



SAMVĀD: PARTNERS

www.samvadpartners.com

About Us

Samvād: Partners is a full-service Indian law firm with offices in Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai and New Delhi. The Firm is committed to providing innovative and quality legal advice to our clients, maintaining the highest levels of professional integrity, and nurturing our lawyers in a work environment that motivates them to achieve and maintain the highest standards.

The majority of our Partners have a rich mix of domestic and international experience – having worked in several international financial centres outside India, including London, New York and Singapore. We strive to provide our clients with innovative and simple solutions to their complex legal and business challenges in India.

Our people are our strength. Many of our lawyers are acknowledged leaders in their respective fields. We maintain a ratio of associates to partners significantly below that of other Indian law firms in order to ensure that our young lawyers receive the necessary training and supervision to match the Firm's reputation for high quality and prompt responsiveness to our clients. For detailed description of our partners please see here: <https://www.samvadpartners.com/our-people>.

Our Diversity & Inclusion Sector

Samvad: Partners (“the Firm”) is committed to promoting a workplace that is free of all forms of discrimination and promotes an inclusive work environment that values and accepts the diverse cultural and social backgrounds of its employees and lawyers. All recruitment and advancement related decisions of the Firm are based on merit, qualification, abilities and performance. The Firm makes reasonable accommodations to employees and lawyers with known disabilities.

The ability to be gender-diverse is hard coded in the DNA of Samvād: Partners. Our gender diversity ratio is probably the best in the country, presently. While not intentional, we are proud that nearly 83% of our partners and 58% of our lawyers are women! This makes us unique not just among Indian, but also global law firms. Legally India in their ‘Annual review report 2019’ has recognised our Firm as one among the largest law firms to stand out in their women to men ratios. The detailed ‘Women in Indian law firms: In a growing minority’ study can be found at: <https://www.legallyindia.com/print-edition/2019-inlegal-50>.

The Firm has curated and conducted several customised ‘*Diversity and Cultural Sensitisation Programmes*’ for its clients taking into account client specifications so as to tailor the needs of the workshop to adapt to the larger cultural requirements of the specific workplace.

Our Recognitions

Recognised as ‘**Highly Commended Firm**’ for Diversity & Inclusion: Outstanding Firm category. (Chambers D&I Asia Pacific and Greater China Region Awards 2023)

Recipient of the external **Guggenheimer Award 2023** (named after a former GC of JP Morgan) for our work on diversity and inclusion.

Shortlisted as an “**Outstanding Firm for D&I**” in the Diversity & Inclusion categories by Chambers Asia Pacific & Greater China Region Awards 2022.

Nomination, ‘**Outstanding Firm for Diversity & Inclusion,**’ Chambers Asia Pacific Awards 2021: Diversity and Inclusion category Awards.

Our partner, Poornima Hatti is **winner** of the ‘**Outstanding Contribution Award: Diversity & Inclusion**’ award (Chambers Asia-Pacific Diversity and Inclusion Awards 2021).

Winner, “**Chambers Diversity & Inclusion Asia-Pacific Awards 2020: Outstanding Pro Bono Programme – Regional Category Award.**” The award is intended to recognize firms dedicated to undertaking impactful and ongoing pro bono work in their local or global community. Chambers & Partners Asia Pacific (2020).

Ranked as ‘**one of the top 5 law firms in India for women**’, across firms of all sizes. - Vahura Best Law Firms to Work Rankings, 2018.

Our Diversity & Inclusion Experience

Following is a snapshot of the wider work that members of the firm are involved with:

- On behalf of three transgender activists, **Centre for Law and Policy Research**, Bangalore (“**CLPR**”) filed a Public Interest Litigation challenging the constitutional validity of the Telangana Eunuchs Act, 1919 in the High Court of Telangana. The Hyderabad office of the firm assisted in the filing of the public interest litigation. The Hon’ble High Court held the Telangana Eunuchs Act, 1919 to be unconstitutional in its order dated 06.07.2023.
- The firm has been associated with the **Centre for Social and Behaviour Change Communication** (SBC³), a team of seasoned and driven professionals who are passionate about using evidence-based communication strategies to bring about social and behavioural change, since its inception and has assisted them with the review of their contracts and agreements as well as their human resource and labour documentation. Our Partner, **Vineetha MG** is also part of the advisory board for SBC3.
- The firm has advised and represented **clients** with respect to complaints before the National Commission of Women.
- The Firm advised **Foundation for Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship** (“**FISE**”), a NGO that promotes innovations and entrepreneurship with a mission to create large scale sustainable social, economic and environmental impact, on the regulatory aspects of their investments into their portfolio companies.
- An **educational institution in Hyderabad** and **its incubator**, on their diversity and inclusivity policies and programs.
- A **homosexual individual**, before the High Court of Telangana in a matter seeking a restraining order against his family on account of an incidence of violence by his family against the said individual.
- The Firm strives to achieve “social diversity”. We work with **IDIA (Increasing Diversity by Increasing Access)** and ensure that students from economically weaker sections of society are provided an opportunity to work at the Firm. We also assist some of these students by helping them enroll in courses to further hone their communication and technical skills.
- **International Arbitration and Mediation Centre, Hyderabad (IAMCH)**, in conducting a Mediation Sensitization Programme for the Police Officers of Women Safety Wing – State of Telangana.
- The Firm has also supported and sponsored **law schools**, in their programmes and initiatives on diversity and inclusion as it believes that there is a need for dialogue on the rule of law and issues of marginalised communities, gender diversity and an inclusive society. The firm sponsored the **1st NALSAR Student Law Review Symposium on Law and Public Health**, which had sessions on Law, Gender and Public Health and Mental Health Policy in India. The firm was the exclusive title sponsor for the **National Law School of India Review’s XIII symposium on ‘Unpacking Reservations in India: Theory, Practice,**

and Beyond'. The symposium generated a platform for structured discussion on re-imagining of the constitutional understandings of substantive equality, dignity and opportunity.

- A **male employee**, whose services were terminated on account of alleged sexual harassment on the way forward to clear his name
- A **rape victim**, on how to get an abortion legally and connected her with social welfare bodies in Hyderabad to assist her in the same.
- We regularly advise **SignAble**, India's first on-demand Indian Sign Language interpretation service provider for individuals who are specially abled in terms of hearing, on various aspects of their company.
- A community of **transgenders**, for taking steps to seek police protection at the High Court of Telangana and drafted the writ for them as well.
- A community of **transgenders**, for taking steps on filing a writ for changing physical tests grading requirements for examinations conducted for certain public posts in Telangana.
- A **woman ex-employee of an IT company**, in a writ petition before the Court of Telangana in a matter of non-compliance of the provisions of The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (**POSH Act**) by the Internal Complaints Committee ("**ICC**") and the IT company as well as victimisation of the ex-employee by termination of her services. The firm had assisted the said woman in making a representation before the National Commission for Women which held the company to be in violation of the POSH Act.
- The Firm organised a get-together for **Women in Litigation** at our Bengaluru office in August 2022 to discuss challenges faced and opportunities available for women litigation lawyers.
- The Firm has organised **mentoring sessions with young women** at the bar at the High Court of Karnataka where senior lawyers can mentor younger women at the bar.
- The Firm organised an **'evening outing' with some of our women clients, partners and colleagues** in Bangalore to celebrate women power, diversity and Samvad's unique gender ratio among law firms Indian and global on October 16, 2019.
- Our Partner, **Ekta Bahl**, is a co-convenor for the Policy and Advocacy Group of the CII-Indian Women's Network and in such capacity she has conducted workshops for Personal Secretaries of Managing Directors of companies as well as member companies on the POSH Act. Ekta regularly speak at events on inclusive workplaces. She was a panelist at the Women's Conclave held in Hyderabad in February 2019 and was also a panelist at the session on "Out & About – Unravelling Queer Lives" at the Hyderabad Lit Fest 2019."
- Our Partner, **Aparna Ravi**, has worked with CLPR, where she was involved in public interest litigation and policy research on the right to education and women's rights, including violence against women and workplace sexual harassment.

- Our Partner, **Poornima Hatti (a)** is mentoring young rural lawyers as part of the Samvidhaan Fellowship organised by Nyaaya; **(b)** is presently working with ICC as part of their Commission on Disability and Inclusion to ensure that arbitrations and arbitral rules cater to the needs of the disabled and are inclusive; **(c)** has been elected as a Secretary of the Jurist Commission, where a large part of her work involves focusing on including more people within the conversation with particular emphasis on economic, social and cultural rights; **(d)** is an intrinsic part of the Bangalore Chamber of Commerce's women empowerment committee.; and **(e)** has also worked with Arbitral Women and the Equal Pledge organisations as well as both domestic and international institutions to ensure that there are more women arbitrators in India-related disputes.
- Several Members of the firm are empanelled as an external member on ICC under the POSH Act and have conducted training workshops on the POSH Act and The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012.

Members of the firm regularly publish articles pertaining to diversity and inclusion at the workplace.

- Our Partner, **Poornima Hatti**, has the following publications to her credit:
 - Published on the need for diversity in India which explains more about Oxford India connection and how it helped the cause of women's legal education in Kannada at [Vakeelavaahini](#) (Bilingual monthly magazine).
 - As part of her Chevening Gurukul Fellowship at the University of Oxford, Poornima worked on a paper on comparative commonwealth jurisdictions on how to have a more diverse and inclusive judiciary.
 - Co-edited a book on 'Understanding Workplace Dynamics' in 'Leadership and Role Modelling' by Palgrave McMillan, 2018.
 - Is Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Curtailing Women's Growth?: Unveiling Women's Leadership: Identity and Meaning of Leadership in India, Palgrave McMillan; 2015 (co-authored).
 - The Pluralist approach to India's Anti-Harassment Law, Shaping Law- Shaping Gender, Experiences from India, Humboldt University, Berlin, (upcoming) (Co-authored by Aparna Ravi and Poornima Hatti)
- Our partners **Ashwini Vittalachar** and **Junaira Rahman** regularly write on the platform, YourStory, on the topic of sexual harassment at the workplace.

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