



# D&I in Action

## **AZB & Partners – Best Practices – Case Study**

Fortunately, AZB has not had to struggle with any gender diversity concerns. It is a proud moment for AZB to say that approximately 35% of its partnership consists of women. This is important because it shows that the work environment has allowed and encouraged women to stay on for a significant period of time and the Firm has managed to retain excellent talent despite the obvious hiccups that women face during early marriage and their child bearing years.

At AZB, we firmly believe that along with creating a more representative workforce, diversity also helps to build a more successful business by bringing together different experiences, perspectives and opinions.

AZB has successfully managed to achieve diversity in recruitment naturally without having to consciously focus on hiring female lawyers. Most of our young lawyers are hired directly from campus and we have over the years consistently managed to maintain a nearly 50:50 ratio between men and women hiring at entry level.

There is no gender bias in recruitment - which is driven entirely based on merit. The Firm's policy has always been to hire the best people and we have been successful in promoting diversity without compromising on quality. Over the last 3 years AZB has hired 290 female lawyers

This diversity cuts across all levels and women are well represented in the professional pipeline and at all the levels (junior, midlevel, and senior). There is a strong emphasis on promoting and maintaining an overall culture of diversity and equality. As per the data for the last 3 years, we have managed to consistently sustain a healthy ratio of 48:52 female to male participation ratio across lawyers. This is promoted by parity at all levels of business right from how our women lawyers are compensated to their representation at all levels of seniority.

The gender diversity at AZB ensures that very rarely teams staffed on any mandate do not consist of at least 1 woman lawyer. To the contrary, it is fairly common for teams to be staffed with only women lawyers and often, in client meetings, AZB is represented by a team of all women lawyers. This culture of equality and inclusion is something which flows from the senior leadership and is inculcated in all our lawyers right from the start.

There is a lot of emphasis to ensure that the senior-leadership support to advance the careers of all our lawyers including women and senior-leader support exert a powerful influence on our female lawyers' ambitions and desire to stay. This has resulted in women being treated 100% equally in pay, opportunity and advancements.

The leadership at AZB believes that after having invested so deeply in bright young women, it would be nothing short of negligence to let such women leave the Firm on account of the Firm not being able to manage flexible bespoke solutions for women at critical points of their career for limited periods of time. We recognize that women need additional support and push at some critical junctures and accordingly, many of the initiatives at AZB are designed to provide greater opportunities and support for women. For example: in addition to a favourable maternity leave policy, we have created a beautiful crèche play area for young mothers who wish to get their infants, toddlers to work.

There is a strong focus to create a safe and positive working environment especially for women and give them the necessary push and flexibility to grow, build confidence and unlock their true potential.