



## Counting What Matters: Unlocking Gender Data in ESG & Policy to Drive Equitable Corporate Leadership

*Series: Women at the Helm – A Global Dialogue Series on Gender Equality and Women's Leadership*

**Date:** May 28, 2025

### **Organizers:**

Nancy D'Cruz, Assistant Manager, UN Global Compact Network India  
Mallika Gandhi, Programme Officer, UN Global Compact Network India  
Arnab Kanti Chakraborty, Intern, UN Global Compact Network India

The UN Global Compact Network India (UN GCNI), through the impactful webinar **“Counting What Matters: Unlocking Gender Data in ESG & Policy”**, reinforced its commitment to **reframing gender equality** as an **urgent strategic priority** across **workplaces, societies, and economies**—not merely a matter of compliance. The session aimed to reframe gender metrics not as compliance checkboxes but as critical levers for business strategy, ESG integration, and equitable workplace transformation. With India's regulatory push via SEBI's BRSR, and the global alignment with SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), the webinar underscored the urgency of making gender-disaggregated data central to ESG strategy.

### **Introduction**

The webinar *“Counting What Matters: Unlocking Gender Data in ESG & Policy,”* part of the *Women at the Helm* dialogue series curated by UN Global Compact Network India (UN GCNI), brought together leaders from corporate, regulatory, and benchmarking spaces to unpack the transformative role of gender-disaggregated data in today's ESG ecosystem. This initiative aligns with UN GCNI's larger mission to accelerate gender equality under SDG 5 by fostering

multi-stakeholder collaboration and sector-specific dialogues that drive measurable change in women's leadership and corporate accountability.

The session was moderated by **Ishita Mukherjee** from Bloomberg, who set the tone by emphasizing the strategic relevance of gender metrics in corporate governance. While acknowledging progress, she pointed out India's lagging position—**129th in the Global Gender Gap Index**—and the persistent absence of women in senior decision-making roles. She cited India's legislative milestone of 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha but warned that legal mandates alone are insufficient unless translated into corporate ecosystems. Mukherjee positioned gender metrics as more than a compliance tool—they are a vital instrument for transparency, investor confidence, and inclusive economic growth. Her framing effectively highlighted that we are at an inflection point where organizations must choose between symbolic inclusion and structural transformation.

## Panel Highlights

### 1. Anurag Pratap, Vice President & Corporate, Social Responsibility Leader, Capgemini

**Anurag Pratap**, from Capgemini stated how the company has embedded gender equity into its ESG strategy through concrete policies and internal monitoring systems. Capgemini, a global IT and consulting firm, is recognized for its strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), particularly under its *Capgemini Women's Network*. In the session, Pratap outlined practices such as tracking resignation trends among women, monitoring the pipeline from hiring to leadership, and introducing women-specific policies—ranging from menstrual leave to flexible post-maternity work options. He emphasized the importance of **cultural change** in fostering women's long-term retention and leadership progression. Capgemini also focuses on leadership development programs for women and inclusive hiring practices that support re-entry after career breaks. Pratap made a compelling case that ESG-driven ethics are not just about metrics but about cultivating environments where **men advocate for women and where diversity is truly valued**.

Capgemini has made gender inclusion a strategic priority under its global **"Active Inclusion"** agenda and local DEI strategy in India. The company has implemented a suite of women-centric programs aimed at building equitable career paths and fostering inclusive work environments.

#### ♦ Key Initiatives:

### 1. Capgemini Women's Leadership Development (WLD) Program

- A structured leadership pipeline for high-potential women employees to prepare them for senior roles through mentorship, coaching, and cross-functional exposure.

## 2. Returnship Programs

- “*Relaunch@Capgemini*” is a flagship initiative that supports women returning to work after career breaks by offering tailored onboarding, skill-building sessions, and mentoring.

## 3. Flexible Work Models & Parental Support

- Flexible work-from-home options and customized return-to-work plans post maternity.
- **Parental Leave Policy** includes extended maternity and paternity leaves along with gradual reintegration.

## 4. Menstrual Leave Policy

- Recognizing the need for menstrual health support, Capgemini introduced menstrual leave days as part of its wellness framework.

## 5. Tracking Gender Metrics Internally

- Capgemini monitors gender representation in hiring, attrition, and promotion data.
- Special attention is given to transitions from mid-level to senior leadership roles.

## 6. Sensitization & Allyship

- Gender inclusion workshops and male allyship training are part of company-wide sensitization programs.

## 7. Inclusive Infrastructure

- Safe and accessible office spaces, gender-neutral restrooms, and nursing rooms in select campuses.

## 2. Rashmi Mohanty, Chief Financial Officer, SBI Cards

From the financial services sector, **Rashmi Mohanty**, representing **SBI Cards**, elaborated on how the organization builds **gender dashboards** and tracks data loops to assess progress on inclusion. SBI Cards, a subsidiary of India’s largest public sector bank, has made strides in

creating a safe, structured workplace for women. She shared that women currently constitute **27% of key managerial positions**, with a target of **30% by 2030**. The company has established internal monitoring committees and safe workplace initiatives, including gender-segregated data collection across hiring, promotions, and exits. However, Jomanty also acknowledged ongoing challenges: resistance from some leadership to adopt gender metrics, and the difficulty of promoting women into senior roles. SBI Cards continues to focus on a “women pyramid” approach—creating a pipeline from junior to leadership roles. She called for **well-defined, enforceable policies** and **retention strategies** for mid-career women, recognizing that leadership gaps are not about capability but about systemic access.

### **SBI Cards – Women Empowerment and Gender Inclusion Initiatives**

As a leading player in India’s financial services sector, **SBI Cards** has committed to advancing gender diversity through workplace equity and systemic reforms.

#### ♦ **Key Initiatives:**

##### **1. Women in Leadership Commitment**

- Currently, women constitute **27%** of Key Managerial Personnel (KMPs), with targets set to reach **30% by 2030**.
- Internal benchmarks track the promotion of women across departments.

##### **2. Safe Workplace Ecosystem**

- Creation of **safe platform spaces** for women employees to share concerns and receive support.
- Strong implementation of the **Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Act** with trained Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs).

##### **3. Gender Dashboard and Data Monitoring**

- Gender-segregated data is collected and reviewed for recruitment, career progression, and attrition.
- Targets are mapped to ESG goals in line with **SEBI’s BRSR** framework.

##### **4. Mentorship & Career Guidance**

- Internal mentorship circles for women employees with high potential for managerial roles.
- Regular leadership talks and skill-building seminars designed exclusively for women.

## 5. Inclusive HR Policies

- Flexible work hours, remote work support, and enhanced parental benefits for women and caregivers.

## 6. Hiring and Promotion Strategy

- Special drives for recruiting women at entry and middle levels in traditionally male-dominated domains (like risk management and operations).

### 3.Samita Thapa, Research Lead - Gender, World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA)

**Samita Thapa**, representing the **World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA)**, brought a global perspective, sharing findings from WBA's gender assessment of over **2,000 companies worldwide**. WBA is a leading global non-profit that evaluates corporate contributions to the UN SDGs, including SDG 5. Thapa noted that despite visible efforts, most Indian companies still struggle with **transparent gender reporting** and fail to meet global benchmarks. She highlighted **Aditya Birla Fashion's progress**, where clear goals and strong leadership have propelled the company into top tiers of gender benchmarking. Thapa outlined major gaps in the Indian corporate context: limited disclosure of **gender-segregated data**, absence of policies on **harassment and grievance redressal**, and poor representation of women in **senior executive roles**—even as their participation remains relatively higher at entry-level positions. She also stressed the need for **intersectional approaches** that consider caste, religion, and other marginalizations. According to her, true transformation will only happen when companies include women in **stakeholder engagement** and uphold **gender-responsive human rights practices**. WBA continues to push companies globally to adopt transparent disclosures and set measurable benchmarks on gender performance.

The **World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA)** is a global non-profit coalition working to hold the world's most influential companies accountable to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with **gender equality and decent work** as core focus areas.

#### ◆ Key Initiatives:

### 1. Gender Benchmark

- Assesses and ranks companies on their contribution to gender equality, with a focus on:
  - Gender balance at all employment levels

- Pay equity
- Health and safety
- Gender-responsive grievance mechanisms
- Representation in decision-making and governance

## 2. Social Transformation Benchmark

- Evaluates 2,000+ companies across industries for their impact on human rights, labor rights, and gender inclusion.
- Provides insights into whether companies uphold international standards like **ILO Conventions**, **GRI 405**, and **SDG 5**.

## 3. Publicly Available Scorecards

- WBA publishes transparent company scorecards, including detailed assessments of policies on **diversity**, **harassment**, and **inclusive leadership**.

## 4. Regional Gender Gap Reporting

- WBA conducts India-specific analyses showing gaps in representation, grievance systems, and stakeholder engagement involving women.

## 5. Advocacy for Intersectional Inclusion

- Promotes inclusion of **marginalized women** (based on caste, religion, rural backgrounds) in corporate DEI strategies.

## 6. Corporate Engagement for Data Transparency

- WBA works with companies to **improve ESG reporting** and fill gender data gaps. They advocate for mandatory disclosures under BRSR and similar frameworks globally.

## Way Forward

Collectively, the session advanced the argument that gender equality must become **an operational and governance priority**, not just a public commitment. The discussion consistently returned to the need for **data-driven action**: dashboards, metrics, and targets that hold companies accountable. Importantly, the panelists agreed that internal cultural change—through leadership development, flexible working models, safe workplace design, and male allyship—is just as critical as external compliance. The role of frameworks like **SEBI's BRSR**,

**GRI 405**, and **SDG 5** was also unpacked, with calls for companies to go beyond minimum disclosure to adopt **outcome-based gender strategies**.

The UN GCNI, through this webinar, emphasized its ongoing role in creating spaces for dialogue and accountability. Its “Forward Faster” initiative aims to accelerate DEI adoption through ESG leadership and cross-sector partnerships. With attendees from corporates, regulators, academia, and civil society, the event successfully demystified gender metrics and offered real-world practices that can be adapted and scaled across sectors. It reinforced that **gender-disaggregated data is not a side agenda—it is central to business performance, resilience, and ethical governance**.