



REPORT

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP 2024[✦]

BOLD, BRILLIANT, AND BEYOND
Defining Leadership for Tomorrow

KEYNOTE | MASTERCLASS | PANELS | FIRESIDE CHAT

Empowering Women, Inspiring Leadership

The Women in Leadership (WIL) Conference hosted by BML Munjal University on 22nd March 2024 was a resounding success, bringing together a diverse array of strong, visionary leaders under the theme '**BOLD, BRILLIANT, AND BEYOND: Defining Leadership for Tomorrow**'. The conference showcased the university's unwavering focus on women's empowerment and leadership development, offering attendees valuable insights and inspiration from esteemed speakers and panelists.

Here's a brief snapshot of the highlights from this transformative event:

Keynote Addresses:

Ms. Mansi Tripathy, Chairman of Shell Group of Companies in India and Vice President of Shell Lubricants Asia Pacific:

Ms. Tripathy shared invaluable insights on women's leadership. She highlighted the importance of policy inclusion and continual growth in leadership roles, encapsulating her journey through the '5H's' – Hunger for Learning, Hardship, Hardlines, Help, and Happiness.

Ms. Mansi Tripathy highlighted that women representation in leadership roles is only 35%. She emphasized the importance of policy inclusion within companies to foster an environment supportive of women's growth and advancement in leadership roles. Her insights on women leadership underscored the importance of policy inclusion, continual growth, resilience, goal-setting, collaboration, and personal happiness in achieving success in leadership roles. Her practical advice provides actionable strategies for individuals aspiring to excel in leadership positions, fostering an environment conducive to growth and advancement.



Dr. Ritu Karidhal Srivastava, Senior Scientist at ISRO:

Dr. Srivastava, also known as 'Rocket Woman of India', shared a spectacular presentation on the journey of Chandrayaan. Through this she emphasized the indispensable contributions of female scientists, particularly in missions like Chandrayaan and how they overcame the failures. Her insights underscored the resilience and collaborative spirit of women in driving innovation and success in STEM fields.

Ms. Shradha Suri Marwah, Chairperson and Managing Director of Subros Limited:

Ms. Marwah in her fireside chat with Ms. Pooja Salwan shared reflections on her professional journey, highlighting the importance of adaptability, resilience, and work-life balance in achieving success. She talked about the power of will in achieving success, suggesting that while skills can be developed through training and development, the driving force behind accomplishment lies in one's determination and perseverance.



Ms. Swati Munjal, President of BML Munjal University:

Ms. Munjal delivered a compelling address that underscored the urgent need for gender equality in the workforce. Quoting statistics from McKinsey, Ms. Munjal emphasized that India could add 68 million women to the workforce by raising women's labour-force participation by 10 percentage points, thereby seizing the full economic opportunity. She invoked Walt Disney's timeless aphorism, "If you can dream it, you can do it," affirming women's potential as thought leaders in bridging the gender gap.



Power Panel Discussions:

Power Panel 1: Women in STEM: Navigating the Change

This dynamic panel discussion, moderated by Ms. Shipra Bhalla Chaudhary, Senior Director of Government Affairs at SAP India Pvt. Ltd, addressed the imperative of bolstering women's presence in STEM fields. Panelists highlighted the need for inclusive initiatives and systemic reforms to advance gender parity in STEM.

Moderator initiated a discussion on gender inequality in STEM, urging panelists to share insights from their diverse backgrounds. They discussed strategies to overcome barriers and highlighted the need for collaborative efforts to drive meaningful change in the field.

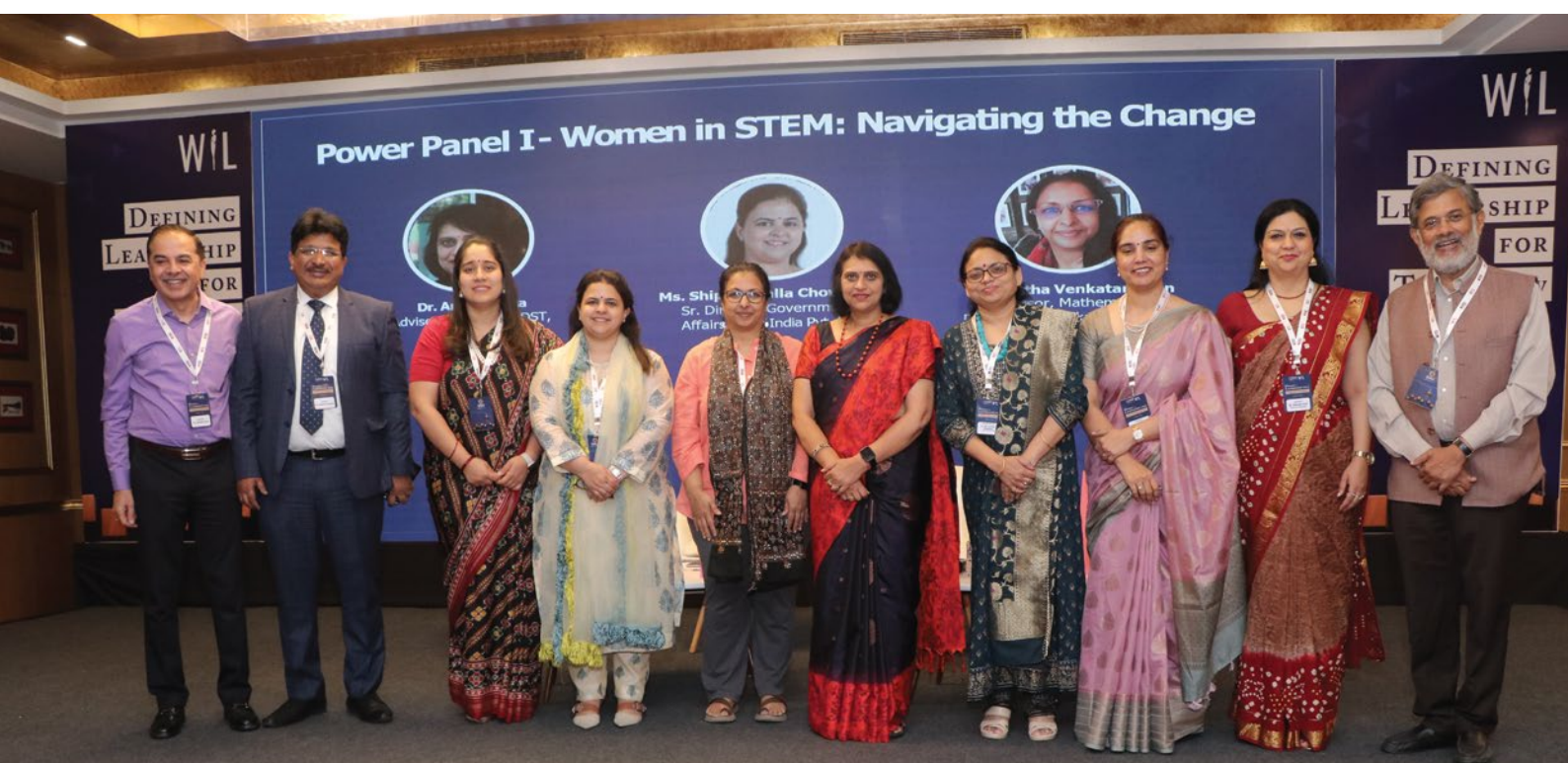
Addressing the question, Dr. Anita Gupta, Adviser/Scientist at DST, Govt. of India, delved into the critical role of education in shaping professional trajectories, highlighting that while women constitute 24% of the labour force in India, they contribute to only 18% of the GDP. Dr. Gupta emphasized the need for inclusive initiatives and cited the success of programs like the Vidushi fellowship, aiming to bolster women's representation in STEM.

Continuing the discussion, Ms. Shipra Bhalla highlighted the challenges faced by women in STEM, particularly in securing and retaining employment. She emphasized the early roots of underrepresentation and biases within educational norms. Ms. Bhalla then prompted the panelists to share their long-term aspirations for fostering an environment where women can freely choose STEM careers, thrive, and overcome systemic barriers to advancement.

Dr. Geetha Venkataraman, Mathematics faculty at Dr B. R. Ambedkar University, revealed alarming statistics on the underrepresentation of women in STEM employments. Despite comprising 43% of STEM graduates in India, only 14% of women secure STEM jobs. Dr. Venkataraman advocated for gender audits and systemic reforms to address the stark gender disparities in faculty positions, citing the inverse proportion of women as they ascend the academic ladder.

Ms. Sugandha Sharma, Lead at IT-APAC, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, championed the transformative power of technology in empowering women in STEM. With 30% of women in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AIML) and 80% of entrepreneurs at a recent start-up event being women, Ms. Sharma highlighted the need for inclusive design thinking to bridge the digital divide and provide equitable access to educational resources.

The panel discussion served as a clarion call for concerted action, illuminating pathways for advancing women in STEM as catalysts for economic progress and champions of gender equality.



Power Panel II - Mentoring and Allyship: Nurturing Women at Workplace



Ms. Rachna Bhanot
Chief of staff/ Strategic initiatives
Talent Management, IBM



Ms. Rachna Kumar
CHRO, Hero Moto Corp



Prof. Neharika Vohra
Professor, IIM Ahmedabad



Power Panel 2: Mentoring & Allyship: Nurturing Women at Workplace

For a long time, the world of leadership was unexplored ground, particularly for women, whose potential was frequently shrouded in hazy doubt. But now, something big is happening: a strong wave of allyship and mentorship is developing, providing a beacon of guidance for women as they face and overcome professional obstacles. The panelists, including Ms. Rachna Bhanot, Ms. Rachna Kumar, Ms. Priya Malhotra, Mr. Deepak Chhabra, and Prof. Neharika Vohra, shared diverse experiences in mentoring and underscored the transformative potential of mentorship and allyship in fostering growth and inclusivity within the workplace.

Ms. Rachna Bhanot, Chief of Staff/Strategic Initiatives and Talent Management at IBM, recounted her journey of overcoming challenges prior to entering the corporate world. She shared her personal narrative of navigating a landscape devoid of guidance, emphasizing the pivotal role of inclusion in her professional development.

Conversely, Ms. Priya Malhotra, Group Head of Talent Development at CK Birla Group, cautioned against the tendency for mentors to replicate themselves in mentees, emphasizing the need for diverse perspectives. She emphasized the value of participating in mentoring programs with mentees from varied backgrounds, which enriched her learning and expanded her approach to evaluation methods, fostering positive change.

Mr. Deepak Chhabra, Managing Director at Timex Group India Ltd., emphasized on proactive approach in fostering inclusivity, notably by introducing multimodal training methods to empower women within the organization, exemplifying his organization's commitment to mentorship and allyship.

Ms. Rachna Kumar, CHRO at Hero MotoCorp, emphasized the importance of two key elements in mentoring: the nurturing ecosystem and the genuine interest of the mentee. She emphasized that mentoring is a reciprocal process, highlighting the value of reverse mentoring in fostering mutual learning and growth.

The panel discussion showcased diverse experiences in mentoring, from empowering support to challenging setbacks. It underscored the importance of clear communication, supportive ecosystems, and embracing diversity in mentorship. Ultimately, it highlighted the transformative potential of mentorship and allyship in fostering growth and inclusivity within the workplace.

Fireside Chat: *The Day I Became a Runner*

Ms. Sohini Chattopadhyay, author of *The Day I became a Runner*, explored pivotal moments in her life and career, particularly focusing on her journey and challenges as a professional. While talking about her book, she explained the role of resilience, determination, and pursuing one's passions despite obstacles while writing. Ms. Chattopadhyay emphasized the importance of perseverance, self-belief, and embracing challenges as opportunities for growth, as well as drawing inspiration from real-life experiences to fuel personal and professional development.



Masterclass on Narrative Leadership:

Ms. Vijayalakshmi Chari conducted a masterclass on Narrative Leadership, demonstrating the power of storytelling to communicate values and deepen connections. Participants gained insights into leveraging personal stories for influence and impact in the workplace.

Conclusion:

The WIL Conference 2024 exemplified BML Munjal University's commitment to women's empowerment and leadership excellence. Through engaging keynote sessions, insightful panel discussions, and interactive masterclasses, the conference provided attendees with actionable strategies and inspiration to navigate and excel in leadership roles. The overwhelming success of the event underscores the university's pivotal role in advancing gender equality and fostering a culture of inclusive leadership in India and beyond.

BMU partners with the Hinduja Foundation and Ambuja Cement Foundation for micro-entrepreneurship

Atal Community Innovation Centre at BML Munjal University is partnering with Sujal Mahila Mahasangh Alwar. This collaboration aims to create a self-sustaining ecosystem of grass root entrepreneurs. Sujal Mahila Mahasangh Alwar comprises 450 women who are involved in village-level planning and promoting WASH practices. This project is supported by the Hinduja Foundation and Ashok Leyland and Implemented by Ambuja Cement Foundation. This partnership underscores BMU's commitment to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in rural and peri-urban areas, with the vision of empowering women sustainably.



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