



Lean In or Change the Rules?

**Gender Equality in the
Workplace**

By: Dr Supriti Bezbaruah



We've
come a
long way



Women outnumber
men in university
education in several
countries

Women's
participation in the
workforce has
increased



Women in Leadership Positions in Asia



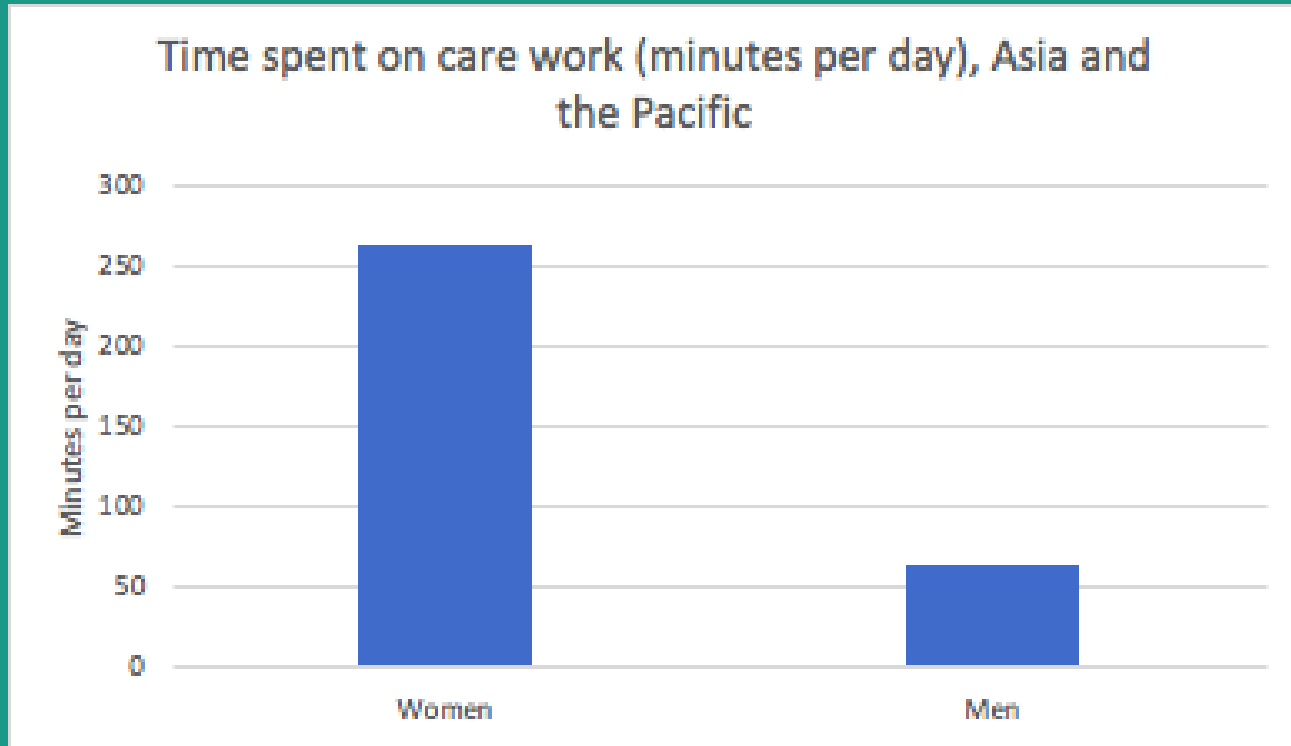
Source: Woetzel, J. et al. 2018. *The power of parity: Advancing women's equality in Asia Pacific*. McKinsey. Available online: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/the-power-of-parity-advancing-womens-equality-in-asia-pacific>

- Globally, it will take about 200 years to get equality in the workplace
- East Asia and Pacific will take over 100 years
- South Asia will take over 1,000 years
- 13 of the 25 countries in the Asia-Pacific dropped in their rankings including China, India, South Korea and Japan

**Biggest
challenge for
women at
work is care
related**



Some things never change



Women step
back or drop
out



Few women
in leadership
positions

Off-ramping

Jayanthi, 32 years old, mid-level manager, Banking

“After having a child, I think, it’s very important for a person to prioritise time for the family. I have this kind of a job, you know, it’s kind of a pressure cooker, you are on your toes all the time. More than physical fatigue, you know, it’s the mental fatigue which kind of sets in. One day, the day you know that I’m just fed up of all this, I’ll probably just quit. Because your career is not really everything.”

It's not just about childcare

Yu Yan, 45 years old, single
woman working in a small
company for about 20 years



The mental load

Rupa, 35 years old, mid-level manager, Banking

“See, women of course end up doing a lot more because you've got to do your work, go home work with the kids, look at their homework. I mean the men are not responsible for their homework, to get them to do their tuition, pack their bags, So it is a very hectic schedule and yes, if I was to take on more responsibility I would think twice before doing that.”

'Lean in' to Change the Rules

What does gender equality in work mean?

“Gender equality in the world of work does not suggest that all women should participate in the workforce instead of staying home to take care of the house, children, or elderly family members. **Rather, it signifies that women and men should have an equal range of choices.**”

A silhouette of a man and a child walking on a beach at sunset. The man is on the right, holding the hand of the child on the left. They are walking away from the camera towards the ocean. The sky is a gradient of light blue and yellow, and the ocean has gentle waves. The text "#SheforHe" is overlaid in white in the center of the image.

#SheforHe

Mind your language (and attitude)

“I bring my child to class with me. I’ve just stuck it out there and said, ‘I’m a woman, I’m someone’s mother. I’m not going to compete as a boy because I’m not a boy.’”

Call out unconscious bias

Tara, 29 years old, senior manager, Banking

“For a promotion, she would need to move, but her boss assumed she couldn’t “he’ll consider that since my husband is also settled in Delhi My family is in Delhi, they can’t move...”

The Business Case for Care

Dementia Timebomb set to cost £3bn by 2030 as people leave work to care for relatives

Lost productivity due to caregiving costs U.S. businesses between \$17.1 to \$33 billion annually.

Sources: (i) Cooper, C. 2014. Dementia Timebomb set to cost £3BN as people leave work to care for relatives. *The Independent*. Available online at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/dementia-timebomb-set-to-cost-3bn-by-2030-as-people-leave-work-to-care-for-relatives-9655241.html>

(ii) Family Caregiver Alliance. N.d. *Caregiver Statistics: Work and Caregiving*. Available online: <https://www.caregiver.org/caregiver-statistics-work-and-caregiving>

#PressforProgress

