 **ARISE**

Accept, Recognise, Inspire, Support, Empower



## The journey so far

At Khaitan & Co, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is at the core of who we are.

In line with the Firm's vision of attracting and retaining top talent and creating a richly diverse community of professionals, we are committed to nurturing an inclusive, bias and barrier-free work environment. We strive to cultivate a sense of belonging where our members feel included, respected and psychologically safe to bring their authentic selves to work. We foster a strong culture where our members can flourish and progress based on their professional merit, accomplishments, and contribution to the Firm, regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation, disabilities, or any other dimension of diversity.

We believe that this DEI commitment will not only enable us to nurture an inclusive and welcoming workplace for our members but also help bring in a diverse and talented set of professionals to provide best-in-class, innovative and commercially oriented solutions to our clients.

## Our DEI verticals



LGBTQIA+



Gender



Mental Health



Disability

## Member Resource Group



Khaitan & Co's dedicated DEI initiative, ARISE is powered by the Firm's Member Resource Group (MRG) that comprises over 40 professionals across practices, offices and levels. The MRG regularly meets to brainstorm and drive our strategic DEI goals.

## Collaborations for Women

Collaboration with She Breaks The Law (SBTL) | A global community of women leaders in the legal industry

This helps us promote dialogue amongst women leaders and provide insights on leadership development and peer networking.



SBTL Networking Lunch / Hybrid Session

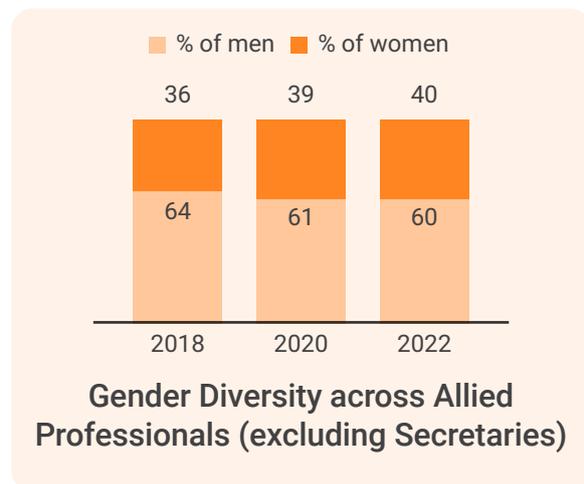
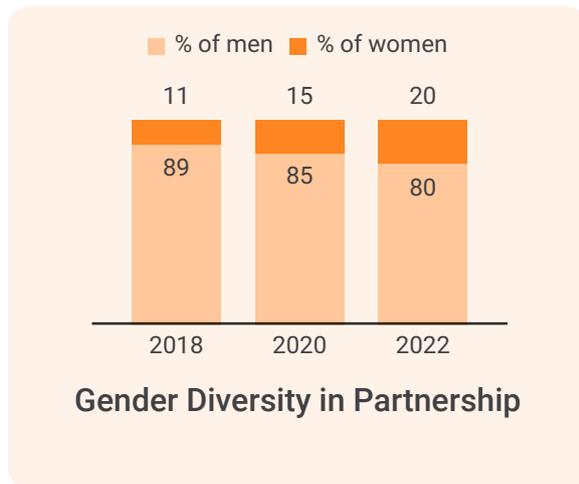
### Learning interventions for women professionals

- Women in leadership programmes
- Returning Mothers sessions
- Board of Directors Programme for women partners

### Gender balance in hiring

Since the launch of ARISE, we have focused on hiring from a gender balanced pool of candidates and with the help of a gender balanced hiring panel.

## Gender Diversity at the Firm



### A Message from Tanvi Kumar, Partner, Corporate and Commercial Practice, on our collaboration with SBTL



The SBTL ethos of collaboration, having a voice in global narratives, and embracing global good practices in the context of diversity and inclusion have benefitted us at the Firm.

We have successfully created deep networks and a symbiotic relationship with the SBTL community of lawyers. This is due to the fillip to consistently engage with the community and the regular global sessions that give a platform to women lawyers of the Firm to participate and develop themselves as leaders and diversity champions.

We have found immense enthusiasm among our clients, as well about this association, who are also keen to participate in the SBTL community.

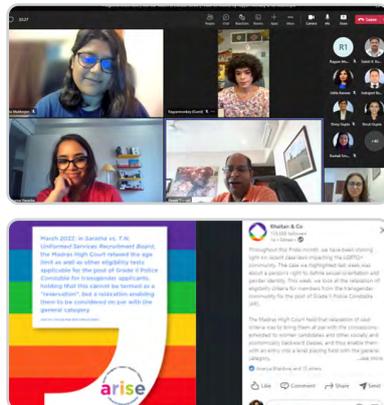
# Celebrating and Supporting the LGBTQIA+ Community

As a Firm, we are strong advocates of LGBTQIA+ inclusion in our workforce. Below are some of the ways we are advocating for inclusion:



## #TogetherWithPRIDE

We demonstrate throughout the year the Firm's solidarity towards the LGBTQIA+ community and build sensitivity. Recapping some key events from 2022 below:



- We hosted a fireside chat with Angel Queentus (Founder - Jaffna Transgender Network) and Gowthaman Ranganathan (PhD researcher - Brandeis University) on rights and legal issues faced by the trans community
- We conducted an Allyship Discussion with Rayyan Monkey, a certified diversity and inclusion specialist and a transgender woman
- We ran an awareness campaign across social media platforms and shared snippets on case-laws impacting the LGBTQIA+ community in India.

## Compendium of LGBTQIA+ rights in India



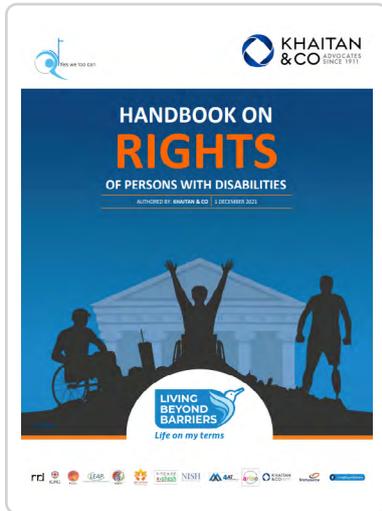
In a first-of-its-kind [compendium](#) put together by an Indian law firm, Khaitan & Co, with a preface from Keshav Suri (Founder of Keshav Suri Foundation), sets out the Indian legal framework applicable to the community including their constitutional and privacy rights. We launched the compendium in March 2023 with a panel discussion.

## A Message from Nandini Khaitan, Partner – Dispute Resolution Practice, about the compendium



One of the most notable initiatives of the MRG in 2022 has been its comprehensive work on curation of a compendium that sets out the domestic laws and some international instruments on the rights and protections available to LGBTQIA+ community, and the evolution of the Indian judicial framework in this regard. The idea behind the compendium was to provide access to information to LGBTQIA+ rights, its challenges, and its entitlements in matters of self-identity, employment, education, succession, property and companionship. For it is only when one is aware of their choices can one exercise it.

## Inclusive efforts focused on Disability



### Collaboration with “Yes We Too Can” (YWTC) Trust

We partnered with the YWTC Trust, founded by Madhavi Latha, a noted wheelchair basketball player, in 2021 to contribute to their #LivingBeyondBoundaries series - a program to empower persons with disabilities. As a part of this collaboration, we authored and published a handbook on the rights of persons with disabilities and hosted several live Q&A sessions.

### Sensitivity training

We welcome interns with disabilities and also organize sensitivity workshops for teams. For instance, we held a sensitivity workshop for the Dispute Resolution group prior to welcoming a law intern with cerebral palsy in 2021.

### A Message from Ranjini Gogoi, Senior Associate, and Saranya Mishra, Associate, Corporate and Commercial Practice



A team of 11 lawyers from the Firm prepared a handbook on the rights of disabled persons, which also discusses mental healthcare law and the rights of persons with mental health issues. It was authored in collaboration with the YWTC Trust and Adv. M. Karpagam.

It was conceptualised as a primer on the law for access to the public at large and was released in 2021 on the occasion of the International Day of Disabled Persons

by Chief Guest Judith Ravin, Consul General, U.S. Consulate General, Chennai. A copy of the Handbook has been published on the website of YWTC Trust. It has also been published in the SCC Online Blog column on mental health, being the first collaboration of its kind.



Select members of the authoring team also conducted live sessions online for wider outreach and dissemination of information. The sessions were applauded and appreciated by the participants as “interactive”, “useful” and “very informative”.

# Building sensitivity across the Firm

Monthly write-ups by MRG Members on themes and topics pertaining to DEI which help members reflect and keep conversations going.

Some topics covered so far include:

- Embracing Generational Diversity at the Workplace
- Out, Proud and Respected | Responding to a colleague or friend who comes out
- Using Disability Inclusive Language
- Embracing a healthier version of Masculinity at the Workplace
- Common Mental Health Issues in the Workplace

## **Building sensitivity across the Firm on Mental Health and Wellbeing**

As a Firm, we focus on prevention and access to support to enable optimal mental health for all.

### **Wellness Leave**

Wellness Leave is offered to members experiencing burnout, anxiety, chronic stress, mental health concerns. We encourage Firm Leaders to proactively look after mental health and wellbeing of their teams.

### **Minds over Matter**

We launched this in 2022 to encourage conversations around mental health across the Firm. We conducted the first session in November 2022 where Partners as well as Associates opened up and shared personal struggles they have faced, thereby providing a safe and trusting space for colleagues.

### **India Mental Health Alliance with other law firms**

Initiated by Chris Parsons from Herbert Smith Freehills, the alliance includes representatives from leading law firms in India including Khaitan & Co. It aims at creating awareness and discussions around stigma reduction by means of sharing good practices and global strategies.

### **Small Group Sessions – ‘In This Together’**

We conducted small group sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic in collaboration with EdPowerU to provide members with a safe space to share their challenges and how they were coping, while also taking away a few tips and techniques to thrive in these unprecedented times.

### **A Message from Shubika Bilkha, Partner, Edpower-U**



The “In This Together Program” was designed by EdpowerU to support 250+ members from Khaitan & Co in sensitively navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The program was designed to develop and build resilience, creating a safe virtual environment that encouraged sharing, reflection, and collaboration and fostering a culture of trust, empowerment and care. Partnering with Khaitan has been inspiring; we appreciate the confidence, receptiveness, openness and warmth received from everyone at the Firm.

## The “S” element in ESG

Our policies are designed to articulate and deliver on our commitment to build an inclusive workplace. Below is a snapshot of the select policies:

### Virtual Office Policy

Our Virtual Office policy provides all members greater flexibility and autonomy (wherever possible) to split their work week between working from office and home. We have continued with this policy post pandemic to ensure a supportive experience for Firm members.

### Parental Leave

Apart from the statutory Maternity Leave, the Firm provides 14 days Paternity Leave. To make the transition to work easier, returning mothers are offered the option of working reduced hours for the first three months.



### LexFlex

To tap into the pool of talent who are experienced but want a flexible lifestyle, Khaitan and Co launched LexFlex. It offers a unique range of opportunities, including working for certain hours in a day, working on specific days, period-based engagements and project-based engagements. This initiative is highly appreciated in the Indian market and has been successfully running since 2021.

## A Message from Anshul Prakash, Partner, and Deeksha Malik, Senior Associate, Employment, Labour and Benefits Practice



The Firm has always fostered a conducive and inclusive working environment for its members, which is where the ‘S’ or the social element in ESG ties in with our values. We have been at the forefront of workforce sustainability and well-being initiatives, and this is evident from our flexible virtual office policy, inclusive people policies and a unique LexFlex programme.



We strongly believe that an inclusive workplace advances professional growth and personal development of its members, being mindful of their individual differences. The Firm’s DEI champions (Member Resource Group) help identify opportunities for us to become more inclusive, represent the Firm at various external platforms focused on best practices within the DEI domain.

## Awards



**Gender Diversity National Firm of the Year –**  
Women in Business Law Awards 2022 APAC



**Best Diversity and Inclusion Project of the Year –**  
ALB Women in Law Awards 2021

### Senior Partner, Haigreve Khaitan shares his thoughts on inclusion at the workplace



“Diversity and inclusion is a trend among winners. From buzzwords earlier, I now see social values being embedded much deeper within the organisational DNA.”

We welcome your feedback and suggestions for our future editions.  
Please send us an e-mail at [dicoordinators@khaitanco.com](mailto:dicoordinators@khaitanco.com).