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**KHAITAN
&CO**
Advocates since 1911

01. MESSAGES FROM FIRM LEADERS



Our Partner, **Haigreve Khaitan**, shares his thoughts on inclusion:

"Diversity and Inclusion are integral ingredients for the success of any organisation. *These values must be at the centre of everything we do.* In fact, I have always maintained that it should not be seen as an initiative - it is part of our DNA and state of being. You cannot have wellbeing without inclusion.

The year 2020 has been a challenging one for all of us in so many ways. The COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent lockdowns, remote working - all these things posed unique challenges for each one of us. *It is during times of such crises that we realise the immense value of having people with diverse points of view in the team.*

Going forward, I am confident that we will continue in this same spirit; ensuring that these values remain ingrained in every aspect of our work culture and solidifying our commitment to promoting inclusion."



Our Partner, **Vanita Bhargava**, shares:

"*The dialogue on diversity and inclusion has taken center stage in recent times but has always been at the core of our Firm's value system.* 16 years ago, Senior Partner of the Firm, Mr Pinto Khaitan, offered me a partnership at the Firm. I remember I was hesitant to accept because I was pregnant at that time but he brushed my concerns aside. That was a pioneering move because at those times most firms expected women to take a break from their professional lives to attend to their young children. From that day till now, it has been a wonderful journey of professional growth for me at the Firm. Through our D&I initiative, ARISE, we are ensuring that these values remain ingrained in every aspect of our work culture."



A message on inclusion and importance of mental health from our Partner, **Ravi Kulkarni**:

"We at Khaitan & Co have been, for the past several years, consciously following policies promoting "Diversity and Inclusion". We are very proud of the initiatives we have been taking in this regard which has enabled us to tap into talent of people from diverse regions and backgrounds. Our commitment to Diversity and Inclusion makes everyone in KCO feel accepted, recognized, supported, inspired and empowered irrespective of their cultural or religious background. Another topic that is immensely important to us is mental and emotional health of our people. *I am happy that we are equally committed to sensitising and demystifying misconceptions about mental health.* We have been committed to and will continue to invest in these efforts."



Tina Gosar, our Chief Financial Officer, talks about how Khaitan & Co's culture helped her dispose her parental responsibilities.

"During my 18 years in the firm, I also became a mother of two. Fulfilling my duties ever since as a full-time working mother, would not be possible without the unconditional support and understanding of the Firm's leadership.

We all know that women today are more likely than men to stop working to care of their children, elderly parents, which forces them to leave the workforce, cutting their earnings and ability to save for important things like retirement. *A supportive work environment, such as ours, goes a long way in empowering women to realise their true potential and be financial stable for life.*

I consider myself very fortunate to have received the flexibility offered to me (in terms of working from home or operating on flexible hours) and the faith reposed in me - which made balancing professional and parental responsibilities completely effortless."

ARISE is not a special initiative - it is part of our DNA and state of being

Mental and emotional health of our people is immensely important to us

02. WE ARISE



Our Executive Director – Human Resources and a strong supporter of diversity and inclusion, **Amar Sinhji**, says " While ARISE is an initiative that we have launched in the recent past, our Firm has always believed in Diversity & Inclusion in a very wholesome sense. Even without a formal D&I policy having been in place, we have grown over the past 100+ years only because we have always lived the spirit of D&I. One only needs to look around us to see this in almost every section of our firm and in every process that we follow.

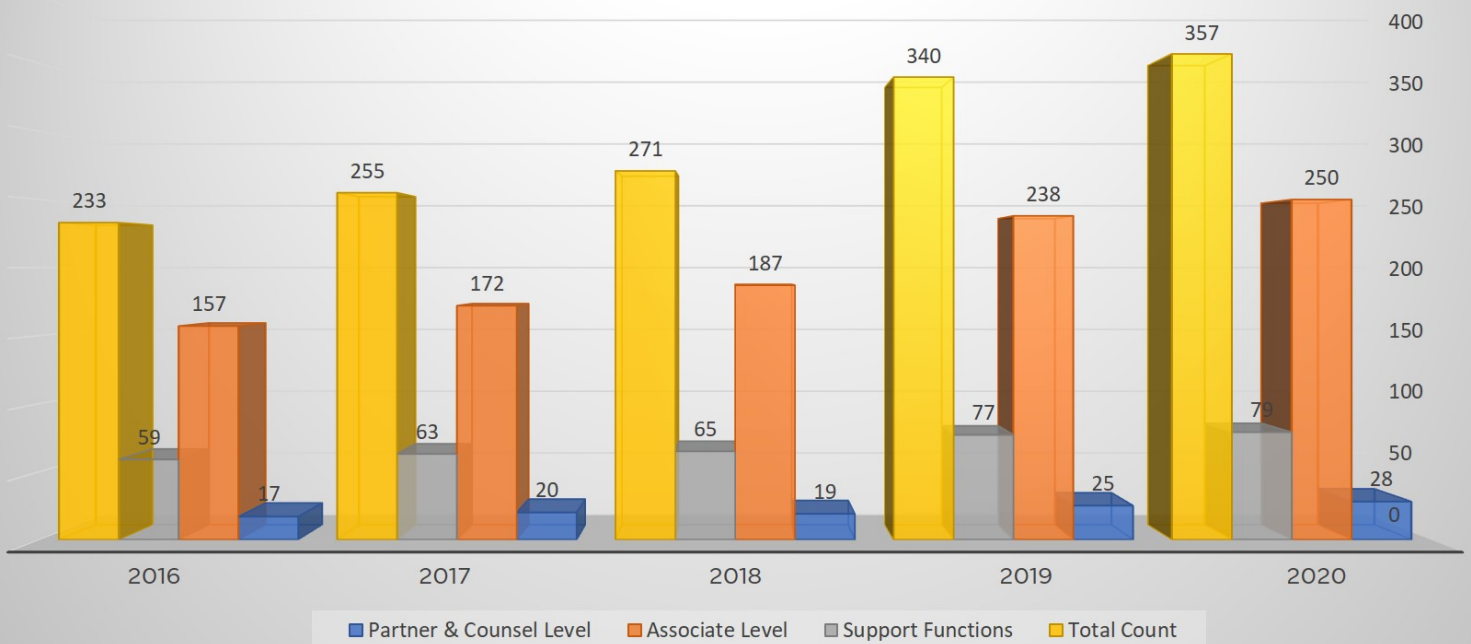
A statement that I believe sums up the essence of true D&I is, being inclusive is far deeper than merely giving people a seat at the table. True inclusion also requires giving those people a voice at the table. While Diversity (or the lack of it) is very visible, Inclusion is not so and is generally a state of mind." While Diversity is a fact that is measurable (and we are doing fairly well on that front), inclusion is a behaviour - something that each one of us needs to introspect about in everything that we do and in every action that we take."

ARISE's goal is to foster a positive and supportive environment in which all can flourish regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, disabilities, religion, culture or any other dimension of diversity.

As we take a step back and evaluate our various composition metrics in 2020, we note encouraging statistics. About 34% of our members across the Firm comprise of people who identify as women, and over the past few years, at least 50% of the lawyers recruited by the Firm on campus identify as women. The graph below depicts the steady rise in the number of women (across practices, functions and levels) we have in the firm since 2016. We owe this transformation to the forward-thinking mindsets of our leaders and management. With more agile and progressive policies today, our women members are entitled to 6 months of maternity leave, along with an additional flexible working regime for 3 months - and our male members are also entitled to 14 days of paternity leave.

Rise in women members across levels since 2016:

Female members across levels since 2016



Inviting Outside Perspectives

We had the pleasure of engaging in interactive dialogue with many of our women leaders, both in-house and from the community around us, to help us understand their journeys and challenges better.



Manisha Girotra, Head of Moelis India and our partner, Bijal Ajinkya

“Be more assertive and vocal” was the key takeaway from a fireside chat between Manisha Girotra, CEO of Moelis India and Bijal Ajinkya, our Partner, held in Khaitan & Co Mumbai office. From addressing the drop-out rate for women in the workforce post motherhood, to tough salary negotiations, both Manisha and Bijal offered enlightening insights drawing from their own experiences and inspired our women members across offices



Tejal Patil, Senior Legal Advisor for India and South Asia, OYO, and our Partner, Vanita Bhargava

“I believe in equity, not equality – each person is different, irrespective of gender” said Tejal Patil, Senior Legal Advisor for India and South Asia, OYO, at the fireside chat with our Partner Vanita Bhargava held in Khaitan and Co’s New Delhi office in January 2020. The frank and open conversation touched upon many difficult topics such as heightened pressure on women in urban societies, need of champions (men and women) for advancing the D&I dialogue and importance of funnelling diversity and inclusion at both senior and middle management levels.



Pooja Dhingra, a well renowned pastry chef, businesswoman and the force behind Le15, addressing Firm members on International Women’s Day in 2020.

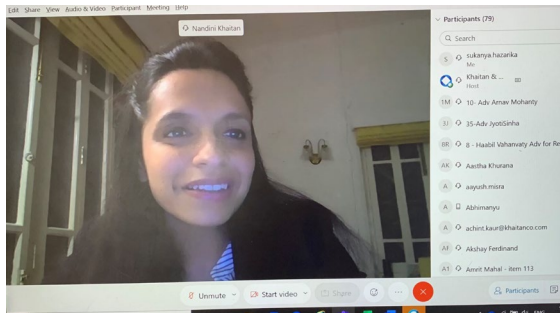
ARISE completed its one-year mark by taking a pledge on World Disability Day (3 December) to continue to create and work towards a positive and supportive work environment for members with disability and raise awareness on disability inclusion.



Madhavi Latha Prathigudupu, a banker, wheelchair basketball player and a former Paralympic Swimming Champion and our Partner, Nandini Khaitan

The Firm took a pledge on World Disability Day to work towards a positive and supportive work environment for members with disability

In this fire-side chat with Nandini, Madhavi shared her journey and challenges as a banker and sports person and her goals for the ‘Yes We Too Can’ movement (which focuses on supporting persons with disabilities).





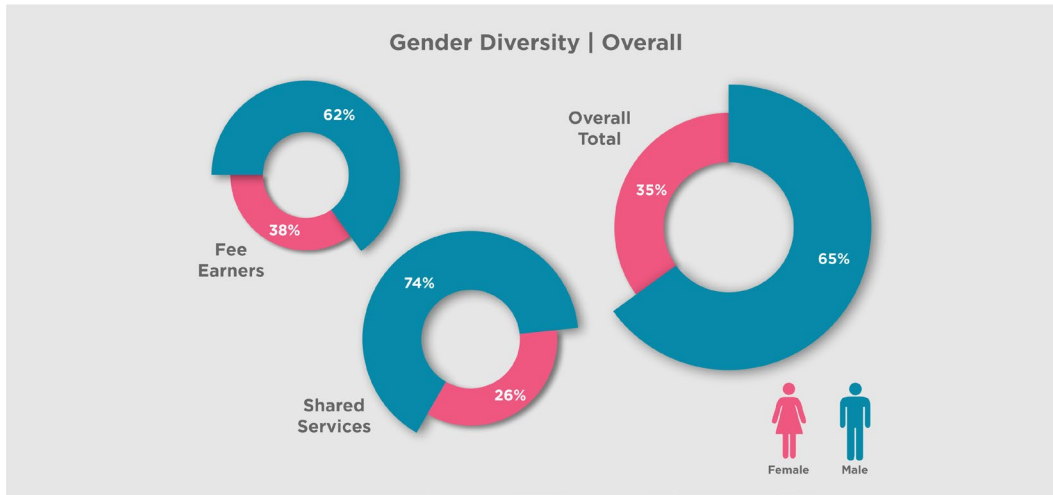
As we took our pledge on Disability Day, our Associate Director, Library Services - Pralhad Jadhav had a few words to share about his life and experience at the firm:

"As a person stricken with polio since the age of three, my parents always wondered how I would work and grow in a professional set up. But it is only with immense pride when I say that in the 14 years I have spent at KCO, there has never been a moment where I was made to feel different or 'not normal' because of my disability.

Today, my disability is my way of life and not a limitation. With the understanding, openness and professionalism around me, I have been able to go above and beyond and deliver the best in my line of work. My team members, other colleagues and seniors have been nothing but encouraging and supportive towards me and my professional endeavours. It is an honour to be a part of a firm with such an open and inclusive culture".

Launching our first Associate Committee!

This year, our young lawyers were invited to come together and form an Associates Committee among themselves. The objective is to express and represent associates' collective voices, act as a bridge between the Firm's management and its associates and enable a healthy exchange of ideas so as to implement best practices and ensure collective and inclusive growth for all members.



Khaitan adopted the Pride colours as part of the Firm logo in June 2020. As a Firm, we take great 'Pride' in standing by our LGBTQIA+ community and in this spirit, celebrated their inclusion through June 2020 across all our social media platforms. We ran awareness campaigns throughout the month for Firm members. We also invited Annemarie Shrouder to talk to the Firm's leadership on "How to Get to Inclusion".



03. WOMEN LAWYERS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES



Bijal Ajinkya
Partner, Direct Tax
Practice

What quality do you appreciate most about KCO, which helped your professional journey?

"Well, I would not say there is just one professional quality that helped me in my journey at KCO. I have penned in a few which I feel has really got me to better my performance every passing day. KCO is perhaps the only law firm, which can truly call itself an institution amongst various law firms which are either personality driven or family run. This set up therefore automatically creates an environment of stewardship where all are expected to contribute to an institution rather than drive individual aspirations alone. The firm but empathetic approach of the top leadership, creates a no-nonsense performance driven but humane organisation which is the bedrock of a true institutional partnership.

When the professional world is racing like it is the last day of performance, what I most appreciate about KCO is that it lets each professional race at her or his own pace, fully appreciating that a journey in a professionals' life, is bound to have some sunny and rainy days. One cannot only be a fair weather friend. I believe that as an individual you always go that extra mile when trust is reposed on you, a feeling of belongingness is created and most importantly empathy! These are all sure shot ingredients of making a truly successful organisation, and has tremendously helped me up my performance every passing day!"



Smriti Yadav
Partner, Intellectual
Property Practice

Please describe the change in the workplace, from a D&I perspective, through your career.

"When I started my career, the desire of being a successful career woman and mother was like

imagining a 'hot ice-cream'. While the same was unbelievable then, it is very much possible now. While challenges for a working mother still exists in the system, they are certainly manageable. Woman of today is fortunate to have refined, fine-tuned law which supports her dream to be a complete woman. Organizations like ours are empowering and respecting gender diversity. It gives woman an upbeat, secure and nurturing environment which leads to thriving organization"



**Suhana Islam
Murshedd**
Partner, Corporate
Practice

Please describe the change in professional environment generally, from a D&I perspective.

"D&I has many facets, the most obvious one being gender, and it's good to see that gender diversity in most law firms has levelled out over the years. I am fortunate to have had powerful women leaders serve as role models very early on in my career. This helped me understand that skills bought in by a diverse group can only enhance team performance and that leadership qualities may be expressed in unconventional ways - for example, with behind-the-scene work, crisis management and building teams. Second generation biases still exist, and this could be attributed to the fact that D&I at the workplace cannot be viewed in isolation but ultimately reflects society at large. Going forward, we need to focus on 'Inclusion' to ensure that every form of diversity is accepted, applauded, and rewarded."



**Gaurita
Udiyawar**
Principal Associate,
Funds Practice

What quality do you appreciate most about KCO?

Something that stands out about KCO compared to some of the other law firms I have worked with in the past (including one other magic circle law firm where I spent 5 years of my career) is that the term 'open-door policy' is not just an HR phrase or terminology but an actual method that is put in practice at KCO. Many lawyers often find it difficult to have their thoughts and opinions about management or other issues of the workplace

Bijal was most recently hand-selected for the Global Elite Directory 2021 (world's most respected lawyers recommended by their peers) in conjunction with Legal Week

Smriti was highlighted as a Recommended Lawyer in 2020 by Legal 500, and as Trademark Star in India by Managing IP in 2020

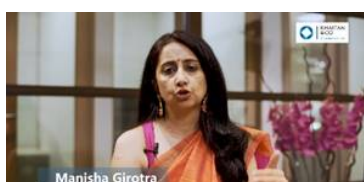
Suhana was listed as a Notable Practitioner in Corporate and M&A by IFLR 1000 in 2020 and 2019

Gaurita was identified as a Rising Star in Investment Funds by Legal 500 in 2020

such as attaining a work-life balance or any other aspects which may be of importance to lawyers placed at an appropriate forum without fear of being questioned or called out for the same. At KCO, I found that this was not a challenge and I always felt comfortable discussing my expectations with my team and my organization. A good and sustainable workplace is one where the both the employer and the employee are aligned in terms of what is expected of each other

and it always helps to be in an organization where one is encouraged to share their thoughts and experiences. This particular aspect at KCO has made me feel safe and 'looked-after'. When an employee knows that his / her needs and opinions are heard and given effect to (assuming the opinions are workable for both sides), a workplace becomes not just a temporary stop in one's career but a place where an employee feels like he / she can chart a long and sustainable career.

D&I Perspectives



MANISHA GIROTRA

CEO of Moelis India

[Click here](#)



BIJAL AJINKYA

Partner

[Click here](#)



TINA GOSAR

CFO

[Click here](#)



NANDINI KHAITAN

Partner

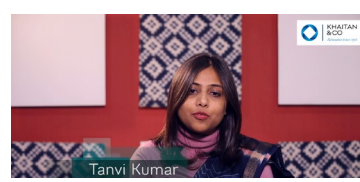
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VANITA BHARGAVA

Partner

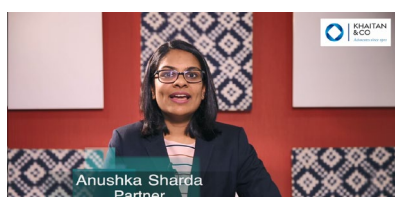
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TANVI KUMAR

Partner

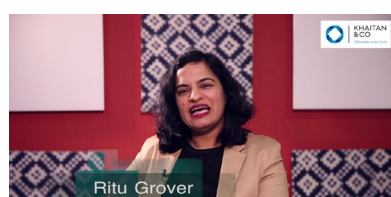
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ANUSHKA SHARDA

Partner

[Click here](#)



RITU GROVER

Director

[Click here](#)

AMBITION STATEMENT

"Our ambition is to be a respectable law firm providing efficient and courteous service, to act with fairness, integrity and diligence, to be socially responsible and to enjoy life. We should put greater emphasis on working in consonance with our aforesaid values than on maximizing earnings. Earn we should but with dignity and pleasure."

Khaitan & Co is a premier full-service Indian law firm with over 700 lawyers, including 160+ partners, and has offices in Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru and Kolkata. To know more about us, please visit www.khaitanco.com. You can elect to unsubscribe from our communication by emailing at unsubscribe@khaitanco.com.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions for our future editions. Please e-mail us at dicoordinators@khaitanco.com.



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