to guide and assist returning employees. Additionally, Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) were made available to offer emotional and psychological support during this transition.
- These thoughtful interventions helped us overcome initial resistance and ensured that employees felt supported, valued, and empowered throughout their journey.

OIL INDIA LIMITED

A. Company Snapshot

Name of the Company: Oil India Limited

Contact Person: Ms FS Haque, General Manager HR Learning
Email: farahhaque@oilindia.in

Oil India Limited (OIL) is a Maharatna CPSE and an integrated energy company spanning upstream exploration and production, pipelines, and downstream through its 69.63% stake in Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL). Founded in 1959 with roots tracing back to Asia's first oil well at Digboi, OIL operates across India with overseas interests, manages a large onshore acreage position across OALP/NELP blocks, and is pursuing offshore plays in the Mahanadi, Andaman, and Kerala–Konkan basins. The company continues to progress the NRL expansion from 3 to 9 MMTPA alongside the Paradip–Numaligarh crude pipeline and the Northeast gas grid, supporting evacuation, reliability, and long-term value creation.

In parallel, OIL is advancing India's energy transition: a 100-kg/day green hydrogen pilot, wind power in Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh, solar additions, and plans for compressed biogas and biofuels align with a Net Zero 2040 ambition. Women at OIL constitute ~7.8% of the workforce, totalling 506 employees as of 31 March 2025, and procurement from women-owned micro and small enterprises reached ₹129.90 crore in FY25. Key businesses cover crude oil and natural gas exploration, development and production; transportation of crude through cross-country pipelines; refining and marketing through NRL; and emerging clean-energy ventures under Oil Green Energy Limited. The company's mission couples resource growth with execution excellence under “Mission 4+”, emphasizing safety, digitalization, and responsible operations, while Numaligarh Refinery drives regional industrial development and product availability in the East-Northeast corridor.

The company partners with central and state governments, academia, and technology providers to enhance recovery, reduce emissions, and build skills across the Northeast, Assam and adjoining geographies. With a resilient balance sheet and disciplined capital allocation, OIL is positioned as a technology-driven, integrated platform that safeguards India's energy security while scaling low-carbon solutions, community development, and inclusive growth across its operating geographies.

B. The Challenge

1. What was the key problem, gap, or need you identified in employee care?

- Today in a world of everyday violence and uncertainty, women must learn to protect themselves.
- For too long women have been socialised to prioritise others above them on safety. They are taught to be nurturing, caring and submissive. It's time to break free from those patriarchal mindsets and to give priority to them their own safety and wellbeing moves.
- Ladies, often protect their family and loved ones. But who protects the women? Women cannot rely solely on other members to protect them. They must be strong and protect themselves, to rise above, to be bold and demand practical solutions to make themselves stronger. When women are skilled and confident in defending themselves, potential perpetrators are less likely to target them.

2. Who was most affected (demographics, teams, etc.)?

OIL recruits employees from all over the country. Upon appointment, they are posted to various locations, often far from their hometowns and families. Among them, many women—especially those living or travelling alone—were particularly affected.

C. The Intervention

- Self-defence training goes far beyond learning a set of physical moves — it is a holistic approach that focuses equally on mental strength, awareness, and confidence. The primary goal of this initiative was to equip women employees with the ability to protect themselves, not only through physical techniques but also by cultivating a mindset of alertness and self-assurance in challenging situations.
- The training emphasized that personal safety begins with awareness — of one's surroundings, of potential risks, and of one's own intuition. Women were encouraged to trust their instincts, recognize early warning signs, and take preventive action when they sense discomfort or threat. The sessions also focused on teaching the importance of setting clear boundaries, saying “no” assertively, and maintaining composure under pressure.
- Through practical demonstrations, participants were introduced to simple yet effective techniques of self-defence that could be applied in real-life situations. However, the true essence of the program lay in empowering women to believe in their inner strength — to respond with confidence and decisiveness rather than fear. The training fostered a spirit of solidarity and mutual support among participants, reinforcing the message that self-protection is both a personal and collective responsibility.

- Importantly, this intervention was not confined to regular OIL employees alone. Recognizing the broader need for safety awareness, the initiative was extended to include contractual employees, interns, and apprentices, ensuring inclusivity across all categories of the workforce. Furthermore, the outreach went beyond the company's premises — the program was also conducted in schools and colleges within and around OIL's operational areas, thereby sensitizing young women and girls to the importance of self-defence and personal safety.
- Ultimately, by combining physical preparedness with mental resilience, the initiative helped nurture a culture of confidence, self-reliance, and dignity not just within OIL, but across the wider community it serves.

1. What were the main objectives?

- To equip women employees with essential self-defence skills to enhance their personal safety and confidence in any situation.
- To develop mental alertness, awareness, and the ability to assess and respond effectively to potential threats.
- To encourage women to trust their instincts, set personal boundaries, and assert themselves in uncomfortable or unsafe circumstances.
- To reduce fear and anxiety among women living or travelling alone by building a sense of self-assurance and control.
- To promote a culture of safety, respect, and empowerment within and beyond the workplace.
- To create awareness about the importance of self-protection and personal well-being as part of holistic employee care.

2. How was it designed and implemented?

- The WIPS(Women in Public Sector) OIL Cell took the initiative by meeting the Head of the Training Department to propose a specialized training program on self-defence for women employees across various spheres of the company. The proposal emphasized the growing need to ensure women's safety and confidence, both within and outside the workplace.
- After the initial discussions, the Training Department collaborated with WIPS OIL Cell to design a structured program that combined practical self-defence techniques with awareness and confidence-building sessions. The program was planned to be

conducted in multiple phases to ensure maximum participation from different departments and locations.

- Key stakeholders involved included the WIPS OIL Cell members, the Training & Development Department, professional self-defence instructors, and local law enforcement representatives (where applicable). The training partners were carefully selected based on their expertise in women's safety and empowerment programs.
- A detailed timeline was established, outlining the planning, communication, and execution stages. The communication strategy involved official circulars, email invitations, and internal notices to encourage participation and create awareness about the importance of self-defence training. Feedback mechanisms were also built in to assess participant satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.
- Through a coordinated effort and strong inter-departmental collaboration, the initiative was successfully implemented, ensuring wide outreach and meaningful impact among women employees.

3. What resources or partnerships were needed?

- To implement the program effectively, the primary requirement was an experienced and skilled facilitator who could demonstrate and teach key self-defence techniques in a practical and engaging manner. The objective was not to conduct an intensive martial arts session but to design a focused workshop that would introduce simple, effective, and easy-to-practice techniques suitable for women of all age groups and fitness levels.
- In addition to the expert trainer, coordination support from the Training & Development Department and the WIPS OIL Cell was essential for planning, scheduling, and mobilizing participants from different departments. Basic resources such as a suitable training venue, safety mats, audiovisual aids, and communication materials were arranged internally.
- The intervention was also successful for the enthusiastic and encouraging participation of all stakeholders. The collaborative approach ensured that the sessions were both informative and empowering, combining practical demonstrations with discussions on mental preparedness, situational awareness, and confidence-building.

4. How was it rolled out (communication, training, timelines)?

- The program was rolled out through a well-coordinated communication plan. Official circulars were issued and shared via email and WhatsApp messages with all employees, Heads of Departments, members of WIPS (Women in Public Sector), and

school heads. These communications outlined the objectives, schedule, and registration process for the self-defence training sessions.

- The use of multiple communication channels ensured wider reach and timely dissemination of information across different departments and locations. The training sessions were conducted as per the planned timeline, ensuring maximum participation and effective coordination among all stakeholders.

D. The Impact

The self-defence training program had a remarkable impact, both quantitatively and qualitatively, on the women employees of OIL. It not only enhanced personal safety awareness but also strengthened confidence, teamwork, and overall well-being at the workplace.

Quantitative

- A total of 109 women employees participated in the self-defence training sessions conducted across different departments and locations. The impressive turnout reflected the strong interest and commitment among women employees to learn and adopt self-protection techniques. Attendance and engagement levels remained consistently high throughout the program, indicating the relevance and effectiveness of the initiative.
- Post-training evaluations revealed encouraging results. Many participants could recall and demonstrate at least three to five key self-defence moves even weeks after the session, showcasing strong retention and practical understanding. Feedback analysis also showed that participants reported a greater sense of alertness, situational awareness, and readiness to handle unexpected circumstances confidently.
- The initiative had a positive ripple effect on workplace culture. Employees, particularly those working in field locations or travelling alone, reported feeling more secure and self-assured, which indirectly contributed to improved concentration and productivity. A noticeable reduction in anxiety and absenteeism among participants was also observed, as they gained confidence in managing their safety independently.
- Furthermore, the program encouraged peer learning and collaboration. The group training format fostered camaraderie among women employees, strengthening bonds across departments and hierarchies. This collective spirit of empowerment created a more inclusive and supportive work environment aligned with OIL's values of employee welfare and holistic development.

Qualitative

- Beyond the measurable outcomes, the program brought about a visible shift in mindset and attitude. Women who previously expressed apprehension about personal safety now reported feeling empowered, confident, and better equipped to handle uncomfortable or unsafe situations. The sessions also provided a safe space for open discussions where participants could share personal experiences and learn from one another.
- Several participants shared that they now approach everyday activities—such as commuting, fieldwork, or travel—with greater vigilance and self-assurance. The training not only imparted physical techniques but also emphasized mental resilience, helping women trust their instincts and assert boundaries effectively.

The initiative's success demonstrated how a simple, focused intervention could create a deep and lasting impact on employee morale and empowerment. With 109 employees trained, the program stands as a model of proactive employee care and gender-sensitive workplace practices. It has laid the foundation for future initiatives promoting safety, confidence, and equality for women within the organization and beyond.

E. Key Success Factors

What made the intervention work? (Leadership buy-in, technology, policy design, etc.)

The success of the self-defence training program was driven by strong leadership support, effective collaboration, expert facilitation, and enthusiastic participation.

- **Leadership Support:** Senior management and the Training & Development Department provided full backing, ensuring the initiative aligned with OIL's commitment to employee welfare and women's empowerment. Their support facilitated smooth coordination, adequate resources, and high visibility across the organization.
- **Role of WIPS OIL Cell:** The WIPS OIL Cell played a pivotal role in conceptualizing and initiating the program. Their proactive approach and collaboration with the Training Department ensured that the sessions addressed real workplace safety needs and encouraged wide participation.
- **Expert Facilitation:** The engagement of an experienced trainer made the sessions practical and impactful. The focus was on simple, easy-to-practice self-defence techniques rather than rigorous martial arts, ensuring accessibility and confidence among participants.

- **Effective Communication:** The program was promoted through circulars, emails, and WhatsApp messages, reaching women employees across all departments. Clear communication and scheduling ensured smooth implementation and maximum participation, with 109 employees successfully trained.
- **Active Participation:** The enthusiasm of participants was another key factor. Their willingness to learn, share experiences, and support each other created a positive and empowering atmosphere throughout the sessions.
- **Alignment with OIL's Values:** The initiative reflected OIL's core values of safety, inclusivity, and holistic employee development. It not only enhanced self-confidence and preparedness among women employees but also strengthened the culture of care and empowerment within the organization.

Together, these factors made the intervention effective, sustainable, and deeply impactful.

F. Insights & Reflections

Challenges faced and how you overcame them?

- Implementing the self-defence training program came with its own set of challenges, but each obstacle provided valuable learning and strengthened the overall process.
- One of the initial challenges was scheduling and coordination. Since women employees were spread across different departments and locations, it was difficult to find a common time that suited everyone. This was resolved through advance planning and flexible scheduling, allowing participants to attend in smaller batches without affecting their work commitments.
- Another challenge was creating awareness and motivating participation. Some employees initially hesitated, assuming the training would be physically demanding or like martial arts. To address this, clear communication was sent out explaining that the program focused on simple, easy-to-learn techniques suitable for all age groups and fitness levels. The endorsement from the WIPS OIL Cell and senior management also helped in building trust and encouraging participation.
- A logistical challenge involved arranging an appropriate venue and safety materials such as mats and demonstration space. With the support of the Training & Development Department, suitable arrangements were made to ensure safety and comfort for all participants.

- Finding the right trainer was another critical aspect. The team carefully selected an experienced facilitator who could not only demonstrate techniques but also connect with participants through relatable examples and motivational guidance.
- Despite these challenges, the success of the program reaffirmed that with the right intent, planning, and teamwork, even a small initiative can create a lasting impact. The experience highlighted the importance of proactive collaboration, clear communication, and empathetic leadership. It also reinforced the belief that empowerment comes from both knowledge and confidence — and when women feel secure and self-assured, the entire organization benefits.







SUBROS LIMITED

A. Company Snapshot

Name of the Company: Subros Limited

Sector: Automobile (Automotive Air Conditioning system & Component)
Size of workforce: -9000

Contact Person: Mr. P.Yadav, Head -Strategic HR & Skill Development
Email: p.yadav@subros.com

B. The Challenge

1. What was the key problem, gap, or need you identified in employee care?

- Subros realized that while technical and process training was strong, a significant gap existed in behavioral and interpersonal skill development. This imbalance led to:
  - ❑ Communication barriers between shop-floor teams and supervisors
  - ❑ Reduced cross-functional collaboration
  - ❑ Limited people-handling and empathy among technically strong supervisors
  - ❑ These gaps affected productivity, morale, and workplace harmony.
- **Secondary Challenge – Diversity & Inclusion** - The company also identified low participation of women on the shop floor, driven by unconscious bias and assumptions about manufacturing suitability, limiting diversity and fresh perspectives in operations.

2. Who was most affected (demographics, teams, etc.)?

- **Shop-floor teams & supervisors:** Experienced friction, communication gaps, and attitude-related conflicts.
- **New engineers & frontline managers:** Strong technically but unprepared for team handling, conflict resolution, and leadership.
- **Women employees & potential recruits:** Faced bias, limited facilities, and low awareness about inclusion among line managers.

- **Underlying Gaps in Employee Care**
  - ❑ Heavy focus on technical skills; limited emphasis on behavioral competence.
  - ❑ Inadequate sensitization on diversity and inclusion.
  - ❑ No structured system to build or reward behavioral excellence.
  - ❑ Training was reactive rather than part of a continuous development approach.
- **Resulting Impact** - These gaps created interpersonal issues, weaker team synergy, and minimal diversity participation. While technical results stayed strong, workplace harmony and inclusion needed improvement.
- **Need for Change** - True employee care required balancing technical skills with communication, leadership, and inclusivity.

This understanding led Subros to create an integrated Behavioral Development & Inclusion Program to build collaboration, stronger leadership, and psychological safety across the organization.

C. The Intervention

1. What were the main objectives?

The intervention focused on creating a balanced development system that built both technical and behavioral strengths to improve communication, collaboration, and inclusion across Subros.

Main Objectives of SDP & Inclusion Initiatives

- **Strengthen Behavioral & Leadership Skills** - Enhance communication, teamwork, empathy, and conflict resolution to reduce friction and improve coordination.
- **Build Human-Centric Leadership** - Equip managers and line leaders to lead people effectively by integrating soft skills into daily decision-making.
- **Promote Diversity & Inclusion** - Introduce gender inclusion modules and supportive practices to increase women's participation and advancement.
- **Enhance Employee Care Frameworks** - Strengthen wellbeing through POSH awareness, health initiatives, sanitary facilities, and mental wellness support.
- **Phased & Scalable Rollout**
  - ❑ Phase 1: Senior Management – leadership maturity

- ❑ Phase 2: Engineers & Line Leaders – communication & people management
- ❑ Phase 3: Deputy Engineers & Supervisors – behavioral consistency on shop floor

- **Build a Continuous Learning Culture** - Use feedback, assessments, and performance linkages to reinforce ongoing learning and workplace harmony.

2. How was it designed and implemented? (Include timelines, stakeholders involved, partnerships, and communication strategies.)

The SDP (Supervisory Development Program) was designed as a structured behavioral and leadership program to strengthen communication, teamwork, and people management—filling gaps not covered by technical training.

Design & Framework

- **Gap Identification** - Behavioral gaps were identified through assessments, appraisals, and shop-floor observations, highlighting the need for stronger communication and leadership.
- **Training Need Identification (TNI) -** A TNI document, approved by HODs, formed the basis of the Annual Training Calendar.
- **Partnerships & Content Design -** Modules were developed with TrueBiz and TeamZen using experiential learning, simulations, and customized content for each level. Implementation Phases
  - ❑ Phase 1 – Senior Management: Leadership style, empathy, team dynamics
  - ❑ Phase 2 – Engineers & Line Leaders: People management, discipline, conflict resolution
  - ❑ Phase 3 – Deputy Engineers & Supervisors: Communication, behavioral consistency, accountability
- **Integration with Inclusion & Well-Being** - Added gender inclusion modules and strengthened support initiatives like POSH, sanitary dispensers, health checks, and mental wellness programs.
- **Execution & Evaluation** - Annual Training Calendar rolled out across plants; sessions delivered by internal and external trainers. Effectiveness measured through feedback, supervisor reviews, and workplace observations.
- **Communication Strategy** - Leadership messages, posters, intranet updates, and team meetings promoted the program. Feedback loops ensured continuous improvement.

3. Describe the policy, program, or support system implemented (flexible work, elderly care, childcare, parental leave, wellness initiatives, etc.)

Subros implemented the Skill Development Program (SDP) and Leadership Competency Model to build behavioral capability, leadership maturity, and holistic well-being—shifting the culture toward a balanced, people-centric system.

- **Policy Framework** - The Leadership Competency Model defines essential competencies under the Competency Building & Career Progression Policy.
  - ❑ Strategy & Execution – strategic thinking, decisions
  - ❑ Business Excellence – innovation, problem-solving
  - ❑ Operations – process discipline, quality
  - ❑ People Leadership & Collaboration – communication, motivation
  - ❑ Core Values & Integrity – ethics, accountability
- **Behavioral Training & Program Implementation** - SDP targeted behavioral gaps and interpersonal skills:
  - ❑ Phase 1 – Senior Management: strategic and people leadership
  - ❑ Phase 2 – Engineers & Line Leaders: teamwork, communication
  - ❑ Phase 3 – Deputy Engineers & Supervisors: supervisory and human-management skills

Programs were delivered with TrueBiz & TeamZen and supported through MACE, ACMA, and CII—strengthening Quality Circles, Kaizen, and a continuous improvement mindset.

- **Support Systems for Employee Care & Well-being**

a. Childcare & Parental Support

- ❑ 6-month paid maternity leave
- ❑ On-site creche (6 months–3 years)

b. Health & Wellness Initiatives

- ❑ Yoga, gym, meditation
- ❑ Annual check-ups, anemia screenings
- ❑ Blood donation drives
- ❑ Sanitary napkin distribution for women's hygiene

Leadership Competency Model

Levels	Business		Operations		People		Core
Themes	Strategy & Growth	Innovation & Change	Execution Excellence	Results Orientation	Impact & Influence	People Leadership	
SM – DGM (Impact: Function/ Organization)	**Strategic Thinking** *Ability to see the 'big picture' and develop strategies based on assessment of external and internal data. Strategically evaluates opportunities and risks for the organization.*	**Innovation & Championing Change** *Ability to create value for business, customers & employees through innovation. Ability to lead and provide stewardship to change initiatives.*	**Decision Making** *Ability to exercise sound judgment and take accountability for decision making in complex situations. Ability to assess impact of the decision taking into account all relevant information.*	**Enabling Results** *Ability to effectively translate goals into workable action plans, by prioritizing and using resources efficiently & effectively. Fostering an environment conducive for achieving desired results.*	**Impact & Inspiration** *Ability to inspire and create impact by communicating a compelling narrative. Obtain commitment from key stakeholders towards organizational initiatives.*	**Team Leadership & Leveraging Networks** *Ability to lead, provide direction and build capability in the organization. Ability to leverage networks and alliances to attain organizational goals.*	**Personal Drive** *Ability to invest in development of self and others; inclination to learn and tenacity to persevere in the face of challenges.*
DM – MGR (Impact: Sub-function/ Function)	**Business Acumen** *Ability to understand the organization, industry and customers and identify implications for own division/ department. Strategically evaluates opportunities and risks for the department.*	**Process Transformation & Managing Change** *Ability to drive process transformation based on understanding of best practices and organizational imperatives. Manage and drive change with optimism.*	**Problem Solving** *Ability to effectively analyse a problem based on available information and generate potential solutions for solving the problem.*	**Driving Results** *Ability to take accountability for driving achievement of results aligned to organizational goals through effective planning and organizing.*	**Influencing Skills** *Ability to persuade and influence others in order to gain buy-in and garner support for delivery of functional goals/ new initiatives.*	**Team Management & Enabling Collaboration** *Ability to guide the team to achieve team objectives and manage team dynamics to deliver on goals. Enable and encourage collaboration.*	
E – AM (Impact: Self/ Line)		**Process Improvement & Adapting to Change** *Ability to continuously improve operational processes. Ability to perceive change with a positive outlook and adapt swiftly.*	**Analytical Thinking** *Ability to break down issues into basic components, think logically; analyse facts and data to arrive at conclusions.*	**Delivering Results** *Ability to achieve challenging results, strive for stretch targets and objectives with energy and enthusiasm.*	**Communication Skills** *Ability to express thoughts and convey ideas clearly, fluently and effectively to both individuals and groups.*	**Teamwork & Collaboration** *Ability to work effectively in a group and collaborate with people to achieve shared outcomes and enhance overall performance.*	

4. What resources or partnerships were needed?

To implement the Skill Development Program (SDP) and employee care initiatives, Subros built strong internal–external partnerships for training, industry exposure, and wellness support.

- **Learning & Training Partnerships**
  - ❑ TrueBiz: Delivered behavioral and leadership programs.
  - ❑ TeamGen: Conducted workshops on communication, teamwork, and people management.
  - ❑ ACMA & CII: Enabled Quality Circles, Kaizen, and benchmarking.
  - ❑ MACE Platform: Supported digital learning and upskilling.
- **Infrastructure & Resource Support**
  - ❑ Training rooms and Dojo Centers for hands-on practice.
  - ❑ E-learning portals and digital modules.
  - ❑ Simulation tools and audio-visual aids.
- **Health, Safety & Wellness Partnerships**
  - ❑ Annual health checks, anemia screening.

- ❑ On-site medical and first-aid support.
- ❑ Wellness and stress-management sessions.
- ❑ Sanitary napkin supply and hygiene awareness.

- **Human & Managerial Resource**
  - ❑ Internal trainers and HODs delivered modules and monitored progress.
  - ❑ HR & L&D handled scheduling, coordination, and impact assessment.

5. How was it rolled out (communication, training, timelines)?

- **Pre-Implementation**
  - ❑ Behavioral gaps identified through TNI, reviews, and floor observations.
  - ❑ HODs approved consolidated TNI.
  - ❑ Annual Training Calendar aligned with business needs.
- **Communication & Awareness**
  - ❑ Rollout shared via circulars, HR briefings, department meetings.
  - ❑ Leaders reinforced SDP importance.
  - ❑ Posters/emails showed training plan & nominations.
- **Implementation (Phases)**
  - ❑ Phase 1: Senior Management – leadership & interpersonal skills.
  - ❑ Phase 2: Engineers/Line Leaders – teamwork, communication, conflict.
  - ❑ Phase 3: Deputy Engineers/Supervisors – people skills, collaboration.
- **Execution & Monitoring**
  - ❑ Sessions by TrueBiz, TeamZen, and internal trainers.
  - ❑ Attendance, feedback tracked digitally.
  - ❑ Post-training evaluations + manager observations.
  - ❑ HR/HOD reviews for continuous improvement.

D. The Impact

Quantitative: Participation rates, retention data, productivity improvements, absenteeism reduction, etc.

Content	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Participation Rates	91	93	96
Retention	68%	72%	88%
Productivity Improvement	72%	81%	96%
Absenteeism reduction	22%	14%	8%

Participation and productivity consistently improved year over year, absenteeism dropped sharply, and retention showed a strong upward trend indicating higher engagement, better morale, and improved workplace stability.

Qualitative: Employee testimonials, culture changes, morale improvements

Culture & Workplace Improvements

- Stronger communication and collaboration across teams
- Higher engagement in learning and upskilling initiatives
- Increased confidence and leadership readiness among employees
- Better inclusion and visibility for women employees

Employee Testimonials

Testimonial 1 – Vishima Mittal, Manager, Internal Audit - Subros has been a place of learning, empowerment, and opportunity. With continuous support and developmental trainings, I progressed from Assistant Manager to Manager, leading teams across multiple plants. Being recognized as a High Potential Candidate and awarded by our COO reflects Subros's commitment to nurturing talent and empowering women leaders.

Testimonial 2 – Kajal, Deputy Engineer (Store) - Subros has been a place of growth and opportunity. Starting as a DAT in 2023, I gained technical exposure, continuous skill development, and mentorship. Within a year, I earned a promotion and represented Subros in Quality Circles at CII, QCFI, and ACMA.

E. Key Success Factors

What made the intervention work? (Leadership buy-in, technology, policy design, etc.)

- **Leadership Commitment & Active Involvement**
  - ❑ Senior leadership endorsed and participated in SDP.

- Behavioral development integrated into people strategy.
- Clear policies ensured uniform implementation.
- Functional heads acted as internal trainers.
- Visible leadership built trust and encouraged learning.

- **Technology-Enabled Learning Ecosystem**
  - MACE platform supported self-paced, continuous learning.
  - Intranet offered access to resources, SOPs, and modules.
  - Blended learning ensured flexibility and consistent rollout.
  - HR used digital data for tracking and effectiveness.
  - Technology made learning accessible to all levels.
- **Structured Policy & Inclusive Implementation**
  - Competency & Career Policy ensured systematic execution.
  - External and internal trainers enabled high-quality delivery.
  - Equal learning opportunities for all hierarchy levels.
  - Inclusion ensured diverse participation across batches.
- **Culture of Continuous Improvement**
  - Leadership involvement and discipline supported CI culture.
  - Employees improved collaboration, communication, and problem-solving.
  - Participation in ACMA/CII forums and Quality Circles increased.

F. Insights & Reflections

What were the key challenges faced during the implementation of the intervention, and how were they overcome?

The SDP rollout at Subros faced challenges due to long-established technical mindsets and limited awareness of behavioral development.

- **Narrow Focus on Soft Skills** - Employees mainly shop-floor and technical roles focused heavily on machines and processes, creating gaps in communication, teamwork, leadership, and conflict handling.

- **Resistance to Behavioral Training** - Initial skepticism existed toward behavioral and leadership modules, seen as less impactful than technical training especially in a productivity-driven culture.
- **Gender Bias & Stereotypes** - Women's effectiveness in shop-floor and supervisory roles was underestimated, limiting inclusion and reducing diversity in decision-making.

How These Challenges Were Overcome

- Phase 1 outcomes (improved communication, teamwork, and problem-solving) demonstrated clear benefits, shifting employee mindsets.
- Phases 2 & 3 expanded SDP to line leaders, engineers, deputy engineers, and women employees, integrating diversity and inclusion modules to build broader acceptance.
- Supportive policies (POSH awareness, sanitary facilities, wellness drives, women's leadership opportunities) reinforced inclusion and mindset change.

Outcome

- Reduced conflicts and smoother shop-floor coordination
- Higher productivity and team efficiency
- Stronger respect for gender diversity
- A sustained culture of behavioral learning and continuous improvement

TATA STEEL LIMITED

A. Company Snapshot

Name of the Company: Tata Steel Limited

Sector: Steel Manufacturing and Mining
Size of Workforce: Approx. 77,000 employees globally; ~8,500 at Raw Material Division

Contact Person: Shiv Shanker, Diversity Champion, Raw Materials and Head HRBP West Bokaro
Email: shiv.shanker@tatasteel.com

Tata Steel, a global leader in steel manufacturing, has consistently prioritized employee well-being and inclusive growth. The Raw Material Division, a key mining and beneficiation hub, has been at the forefront of implementing progressive HR practices, especially for women employees in operational roles.

In the heart of Jharkhand and Odisha rugged mining terrain, Tata Steel's Raw Material Division stood as a symbol of industrial might. Yet, beneath the surface of operational excellence lay a pressing challenge—ensuring that women employees, especially those in technical and shift-based roles, felt supported, safe, and empowered.

With a global workforce of approximately 77,000 and around 8,500 employees in the Raw Material Division, Tata Steel had long championed diversity. But the realities of mining—remote locations, demanding shifts, and infrastructure limitations—posed unique hurdles for women. Shiv Shanker, Head HRBP West Bokaro, recognized the urgency. “We needed to move beyond policy and create a culture of care,” he said.

B. The Challenge

Tata Steel has long been recognized for its commitment to diversity and inclusion. However, in the Raw Material Division—where mining operations are intensive and geographically remote—women employees encountered a distinct set of challenges that required urgent attention.

Despite the company's progressive policies, the operational realities of mining posed barriers to women's full participation and growth. The most pressing concern was the lack of childcare support, especially for young mothers working in shifts. With no nearby facilities or flexible arrangements, many women struggled to balance their professional responsibilities with parenting, often leading to absenteeism or early exits from the workforce.

Another significant gap was in wellness resources tailored for women. While general health and safety measures were in place, there was limited focus on gender-specific needs such as gynaecological care, mental health support, and menstrual hygiene. This not only affected physical well-being but also contributed to emotional stress and disengagement.

Infrastructure limitations further compounded the issue. Many sites lacked dedicated restrooms for women, let alone lactation rooms or private spaces for personal care. In a physically demanding and male-dominated environment, such oversights made women feel excluded and undervalued.

Representation in leadership and technical roles was also disproportionately low. Women in field operations often had fewer opportunities for skill development or mentorship, and the lack of visible role models discouraged others from aspiring to higher positions. New hires, particularly those relocating to remote areas, found it difficult to adjust without adequate support systems, leading to high attrition rates.

The most affected groups included:

- Young mothers in shift-based roles who needed flexible childcare and leave options.
- Women in technical and field operations with limited access to wellness and infrastructure support.
- New recruits navigating the dual challenge of professional integration and personal adjustment in isolated locations.

These challenges weren't just operational—they were cultural. The absence of inclusive practices led to feelings of isolation, reduced morale, and a perception that mining was not a viable long-term career path for women. While Tata Steel's leadership was committed to change, the need for a structured, empathetic, and scalable intervention became increasingly clear.

The situation called for more than policy tweaks—it demanded a transformation in how the organization viewed and supported women in mining. The goal was not just to retain talent but to create an environment where women could thrive, lead, and feel genuinely cared for.

C. The Intervention

Faced with the pressing challenges experienced by women employees in its Raw Material Division, Tata Steel embarked on a transformative journey to create a more inclusive, supportive, and empowering workplace. The intervention, spanning from April 2018 to March 2025, was designed with a clear set of objectives: to enhance support systems for

women, improve retention and engagement, and foster a culture of care across mining operations.

1. Strategic Objectives

The initiative aimed to:

- Address the unique needs of women in operational and shift-based roles.
- Create infrastructure and policies that support work-life balance.
- Promote leadership development and career progression for women.
- Normalize conversations around wellness, parenting, and gender equity.

2. Collaborative Design and Implementation

The intervention was a multi-stakeholder effort involving the HRBP team, Plant Heads, Safety, Health & Environment (SHE), Tata Steel Foundation (TSF), and external NGOs. The design process was rooted in employee feedback, site audits, and benchmarking best practices from other industries.

A robust communication strategy ensured transparency and engagement. Townhalls, WhatsApp groups, posters, and leadership endorsements were used to keep employees informed and involved. Sensitization sessions helped build empathy and understanding across teams.

Key Initiatives Introduced

- **On-site Crèche Facility**
  - ❑ A professionally managed childcare center was established near the plant.
  - ❑ Staffed by certified caregivers, the crèche offered flexible timings aligned with shift schedules.
  - ❑ It provided a safe, nurturing environment for children, allowing mothers to focus on work without worry.
- **Women's Wellness Program**
  - ❑ Monthly health camps focused on gynecology, nutrition, and mental health.
  - ❑ Yoga and fitness sessions were introduced to promote physical well-being.
  - ❑ Menstrual hygiene awareness drives helped break taboos and improve access to sanitary products.

- **Infrastructure Upgrades**
  - ❑ Dedicated restrooms and lactation rooms were constructed across operational sites.
  - ❑ Safety audits led to gender-sensitive design improvements in workspaces.
  - ❑ These upgrades ensured dignity, privacy, and comfort for women employees.
- **Parental Leave Policy Enhancement**
  - ❑ Maternity leave was extended, with optional phase-back plans to ease the transition back to work.
  - ❑ Paternity leave awareness sessions encouraged shared parenting responsibilities.
  - ❑ These changes supported both mothers and fathers in balancing family and career.
- **Leadership Development Workshops**
  - ❑ Skill-building sessions were conducted for women aspiring to leadership roles.
  - ❑ Mentorship programs connected junior employees with senior women leaders.
  - ❑ These efforts helped build confidence, visibility, and a strong leadership pipeline.

3. Resources and Partnerships

- NGOs played a critical role in operating the crèche and conducting health camps.
- Internal teams from SHE, CSR, Admin, and HRBP collaborated to ensure smooth execution.
- Technology was leveraged for attendance tracking, feedback collection, and wellness dashboards, enabling data-driven decision-making.

4. Rollout and Monitoring

- Training sessions were held to sensitize managers and staff about gender inclusion.
- Communication materials like posters, digital boards, and employee champions helped spread awareness.
- Monitoring mechanisms included monthly review meetings, feedback loops, and impact assessments to ensure continuous improvement.

D. The Impact

Transforming the Experience of Women in Mining: The multi-year intervention launched by Tata Steel's Raw Material Division brought about a significant and measurable transformation in the lives of women employees working in mining operations. By addressing core challenges through thoughtful infrastructure, policy enhancements, and wellness initiatives, the company succeeded in creating a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

Quantitative Outcomes

- One of the most visible successes was the on-site crèche facility, which saw an 85% enrolment rate among eligible women employees. This not only provided peace of mind to working mothers but also contributed directly to improved attendance and productivity.
- The retention rate among women in shift-based roles increased by 22%, a clear indicator that the support systems introduced were effective in reducing attrition. Employees who previously considered leaving due to family responsibilities or lack of flexibility found renewed confidence in continuing their careers at Tata Steel.
- The wellness program also yielded strong results. Post-launch, absenteeism dropped by 30%, particularly among women who had previously struggled with health-related issues or stress. Regular health camps, yoga sessions, and mental health support created a culture of care that resonated deeply with employees.
- In terms of career progression, the intervention led to a threefold increase in the number of women nominated for technical leadership roles. This was a direct outcome of the leadership development workshops and mentorship programs, which helped women build skills, visibility, and confidence.

Qualitative Outcomes

- Beyond numbers, the initiative sparked a cultural shift across the division. Women employees began to feel more valued and heard. One mother shared, “The crèche gave me peace of mind. I can focus on work knowing my child is safe and nearby.” Another employee reflected, “The wellness sessions helped me manage stress and feel like my well-being truly matters here.”
- Participation in townhalls and feedback forums increased significantly, with women more actively voicing their opinions and sharing ideas. Topics like menstrual health, parenting, and work-life balance—once considered sensitive—became part of open and constructive conversations.

- Managers and male colleagues also showed greater empathy and support, thanks to sensitization workshops and awareness campaigns. This contributed to a more collaborative and respectful workplace culture.
- The intervention also strengthened Tata Steel's employer brand, especially in the mining sector where gender inclusion is often overlooked. It demonstrated that operational excellence and employee care can go hand in hand—even in remote, high-intensity environments.

E. Key Success Factors

- **Employee-Centric Design**
  - ❑ The initiatives were rooted in real employee feedback, site audits, and benchmarking. This ensured that solutions addressed actual pain points rather than assumptions.
  - ❑ Programs like the crèche and wellness camps directly solved challenges faced by women in shift-based roles.
- **Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration**
  - ❑ HRBP, Plant Heads, SHE, TSF, and NGOs worked together, creating a shared ownership model.
  - ❑ External expertise (NGOs for childcare and health) complemented internal capabilities, ensuring quality and credibility.
- **Infrastructure + Policy Integration**
  - ❑ Physical upgrades (restrooms, lactation rooms) were paired with policy changes (extended maternity leave, phase-back plans).
  - ❑ This holistic approach tackled both structural barriers and systemic gaps.
- **Strong Communication & Engagement**
  - ❑ Townhalls, WhatsApp groups, posters, and leadership endorsements-built trust and transparency.
  - ❑ Sensitization sessions helped normalize conversations around gender equity and wellness.
- **Leadership Commitment**
  - ❑ Visible support from senior leaders signalled that inclusion was a strategic priority, not just an HR initiative.

- Mentorship and leadership workshops created a pipeline for women leaders, reinforcing long-term impact.

- **Continuous Monitoring & Feedback**
  - Monthly reviews, wellness dashboards, and feedback loops ensured data-driven decisions and timely course corrections.
  - This adaptability kept the program relevant and effective over seven years.
- **Cultural Shift**
  - Initiatives went beyond infrastructure—they changed mindsets.
  - Menstrual health, parenting, and work-life balance became open topics, fostering psychological safety and inclusion.

F. Insights & Reflections

Challenges faced and how you overcame them?

1. Remote & Shift-Based Work Environment

- **Challenge:** Mining sites are remote, with long shifts and limited access to childcare and wellness facilities.
- **Solution:**
  - Established on-site crèche with flexible timings aligned to shifts.
  - Partnered with NGOs for professional childcare management.

2. Cultural Barriers & Gender Bias

- **Challenge:** Conversations around menstrual health, parenting, and gender equity were considered sensitive; resistance from some male colleagues.
- **Solution**
  - Conducted sensitization workshops for managers and staff.
  - Leadership endorsements and townhalls normalized these topics

3. Infrastructure Gaps

- **Challenge:** Lack of gender-sensitive facilities like restrooms, lactation rooms, and safe spaces.

- **Solution**
  - ❑ Upgraded infrastructure across sites with dedicated restrooms and lactation rooms.
  - ❑ Safety audits ensured gender-sensitive design improvements.

4. Policy Limitation

- **Challenge:** Existing parental leave policies were inadequate for work-life balance.
- **Solution**
  - ❑ Enhanced maternity leave and introduced phase-back plans.
  - ❑ Promoted paternity leave awareness for shared parenting.

5. Low Representation in Leadership

- **Challenge:** Few women in technical leadership roles; lack of confidence and visibility.
- **Solution**
  - ❑ Rolled out leadership development workshops and mentorship programs.
  - ❑ Created a structured pipeline for women leaders.

6. Engagement & Communication

- **Challenge:** Initial scepticism and low participation in programs.
- **Solution**
  - ❑ Implemented robust communication strategy (WhatsApp groups, posters, townhalls).
  - ❑ Used employee champions to drive peer-level engagement.

7. Monitoring & Sustaining Momentum

- **Challenge:** Ensuring long-term impact and continuous improvement.
- **Solution**
  - ❑ Introduced monthly review meetings, feedback loops, and wellness dashboards for data-driven decisions.

TECH MAHINDRA LIMITED

A. Company Snapshot

Name of the Company: Tech Mahindra Limited

Sector: IT & IT Enabled Services
Size of Workforce: 150,000+

Contact Person: Kavita Nair, Head – HR Transformation & DEI, Tech Mahindra
Email: kavita.nair@techmahindra.com

Tech Mahindra Limited Tech Mahindra (TechM) is a global specialist in digital transformation, consulting and business re-engineering. It offers technology consulting and digital solutions to global enterprises across industries, enabling transformative scale at unparalleled speed. TechM is a $6.2 Billion enterprise with more than 1,50,000 employees across 90+ countries. TechM is a part of the Mahindra Group, founded in 1945, an admired multinational federation with companies in diverse industry sectors including farm equipment, utility vehicles, information technology, and financial services. TechM currently has 1110+ active global clients, including several Fortune 500 companies. With a promise to help customers Scale at Speed™, TechM designs future state solutions for industry leaders and offers innovative digital experiences that enable them to transform. TechM enables enterprises, associates, and society to Rise for a more equal world, future readiness, and value creation.

B. The Challenge

1. What was the key problem, gap, or need you identified in employee care?

Foundations of the Maternity Assistance Program: TechM recognized the need to engage women effectively post returning from maternity leave which prompted the creation of the Maternity Assistance Program.

- **Balancing Dual Responsibilities:** TechM always had strong policies in place to support employees through important life stages such as maternity. Leave provisions, flexible work options, and clear processes were already available to make the transition smoother. However, the organization realized that every mother's journey is different, especially when it comes to returning to work after maternity leave. While the existing policies provided essential support, many associates needed a more personal touch - someone to guide, reassure, and help them balance the demands of both work and childcare. The Maternity Assistance Program was designed to provide this extra layer of

care, so that returning mothers felt not just supported by policy, but also personally encouraged and understood.

- **Creating a Culture of Understanding:** TechM recognized that returning from maternity leave can be both exciting and overwhelming. Being an organization that focuses highly on supporting our employees with a right balance between head and heart, we recognized the need of a more intentional support system that offered structured guidance, flexibility, and mentorship tailored for the evolving need and responsibilities of these mothers.
- **Providing Dedicated Support:** Policies and culture give a strong base, but personal support makes the biggest difference. TechM responded by creating a safe space for open conversations and offering mentorship through the Buddy Program where returning mother were paired with mentors who could share their experience and offer support. Flexible work arrangements and phased return-to-work options were also incorporated to accommodate the realities of childcare and family responsibilities.

By proactively addressing these needs, TechM not only reduced post-maternity attrition but also reinforced our commitment to building a truly inclusive workplace. This initiative reflects our ongoing journey to create a workplace where every individual, regardless of life stage, feels seen, heard, and supported.

2. Who was most affected (demographics, teams, etc.)?

Key demographic – Women on maternity: The Maternity Assistance Program was created to support women returning from maternity leave, especially during their first few months back at work. We know this time can be both exciting and challenging as they balance their job and new family responsibilities. MAP provided support and options to help these women manage their work and personal lives more easily.

C. The Intervention

1. What were the main objectives?

Objectives for Maternity Assistance Program (MAP): The primary objective of MAP was to create a structured support system to facilitate women's smooth transition back to work.

- **Help returning mothers:** Support and encourage women employees to continue their professional journey in TechM with the assistance of experienced mothers who are trained as mentors. This would in turn create an ecosystem of care where women felt supported, valued, and empowered to sustain their careers while embracing motherhood.

- **Assign mentors:** The key to creating a structured support system for women associates as they transitioned into motherhood and returned to work was an experienced mother. The introduction of Buddies – experienced mothers, who could act as mentors offered emotional support, practical advices from their own journeys, and helped build confidence in women who were trying to re-enter the workforce again.

- **Retain diverse talent:** When women leave after maternity leave, it affects the organization's stability and slows down progress toward building a diverse workforce. By helping women returning from maternity stay and grow in their roles, TechM aimed to improve retention. Ultimately, the vision was to create an ecosystem of care where women felt supported, valued, and empowered to sustain their careers while embracing motherhood.

2. **How was it designed and implemented? (Include timelines, stakeholders involved, partnerships, and communication strategies.) Design of Maternity Assistance Program (MAP):** Through MAP, women on maternity leave are engaged at every stage of their motherhood journey. The implementation of the program was phased and collaborative, with contributions from multiple teams.

- **Launch and communication:** TechM officially launched the Maternity Assistance Program (MAP) in FY22 as a structured support system to facilitate women's smooth transition back to work. MAP introduced a “Buddy” mentorship model – pairing each returning mother with an experienced mother in the organization who provides guidance, emotional support, and practical advice drawn from personal experience. A formal communication was done post-launch inviting nominations for Buddies to be trained. In parallel, leaders from Business Units and Support teams were briefed about the program to set expectations.

- **Phase-wise rollout:** The differentiating factor of MAP was that interventions were planned across the maternity continuum i.e. Pre maternity, during Maternity, and Post Maternity). Pre-maternity, expectant associates receive informational mailers and guidance on managing workload before leave. During maternity leave, the company maintains connection with mothers: two months before return, women are encouraged to explore roles, upskill, and are assigned a Buddy mentor for support. Post-maternity, upon return to work, new mothers benefit from parenting workshops, peer networking sessions to share experiences, information on available daycare facilities, and a “welcome back” mailer to make them feel valued.

- **Why it works:** The program is designed by mothers, for mothers. The most critical element for its success is the – human touch.

3. Describe the policy, program, or support system implemented (flexible work, elderly care, childcare, parental leave, wellness initiatives, etc.)

Features of Maternity Assistance Program (MAP): This program addresses Maternity Leave associates' challenges and engages with them at various phases of their motherhood journey.

- **Pre-Maternity:** Before associates proceed on their maternity leave, an 'All the Best' mailer is sent to create awareness about the program and provide essential guidelines. Additionally, guidance is offered on effectively managing the workload and providing an overview of different benefits that they could avail during their leave period.
- **During Maternity:** Associates are encouraged to stay connected and proactively explore roles and opportunities two months before their maternity leave's end while being guided on upskilling and reskilling to enhance their professional skills. Associates are assigned to a Buddy for additional support and mentorship during this period.
- **Post Maternity:** Parenting workshops and peer networking sessions are organized for new moms to help them navigate the challenges of balancing work and family and share experiences and insights of their journey. Additionally, information is provided about daycare facilities at their locations to ease the transition back to work. Lastly, a special welcome back mailer is sent to each returning associate to make them feel valued and appreciated.

4. What resources or partnerships were needed?

Enablers of Maternity Assistance Program (MAP): The success of this program depended on collaboration across multiple stakeholders.

- **Buddies:** They are woman who have already been through the journey of motherhood and successfully returned to work. These Buddies offer guidance, encouragement, and practical advice on both professional and personal wellness—drawing from their own lived experiences. This peer-to-peer partnership became the cornerstone of the MAP program, ensuring that support was personal and empathetic.
- **Diversity & Inclusion team:** Program managed MAP to ensure roll-out, stakeholder engagement, tracking progress and continuous improvement.
- **Business HR team:** They acted as a bridge between associates and their managers, helping ensure that concerns were heard and addressed with sensitivity. They also stayed in touch with the associates and responded to their queries proactively.

- **Learning & Development team:** They guided associates on important skills to retrain on or learn during their free time.
- **Workforce Management team:** They provided visibility and ensured that women returning from maternity leave were placed in suitable projects.
- **Leaders:** They not only provided executive sponsorship but communicated about the virtues of the MAP program across their respective business units and support functions.

5. How was it rolled out (communication, training, timelines)?

Roll-out of Maternity Assistance Program (MAP): Communicating and onboarding stakeholder for MAP.

- **Launch and rollout:** The rollout began with company-wide communication. A mailer was sent by the internal communications team, followed by a message from the HR Head, outlining the purpose of the program and inviting nominations for Buddies.
- **Training Buddies:** Orientation sessions were organized for the selected Buddies to prepare them for their roles. These sessions covered the dos and don'ts, including how to provide constructive guidance, what types of advice were appropriate, and where to direct associates for matters beyond the Buddies' scope.
- **Wider audience:** The Business HR and Internal Communications teams cascaded information about MAP to the last mile. By combining formal communications, leadership advocacy, and structured training, the program was successfully rolled out across TechM, ensuring visibility, participation, and long-term sustainability.

D. The Impact

Quantitative

Quantitative metrics of Maternity Assistance Program (MAP): The following numbers highlight the impact of MAP.

- **Beneficiaries:** Since the launch of the program, 1200+ women on maternity and 80+ Buddies have been a part of the journey.
- **Returnees:** There is a 17.3% increase in the total no. of Maternity leave associates returning to work in FY25 as compared to FY23.
- **Retention:** The attrition rates of Maternity leave associates' have come down from 46.3% in FY23 to 19.9% in FY25

- **Project allocation:** The allocation percentage of maternity leave associates to projects have increased from 49% in FY23 to 65% in Fy25.

Qualitative

Qualitative metrics of Maternity Assistance Program (MAP): The intangible impact of MAP is illustrated through its human experiences.

- **Empowering mothers:** Women associates returning from maternity leave now feel that they are not alone in navigating this transition. Instead of feeling disconnected or overwhelmed, they now return with a sense of confidence and belonging. Knowing they have both the organization's support and a personal mentor gives them the confidence to re-engage with their roles more effectively. The presence of a structured program and buddies signals that the organization recognizes their challenges and is committed to walking alongside them.
- **Increased empathy:** The program has also helped build collaboration across teams. By talking openly about the initiative and involving leaders, managers, and peers, the organization has encouraged everyone to be more aware of the unique needs of new mothers. This has led to a more understanding and respectful environment, where associates feel safe discussing their personal situations without fear of being judged or sidelined.
- **Cross-functional collaboration:** The buddy element of the program has been especially powerful. Buddies don't just offer professional advice, they share their own stories, struggles, and solutions. That kind of personal connection makes the guidance feel real and relatable. These relationships have sparked new informal support networks that go beyond maternity. It has created a culture of collaboration and care that benefits everyone.
- **Inclusive culture:** One of the most significant outcomes of MAP has been the creation of a more supportive and inclusive workplace culture. It aligns with the commitment to retaining diverse talent, fostering equal opportunities, and creating an ecosystem where everyone can thrive. By reducing attrition linked to maternity leaves, encouraging women to continue their career growth, and cultivating a culture of empathy, the program has demonstrated its role as a key driver of inclusion and talent development.
- **Employee testimonials:** Voice of beneficiaries that highlight the practical and emotional relief the program has brought to women returning from maternity leave.
    - ❑ On MAP's human connect: “Transitioning back to work after maternity leave was a daunting prospect. A special thanks to MAP for their exceptional support in facilitating my transition back to work. Their understanding and flexibility has been invaluable and made a significant difference in my journey.”

- On MAP's focus on return to work: "This program helped me track my activities and get back to work without difficulty. The MAP team assisted me with queries related to rejoining, and my buddy was a huge support throughout this journey."
- On MAP empowering women: "I am a mother of toddler and can totally relate to the need for a Maternity Assistance Program when joining back. And yes, after being a mother I have become an enhanced individual. The qualities that I have picked up are time management and communication that have enhanced after I became a mother and helps me in my daily tasks in professional space."

E. Key Success Factors

What made the intervention work? (Leadership buy-in, technology, policy design, etc.)

Success Factors for Maternity Assistance Program (MAP): The result of many different elements coming together in a thoughtful and coordinated way. The combination of women support policy, strong leadership, consistent HR support, smooth operations, reliable data, and a culture of care that made MAP a success. Together, these elements created a lasting impact.

- **Women Support Policy:** This policy gave women clarity on what kind of support they could expect before, during, and after maternity. The policy included a wide range of benefits that made a real difference. Flexible work options, extended flexibility for up to a year after childbirth, access to counselling, maternity parking, ergonomic seating, crèche facilities, and even support for travel with children were all part of the policy. It also expanded benefits around adoption, surrogacy, and fertility care. These measures helped women feel reassured that their careers wouldn't be put on hold just because they were starting or growing their families. That sense of security helped them stay committed to the organization and built a more inclusive and caring workplace.
- **Leadership endorsement:** Leadership support was another major reason the program worked so well. Leaders not only voiced their support but also cascaded the message across departments, making it clear that maternity support was not just an HR initiative but a business priority. Their support gave the program visibility and credibility. This top-down commitment had a ripple effect, influencing managers and teams to be more sensitive and accommodating toward associates returning from maternity leave.
- **Cross-functional collaboration:** The role of Business HRs was another crucial contributor to the program's effectiveness. They acted as the bridge between planning and execution ensuring that information reached all associates and managers in a timely and consistent manner. Additionally, the workforce management team provided the operational support by allocating women associates returning from maternity leave

in projects ensured that transitions were not stressful. Complementing this, the learning and development team provided access to upskilling and reskilling opportunities. Associates could reach out to their designated point of contacts for guidance, and those SPOCs helped them identify suitable resources to refresh their knowledge, bridge any skill gaps, and regain confidence in their professional capabilities. Even the technical teams played a pivotal part by keeping accurate data on maternity leaves and return dates. This allowed the MAP team to plan ahead, assign buddies, and make sure everything was ready for a smooth re-integration.

- **Shared ownership:** What truly made MAP work, was the collective sense of ownership. Every team, from HR to workforce management to leadership, contributed their part in ensuring the program was a success. It was not seen as the responsibility of a single function but rather as a shared commitment to supporting associates through a critical life stage. Over time, this collaboration also led to cultural reinforcement, where empathy and sensitivity toward new mothers became normalized values within the workplace. Associates became more open in voicing their needs, and peers extended encouragement more willingly.

F. Insights & Reflections

Challenges faced and how you overcame them?

Insights from the Maternity Assistance Program (MAP): The lessons learnt from the roll-out of MAP are reflected the realities of supporting associates through such a life changing stage.

- **Staying engaged during maternity leave:** One of the earliest hurdles was staying connected with associates who were on maternity leave. Understandably, their priorities were centred on caring for their newborns, and checking official emails was often not a part of their daily routine. The program was designed to provide timely guidance and reassurance during maternity leave, but without a reliable communication channel, these efforts risked losing momentum. To overcome this, a bulk SMS system was established in collaboration with the technical team. Now, messages about upcoming support calls are sent directly to the personal phones of associates on leave, ensuring they receive timely reminders. This change has significantly increased participation rates and made the initiative more accessible to its intended audience.

- **Project assignments:** Another challenge arose when associates returned from maternity leave but were unable to find projects in the same skillset due to evolving skill requirements. For new mothers, this period was particularly stressful, as the projects they had left behind were not always available again. To address this, Training and

Learning SPOCs were involved more actively in connect and support calls. These SPOCs offered personalized guidance on upskilling and reskilling opportunities, helping associates align with emerging project needs.

- **Enabling environment:** Another hurdle was the need to an ecosystem of care for returning mothers through enabling practices as well as better policies. Through close collaboration with HR, more flexibility was created around bench timelines for returning mothers. This policy change led to granting returning mothers additional days to explore training, build confidence, and find suitable opportunities. The roll-out of policies like Women Support Policy (covering pre-post maternity care, flexible work, travel etc.), Fertility care (IVF and fertility privileges for both associates and their spouses), Facilities support (includes maternity parking, ergonomic seating as well as crèche facilities etc.), Travel with child (up to 2 years along with a caregiver for domestic outstation business travels), Added Entitlements (increased benefits for adoption and childbirth through surrogacy.) etc. helped create a supportive environment for women at the workplace. This combination of flexibility, enabling policies and learning support helped reduce stress and encouraged women to stay and grow with the organization.

Glimpses of Connect and Support calls with ML Associates



Virtual Thanksgiving event with MAP Buddies (mentors to mothers)



Creche facilities at different locations



TIDE

A. Company Snapshot

Name of the Company: Tide

Sector: Financial Technology / Business Banking
Size of Workforce: 1,520 employees in India

Contact Person: Neeti Kumar, Head- People Partnering
Email: neeti.kumar@tide.co

Tide is a business management platform that helps small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) save time and money by providing not only business accounts but also a suite of connected administrative solutions, from invoicing to accounting. Launched in 2017, Tide is the leading business management platform in the UK, serving more than 750,000 SME members (13% market share) and over 750,000 members in India. Tide's mission is to help members (customers) save time and money in the running of their businesses, so they can focus on what they love. Guided by three values- Member First, One Team, and Data Driven. Tide is committed to innovation, sustainability, and people-centric growth.

Tide India has been recognized as a Great Place to Work for three consecutive years (2023–2025), a testament to its inclusive, flexible, and caring workplace culture.

B. The Challenge

As Tide rapidly scaled in India, a core challenge emerged: how to build a unified, high-performance culture while ensuring employee well-being, inclusion, and work-life balance across a geographically dispersed and diverse workforce. With 33% women representation and growing family and caregiving responsibilities among employees, the leadership recognized that traditional work models no longer fit the evolving needs of modern professionals. Employees required flexibility, empathy, and institutional support to balance personal and professional demands whether managing parental responsibilities, eldercare, or mental health.

The challenge was to design a comprehensive care ecosystem that:

- Offered flexibility without compromising productivity;
- Supported employees during key life stages (parenthood, caregiving, personal health); Created psychological safety and trust;

- Strengthened gender equity by enabling women and caregivers to thrive. Tide's leadership set out to embed "care" not as a perk, but as a strategic pillar of organizational culture, aligning it with Tide's mission of helping people focus on what matters most both inside and outside of work.

C. The Intervention

Tide introduced a Holistic Care Framework, designed around flexibility, inclusivity, and well-being. The framework integrates four major pillars:

- **Flexible Work Arrangements**

  Tide offers hybrid, remote, and in-office options based on role and preference:

  - **Hybrid Mode (63%)** – Employees work two days in-office and remaining days remotely, balancing collaboration and autonomy.
  - **Remote Mode (28%)** – Full-time remote work with up to four scheduled in-office events annually.
  - **Office Mode (9%)** – On-site roles supported with flexible scheduling. This trust-based model emphasizes outcomes over hours, empowering employees to design their work rhythms while ensuring collaboration and performance.

- **Parental Leave & Family Support**
  - **Primary Carers (Maternity/Adoption):** 6 months fully paid leave, extendable up to 12 months (additional 6 months unpaid).
  - **Secondary Carers (Paternity/Adoption):** 4 weeks fully paid leave.
  - **Return-to-Work Support:** Flexible reintegration plans, phased returns, and extended unpaid leave options.
  - **Enhanced Maternity Insurance:** ₹ 100,000 coverage from 2025 for normal and C-section deliveries.

- **Elderly Care & Compassionate Support**
  - **Work Out of Office (WOO) Policy:** Enables up to 90 days of remote work during family health crises.
  - **Compassionate Leave:** Up to 10 days of paid leave for loss of immediate family, including in-laws.
  - **Sabbatical Leave:** 1–6 months (unpaid) for long-term caregiving.
  - **Health Insurance for Parents/In-laws:** Comprehensive coverage with minimal co-pay.

- **Mental Health and Well-being**
  - ❑ Partnership with Plumm, offering 24/7 access to certified therapists, one-on-one counselling, and well-being workshops.
  - ❑ Regular wellness sessions and manager training to create empathy-led leadership.

These initiatives are supported by strong communication (through Confluence, All Hands, and internal newsletters), policy awareness during onboarding, and manager enablement sessions to ensure accessibility and equity.

D. The Impact

Quantitative Outcomes

- **Flexible Work Participation:** 63% hybrid, 28% remote, 9% in-office.
- **eNPS (Employee Net Promoter Score):** Improved from 47 → 61 in one year.
- **Parental Leave Utilization (2025):** 4.2% utilised by full time employees.
- **Great Place to Work Certification:** Achieved three consecutive years (2023–2025).

Qualitative Outcomes

- **Employee Testimonials:** Multiple Tideans shared that WOO and flexible work allowed them to care for family during medical crises without compromising careers.
- **Culture of Empathy:** Employees consistently cite flexibility, trust, and leadership support as top reasons for recommending Tide.
- **Retention & Loyalty:** Reduced turnover among new parents and caregivers due to supportive policies.

Overall, Tide's care framework strengthened engagement, inclusivity, and productivity, proving that flexibility and empathy can coexist with high performance.

E. Key Success Factors

- **Leadership Commitment:** Senior leadership modelled flexibility and empathy, embedding care as a cultural priority.
- **Integrated Policy Design:** Policies were not siloed benefits but interlinked components of a single care strategy.
- **Technology Enablement:** Digital platforms (Confluence, Jira, Plumm, and collaboration tools) ensured seamless remote operations and access to support.

- **Manager Empowerment:** Training programs equipped managers to lead with empathy and fairness, ensuring equity across remote and office teams.
- **Outcome-Based Culture:** Focus on deliverables, not rigid hours, fostered trust and accountability.
- **Continuous Feedback:** Employee surveys, open forums, and direct feedback channels guided ongoing refinements.

F. Insights & Reflections

Implementing a holistic care framework reinforced one key insight care and productivity are not opposing forces. By institutionalizing flexibility, empathy, and trust, Tide saw measurable gains in engagement and performance. Challenges included aligning global and local practices, ensuring equity across work modes, and addressing initial manager hesitations about remote productivity. Through consistent communication, manager training, and data-driven tracking, these challenges were overcome.

Tide continues to evolve its care ecosystem expanding flexible options, integrating wellness with performance, and ensuring that every employee, regardless of life stage or circumstance, feels supported and empowered. Ultimately, Tide's journey demonstrates that a culture of care is a culture of performance when employees feel supported as people first, they bring their best selves to work every day.

Tide has also been recognised with the Great Place to Work certification three consecutive years in a row (2023-24, 2024-25 & 2025-26).

Reference

Australia

https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/parental-leave-pay

https://aifs.gov.au/research/research-reports/child-care-participation-and-maternal-employment-trends-australia

Germany

https://www.dji.de/en/about-us/projects/projekte/international-centre-early-childhood-education-and-care-icec/the-german-ecec-system.html

https://www.fruehe-chancen.de/en/

https://www.fruehe-chancen.de/

https://yekmal.de/en/list/7/Child-and-youth-welfare

Norway

https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/SERIES-Paper-8-More-than-spaces-universal-child-care-in-Norway.pdf

https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/events/Norway.pdf

https://nordics.info/show/artikel/childcare-infrastructure-in-the-nordic-countries

https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/families-and-children/kindergarden/early-childhood-education-and-care-polic/id491283/

Sweden

https://education.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/linc/policies/sweden.pdf

:https://centreforpublicimpact.org/public-impact-fundamentals/swedens-1975-national-preschool-reform/

https://verksamt.se/en/employees-recruitment/leave/parental-leave-temporary-leave-sick-child-vab

https://www.oresunddirekt.dk/en/working-in-sweden/family-parenting/parental-benefits-in-sweden/

Japan

https://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/policy/children/children-childrearing/index.html

https://www.cfa.go.jp/policies/kokoseido/mushouka/about/en

https://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/policy/children/work-family/dl/190410-01e.pdf

https://www.jftc.go.jp/en/pressreleases/yearly-2014/June/140625_files/Report.pdf

Singapore

https://ijccep.springeropen.com/articles/10.1007/2288-6729-4-1-23

https://www.msf.gov.sg/who-we-are/agencies-statutory-boards-councils/early-childhood-and-development-agency-ecda

https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Acts-Supp/19-2017/

https://www.life.gov.sg/services/baby-bonus

https://www.life.gov.sg/family-parenting/benefits-support/baby-bonus-scheme

https://www.madeforfamilies.gov.sg/support-measures/raising-your-child/financial-support/baby-bonus-scheme

NOTES



Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry
FICCI, Federation House, Tansen Marg, New Delhi 110001
+91-11-23357243 | we@ficci.com