



Shakti Women Pink Paper 2021

**“Unashamedly full of the
latest facts about women in
the UK”**

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Who have all contributed their time and research to this evolving labour of love.

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On the name

Oh yes, we did. We used the ‘P’ word. That’s right. We’re talking about women and we’re using ‘pink’...Gasp!

And we know that many of you will find this annoying, because it implies all women are pink and fluffy, or that all women are the same. But that’s not why we called this document the Pink Paper. In fact, we’re really not about putting women into any sort of box – at the core of Shakti Women is embracing the diversity of women. It’s built into what we do. Go to the ‘about us’ section of the Shakti Women website www.shaktiwomen.com and you will see it there:

“We value the unique beauty and aspirations of each and every woman we serve”

So, please believe us when we say, we’re not trying to stereotype women. In fact, there are probably many among us who hate the colour pink, as well as some who love it. Either stance is fine.

So why did we use pink?

Basically, ‘Pink’ is like a shorthand for ‘women’. And since we want this research to extend far and wide, we thought we’d just say what it is right there on the front, and maybe cause a little controversy so people are intrigued to see what it’s about. And if you’re reading this introduction because of how annoyed you were that we used pink to signify women, then you have to admit, our ploy worked a bit!

We completely accept the arguments that many make against using pink as a symbol for females, but you better brace yourselves because there is so much more in this document to be annoyed and offended about than what colour it is called.

Like the fact that, at the current rate of progress, the global pay gap between men and women won't be closed entirely until 2220; or that only 1 in 4 of the people heard, read about or seen in the newspaper, TV or on radio news are women; or that research by the United Nations reveals that one-in-five women have faced violence from an intimate partner in the past year (and this was before the pandemic, which we know has increased the risk of domestic violence for women).

So, if you are still really offended by us using pink as a way to attract people to see what this research paper is about, wait until you read what's inside...

Siobhan Harper-Nunes, Founder

Personally, I love pink. I tried the red power suits in the 80s and even stopped traffic one evening dressed in bright orange, but nothing suited me quite like pink. So, for three decades now, I've worn pink lipstick because I feel empowered with my hot pink lips – I become the warrior woman.

But ladies, this body of work is not about colour, it's about gender. It's just some of the tools we need to help us in the fight for equality, to stand up to sexism and misogyny. These are just some of the facts we can quote when once again we are being "othered" and called overly sensitive, angry or downright difficult.

Let us be clear, this is a beginning. Having good data at our fingertips is like having a sword in our sheath, what we do with it is the next step. I do hope you will become a part of the movement of women who decide what those steps are.

Love always

Siobhan

Introduction

The research in this paper comes from a wide range of sources from official government or charity reports to corporate surveys and media articles. It covers a number of topics which we have grouped into the following broad categories:

- Work
- Business
- The Economy
- Society
- Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Women
- Mental Health
- Politics
- Representation
- The Power in Our Purse Strings

All the sources of the information are fully acknowledged with links taking you directly to the original (or to a page where you may download it) and a full reference list at the end of the paper. We quote liberally (with permission, of course) from original sources out of respect for the hard work of the authors and editors of those works. When we quote directly, we use speech marks.

In order to give a rounded picture, whilst also staying relevant, the research in this paper goes back no farther than 2011 (i.e., no research is more than ten years old at the time of publication).

While we have tried to include relevant data on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected women, the published data we drew from was limited at the time of writing. It is clear from that data, however, that women's equality has been severely affected by the crisis.

Since the first Pink Paper we published in 2012 we've also added chapters on Mental Health and Politics, and sub-chapters on disabled women and the #MeToo movement. There's so much more we could have included, but we have tried to cover as many bases as possible.

Though most of what you read in this paper may shock you, we do end on an uplifting note with a chapter about women's purchasing power aptly titled 'The Power in Our Purse Strings' which we believe is one of the most important superpowers that women have.

It's also important to note that, whilst we quote liberally using the acronyms BAME and BME throughout the paper, we don't really like them. Deputy Head of Unit & Deputy Director of Policy and Strategy for the Race Disparity Unit in the Cabinet Office, Zamila Bunglawala, has written an informative blog on the issue of terminology for ethnic minorities that we recommend you read for a full explanation of why these acronyms are not our favourite.

This time around, we've also included some profiles of leading and trailblazing women like the first Director of Cultural Diversity at the BBC, June Sarpong OBE, and epidemiologist and writer, Professor Sunetra Gupta.

Finally, our Shakti Women Power Pledge outlines, in the form of a manifesto, our planned response to what's shown by the data as our organisation moves forward.

Before we get down to business, we apologise if the tongue-in-cheek nature of our musings on pink at the beginning of this paper had you fooled because, from hereon in, this Pink Paper gets serious.

And one last thing...

Viewed from above like this, the picture for women in the UK looks rather bleak. There's a ton of work to be done if we are to reach gender parity before hell freezes over. Nonetheless, compiling this research has filled us with a sense of hope and inspires us to keep being part of the solution, and to keep lifting up other women as we go.

Looking at improvements in the representation of women, especially black women, across certain sectors of society, it's clear to see the world is changing and 2020 was an extraordinary year for waking us all up to what our society really needs. It was a turning point. So, with this in mind, let's get informed and let's get to work.

Please make liberal use of the research in this paper to help your organisation move forward too.

If you feel like telling us what you think about it, let us know on social media using **#ShaktiPinkPaper2021**.

Danielle Parker
Writer, Researcher & Project Manager
Shakti Women

Danielle

Work

When women work, society gets better. It's that simple. Women bring different skills, perspectives and attitudes to the workplace that benefit everyone, and it is now widely concluded that labour diversity drives up almost all the indicators of successful business and operation. Sadly, the data shows that women are still being undervalued and sidelined. It also shows that women's specific workplace needs and desires are not being met. Isn't it high time this changed? Oh, and the workplace sexism that's still rife? No. Just stop it.

Workforce

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, a record-breaking number of women around the world were in work.

More women had been working in the UK than ever before. As of June 2020, more than two-thirds (72.7%) of women aged 16–64 were employed.

However, as of January 2020, more than two-thirds (72.0%) of women aged 16–64 were employed. "This [was] 0.4 percentage points down on the same period the previous year and 0.1 percentage points down on the quarter."

By comparison, 80.1% of men aged 16–64 were employed in the same period

In October-December 2019 15.61m women in the UK aged 16 and over were in employment. The number of women in work was 298,000 higher than the year before and 1.94 million higher than the decade before.

Since late 2013 estimated unemployment rates for both men and women aged 16 years and over in the UK had generally been falling but unemployment has increased over recent periods.

However, coming up to date, "**September to November 2020 estimates show a large increase in the unemployment rate and a record number of redundancies, while the employment rate continues to fall; although decreasing over the year, total hours worked increased from the low levels in the previous quarter.**"

“The redundancy rate reached a record high of 14.2 per thousand.”

“the estimated UK unemployment rate for women was 4.7%; this is 1.1 percentage points higher than a year earlier and a record 0.7 percentage points higher than the previous quarter.”

“the estimated economic inactivity rate for women was at a joint record low of 24.4%; this is down by 0.5 percentage points on the same period the previous year and also down by 0.5 percentage points on the quarter.”

The West Midlands has the third highest rate of unemployment in the UK, up 1.7% on 2019 figures for the period September to November 2020.

“For the period September to November 2020 the UK region with the highest unemployment rate estimate was London at 6.9%

“The Claimant Count is the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work and be available for work. It is the new headline measure of those claiming benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed.”

“The latest claimant unemployment figures released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that seasonally adjusted claimant unemployment in Birmingham increased by 494 in June 2020 to stand at 77,380; the rate increased to 14.5%. The rate of growth in the claimant count has however slowed sharply in June as the economy reopened.”

“Birmingham has a comparatively high claimant unemployment rate. At 14.7%, Birmingham’s claimant unemployment rate is the highest of the core cities - significantly above the core city average of 11.1%

It is thought that the coronavirus pandemic is the main cause of this increase, adversely affecting the rate of employment across the UK.

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Women have faced significant economic and health impacts and risks due to the Covid-19 crisis. For example, women were 5 percentage points more likely to have lost their jobs due to Covid-19 than men, 60% of the country’s essential workers are women and women comprise 77% of the labour force at high risk of contracting Covid-19. [Go to briefing](#)

Globally, Covid-19 has also meant a larger increase in unpaid work for women than men. According to the UN Women report *Whose Time to Care? Unpaid Care and Domestic Work During Covid-19* (November 2020), “on an average pre-COVID-19 day, women already spent about three times as many hours on unpaid domestic work and care work as men. Available data from 38 countries overwhelmingly confirm that both women and men have increased their unpaid workloads, but women are still doing the lion’s share.”

In terms of redundancies and loss of livelihoods, as well as an increase in unpaid domestic work (doing household chores and other domestic work), women and girls stand to be hardest hit by the economic fallout of the pandemic.

Evidence shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced traditional gender norms and strengthened gender inequalities, forcing many women out of the labour market or increasing their workload as more time is spent in the home.

The report also claims that the average woman now spends nearly the equivalent of a full-time job doing unpaid childcare – a full working day a week more than men. [Go to report](#)

In the final quarter of 2019, 9.31m women were working full-time in the UK, while 6.3m were working part-time. 40% of women in employment were working part-time, compared with 13% of men.

The most common employment sectors for women in the UK are health and social work (accounting for 21% of all jobs held by women at September 2019), the wholesale and retail trade (14%) and education (12%). 79% of jobs in the health and social work sector and 70% of jobs in education are held by women.

Of course, people working in health and social work and education are at greater risk of contracting coronavirus, while the wholesale and retail trade is one of the hardest hit sectors in terms of job losses.

WHEN (Women's Higher Education Network)

For women working in Higher Education, the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised the limits of domestic and child care sharing and the alarming tendency for women to be carrying the burden of increased domestic work due to lockdown, home schooling and added emotional labour on top of trying to manage their own professional work in often unfair home-working conditions.

For their report, 'Sharing the Caring: UK Higher Education Professional Services parents, work and family life during 2020 lockdown', they surveyed 1000 parents working in Professional Services in Higher Education [HE] during UK's first COVID-19 lockdown and school closures, between March and June 2020.

Head of Research, Ivana Vasic Chalmers, explains the reasons behind the report: "Data on ways in which unpaid labour is divided between co-parenting couples is scarcely available, yet we know it influences career progression significantly. The COVID-19 pandemic provided a unique opportunity for WHEN to look at how parents felt about the division of home and caring responsibilities, and the impact on their careers, whilst working from home during lockdown. We focused on professional services staff because they have been largely ignored in sector studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time, yet represent a significant proportion of the workforce. Women in Professional Services roles make up one third of the entire sector."

Some of the key findings of the report were:

- Self-identifying women (mums) in dual career households continued to be predominantly responsible for childcare, household chores and duties for caring outside the home based on their self-reported perceptions of effort in the home. The pandemic exacerbated this, generated a substantial increase in responsibility and created significant challenges in their ability to do their jobs.
- Self-identifying men (dads) increased their childcare and caring outside the home efforts but domestic tasks remained predominantly in the remit of women. During the pandemic it is these tasks that both increased, and were not possible to outsource. This demonstrates that unpaid labour in homes of professional services parents in the UK HE sector is still disproportionately a woman's domain – as has been recognised in global research on the subject.
- Traditional gender roles were still evident in the division of duties. It was predominantly women that self-reported organising the family's time and activities, school work and household chores, and that were physically and emotionally more accessible for their children and extended family.

- Women described their partners as taking on activities that had less of a 'mental' and 'emotional' load, such as play or cooking meals, and that they were more likely to have separate, quieter working spaces

The good news about work...

There are now more women entrepreneurs in the UK, with a steady increase in women who have started their own businesses.

"From 2016 to 2019 there was a consistent year-on-year increase in female-owned small businesses. The total is equal to a rise of 58 per cent overall over the four-year period."

However, female-owned businesses were 5.9% more likely to have closed their businesses than male-owned businesses during the pandemic.

The economic inactivity of women (meaning not looking for or available for work) since the 1970s has fallen sharply. 25% of women aged 16-64 were economically inactive in 2019, compared to 45% at the start of the 1970s.

The higher education participation level for young women has now reached 56.6%, compared to only 44.1% for young men, meaning the number of female graduates is set to increase.

As of August 2020, the number of women and men starting apprenticeships were almost at the same level, with slightly more starts by women (50.1%).

For the first time ever (as of 2019), there are over 1m women working in core STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) roles in the UK.

13% of the overall UK STEM workforce are women, and the percentages of women in STEM for technology and mathematics are 19% for Computer Studies and 38% for Maths. Just 15% of Engineering graduates are female.

In 2019, there were over 50,000 women in engineering professional roles which is almost double the number 10 years prior (2009) and the proportion of tech roles filled by women has flatlined at 16% since 2009.

Wages

The Equal Pay Act was passed in 1970 in the UK and this prohibits wage discrimination based on gender, so that men and women must be paid equivalently and receive equal benefit for the same work, similar work or work of equal value.

Achieving equal pay is not the same as eliminating the gender pay gap.

The gender pay gap is a broader measure of the average earnings of men and women – regardless of the job they do – across a whole workforce.

An organisation, business or industry could be fully complying with the Equal Pay Act and still have a huge gender pay gap if the majority of their top-earning workforce – those in the most senior positions – are male, and the majority of their junior or part-time workforce are women.

“More than three out of four UK companies pay their male staff more than their female staff, and in nine out of 17 sectors in the economy, men earn 10% or more on average than women.”

9 out of 10 women work for a company paying women less than men.

The gender pay gap among all employees was 15.5% in 2020, decreased from 17.4% in 2019.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on labour market hours worked and pay, in April 2020 it appears to have had little impact on the gender pay gap.

Latest figures (2017) show that male graduates had higher employment rates (86%) than females (79%) and were more likely to have a high- or upper-middle-skill job. The employment rate for female graduates may be slightly lower because they were more likely to state that they were out of the labour force in order to look after the family and/or home; 11% of female graduates said this, compared with 2% of male graduates.

“The under-utilisation of women’s skills costs the UK economy between 1.3% and 2% of GDP every year. Other estimates of the potential benefit of fully tapping

into female talent in the economy are that raising the level of women's employment to the same as men's could lift GDP by 10% by 2030, while eradicating the full-time gender pay gap would contribute additional spending into the economy of £41 billion each year

Sexism

Two thirds of women (66%) agree that sexism is still a problem in the workplace.

The gender pay gap is a broader measure of the average earnings of men and women – regardless of the job they do – across a whole workforce.

According to a 2019 YouGov poll for the Young Women's Trust:

- 2 in 5 women bosses say there is sexism in the workplace.
- 37% of women and 22% of men with management responsibility say that sexist behaviour still exists in their organisation – totalling 29% of all employers.
- 1 in 10 men say that men are better suited to management jobs than women.

Sexual Harassment

Key findings of a 2016 report by the Everyday Sexism Project and the TUC (Trade Union Congress) relating to the extent of sexual harassment in modern workplaces are:

- More than half (52%) of all women polled have experienced some form of sexual harassment.
- 35% of women have heard comments of a sexual nature being made about other women in the workplace.
- 32% of women have been subject to unwelcome jokes of a sexual nature.
- 28% of women have been subject to comments of a sexual nature about their body or clothes.
- 25% of women have experienced unwanted touching (such as a hand on the knee or lower back).
- 20% of women have experienced unwanted sexual advances.
- More than one in ten women reported experiencing unwanted sexual touching or attempts to kiss them.
- In the vast majority of cases, the perpetrator was a male colleague, with nearly one in five reporting that their direct manager or someone else with direct authority over them was the perpetrator.
- 4 out of 5 women did not report the sexual harassment to their employer

The 'Glass Ceiling'

There is no single glass ceiling on entry to the boardroom. Working women face multiple barriers to reaching their full career potential, from age and a lack of female role models to motherhood and acquiring the necessary qualifications and experience.

Let's be clear though, motherhood is not the barrier. Having children becomes a barrier when the culture perpetuates the traditional heteronormative idea that mothers, not fathers, must be the primary caregivers in a family, and when policies - such as the amount of maternity versus paternity leave employers are legally expected to give - reflect these accepted norms.

What women want at work

In February 2013, LinkedIn partnered with Cross-Tab in a global survey of more than 5300 working women across 13 countries. They asked women:

- ***What does success at work mean to you?***

63% said finding the right balance between work and personal life.

- ***What did success at work mean to you 5 or 10 years ago?***

56% said earning a higher salary.

- ***Would you like a more flexible working environment?***

65% said yes, I have a family and flexible working would enable me to better manage my career and family

21% said not now but when I have a family it will be important

14% said no I am focused on my career and don't need flexible working

- ***What are the challenges that affect your career?***

51% said no clear career path

47% said no investment in professional development

44% said inequality in pay

74% of respondents agreed that "You can 'have it all': a fulfilling career, relationship and children."

- 57% of respondents disagreed that "I'm a career focused woman, but as soon as I have children, I plan to slow down my career"

Other data from the report revealed:

- 77% of women worldwide consider their careers to be successful so far. One of the standout regions in this regard is India, where 69% of women consider their careers successful.
- The definition of success for women is evolving. 63% currently define success as achieving work/life balance, an issue only 39% viewed as “success” just 5-10 years ago.
- 56% equated high salary with success 5-10 years ago. Today only 45% would make that correlation.
- 80% of women consider a flexible work environment vital for future generations.
- 70% consider greater presence of women at senior executive levels to be essential as well.

What women want from life and work is the flexibility to balance their work and home lives

So, do men and women want the same thing at work?

Women say what’s important to them is:

- Making a difference 23%
- Personal achievement 21%
- Enjoyment 19%
- Being part of a successful team 19%
- Challenges 18%

Men say what’s important to them is:

- Making a difference 23%
- Personal achievement 20%
- Enjoyment 20%
- Being part of a successful team 19%
- Helping others 18%

Women as working parents

The trend of mothers’ work preferences has remained fairly steady over the last decade- and-a-half. In 1997, 70% of mothers expressed a preference for working part-time or not at all. In 2012, this percentage remained about the same, at 67%.

“The idea that what working women really want is flexibility has been challenged by a recent event at London Business School for professional women. The attendees were asked what would make them feel they had a successful career. Just 14% felt that a benchmark of success would be a better work-life balance; 44% wanted job satisfaction, while 34% wanted to be able to define their company’s direction and leadership. It’s not more time that women want, it’s more power”

In their report published in 2014, Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Melinda Marshall found that in order for women to succeed at work they needed five things: to feel in control of their career path, to have their work recognised, to find meaning and purpose in their work, to be able to empower others, and to have financial security.

Celia Moore, assistant professor of organisational behaviour at London Business School says: “There was research done by one of the big accounting firms in the nineties. They assumed that the reason they lost women was because they had made the choice to stay home. Finally, the leader of the organisation contacted women who had left in the last six months, 80% of them were still in full employment.”

Business

Women are incredible entrepreneurs and there's plenty of evidence to suggest that we are smashing it in business. The data tells us that women care more about making a difference too and as humanity grapples with some of its greatest threats to date, caring more matters. The trouble is women aren't getting the support they need to start or grow their businesses and that comes down to the unfair biases in the finance and venture capitalist industries. If the playing field was level, though, just imagine what women in business could achieve. The possibilities are endless!

Entrepreneurial Activity

"As of January 2020, self-employed women only accounted for around 1 in 20 of all people in employment, however, they have seen the largest rate of increase over the last 10 years. Between November 2009 to January 2010 and November 2019 to January 2020, the estimated number of women in self-employment grew by 51.3%.

"Up to £250bn of new value could be added to the UK economy if women started and scaled new businesses at the same rate as UK men.

Just 8.6% of all UK women surveyed said they plan to start a business in the next three years, compared to 14.3% of men.

Women are then only half as likely as men to launch an enterprise.

Female-led businesses receive less funding than those headed by men at every stage of their journey. Start-up funding is the #1 barrier mentioned by women non-entrepreneurs: women launch businesses with 53% less capital on average than men, are less aware of funding options and less likely to take on debt. Only 1% of all venture funding goes to businesses founded by all-female teams, inhibiting scale up.

"From a survey of 22,257 businesses by UENI (a company on a mission to get all small businesses online), approximately 7,205 were launched by female entrepreneurs."

This sets the number of UK businesses currently owned by women at 32.37%, highlighting a remarkable shift from four years ago [2016], when just 17% of founders were female.

Women are more likely to run a business as a one-person company than have four or more employees.

Women-led companies make up only 23.44% of businesses with a larger employee count

If women set up businesses at the same rate as men, there would be an extra 150,000 start-ups in the UK each year.

"If women and men participated equally as entrepreneurs, global GDP could rise by approximately 3% to 6%, boosting the global economy by \$2.5 trillion to \$5 trillion."

The Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs has become a respected report on the entrepreneurial activity of women globally. Key findings of the 2020 publication are:

- Israel comes out on top for having the most women participating in entrepreneurial activity.
- The UK ranks 6th in the world for the amount of woman-led entrepreneurial activity.
- Women in less wealthy and advanced economies of Uganda, Angola, Malawi, Ghana and Botswana are defying sociocultural barriers and structural impediments to emerge as having the highest percentage of women business owners (with around 30-40% of all businesses being owned by women).
- The main deterrents of women's advancement in self-owned business are fear of failure, lack of funding (investors favour male-owned ventures), and lack of motivation.

In 2019, 15% of SME employers were led by women (meaning that they were either led by one woman or by a management team that is majority female)

Only 5% of SME employers are run by leadership teams where the majority are from black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups

Estimates by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring Consortium show the proportion of women involved in “total early-stage entrepreneurial activity” or ‘TEA’. TEA includes the owning or running of any business that is less than 3 and a half years old.

In 2019/20, the TEA rate in the UK (the proportion of working aged people involved in TEA) for men was 11.7% and 7.0% for women

Money and Finance

“It is estimated that in the UK, women-led SMEs contribute about £85 billion to economic output (16% of Gross Value Added contributed by SMEs in the UK).

Women launch businesses with 53% less capital on average than men, are less aware of funding options and are less likely to take on debt.

“Women are around ten percent more likely than men to see finance as their only barrier to entrepreneurship. Education and training reduce the difference.”

“Only 1% of government procurement tenders are won by women.”

“Women-owned businesses lack access to finance compared to their male-owned competitors, which places women-owned businesses at a disadvantage with respect to bidding and compliance costs as well as the ability to absorb the impact of delayed payments.”

Women-owned businesses are less present in the “high economic impact” sectors that grab the lion’s share of procurement contracts, such as construction, transportation, warehousing, manufacturing and wholesale trade”

Globally, “there is a \$1.5 trillion credit gap for women-owned small and medium enterprises”

“Women entrepreneurs are less likely to believe they can access finance than men and secure less start-up capital.”

Women are significantly less aware of different start-up funding options and processes than men. A survey of over 500 female-led start-ups and aspiring business owners in 2017 found that 40% of respondents didn’t know where or how to start the process of seeking funding, and 25% didn’t know how to write proposals or complete the right paperwork.

Women starting businesses are also less willing to take on bank loans than men. The most popular funding option for women starting up is grant funding, averaging around £7,000 per business. Around 40% of early stage women entrepreneurs take this route compared to the 1% who secure angel investment. And, on average, female entrepreneurs estimate that they need 40% less funding than men to launch their businesses. By comparison, 10% of male entrepreneurs had secured angel or other investment averaging £150,000-200,000. Men were 10% less likely than women to use grants.

“Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is another important company role where women fail to get to the top. Women enter finance in large numbers, but few make it to CFO. This year just 16% of CFOs are women, with men taking 84% of these roles.”

A staggering 68% (over two-thirds) of FTSE 350 companies do not have a single female executive committee member in a profit and loss role, raising serious questions about the desire for positive change in so many businesses and the prospects for women seeking to make it to CEO

Women-led Businesses

Only 25% of entrepreneurs in high productivity sectors are women. High productivity sectors include manufacturing, transportation, financial services, and information/communications.

“Women continue to make up the overwhelming majority of Hair & Beauty related companies, with women-led businesses making up 76.08% of the sector.

“Women are around ten percent more likely than men to see finance as their only barrier to entrepreneurship. Education and training reduce the difference.”

“Only 1% of government procurement tenders are won by women.”

Women are noticeably underrepresented in the running of companies based in Electronic & Appliance (2.82%), Construction Services (4.9%) and Outdoor & Garden (5.42%).

“Women starting a business are more likely to agree with the motivation of making a difference to the world.”

“Companies with no women on their executive committees have a net profit margin of 1.5%, whereas those with more than 33% women at this level reached an impressive 15.2% net profit margin.”

“In 2020, there are just 13 women CEOs of FTSE 350 companies. That’s a mere 5% of company leaders. On the 17th April 2020 there were more CEOs named Peter (6) than there were women.”

“The failure to embrace gender diversity has created the conditions where there may not be a single woman CEO of a FTSE 100 company in just five years’ time.”

To us, this seems counter-intuitive when “Evidence is showing that organisations and governments headed by women are faring better during the Covid-19 crisis. In business, we see noteworthy examples in the world of Hedge Funds, with female-led organisations outperforming their male-led competitors

“Women continue to make up the overwhelming majority of Hair & Beauty related companies, with women-led businesses making up 76.08% of the sector.

“Women are around ten percent more likely than men to see finance as their only barrier to entrepreneurship. Education and training reduce the difference.”

“Only 1% of government procurement tenders are won by women.”

Women are noticeably underrepresented in the running of companies based in Electronic & Appliance (2.82%), Construction Services (4.9%) and Outdoor & Garden (5.42%).

“Women starting a business are more likely to agree with the motivation of making a difference to the world.”

The Economy

What would an economy look like that properly and fairly utilised the full potential of women? Billions of pounds richer, probably! Even though women are working more than ever before, they are getting shafted left, right and centre with a gaping pay gap, lower wages and fewer high salaries, not to mention the extra unpaid, domestic burdens that COVID-19 have placed on women's shoulders. Whatever happens in our post-pandemic recovery, companies better start to realise how damaging their lack of appreciation for women is to their profits and the economy as a whole and they better start getting wise to the economic power of Woman.

“Women contribute 37 per cent of the global GDP. Moreover all types of women's care work, including unpaid work generate USD 11 trillion globally (9 per cent of global GDP). Deploying women's full potential is critical to economic recovery. However, it is unclear how much the sizeable G20 (or non-G20) economic packages have invested in women's priorities, despite evidence that the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 are worse for women.”

Pay Gap

“The gender pay gap is a measure of the average earnings of men and women – regardless of the job they do – across a whole workforce.”

“Evidence from the ASHE and the Labour Force Survey (LFS) suggests that coronavirus (COVID-19) factors did not have a notable impact on the gender pay gap in 2020.”

“Among full-time employees the gender pay gap in April 2020 was 7.4%, down from 9.0% in April 2019.”

“The gender pay gap among all employees [full and part-time, of all ages] was 15.5% in 2020, down from 17.4% in 2019”

“It has remained close to zero for full-time employees aged under 40 years but was over 10% for older age groups.”

“It was higher in every English region than in each of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.”

“The gender pay gap is small or negative for employees in their 20s or 30s, but widens considerably for older age groups. One reason for [this] is that factors affecting women’s employment and earnings opportunities become more evident when women are in their 30s and 40s. For example, time spent out of the labour market to care for children or elderly relatives could affect future earnings when a person returns to work.”

“A much higher share of women than men are employed part-time and part-time workers tend to earn less per hour than those working full-time”

High Pay

“There are more women holding higher-paid managerial roles in 2020.”

“There are now almost 39,000 women around the world that fall into the Ultra-High Net-Worth (UHNW) category (those that have a net worth of \$30m or more).”

According to newspaper The Daily Telegraph, more women are now joining the higher-rate tax bracket. In 2013, more than 1.02m women joined those paying the higher rate of tax (i.e. on earnings over £41,865 a year) – a 17% increase in the number of women. The number of men joining this tax band in the same period was just 13%. However, around 3.18m men pay the highest rate of tax – still more than double the number of women.

More recent research indicates that “when looked at in the round using data on all higher-rate tax brackets from £31,786 to £150,000, higher earnings for women have stagnated over the past four years. Research from law firm Clyde & Co shows that women make up just 27% of all higher rate tax payers and that this has remained the same over the past four years. In 2014 just 1.21m of the 4.47m higher rate tax payers were women. Clyde & Co says that the total number of those paying higher rate tax has grown by nearly 1m in four years, the percentage of women within this bracket has stagnated.

Low Pay

“Female employees are more likely than men to be working in jobs paying the National Minimum Wage.”

Around 24.4% of female employees had hourly pay below the voluntary Living Wage rate (as set by the Living Wage Foundation) at April 2019, compared to 15.6% of male employees. At April 2019, the Living Wage was £10.55 for people working in London and £9.00 for those working outside of London."

"Women are less likely to progress out of low-paid work."

A much higher proportion of low-paid workers in Nottingham and Birmingham are employed by the five firms employing the most low-paid people than in Bristol or London. On a sectoral level, low-paid workers in retail are much more likely to work for one of the five largest employers there than in hospitality

"The disproportionate impact on women can be seen clearly with reference to Northfield [large constituency of Birmingham]: 63% of women in the constituency earn less than the Living Wage, compared to 37% of men. Birmingham Yardley is another hotspot for low paid women with 45% paid less than the Living Wage. Other Midlands low wage hotspots for women include Staffordshire Moorlands (45.5%), North Herefordshire (44.2%) and Wolverhampton South West (43.8%).

The TUC says that working for less than the Living Wage "is normal" for women in thirteen areas, including large swathes of the Midlands such as West Bromwich, Stourbridge and Stoke on Trent. Nationally it is estimated that nearly three-quarters of the UK's 6m part-time workers are women."

The low-pay situation is even worse if one focuses on part-time workers – where again women are disproportionately represented. Research by the TUC indicates that almost 77% of women part-time workers in Northfield are paid below the Living Wage.

Cuts to benefits disproportionately affect women as benefits typically make up a fifth of women's incomes, as opposed to a tenth of men's

A survey of over 2,000 working mums found that over half said they will be forced to stop work or significantly reduce their working hours as a result of the cut to support for childcare costs.

Poverty

In 2018, the Women's Budget Group published the report 'The Female Face of Poverty' about the causes of poverty among women and the consequences that poverty has on women's lives. Key statistics include:

- "Women in the UK are slightly more likely to live in poverty than men when this is measured on the usual household basis (21% of adult women, compared to 19% of adult men in 2016-17) and female headed households are poorer than comparable male-headed households.
- Almost half (48%) of single-parent households are living in poverty, compared to a quarter (24%) of couple households. In the vast majority (86%) of such households, the single parent is the mother.
- In older age-groups, 23% of single female pensioners are living in poverty compared to 18% of single male pensioners

This data was taken from different sources, such as the Department for Work and Pensions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the existing poverty crisis in the UK.

"Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, the Trussell Trust's food bank network distributed 1.9 million three-day emergency food supplies to people in crisis, a 18% increase on the previous year. More than seven hundred thousand of these went to children."

There was a 47 per cent increase in the number of three-day emergency food parcels it distributed in the 6 months from March to September 2020, compared to the same period in 2019.

Gender and the Green Economy

According to the charity Nesta which designs, tests and scales new solutions to society's biggest problems, "Green jobs are in industries where their carbon intensity (CO2/output) is below the median; such as professional, scientific and technical activities. Brown jobs are above the median, like mining and quarrying."

These are the key findings in relation to gender from their 2020 report 'Going Green: Preparing the UK workforce for the transition to a net-zero economy':

- "Females represent 57.9% of green jobs but many of them are in jobs that are valued less. Those in brown jobs will also face unique barriers to upskilling as the economy transforms.
- Women often represent more supporting roles than senior ones in the green sectors.
- The gender pay gap is larger in green jobs than brown jobs.
- The larger pay gap for females in green jobs is surprising because females in green jobs are more educated (51.5% have a tertiary education) than those in brown ones (39.1% have a tertiary education).
- Women in brown sectors are less likely to upskill. Both males and females have similar levels of upskilling, at around 18% for green jobs but 12.5% for brown jobs. As Nesta has discussed, females in all sectors report family responsibilities (41% more than males) and costs (20.4% more than males) as barriers to upskilling.
- Men are more likely to take high-risk, higher-paid jobs due to expectations from prescribed masculinity."

This data was taken from different sources, such as the Department for Work and Pensions.

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Society

Can a woman ‘have it all’? If that’s what she wants, the answer should be ‘yes’! Women should have the right to choose and the means to craft whatever kind of life suits our individual and collective needs and desires best. Women shouldn’t be judged for making those choices. Women should also be heard, and they should be believed. We no longer want to live in a society where femicide, rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment and domestic violence are the norm. Women aren’t asking for the world; we’re just asking for a world that respects and values us.

What women want

Underpinning women’s empowerment is a highly nuanced and personal experience of self-esteem, according to the market research group, Kantar, in their 2018 report ***‘What Women Want? An exploration of 100 years of marketing to women’***.

They define self-esteem as “having real belief in your own ability and value; feeling that you can achieve what you want to achieve in a way that makes you feel happy...”

According to their research, women have “lower self-esteem than men, and they feel the value of self-esteem acutely.”

Kantar identifies five contributors to self-esteem:

- Financial autonomy
- Sexual/body autonomy
- Freedom of thought/expression
- Accessibility/visibility
- Social connections/networks

In their 2015 report '*Understanding Women's Lives*', Women in Sport defines six key values that are fundamental in the lives of women and girls:

- looking good
- feeling good
- nurturing family and friends
- achieving goals
- developing skills, and
- having fun

Women's values: Looking good: This is a value that resonates with many women, and increases in importance at different times in their lives. This can include being slim, toned, having muscle definition or taking care of hair and nails. The importance of this value is likely to increase when women are approaching 'on show' events like weddings, holidays and parties.

Feeling good: This is a growing priority for women. Women see the importance of looking after holistic mind, body and soul, as contributing to longer term health. They are increasingly investing in their emotional and spiritual wellbeing as well as physical. Wholesome experiences and 'me-time' are increasingly being prioritised as women seek to avoid letting stressful lives get the better of them.

Nurturing friends and family: Women value spending time with family, friends, children and partners, often instinctively prioritising others' needs over their own. Wives and mothers invest their time in their family's development - particularly in the case of their own children. Women often adopt the role as family linchpin.

Achieving goals: Women like to feel as if they are progressing in life. They set themselves goals of what they'd like to achieve in life, not just professionally but also personally, and feel a great sense of satisfaction when they are able to tick these off. Women can be very determined in seeking to achieve these goals, especially when proving others wrong in terms of what they are capable of.

Developing skills: Enhancing personal development by developing new skills is an important element of life. Women want to feel as if they are learning new things, developing as a person and broadening their horizons. They can gain satisfaction from mastering something new, increasing their knowledge or producing something. There is also interest in developing soft skills such as leadership, interpersonal skills and coaching.

Having fun: This is a fundamentally important part of women's lives. It provides an essential release from the day-to-day grind that women can often feel. Having fun is about doing things they choose to do rather than feel obligated to do. Socialising, interacting, and laughing with friends is an essential part of life. However, spending time alone can also fulfil this value.

Meeting these values = happiness, contentment and self-worth.

If you are marketing something for women, addressing more than one value maximises your chance of relevance.

Between the ages of 35 and 50, the vast majority of college-educated women working in white-collar professions (a whopping 91% of American women, 81% of British women, and 89% of German women) say they're driven to succeed.

This report examines the flywheels of women's fierce ambition: What drives them, what inspires them to remain fully engaged and on track for leadership roles. It found that across geographies, well-qualified women have a five-point value proposition. They want the ability to:

Flourish: Women flourish and flower when they feel they have agency and impact; when they have the ability to self-actualize. Flourishing is grounded in health and well-being, as well as in freedom and autonomy. When women have a real measure of control, they can manage competing demands in ways that sustain their physical well-being, replenish their energy, and fulfil their emotional and spiritual needs.

Excel: Women want intellectual challenge in order to grow their mastery and ace a domain of knowledge or an expertise. But since an approving audience is what inspires mastery and the pursuit of excellence, women also want recognition.

Reach for meaning and purpose: Women find work meaningful when it allows them to model success and exceed expectations—their own, and those of their family or community. It's important to women to achieve stretch goals set before them or their team and to have lasting impact in their profession or field. Women find work particularly meaningful when it helps advance causes important to them. These causes centre on improving lives through health and education, advancing social justice, and healing the planet.

Empower others: and be empowered: Women seek sponsors: senior colleagues who are willing to take a bet on them and advocate for their next big opportunity. They also seek protégés: high-achieving junior colleagues who deepen their capabilities, extend their reach, and burnish their brand.

Earn well: Women say it's important to them to attain financial security as well as financial independence, but also to sustain a comfortable lifestyle for themselves, their offspring, and their parents.

Women start their careers hungry to attain a powerful job but lose their appetite as they age. Even for women without children, and those who are breadwinners, power loses its lustre for the 35-to-50 age group.

Young women

15- and 16-year-old girls are “less likely to consider themselves to be best at a STEM subject: 33% compared to 60% of males.”

“When asked about which subjects were most likely to lead to a future job, 69% of male pupils named a STEM subject compared to 51% of females.”

“More males (36%) than females (23%) felt that mathematics was most likely to lead to a job in the future; the most common answer for females was English.”

“The largest difference in planned take-up of a STEM subjects at A level was for physics (30% male, 8% female) and IT (16% compared to 3%).”

“According the recent UCAS data provided by HESA, 35% of STEM students in higher education in the UK are women.”

“The UCAS data shows that year-on-year, core STEM subjects have seen only a small increase of around 1,000 female students. This shows that efforts to encourage women to enter into science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields has been somewhat successful.”

“60% of female STEM students have had their future career prospects affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“Amongst younger age groups, 18 to 24 and 25 to 34, female entrepreneurship is still half of male entrepreneurship, but the picture amongst students is more promising with a TEA female rate of 2.6% compared to male TEA rate of 1.6% (The Enterprise Report, Enterprise Insight, 2005).”

“Male and female students are equally likely to participate in school enterprise education, but males are 50% more likely than females to be interested in starting their own business as a result. In contrast the girls are significantly more interested in setting up a charity or social enterprise. (‘Enterprise Insight Impact Evaluation, 2009).”

“One trend that is seen across the UK is that females perform better in all headline measures than males, and the gap increases as the level of education goes up. This trend feeds through to the figures seen earlier in Higher Education, where female students outnumber male students in the UK.”

“When looking at five-year age groups, women in their 30s (aged 30 to 34 and 35 to 39) are significantly happier than men. For both sexes, happiness is lowest when they are in their late 40s and early 50s.”

NEETs

“The 16-24 female NEET (not in employment, education or training) rate is at its lowest in the series, while the male NEET rate has risen to 2013 levels. In recent years the gender gap has closed however, in 2020, we see the largest gender gap since 2014 and the first time 16-24 females have notably lower NEET rates than males.”

“In October to December 2020 females are still more likely to be NEET due to looking after family/home than males (2.0% compared with 0.2% of their respective populations) however the female proportion has almost halved from the same quarter the previous year (3.7%, a statistically significant change)”

Period Poverty

Research by global children’s charity Plan International conducted in May 2020 revealed that 3 in 10 girls struggled to afford or access sanitary wear during lockdown.

“As the country starts to look to life beyond lockdown, Plan International UK is calling for the ground-breaking progress made on period poverty in recent years to not be allowed to roll back.

The study found that accessing products has been difficult for many, with 1 in 5 (22%) girls having struggled to access products (but been able to afford them). Of these:

- 64% said they could not find them in their local shops
- 17% said they feared catching coronavirus if they left the house
- 15% have been unable to leave the house to go shopping during lockdown

“Period poverty is the lack of access to sanitary products due to financial constraints.”

In 2017, a survey (Plan International UK) reported that 1 in 10 girls had been unable to afford sanitary products; 1 in 7 had to ask to borrow sanitary wear from a friend due to affordability issues; and 1 in 10 had to improvise sanitary wear. It is estimated that currently over 137,000 children across the UK have missed school days due to period poverty.

Across the UK, 5% VAT is added to sanitary products, including tampons, pads and towels. In 2017, Nursing Standard reported growing incidents of school nurses buying sanitary products to keep pupils in school. Foodbanks are also being relied upon to provide sanitary products for women and families. Some national supermarkets have cut prices or pay the 5% tax themselves to increase affordability.”

The Older Woman

“People are...living longer, healthier lives. In 2018, a man aged 65 could expect to live for another 18.6 years, while a woman could expect to live for 21 more years. So, on average, at age 65 years, women still have a quarter of their lives left to live...”

“Older women are more likely than older men to live alone.”

“Women increasingly outnumber men at older ages; among those aged over 65, 55% are women.”

“Women face particular difficulties in accessing work in later life as, on average, they do the majority of caring for children and older, sick or disabled family members. Women are more likely to work part time.”

“The employment rate for women aged 50-64 has been rising for many years, but remains significantly below that of men (67.5% and 76.2% respectively); this has been partly due to ongoing changes to the SPA, resulting in fewer women retiring between the ages of 60-65.”

“...women in their early 60s report increasing happiness levels. Between the ages of 65 and 74, both sexes are happier than those in any other age group”

“After the age of 50, women will spend an average of 5.9 years of their remaining life as unpaid carers, and after 65, they will spend an average of 2.6 years of their remaining lives as unpaid carers.”

“Women in later life want to live by their own personal values, having perhaps had to conform to an employer’s standards and not being in a senior enough role to exert influence. Inclusivity is also important to our female respondents who want to include family members in their business.”

“Although [older] men and women are equally willing to develop a business idea with a family member, more [older] women than men are open to providing employment for a family member in their business”

LGBTQI+

“In 2017, there were an estimated 1.1 million people aged 16 years and over identifying as LGB+ out of a UK population aged 16 years and over of 52.8 million.

Males (2.3%) were more likely to identify as LGB+ than females (1.8%) in 2017.

Males (2.3%) were more likely to identify as LGB+ than females (1.8%) in 2017.

“Fifty nine percent of trans women and 56% of trans men who responded to the [government’s ‘National LGBT Survey’ of 2019] said they had avoided expressing their gender identity for fear of a negative reaction from others. For non-binary respondents the figure was much higher, at 76%. Generally, respondents with a minority gender identity had avoided expressing their gender identity in all contexts, but particularly when out in public (e.g. 68% avoided it on the street).”

“...the number of hate crimes recorded by the police on the grounds of sexual orientation and being transgender [rose] by 27% (from 7,194 in 2015-16 to 9,157 in 2016-17) and 45% (from 858 in 2015-16 to 1,248 in 2016-17) respectively. This may be, in part, due to improved recording by the police and increased willingness of victims to come forward.”

“LGBT students do not feel their needs are addressed, particularly in sex and relationships education, as teachers and the curriculum assume that students do not have a minority sexual orientation or gender identity”

The top 5 organisations that have “done great work over the past year to help achieve acceptance without exception for all LGBT people” are:

- Newcastle City Council
- Gentoo Group
- Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Pinsent Masons
- Ministry of Justice

By Stonewall’s estimates, “around 1 per cent of the population might identify as trans, including people who identify as non-binary. That would mean about 600,000 trans and non-binary people in Britain, out of a population of over 60 million.”

“There isn’t an accurate figure for how big the trans community is,” they say, which is “because it isn’t asked in the census, and there isn’t any research that’s been done that covers enough people to be statistically significant”

There is a heated debate about whether transgender women have the right to change their biological sex and, by proxy, be permitted to enter exclusively cisgender female spaces (such as prisons and refuges). The Guardian published a cross section of readers’ letters in March 2020 that outline both sides of the argument. The debate, like so many others in 2020, has also raised serious questions around free speech and so-called ‘cancel culture’.

Nonetheless, we think it’s important to reflect on the very limited statistics available on transgender people in the UK. Channel 4’s Factcheck site published an article by Georgina Lee in 2018 tentatively deducing that:

- “...an average of one trans person is murdered each year in the UK.”
- “...it appears that trans people are more likely to experience other violent crimes, for example domestic abuse.”

Home Office figures for the number of police recordings of hate crime offences against trans people in England and Wales stood at 1,651 in 2017-18. 9% involved “violence against the person with injury

“Many GRT [Gypsy, Roma and Traveller] women experience triple discrimination: discrimination as women, discrimination as GRT and discrimination as GRT women. GRT lesbians, bisexual and transgender women face a further layer of discrimination from the wider hetero-normative society and from within their mainly patriarchal, conservative, Christian/Catholic GRT communities.”

“The [2011] census recorded that Gypsy/Travellers, compared to the population as a whole, were:

- less likely to be economically active
- more likely to have never worked
- more likely to work in elementary occupations
- were more likely to be divorced or separated, live in lone parent households **and**
- have 3 or more dependent children
- were more likely to have worse health than the population, despite a younger age profile.”

“G&T women often take on leadership roles and act as spokespersons for their communities. ‘The majority of development, advocacy workers and volunteer representatives within the Traveller community are women. As such, women occupy that interface between the Traveller population and service providers. The struggle to assert the needs and rights of the Traveller Community often lies with women

Disabled women

We’d like to thank experimental collective for disabled women, Sisters of Frida, for collating the following statistics:

- “35% of disabled women (and 30% of disabled men) are paid below the National Living wage in the UK”
- “27% of disabled women are economically inactive compared with 16% disabled men.”
- “Disabled people experience more domestic abuse than non-disabled people. Disabled women are significantly more likely to experience domestic abuse than disabled men”

- “In fact, one in ten experienced domestic abuse in 2012-13.”
- “Disabled women, particularly with learning difficulties, are at risk of forced sterilisation in the UK or are encouraged to consent to sterilisation as a form of ‘menstruation management’ rather than be presented with a range of options available to other women.”
- “The CEDAW Committee [UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women] is concerned that ethnic minority and disabled women are particularly poorly represented in Parliament, the legal system and on public sector.”

Pregnancy and maternity

- “In 2018, conception rates for under 18-year-olds in England and Wales declined by 6.1% to 16.8 conceptions per 1,000 women aged 15 to 17 years. Since 1999, conception rates for women aged under 18 years have decreased by 62.7%.”
- “Overall, three in four mothers (77%) said they had a negative or possibly discriminatory experience during pregnancy, maternity leave, and/or on return from maternity leave.”
- “Around one in nine mothers (11%) reported they felt forced to leave their job. This included those being dismissed (1%); made compulsorily redundant, where others in their workplace were not (1%); or feeling treated so poorly they felt they had to leave their job (9%).”
- “One in five mothers (20%) said they experienced harassment or negative comments related to pregnancy or flexible working from their employer/colleagues.”
- “Around half of mothers (51%) who had their flexible working request approved said they felt it resulted in negative consequences.”
- “Most employers (70%) said they felt women should declare upfront during recruitment if they are pregnant. A quarter of employers felt it was reasonable during recruitment to ask women about their plans to have children.”
- “Sector was the most important factor driving flexible working experiences” for expectant mothers. “Those in Arts, Culture and Leisure; Agriculture; Fishing and Mining, Manufacturing; Utilities; and Trade sectors were one and half to two times more likely as likely to report a negative experience.”
- “Ethnic minority mothers were more likely than White British mothers to report financial loss; a negative impact on opportunity, status or job security; or to have had a negative experience related to breastfeeding.”

UNICEF states:

“Policies on maternity, paternity and parental leave can play an important role in supporting families during the first few years of a child’s life. Maternity leave allows mothers to recover from pregnancy and childbirth and to bond with their children. Well-paid, protected leave from work helps female employees maintain their earnings and attachment to the labour market, although leave that is too long¹ can have the opposite effect (Thévenon and Solaz 2013). Leave reserved for fathers, if taken, can promote a more equitable distribution of care in the home and help fathers to bond with their children.”

Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Estonia and Portugal offer the best family-friendly policies among 31 rich countries with available data, according to the report. Switzerland, Greece, Cyprus, United Kingdom and Ireland rank the lowest.

In the UK, paid leave available to mothers is 12 weeks (full-time rate equivalent) and paid leave available to fathers is 0.4 weeks. This ranks the UK 28th amongst the world’s high- and middle-income countries for family-friendly policies.

Comparatively, France offers 19 weeks paid leave to mothers and 5.6 weeks to fathers.

Interestingly, countries with shorter paid leave for mothers (but longer leave reserved for fathers) tend to have more children under three in childcare centres.

The available data suggest that high-income countries have comparatively low breastfeeding rates. The World Health Organization¹⁵ reports that between 2006 and 2012, only 25 per cent of infants in the European region were fed only on breast milk in their first six months.

All but seven of the 41 EU/OECD countries – Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Malta and the United Kingdom – guarantee breastfeeding breaks at work until the child is at least six months old,¹⁸ according to the World Policy Analysis Centre.

In many countries, parents of children under the age of three say that the cost of childcare is the main reason for not making more use of childcare centres. Affordability is a key barrier for 22 per cent of parents in the United Kingdom who say they have an ‘unmet need’ for childcare.

The report offers guidance on how countries can improve their family-friendly policies:

- Provide statutory, nationwide paid parental leave of at least six months for parents.
- Enable all children to access high-quality, age-appropriate, affordable and accessible childcare centres irrespective of family circumstances.
- Ensure there is no gap between the end of parental leave and the start of affordable childcare so that children can continue their development without interruption.
- Ensure that mothers can breastfeed both before and after they return to work by providing lengthy-enough paid parental leave, guaranteed breaks at work and safe and appropriate locations to breastfeed and pump.
- Collect more and better data on all aspects of family-friendly policies so that programmes and policies can be monitored, and countries compared

In the UK, Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is paid for up to 39 weeks. Women get:

- 90% of their average weekly earnings (before tax) for the first 6 weeks
- £151.20 or 90% of their average weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for the next 33 weeks

Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) is £151.20 a week or 90% of a person's average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

“A majority of women (90%) said that, during labour and birth, they were ‘always’ spoken to in a way they understood.”

“There has been a significant increase in the proportion of women directly accessing midwifery services over time. While until 2017, women were more likely to contact their GP rather than a midwife, this is now the opposite. In 2019, 51% of women self-referred to a midwife while 42% contacted a GP. The proportion of those consulting other health professionals slightly increased compared to 2018 (from 6% to 7%).

“More women use self-employment as a temporary solution to combining childcare and income generation at specific points in their life, seeking to select back into employment when they feel it is appropriate” (Jayawarna, Rouse and Kitching 2011)

Black, Asian and mixed heritage women and pregnancy

“Black British mothers are five times more likely to die in pregnancy or six weeks after childbirth, than White women. Women of mixed ethnicity have three times the risk, and Asian women almost twice the risk. BAME women are also at an increased risk of having a pre-term birth, stillbirth, neonatal death or a baby born with low birth weight.”

Channel 4 has commissioned a major investigative documentary about black women’s maternal care and mortality in the UK and you can watch a short video they released on the topic in 2019 on Facebook Watch called ‘Black mums: Death in the delivery room.’

Research by Maternity Action “explored the impact of the pandemic on pregnant women and new mothers in insecure work” and found, “Gaps in the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme left many women with variable hours at a significant disadvantage. Increasing numbers of women have been forced onto Maternity Allowance, expanding the impact of the unfair treatment in Universal Credit regulations. In some cases, women on insecure contracts missed out on maternity pay altogether, as the pandemic left them unable to work a sufficient number of hours to qualify.”

Domestic Violence

“The proportion of females experiencing domestic abuse in 2019/20 was 7.3%, double that of males (3.6%).”

“There has generally been an increase in demand for domestic abuse victim services during the coronavirus pandemic, particularly affecting helplines as lockdown measures eased; this does not necessarily indicate an increase in the number of victims, but perhaps an increase in the severity of abuse being experienced, and a lack of available coping mechanisms such as the ability to leave the home to escape the abuse, or attend counselling.”

“On average the police in England and Wales receive over 100 calls relating to domestic abuse every hour.”

“According to CSEW data for the year ending March 2018, only 18% of women who had experienced partner abuse in the last 12 months reported the abuse to the police.”

A research review published online by Kent, Surrey & Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company captures some of the nuances in relation to domestic violence amongst different groups of BAME women. It cites the following issues as contributors to more pronounced problems and negative experiences for BAME women victims of domestic abuse:

- Higher rates of domestic abuse amongst minority women
- “Chronic underreporting” of domestic violence due to mistrust of police and disproportionate arrest rates of BAME men and women
- Longer periods in abusive relationships due to barriers associated with leaving (“victims from B&ME communities typically suffer abuse for 1.5 times longer before getting help than those who identify as White, British or Irish.
- Insecure immigration status being used against BAME women by their perpetrators and acting as a further barrier to them seeking help.
- An overrepresentation of BAME women in refuge spaces
- A prevalence of so-called ‘honour-based violence’
- Government funds (such as Universal Credit) more difficult for women victims of domestic abuse to access during COVID lockdowns and many more BAME women in need of these funds due to a prevalence of insecure work amongst minority women
- Having No recourse to public funds (NRPF) means BAME women are more reliable on their perpetrators and vulnerable to economic abuse

Though the true level of domestic violence in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities is not known, it is thought that a very high proportion of GRT women have experienced domestic abuse.

“GRT women face particular problems leaving a violent relationship, and domestic violence incidents are underreported due to a number of factors including: ‘literacy issues, taboos on contacting police, problematic access to telephones to call for help or advice, or difficulties in receiving or reading letters if an injunction or other legal advice is sought. A woman who does decide to leave home faces a form of ‘double jeopardy’ if her family does not support her decision to end her marriage, as ‘strong community connections and communication means that a woman leaving her husband virtually has to leave the whole community. However, this means losing contact with her culture and her way of life, and facing the prejudice of the settled population alone”

Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

“In 2019/20, sexual assault towards females within the last year were over 4 times higher than towards males. Of all sexual offences, indecent exposure and unwanted touching had the highest prevalence rate.”

“Females accounted for the majority of victims of sexual offences against children recorded by the police in the year ending March 2019 (80% female, 20% male).”

“Girls were around twice as likely as boys to be subject to a child protection plan for sexual abuse in England¹ or on the child protection register for sexual abuse in Wales² (2 in 10,000 girls compared with 1 in 10,000 boys).”

Muslim Women’s Network UK published the results of a small (but incredibly revealing) report on the sexual exploitation of Asian girls and young women in 2013 called ‘Unheard Voices’. Some key findings of the report were:

- “The cases included examples of both online and street grooming”
- “[the] phenomenon [of sexual exploitation] is not isolated to these communities”
- “Asian / Muslim female victims are also vulnerable to grooming and sexual exploitation and are also being targeted and sexually exploited and include children, young persons (16 to 18 years) and adults.”
- “Asian / Muslim female victims are most vulnerable to offenders from their own communities as the overwhelming majority of the offenders were from the same background as the victims.”
- “Asian / Muslim children, young persons and adults have specific vulnerabilities associated with their culture which are exploited and also constitute a barrier to disclosure and reporting.”
- “Blackmail connected with shame and dishonour appeared to be a key and unique method of control for victims of Asian and Muslim backgrounds. Shame, dishonour and fear were used to blackmail the victims; e.g. threats of circulating images and recordings of the victims. Other methods of manipulation and mental control exercised by the offenders included: building a close attachment which was used then to emotionally blackmail the victim, such as promises of marriage; issuing threats of violence towards the victim and family; creating dependency on drugs and alcohol; and manipulation so the girl or young person does not recognise she is a victim.”

“In 2016, at any given time, an estimated 40.3 million people worldwide were in modern slavery, including 24.9 million in forced labour and 15.4 million people in forced marriage. 70% of these are women and girls.”

“Women and girls account for 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry, and 58% of other sectors in other sectors of forced labour”

In England and Wales, “In the year ending June 2019, 55% of potential victims were female and 44% were male. The type of exploitation experienced varies by sex of victim. For example, in the year ending June 2019, domestic servitude and sexual exploitation were predominantly experienced by females (83% and 98% respectively), whereas labour exploitation was mostly experienced by males (86%).”

Women and the Criminal Justice System

“48% of women have committed an offence in order to support the drug use of someone else.”

“53% of women in prison have survived emotional, physical or sexual abuse during childhood.”

“7 in 10 women in prison are survivors of domestic abuse.”

“Women in custody are 5 times more likely to have mental ill-health than those in the general population.”

“80% of women have been sentenced to prison for a non-violent offence, such as shoplifting.”

“9 out of 10 children have to leave home due to their mother’s imprisonment.”

“2 in 5 women leave prison without settled accommodation and 5% are street homeless upon release.”

“58% of women are back in prison within one year of leaving prison.”

(All of the information above is courtesy of the Prison Reform Trust as collated by UK charity, Women in Prison)

“In homicides where the principal suspect was known to the victim, 67% of cases with female victims suspected the partner/ex-partner.”

“In 2018/19, 21% of the 85,900 adults who engaged with liaison and diversion services were female. Females in contact with the services more often had suspected alcohol misuse, financial needs, were abuse victims and had mental health needs compared to males.”

“The proportion of ineffective and cracked trials was higher for females (20% and 37%) than males (16% and 33%) in 2019. Consequently, there is a lower proportion of effective trials for females (43%) compared to males (50%).”

“As at 30 June 2019, 5% of the prison population were female, this proportion has remained stable for the last 5 years.”

“In the 2019/20 HM Inspectorate of Prisons survey, females reported significantly more negative results for questions related to problems on arrival at prison. Compared to males, a higher proportion of females reported: self-declared mental health problems, physical disability, having drug and alcohol problems, money worries and housing worries.”

“A higher proportion of female prisoners self-harmed in 2019. In 2019, the number of individuals who self-harmed per 1,000 prisoners was 335 for females and 148 for males. Self-harm per individual was over twice as high for females at 9.3 instances, compared to 4.4 for males.”

“The proportion of all young offenders in the matched cohort that achieved 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalents) graded A* to C, including English and Maths, was slightly higher for the young female group, at 12%, compared to 10% for young males.”

“Of all females sentenced in 2019, Black female offenders had the highest custody rate⁷⁵ at 23%. The custody rate ranged between 20% and 23% across all female ethnic groups.”

An ineffective trial means that on the trial date, the trial does not go ahead due to action or inaction by one or more of the prosecution, the defence or the court and a further listing for trial is required while a cracked trial means that on the trial date, the defendant offers acceptable pleas or the prosecution offers no evidence. A cracked trial requires no further trial time, but as a consequence the time allocated has been wasted, and witnesses have been unnecessarily inconvenienced thus impacting confidence in the system

“TV licence evasion was the most common offence for which females were convicted in 2019. In 2019, 74% of those convicted for TV licence evasion were female. This offence accounted for 30% of all female convictions, compared to 4% of male convictions.”

“Theft from shops was the most common indictable offence for which 34% of females and 14% of males were convicted in 2019.”

“Over the last 5 years, there have been increases in female representation across almost all CJS organisations and in the proportion of senior staff.

The largest increase in female representation was seen in court judges by 5 percentage points, to 32%. Other increases included a 3 percentage point increase in both magistrates and HMPPS (excluding probation) to 56% and 40%, respectively. Female representation within MoJ and CPS remained constant.”

(All of the information above is courtesy of the Ministry of Justice)

The #MeToo movement

In 2006, North American activist, Tarana Burke began using the tag ‘metoo’ to help women with similar experiences stand up for themselves. Fast forward to 2017 and #MeToo goes viral after actor Alyssa Milano urged survivors of sexual aggression to use it on social media. This led to a worldwide social media explosion of women sharing their experiences of sexual harassment.

“Women have been inspired to break the silence about the harassment they have experienced, and continue to experience - from the halls of Westminster to the Presidents’ Club and in industries across the UK.”

The #MeToo movement has “challenged people to change their thinking about sexual harassment. 38% of people in the UK agree that they had thought differently about what behaviour is and isn’t acceptable over the last year – and 31% of people have had a conversation with someone of the opposite sex about sexual harassment.”

“Those conversations have led to more people being willing to take action in their own lives to tackle sexual harassment. [Fawcett Society] research found that over half of women aged 18-34 and 58% of young men say they have been more willing challenge behaviour or comments they think are unacceptable. Women across social divides have been calling out unacceptable behaviour – this change has not been restricted to “elites”.”

Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Women

Whether we like the term BAME or not, we have to recognise the specific realities and struggles of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic women including those from the myriad regions, cultures, religions and ethnic groups who are marginalised in the UK. Inequalities are intensified at the intersections of gender, race, class, disability and other identities and whatever approaches there are to tackle gender inequalities in the UK, they must take this into account. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been worse on minority women who were already living in the oppressive confines of a system rigged against them.

Work

Discrimination in the workplace

The following comments are taken from the ground-breaking 2007 report of The Diversity Practice Ltd DWDP (Different Women Different Places). Their second DWDP project is well underway.

- “While it is often said that women come up against a glass ceiling preventing them from rising through the ranks, for BME women that ceiling could be said to be “a glass ceiling reinforced by concrete”, reflecting the greater difficulty for them to make it into the top echelons of organisations, especially without compromising who they are.”
- “Though there has been an increase in the number of BME women employed in management, the fact remains that 11% of white British women are managers or senior officials, compared to 9% of Black Caribbean and Pakistani women and only 6% of Bangladeshi women.”
- “A survey of over 300 BAME women leaders found that over three quarters felt the leadership style of white women is more positively perceived in the workplace, and 80% felt that the communication style of white women is more positively regarded.”

“One in five black women think their workplace is equipped to tackle racism.”

“BAME women currently make up 16% of the female working age population of England and Wales.”

“It is well documented that many women from the Windrush generation came to the UK in the 1950’s and 1960’s to work in the NHS, and that BAME women are overrepresented in health and social care services in 2020.”

“...whether it is BAME women themselves or their fathers, sons, brothers or partners, there is likely to be a disproportionate impact [of the pandemic] on ethnic minorities.”

“1 in 8 (12.1%) BME women working in the UK are employed in insecure jobs compared to 1 in 16 (6.4%) white women and 1 in 17 (5.5%) white men. The TUC says that many of these roles are in vital front-line services like health and social care.”

“BME women in insecure work often have little control over the hours they work and how often, creating huge financial uncertainty, anxiety and stress. The unpredictability of their take-home pay makes it increasingly difficult to plan financially, to access credit, and to secure mortgages or tenancy agreements. Constantly varying working hours also has an impact on family life, making it difficult for women to organise childcare, the care of older relatives and a social life.”

Due to their uncertain employment status, the transient nature of their work and their low level of weekly pay, many BME women working on zero-hours or agency contracts lose out on basic rights at work such as the right to sick pay, right to paid leave and protection from unfair dismissal. Protections that are vital during a crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic.”

“67.5% of professors are white men, 23% are white women, 7.5% are BME men, and just 2% of professors are BME women. 65.5% of senior managers are white men, 30% are white women, 3.5% are BME men, and only 1% are BME women.”

“Nearly half (46%, equating to 900,000 people) of all people living in families where the household head is Black/African/Caribbean/Black British are in poverty, compared to just under one in five (19%) of those living in families where the head of household is White. People in Black and Minority Ethnic families are also between two and three times more likely to be in persistent poverty than people in White families.”

In October 2020, Stylist magazine was taken over by a special guest editor, the co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, Alicia Garza. The issue contained results of a survey, called The Black British Women's Census, of over 600 readers across the country. Here's a round-up of its key findings:

- “More than 82% of Black British women have to go out of their way to find stories that reflect their experiences.”
-
- “74% have difficulty finding positive narratives about Black women in the media, and just 11% feel that the government is doing enough to support Black women.”
-
- “51% [said] that the limitations [in the beauty product industry] affected their self-esteem.”
-
- “Only 11% of respondents feel society has a positive perception of Black women, and the majority believe [they are] seen negatively.”
-
- “74% of Black women feel neglected by the healthcare system.”
-
- “95% of Black women in the UK have experienced racial discrimination.”
-
- “70% of Black women say the beauty industry does not feel inclusive.”
-
- “65% of Black women think representation in the media is the most likely area to see positive change in the next year.”

BAME Women in STEM

“According to BBSTEM, just 6.2% of UK domicile students enrolled onto STEM-related subjects at UK universities are black (4.8% Black African, 1.2% Black Caribbean, 0.2% Black Other).

When we look at figures for high-level employees, the representation of BAME women is vastly worrying. Within the top tech firms in the UK, over 70% of boards and senior executive teams do not have a BAME member; in fact, women of BAME backgrounds only make up around 2% of boards and senior executive teams.”

Over the past year there has been a small increase in the percentage of black women working in IT positions, from 0.3% in 2019 to 0.7% in 2020¹, according to a study by The Chartered Institute for IT (BCS) based on Office for National Statistics (ONS) employment data.

Black women are still heavily under-represented in IT and, by comparison, across other occupations their level of representation is 2.5 times higher.

“Less than one in five of UK technology workers is a woman or from a BAME background.”

Health

The Lancet Public Health study [‘Ethnic inequalities in health-related quality of life among older adults in England: secondary analysis of a national cross-sectional survey’](#) is based on an analysis of responses from those registered at GP practices across England from July 2014 to April 2017 and includes more than 150,000 people belonging to an ethnic minority group.

The study finds that:

Estimates of life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at birth are lower for most minority ethnic groups than for White British people in England, with some large inequalities.

For example, compared with their White British counterparts, estimates of disability-free life expectancy are approximately 10 years lower for Bangladeshi men and 12 years lower for Pakistani women.

Some studies have provided evidence of an interaction between ethnicity, gender, and age, with disparities often greater for women than men and increasing with age.

Experiences of the Criminal Justice System

The Muslim Women’s Network UK’s 2019 report ‘Muslim Women’s Experiences of the Criminal Justice System’ using data from their national faith and culturally sensitive helpline service finds:

- “Sometimes complaints were not being taken seriously and were dismissed or were not investigated to an acceptable standard.
- Victims were not being kept up to date and they were having to constantly chase police and the Crown Prosecution Service for updates, which was mentally exhausting and which would result in our helpline being contacted.
- Weaknesses in the Victims’ Right to Review scheme were also identified; victims are not allowed to request a review where only some suspects are charged but not others.
- When cases proceeded to court, the quality of publicly funded barristers i.e. prosecution barristers and legal aid funded defence barristers (e.g. for female offenders who were also victims of abuse) were variable. Poor handling of cases resulted in victims of abuse not obtaining justice.
- Sometimes police officers were missing risks associated with honour-based violence, forced marriage and revenge porn due to a lack of understanding.
- Sometimes police officers were missing risks associated with honour-based violence, forced marriage and revenge porn due to a lack of understanding.
- We found that sometimes police were not alert to the fact that Muslim women may face additional barriers to reporting abuse. Police were sometimes inflexible and did not adapt their approach.”

Other Research by MWNUK

Evaluation data from the MWNUK’s national faith and culturally sensitive helpline service for January to December 2019 finds that:

- 3133 contacts (phone, email, texts etc) were made to the helpline and there were 1247 beneficiaries (women helped)
- They were contacted about 42 different issues
- The Top 5 issues included domestic abuse, mental health, divorce, housing / homelessness, and relationships
- Other significant issues included marriage, faith / spirituality, isolation / loneliness, and money / finance, immigration, forced marriage and honour based abuse
- Most (77%) contacted the helpline about themselves
- Third sector and professionals (8%) and friends / family (9%) also called on behalf of others
- 51% of the callers also had a second underlying issue in addition to the primary reason for calling helpline
- 25% of the callers were experiencing three issues for which they needed help and advice

- In 19% of calls the police were involved and in 16% of these the helpline involved the police
- In 10% of calls the social services were involved and in one fifth of these the helpline involved them
- Although calls were received from over 60s and under 18s most callers were in their 20s, 30s and 40s
- The ethnic background of the callers varied but those of Pakistani background were the largest group
- The callers were from across the country with most from London and West Midlands

Mental Health

Personal wellness is everything to women. More than ever, women are striving to take better care of themselves by investing thought, time, and energy in self-care practices. More and more women are realising that taking a pause, even just to savour a cup of tea, is essential for their mental health. After all, like the old adage says, you can't pour from an empty cup.

It's a sad truth, however, that anxiety disorders amongst women are on the increase and for women living in economic hardship, self-care can seem like an unaffordable luxury. That's why it's important for all employers to promote the wellbeing of their staff and for the government to give mental health services the funds they deserve.

At Shakti Women, we empower women and girls by focusing on the whole woman which is why we encourage women to attend to their mental health as a priority.

The mental health of women

“Women between the ages of 16 and 24 are almost three times as likely (at 26%) to experience a common mental health problem as their male contemporaries (9%) and have higher rates of self-harm, bipolar disorder and posttraumatic stress disorder.”

“Nearly half (43.4%) of adults think that they have had a diagnosable mental health condition at some point in their life (35.2% of men and 51.2% of women).”

“Findings from the APMS (2014) show that all types of common mental health problems were more prevalent in women than in men, with significance for GAD, phobias, panic disorder and CMD-NOS.”

“In the survey, common mental health problems were also found to be more prevalent in certain groups of the population, including black women, adults under the age of 60 who are living alone, women who live in large households, unemployed adults, those in receipt of benefits and those who smoke cigarettes.”

“Women and girls comprise the majority (62%) of admissions for intentional self-harm...”

“The highest rates of self-harm were reported by women aged 16–24, in which one in four (25.7%) reported having self-harmed...”

“Women with severe mental health problems were 10 times more likely to experience assault than those without.”

(All of the above taken from Mental Health Foundation, ‘Fundamental Facts about Mental Health 2016’)

“Women are more likely to have suicidal thoughts and make suicide attempts than men. But men are 3 times more likely to take their own life than women.”

Professor Kathryn M. Abel and Dr Karen Newbigging of the British Medical Association cite the following characteristics of women-friendly mental health services:

- “Prioritise understanding mental distress in the context of women’s lives
- Are co-designed with women with lived experience
- Enable all dimensions of problems experienced to be addressed
- Address sexual abuse, domestic violence, body image concerns, reproductive and life stage elements of health and wellbeing
- Are sensitive to the diversity of women’s needs, experiences and backgrounds including race, sexuality and disability
- Enable women to make choices about their care and treatment
- Provide women-only spaces, particularly in-patient settings, which enable women to feel secure, safe and respected
- Empower women to develop skills for addressing their difficulties
- Promote self-advocacy and advocacy for women who need support to voice their views
- Value women’s strengths and potential for recovery”

Anxiety

“In the UK, women are almost twice as likely as men to be diagnosed with anxiety disorders.”

“In the UK, women are almost twice as likely as men to be diagnosed with anxiety disorders.”

“Anxiety was found to be more common in young women than in other age groups.”

(All of the above taken from Mental Health Foundation, ‘Fundamental Facts about Mental Health 2016’)

“In the year ending March 2020, average ratings of life satisfaction, happiness and anxiety, in the UK, all deteriorated; this is the first time since we started measuring them, in 2011, that these three measures have significantly worsened when compared with the year before.”

“Nearly half of female prisoners in the UK have been identified as having anxiety and depression. This is double the rate of male prisoners. What’s more, nearly half female prisoners (more than double the rate for men) report attempting suicide.”

“Women are 1.6 times as likely to report high anxiety (scoring 6 to 10 out of 10) than men. Between 3 April and 10 May 2020, average anxiety scores for women were 4.7 out of 10 compared with 3.9 out of 10 for men”

“The burden of homeschooling has fallen disproportionately to women (60%), potentially contributing to higher anxiety among women. Almost a fifth of women (19%) said they are involved in the provision of homeschooling compared with a smaller proportion (13%) of men.”

Minority women and their mental health

“23% of Black or Black British people will experience a common mental health problem in any given week. This compares to 17% of White British people.”

“In the UK, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women are

- 3–6 times more likely to be admitted to mental health units than average
- More likely to be compulsorily admitted
- Less likely to be admitted to women’s crisis houses
- Less likely to be referred to talking therapies”

“LGBTIQ+ people are between 2–3 times more likely than heterosexual people to report having a mental health problem in England.”

“Disabled women with a mental health problem die on average 13 years earlier than the general UK population.”

Politics

Who runs the world? Girls! Who runs the world? Girls!

Ok, look, we're not there yet, we're not even close, in fact, but we are proving time and time again that when women participate in politics, better decisions are made overall for everyone. There's even some evidence to suggest that women lead nations more effectively than their male counterparts. Just look at the woman-led countries that got COVID under control so quickly.

Whether or not we believe this, the fact is that women bring something different to the table where politics is concerned and there certainly needs to be many, many more of us around that table.

“Women belong in all places where decisions are being made.”

Ruth Bader Ginsburg
Participation

“Only 34% of the Members of the House of Commons are women.

Only 27% of the Members of the House of Lords are women.

Six of the current members of the Cabinet (27%) are women. The highest proportion of women in Cabinet was 36% between 2006 and 2007.”

“47% of Members of the National Assembly for Wales are women...”

“40% of members of the London Assembly are women.”

“There are 39 Government Ministers and Whips who are women, this is exactly a third of the 117 individuals in Government.”

“Following elections in 2016, 8 out of 40 (20%) elected Police and Crime Commissioners in England were women.

“Following the 2019 General Election, 65 or 10% of Members of the House of Commons were from ethnic minority backgrounds.”

“if the ethnic make-up of the House of Commons reflected that of the UK population, there would be about 93 Members from ethnic minority backgrounds.”

“More than half (37) of the 65 minority ethnic MPs are women.”

“97% of councils are male dominated and [as of 2018] there has been virtually no progress on women’s representation in local government.”

“The proportion of women elected to local government in England increased by less than 1 percentage point [in 2018], bringing the total proportion of female councillors to just 34%.”

“The static picture on women's representation comes after the Fawcett Society and Local Government Information Unit’s Local Government Commission concluded that local government is 'not fit for the future', owing to a range of outdated practices and attitudes upholding barriers to equality.”

As of December 2020, “Downing Street [had] not used a female minister to lead its coronavirus press conference for more than six months.”

“A frequently cited major constraint for women entering Parliament is caring for young children.”

Profiles

Nimco Ali

A key figure in the campaign against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Nimco Ali, is now advisor to the Home Office on tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG). She co-founded the non-profit Daughters of Eve in 2010 before founding global campaign to end FGM, Five Foundation, in 2019. She is determined to bring diverse and marginalised voices to discussions around VAWG as well as open up uncomfortable conversations about toxic masculinity in our society.

Though Ali was brought up Labour, she stood as a candidate for the Women's Equality party in 2017 and has since been an open supporter of Prime Minister Boris Johnson and campaigned for the Conservative Party. Ali was subjected to FGM as a seven-year-old child and stayed silent about this for almost 20 years. She was four years old when she came to Britain as a refugee from Somalia.

Profile: Sharon Thompson

As a Labour Councillor for the Birmingham North Edgbaston ward since 2014, Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods, and the WMCA Housing & Land Delivery Board, Sharon Thompson is a formidable force for change and cares deeply about improving peoples' lives. She is described as inspiring, self-motivated and a conscientious woman worth listening to and as someone who experienced extreme poverty and homelessness, as well as early single motherhood, she has a lot to say. Her approach to tackling homelessness in Birmingham has been instrumental in reducing the numbers of people sleeping rough, even during the pandemic. Not only is she a full-time politician, she is also a mentor of others and due to the help she received from various organisations throughout her journey, she is committed to ensuring that vulnerable and marginalised people have access to help and services.

Profile: Diane Abbott

It is impossible to sum up Diane Abbott's incredible career in one paragraph. She has been aptly labelled a titan of British politics with a list of achievements spanning more than 33 years starting with her election as the first ever black female MP in 1987. As a Labour party member, Diane Abbott was outspoken against the introduction of tuition fees and the Iraq war in the era of Tony Blair and she has been a staunch campaigner for civil liberties her entire political life. She is the founder of the London Schools and Black Child initiative which aims to raise the educational attainment levels of Black children and she chairs the All Party Parliamentary British-Caribbean Group initiated in 2017. Making history again in October 2019, she became the first black MP at the despatch box at Prime Minister's Questions, in place of Jeremy Corbyn. As Shadow Home Secretary, she has stood for a fairer immigration system. Though she has stood down from front bench politics now, she is still MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington and despite extensive media vitriol and racist abuse on a multitude of online platforms, Abbott continues to speak up for human rights and racial justice.

When happens when women lead?

“There is established and growing evidence that women’s leadership in political decision-making processes improves them.”

Jane Dudman writing for The Guardian in December 2020 debates whether the pandemic is proving that female leadership makes a positive difference or not.

“There is a wealth of data and evidence that shows that when women lead within governments, they are more likely to prioritize health and well-being and our natural resources. When they participate in peace processes, the results are more inclusive and durable. When they lead within companies, those companies make more money and have less turnover. When they lead within economies, those economies grow.”

The “Majority of the countries that have been more successful in stemming the tide of the COVID-19 pandemic and responding to its health and broader socio-economic impacts, are headed by women. For instance, Heads of Government in Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, New Zealand and Slovakia have been widely recognized for the rapidity, decisiveness and effectiveness of their national response to COVID-19, as well as the compassionate communication of fact-based public health information.”

In light of this, “UN Women announces the theme for International Women’s Day, 8 March 2021 (IWD 2021) as, “**Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world.**””

For more on the debate about whether women leaders are better for the world, we love this 16-minute feature first heard on Talk of the Nation called [‘What Changes, When Women Lead?’](#) (even if it is US-centric).

We also love [this in-depth debate](#) hosted by ‘Duke Corporate Education’ about the differences (if any) between the ways that women and men lead.

Profile: Nicola Sturgeon

Nicola Sturgeon is the First Minister of Scotland and leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP) as well as Member of the Scottish Parliament for Glasgow Southside Constituency.

She joined the SNP at the age of 16 and was elected to the Scottish Parliament in 1999. By 2014, she was planning the historic Scottish independence referendum with the then leader of the SNP, Alex Salmond. After being re-elected as leader of the SNP in 2016, Sturgeon introduced a Scottish cabinet with a 50/50 gender split and the number of SNP MPs rose from 6 to 56 after the 2015 UK Election, leapfrogging the Liberal Democrat party to third in Westminster. During the Brexit campaign, she defied Theresa May's Westminster by calling for a second independence referendum and 62% of the vote in Scotland was to remain in the EU, compared with 52% of the votes to leave across the whole of the UK. During the pandemic, Sturgeon has often taken a different approach to restrictions taken by Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Profile: Jacinda Ardern

At 37, Jacinda Ardern became the world's youngest head of state as Prime Minister of New Zealand. Since then, Ardern has been lavishly praised by international media for her open and compassionate leadership style, her leadership in the aftermath of the Christchurch alt-right terrorist attack, and her handling of the COVID-19 crisis which saw New Zealand announce the end of community transmission of the virus as early as April 2020. She has challenged expectations by becoming only the second female state leader to have a baby in office and the first world leader to take her baby to the UN general assembly.

Profile: Ana Brnabić

Prime Minister of Serbia, Ana Brnabić took office in 2017 as the first woman and LGBTQ person to hold this position which is no small feat in a country where same-sex marriage is illegal and there is wide-spread homophobia. She is an advocate for wind power and entrepreneurship, receiving numerous awards for the development projects she has worked on, and for the promotion of social responsibility and tolerance. Though she was re-elected the Prime Minister of Serbia for the second time in 2020, she has come under criticism from the LGBTQ community in Serbia for not doing more to strengthen their rights in the country.

Representation

When Kamala Harris was sworn in as Vice President of the United States of America, social media was flooded with images of little girls standing in front of TV screens emulating Harris' iconic hand-on-Bible moment. It was tear-inducing stuff. Why? Well, because representation matters and little girls, especially little black girls, need to be able to see what's possible for themselves in order to imagine their futures. The research suggests that when women are more visible in traditionally male-dominated industries, positions of leadership, and on our screens, society changes for the better, for all.

Company Boards

There is “a significant link between diversity and financial performance, with companies in the top quartile for executive team diversity 15-24% more likely to outperform their national industry median EBIT margin than their bottom quartile peers.”

The number of women on FTSE 100 boards has more than doubled in the last 10 years but still remains unacceptably low at 341 while the overall representation of women in senior leadership stood at 32.4% as of 2019.

The appointment rate of women on FTSE 100 executive boards was 36% up 4 percentage points from 2007.

“Women are strongly represented in HR Director roles and to some extent as Company Secretary, elsewhere there is still work to do.”

For example, only 15% of all FTSE 100 Finance Director roles and 17% of all Chief Information Officer roles have gone to women.

Around two thirds of all available FTSE 250 senior leadership roles were still going to men in 2019.

“The Hampton-Alexander Review set a target of 33% representation of women on FTSE 350 Boards and in Executive Committee and Direct Reports by the end of 2020.”

“It is becoming increasingly rare to see All-Male Executive teams in the top ranks of large businesses, whereas it was commonplace until relatively recently.”

Only 16.9% of board seats are held by women globally as of 2018.

Only 5.3% of all board chairs globally are women as of 2018.

In 2018, the industries with the highest percentage of women on boards were consumer business, life science and healthcare, and financial services.

Norway has the highest percentage of board seats held by women while Qatar has the least and the UK ranks 13th globally.

Profile: Liv Garfield CBE

Liv Garfield was one of the youngest FTSE 100 chief executives when she was appointed as Chief Executive of Severn Trent in April 2014. Before this, she was CEO of BT Openreach and is credited with overseeing the commercial roll-out of fibre broadband to two-thirds of the country. Before joining BT she worked for Accenture as a consultant in the communications and hi-tech market division and she was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in October 2020 for her services to the water industry. In 2013, she was ranked 10th in Fortune magazine’s annual 40 under 40 list of rising corporate stars and she is a member of the 30% Club which is committed to reaching at least 30% representation of all women on all boards and C-suits globally.

Politics

Sadly, “women are underrepresented at all levels of decision-making worldwide”. “Women serve as Heads of State or Government in only 21 countries, and 119 countries have never had a woman leader. At the current rate, parity in the highest decisions of power will not be reached for another 130 years.”

“Just 10 countries have a woman Head of State, and 13 countries have a woman Head of Government.”

“The five most commonly held portfolios by women ministers are: Family/children/youth/elderly/disabled; followed by Social affairs; Environment/natural resources/energy; Employment/labour/vocational training, and Women affairs/gender equality.”

“Globally, there are 27 States in which women account for less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, including four single/lower chambers with no women at all.”

(All of the above information is courtesy of UN Women)

Profile: Kamala Harris

On January 20th, 2021, the world watched as Kamala Harris was sworn in as the first female, Black and South Asian Vice President of the United States. Notably, she was sworn in by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the first Latina on the supreme court. Harris started out in law, becoming a district attorney in 2004 and in 2010 she was elected attorney general of California. She was seen as one of the leading contenders for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2020 but dropped out of the race and was subsequently selected as Joe Biden’s presidential running mate soon to be inaugurated in one of the most controversial US elections of all time.

Media

News & TV

The 2020 report by Women in Journalism titled ‘A week in British news: how diverse are the UK’s newsrooms?’ took a snapshot of gender and ethnicity at leading newspapers and prime-time TV and Radio news programmes in the UK.

Some of the key findings are:

- “Out of the 174 front-page bylines counted, just one in four went to women.”
- “Out of the 111 people quoted on the front pages, just one was a black woman. That was Jen Reid, quoted in The Guardian after a statue of her was erected in the place of that of slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol.”
- “Out of a combined total 816 expert guests appearances over the course of all 133 prime-time radio newscasts, 68% were men.”
- “Every single prime-time presenter on LBC was white and all 27 slots were filled by men apart from Shelagh Fogarty on at 1-4pm and Rachel Johnson on at 6-7pm on Friday July 17th. Out of the 119 times a reporter was featured on LBC’s prime-time programmes, just 23% were women, and every single one was white.”

“On average 66% of senior roles in UK newspapers are held by men. Just three UK national newspapers we analysed have female editors: the Guardian, the Daily Star and The Sun on Sunday.”

“Only three newspapers have women running their news desks according to our research: Metro, The Times and The Sunday Times.”

“Just one, the Daily Star, has a woman in charge of their back bench, the place where the biggest decisions are made in tabloids, while Metro has a woman as night editor.”

“The Daily Mirror had the lowest count of female front page bylines in June-July 2017, with only 10% of stories written by women. This was followed by the Evening Standard and The Sun, both with 15% of front page stories written by women, and the Daily Express with 16%.”

“The Guardian was the best for female bylines, with 43% of front page stories written by women. This is almost double the proportion of female bylines from our 2012 research, which supports the idea that replacing Alan Rusbridger with Katharine Viner has had an impact on women being more visible both on the front page and in the office. Culture change can come from the top, but just having a female editor and not changing other roles or the culture is not enough.”

(All of the above courtesy of Women in Journalism)

“Women make up 45% of the UK TV employees, down from 47% three years ago and short of the 47% of women represented across the national labour market. There has however, been a slight increase since last year in the proportion of women occupying senior management roles – from 41% to 42%”

“The 2013–16 period saw the percentage of television episodes directed by women decline from 27.29% to 24.31% (down by 2.98 percentage points). While in the same period the percentage of episodes directed by men increased from 72.67% to 75.53% (up by 2.86 percentage points).”

“Of episodes broadcast across the four television channels between 2013 and 2016, on average only 25.03% were directed by women.”

Film

“The percentage of top grossing films featuring female protagonists rose from 31% in 2018 to 40% in 2019, reaching a recent historic high.”

“In 2019, females accounted for 37% of major characters.”

“Female characters remained younger than their male counterparts (see Figure 7). The majority of female characters were in their 20s (22%) and 30s (31%). The majority of male characters were in their 30s (32%) and 40s (26%).”

“In 2019, 68% of all female characters with speaking roles were White, 20% were Black, 5% were Latina, 7% were Asian, and 1% were of some other race or ethnicity. 71% of all male characters were White, 15% were Black, 5% were Latino, 6% were Asian, and 3% were of some other race or ethnicity.”

- “68% of all female characters were White in 2019.”
- “20% of all female characters were Black in 2019.”
- “5% of all female characters were Latina in 2019.”
- “7% of all female characters were Asian in 2019.”

“Females comprised 26% of leaders, while males accounted for 74% of leaders. Females were more likely than men to be portrayed as leaders in two groups, as professionals (ex., doctor or lawyer) and as social leaders (ex., leaders in a neighborhood). Females were least likely to be portrayed as political leaders...”

“Films with at least one woman director and/or writer were more likely than films with no women in these roles to feature higher percentages of females as protagonists, in major roles, and as speaking characters.”

“In films with at least one woman director and/or writer, females comprised 58% of protagonists. In films with exclusively male directors and/or writers, females accounted for 30% of protagonists.”

(Thanks to Dr. Martha M. Lauzen’s ‘It’s a Man’s (Celluloid) World: Portrayals of Female Characters in the Top Grossing Films of 2019’ for the information above)

“96% of members of Women in Film and TV UK (WFTV UK) have lost all their income either temporarily or permanently due to the coronavirus shutdown, according to a survey carried out by the organisation.”

“Particularly powerful obstacles to workforce participation are the screen sector’s reliance on personal networks for allocating work and business opportunities; a ‘white, male, middle class’-dominated industry culture; working conditions characterised by long working hours, flexible and mobile working and income insecurities; and an underlying acceptance of these conditions as diversity unfriendly but necessary and unchangeable.”

“Within TV and film women were over-represented in makeup and hairdressing and wardrobe and costume occupation, fairly represented in business and legal occupations, but under-represented in other occupations, such as audio, lighting, camera and editing. There is also substantial regional variation, which will partly reflect the geographic clustering of industries with significantly higher shares of male or female workers in their workforce. For example, the representation of women might be lower in the East Midlands because of a higher density of video games companies (which tend to employ comparatively fewer women) in that region.”

Profile: June Sarpong OBE

“It’s important to keep paying it forward” is what June Sarpong told Nasheen Iqbal in an interview for The Guardian back in October 2020. It is a philosophy which has no doubt in part led to where this writer, broadcaster, production company director and new Creative Director of Diversity at the BBC is today. Sarpong was headhunted by the BBC as a champion of diversity having campaigned on a wide range of diversity and inclusion issues and published extensively about the subject, the books ‘The Only One in the Room’ (2021), ‘The Power of Privilege’ (2020), ‘The Power of Women’ (2018), and ‘Diversify’ (2017). She is a former MTV host and panellist on ITV’s Loose Women and now appears on Sky News’ The Pledge. She also co-founded the Women - Inspiration and Enterprise (WIE) Alliance in 2010, an international conference supporting female excellence and empowerment. As one of the most recognisable and formidable personalities of British television, Sarpong is using her power to ‘pay it forward’, a Shakti value we hold dear to our hearts.

Arts

“This year’s report shows that 66% of students studying Art & Design subjects in their GCSEs in 2019 were female (evidence 1); at A level this increased to 74% (evidence 2), which begs the question: at what age does creative work become so gendered? Outdated school curricula often emphasise the work of male artists, and yet young women still flock to the field. Is the association with precarious and low-paid work less attractive for young men? Or are Art & Design subjects considered ‘soft’ career choices for young women? This data suggests that further research needs to be done to support young men into creative work, but most importantly, that the enthusiasm women evidence early on continues to be supported throughout their career.”

“In 2019, only 35% of artists represented by commercial galleries in London were women.”

“Sotheby’s increased the number of female artists across all their evening sales by just 2% compared to the previous year, and 80% of the ten highest-grossing sales were works by men.”

“It is hard to believe that a sculpture by Louise Bourgeois (1911–2010) can be purchased for just a few million pounds, when the works of arguably less important male artists are still selling for ten times that amount. Of the 112 artists whose works were sold in the three Christie’s evening sales in 2019 only 14 were women.”

“The existence of the ‘second shift’ for artist mothers has become overwhelmingly visible during COVID-19, indicating that despite changes in the workplace and public policy, the personal is still political for most women.”

“Artists still earn as little as £16,150 per annum in the UK, with only 36% of that attributable to income from their practice. Once the gender pay gap of 17.3% in the UK is applied (reducing the average income by £2,795), it is likely female artists in the UK have an average income of £13,355; £4,783 less than the minimum wage in the UK of £18,138.”

“In 2019, of the 11 major institutions in London that receive more than £1million in ACE/DCMS funding, only 36% of directors are female, as opposed to institutions receiving less than £1 million in funding, where 63% of directors are female.”

(Thanks to Dr Kate McMillan’s report, ‘Representation of Female Artists in Britain During 2019’ for the above information)

“Women are seriously underrepresented on stage, among playwrights and artistic directors, and in creative roles such as designers and composers. On the other hand, women are a substantial majority when it comes to the audience. According to Ipsos Mori figures produced for the Society of London Theatre in 2010, women make up 68% of theatregoers.”

“Our sample [of the top 10 subsidised theatres in England] had an average of 33% women on their boards; only one, the Royal Court, has a majority female board. Women accounted for 36% of the artistic directors; executive directors were much better represented at 67%. Of the actors employed by the 10 theatres, 38% were female, with the National coming out worst at 34%.”

“Of directors, only 24% employed were women; and when we examined creative teams (directors, designers, sound designers, composers), 23% were women. We found, too, that women in creative roles were less celebrated. In 36 years of Olivier awards, women have won only twice for director (Deborah Warner, in 1988 and 1992) and four times for playwright (Caryl Churchill, Timberlake Wertenbaker, Pam Gems and Katori Hall).”

“...women writers accounted for only 35% of the new plays produced.”

“41% of the plays commissioned by our theatres, but yet to reach the stage, are by women.”

“Roxana Silbert at the Birmingham Rep came out top [for staging plays by women]: 32% of the plays she has directed are by women.”

“The December Group collected the following data from sources including University Women in the Arts and Loughborough University’s 2017 research project into gender and theatre:

- Artistic Directors 64% Men
- Boards 67% Men
- Performers 62% Men
- Technical staff 67% Men
- Olivier Awards 90% Men
- Critics 90% Men
- University Professors of Drama 73% Men

Profile: Sisters Grimm

Ex Royal Ballet ballerina, Pietra Mello Pittman, and composer, Ella Spira, formed pioneering theatre company Sisters Grimm in 2009 to “break the rules” by trailblazing culturally themed spectacles of dance-theatre to tell stories that inspire social and cultural change. Their critically acclaimed, Grammy-nominated shows have received standing ovations at all the major musical theatres of London’s West End and their social impact programme has provided opportunities to engage with the creative process of theatre production for more than 6000 beneficiaries.

Publishing

There are two strands to publishing in the UK: corporate and independent. The majority of British publishing is in the hands of large global media companies like Rupert Murdoch's News Corp empire which owns HarperCollins while the rest of it belongs to the many independent publishers dotted around the country. Even though the industry is dominated by a (white) female workforce, there are still major issues around equality and diversity.

Sexism, for example, is worst in the large corporations where women who reach senior positions tend to find themselves sidelined as soon as they have children and this is the point where top tier positions in the company close off to them. Furthermore, the average salaries for women are less than those of men in UK publishing. Independent publishers are doing more to cater for women by introducing flexible working hours.

There are two key reports to read where diversity in publishing is concerned:

The Publisher's Association annual report on diversity and inclusion: 'UK Publishing Workforce 2020' and Dr Anamik Saha and Dr Sandra van Lente's 'Re:thinking Diversity in Publishing' (2020).

Here are the key findings of the report by The Publisher's Association:

- Over half of executive leadership and senior management roles are held by women (52% and 55% respectively). This compares to 49% and 41% in 2017. Females accounted for 64% of respondents.
- Representation of people from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic groups has remained around 13% since 2017. 3% of respondents identified as Black or Black British, 6% as Asian or Asian British, 3% as having mixed or multiple ethnicities and 1% of respondents identified as belonging to another minority ethnic group.
- LGBT+ representation continues to increase with 11% of respondents either identifying as lesbian, gay, or bi, or preferring to self-describe. This figure has more than doubled since 2017 (5%). 0.6% of respondents identified as trans.
- The representation of people with a disability has increased from 2% in 2017 to 8% in 2020.
- Almost half of respondents have experienced mental health problems. Compared to the previous year, this increased from 40% to 46%. At the time of the survey, one in five were currently experiencing mental health problems.

Profile: Sharmaine Lovegrove

As the researcher behind this edition/updated version of the Pink Paper, a 'BAME' woman who is still trying to work out her place in the world, a lover of the written word and a writer in the making, Sharmaine Lovegrove's story is truly an inspiration to me.

She is the founder of Dialogue Books, an independent publisher on a mission to change the landscape of the industry by solely publishing books aimed at the LGBTQI+, disabled, BAME and working-class communities.

As a black woman, Sharmaine Lovegrove has experienced profound discrimination in the industry. She had to go to Berlin to be taken seriously as a bookseller and this is where she opened her now highly successful bookstore, also called Dialogue, after being 'laughed out of the bank' when she applied for loans to open a store in Hackney.

She is the publisher of my favourite book of 2020, Rainbow Milk, by up-and-coming writer, Paul Mendez.

You can read more about her journey [here](#).

STEM

"According [to] the recent UCAS data provided by HESA, 35% of STEM students in higher education in the UK are women."

"the percentage of women in STEM [women graduating in core STEM subjects] has fluctuated from 25%, down to 24%, and finally up to 26% where it has stalled in 2019."

"the STEM sector is continuing to grow at a rapid rate. From 2017, core STEM employment had increased by 6.3%, which equates to more than 6 times that of the total rise in the UK's overall employment rate. In 2019, the government data showed that there are now one million women working in core STEM occupations!"

"women now make up 24% of the STEM workforce in the UK."

"Women now make up 46% of the total science professional workforce."

"the female proportion of the IT professional workforce was still only at 16% in 2019."

Tech industry collective Tech Talent Charter (TTC) was created in 2017 because solving the diversity problem in tech requires a collective effort across companies and sectors.

Profiles

Profile: Abadesi Osunsade

Abadesi Osunsade is the founder of Hustle Crew, a career advancement community on a mission to make tech more inclusive through talks, training and mentorship. She has helped hundreds of 20-somethings from diverse backgrounds land jobs in tech and she's also the author of the book 'Dream Big. Hustle Hard.: The Millennial Woman's Guide to Success in Tech' (Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017).

Profile: Sunetra Gupta

Sunetra Gupta is the professor of Theoretical Epidemiology at the University of Oxford as well as a writer of novels that explore the connections between science and literature and a translator of the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore. Her core scientific interest is in the behaviour of the infectious diseases, HIV, malaria, bacterial meningitis, and influenza and she received the 2009 Royal Society Rosalind Franklin award for her achievements in science. Gupta's expertise in infectious disease and epidemiology has been called upon during the COVID-19 pandemic, however, she became somewhat of a controversial after openly criticising the UK government's response to national lockdowns.

Conclusion: The Power in Women's Purse Strings

Money talks, right? And the truth is that there is probably nothing more attractive about achieving gender equality to our male dominated world than the fact that it generates wealth. (Never mind that it's just THE RIGHT THING TO DO! Cue eye roll.) As cynical as this sounds, the possibility of increasing economic outputs, GDPs and profit margins really does present some of the most persuasive statistics when it comes to getting governments, institutions, corporations and companies to put gender parity at the forefront of what they do.

Several major employers are waking up to the figures. Leading global professional services company, Accenture, for example, has pledged to have a gender balanced workforce by 2025 and, like several other companies, they've also recognised that 'equality drives innovation' which equates to 'economic potential'.

In other words, when women rise, economies rise. This is one of our greatest superpowers, ladies! Another is our power to pull the purse strings. With most women in the driving seat of almost all household purchasing, women have the spending power to birth new trends that influence production markets. Women are the Great Influencers of our age, the Captains of supply and demand.

So even though the 2021 version of the Pink Paper has probably left you reeling, we want to leave you with this empowering message of encouragement: **KNOW OUR WORTH.**

Here are the Superpower Stats that remind us what that worth is:

"Women currently control \$20 trillion or 27% of the world's wealth. In the UK 46% of the 376,000 millionaires are female and 18 women are now in the exclusive billionaires' club (2016). And this figure is expected to grow as more women enter these power indexes, no longer claiming their position due to family inheritance or divorce settlements.

Women now represent the largest market opportunity in the world and female consumer purchasing power exceeds the GDP of India and China combined (Forbes 2013). Women are fast becoming “prominent creators of wealth” and it is expected women will control 75% of all household spending by 2028.

Leading gender analysts Catalyst.Org, estimates that, on average, 67% of all UK Household consumption is controlled or influenced by women. And it is much greater in many key household areas.

Women make the decision or influence the purchase of 92% of holidays, 65% of cars, 93% of food, 91% of homes and 61% of PCs and with the extensive and growing use of social networks such as Facebook and sharing of social reviews by women, social media is now playing an increasingly important role in the decision-making process of many women.”

“With 71% of social media users’ women and 78% of women using the internet for product information, social marketing is also becoming an increasingly important tool and channel to influence decisions and to engage women on a range of business and work related issues.”

“Raising the level of women’s employment to the same as men’s could lift GDP by 10% by 2030.”

“If earnings for women working fulltime (between the ages of 21-60) were equal to those of men, women would earn an extra £190,551. This represents £1,592 billion in potential earnings lost for the economy, or £40.8 billion each year.”

“Boosting female entrepreneurship could deliver approximately £60 billion extra to the UK economy.”

“Women’s total early-stage entrepreneurial activity rose from 6.3% in 2012 to 7.5% in 2014, which translated into more than 400,000 new businesses in 2014.”

“58 percent of women in the UK said they would stop shopping at a retailer or brand temporarily if it released an offensive product.”

“Women are the original social network and their influence has grown in parallel with their spending power.”

The Women2Women List

Leading gender analysts Catalyst.Org, estimates that, on average, 67% of all UK Household consumption is controlled or influenced by women. And it is much greater in many key household areas.

- Care International UK
- Dialogue Books
- The Diversity Practice
- Bloody Good Period
- Engender
- The Fawcett Society
- The FPA
- GenAnalytics
- Girls Out Loud
- Helen Bamber Foundation
- Housing for Women
- Imkaan
- Jewish Women's Aid
- Marie Stopes
- The Maya Centre
- Muslim Women's Network UK
- My Body Back
- The National Traveller Women's Forum
- Plan International UK
- The Prison Reform Trust
- Rights of Women
- Rosa
- Safelives
- Savera UK
- Shakti Women's Aid
- Sister of Frida
- Sisters Grimm
- Smart Works
- Sphinx Theatre
- STEM Women
- Stonewall
- The Equality Trust
- UN Women
- Virago
- Wish Women's Mental Health Charity

The Women2Women List

Leading gender analysts Catalyst.Org, estimates that, on average, 67% of all UK Household consumption is controlled or influenced by women. And it is much greater in many key household areas.

- WISE
- Women Action in Today's Society
- Women's Aid
- Women's Business Council
- Women's Equality Party
- Women in Prison
- Women in Sport
- Women for Refugee Women
- The Women's Organisation
- Young Women's Trust

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