

Women

In Security Survey

Report 2022



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Foreword



Guru Nanak Dev-ji propagated equal status for women as both men and women have the same souls. The Gurbani verse also mentions 'without the woman there is none'.

Women, in general, have many skills that can be an additional advantage when serving in the industry of risk management, security, intelligence, and investigations. Such work fields

from ancient times have been dominated by males however recent times have witnessed ever-progressive contributions from female professionals. If one reviews the most difficult part of security which is at the armed forces level, most countries are noticing women involved in active combat roles. When we review security and risk at the corporate level, the participation is much higher. The ability of women to understand risks, technology and innovative mitigations is well acknowledged.

This survey, a first of its kind in India, focuses on women working in the corporate sector for specific skills. The survey is just an attempt to churn out correct data and facts. We are sure the data will help industry players to use analytics and reach diligent decisions. There have been many similar or somewhat gender-based surveys globally, that have provided insights and triggered tremendously positive dialogues.

We would like to express our gratitude to our partners who have provided support and also to professionals who have provided their responses.

Gurbawan Singh
President
IIRIS Consulting



"Feminism isn't about making women stronger. Women are already strong; it's about changing the way the world perceives that strength."

G.D. Anderson



The security sector is growing by leaps and bounds the world over with India being no exception, however, the ratio of women as compared to men is still quite low in this domain

Research shows that organizations that build a diverse leadership team are 16% more likely to succeed against others in their industry. It is a demonstrated fact that women provide balance to strategy, planning, and decision-making that move organizations to the next level.

Yet, the security sector lags far behind, as compared to other sectors. Though reasons were guessed to be many, such as the security industry primarily being a male dominated industry, or women not being capable enough to undertake security jobs, especially those who do not have a police or military background, or there not being a clear-cut career advancement path in the security sector, disparity in pay scales/promotions for women as compared to their male counterparts, or simply a general lack of awareness to consider a career in security.

No previous coordinated study has been conducted to find out exactly why this is so? Therefore, SECURITY TODAY, the nation's most widely read and largest circulated publication for the security professionals, decided to support IIRIS Consultancy to conduct a joint survey and find out the main reasons behind this.

We are pleased to launch the 1st of its kind of annual report on 'Women in Security in India' at

Foreword

the TIWIS 2022, a yet another unique initiative that was launched in 2020 by us to recognise the 'TOP INDIAN WOMEN INFLUENCERS IN SECURITY'.

Hopefully, with the publishing of this report, not only will the private security industry see the benefits of employing more women at senior management levels, but women will see the benefits of choosing security as their 1st career choice and charting their growth in this domain.

To grow, women too need to be more volunteering and participative, especially in professional forums and events where they get noticed and can demonstrate their knowledge and capabilities in an environment outside the comfort zone of their offices and work spaces.

We are sure that more and more women will come forward in the near future to break the glass ceilings in the physical, electronic, risk/threat management, fire, cyber and all other associated domains of this sector. And hopefully this report will help in dispelling outdated perceptions of what physical security work involves and create a working environment that is attractive to all and enables all staff to be treated equally.

There is little desire among women to be handed advantages, rather, all they need is a welcoming environment to rid them of apprehensions, and to be treated fairly.

GB Singh
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief
SECURITY TODAY

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NOTE: Women in Security comprise of women involved in the Security, Safety, Fire Protection, Risk Mitigation, Cyber & Information Security functions of an organisation, collectively referred to as 'Security & Security' in this report, which include private and public companies and organisations, NGOs, public sector enterprises, banks, educational institutions, associations, trusts and societies, police, paramilitary and armed forces.

Executive Summary

WIS Survey 2022 was launched with the aim of assessing India's position surrounding women in security across industries and corporate bodies. Majority of the respondents (over 55%) represented organizations with a total workforce of above 1000 employees, with approx. 28% of the respondents commenting that there are over 500 women employees in their organizations. Also, over 90% of the respondents are representatives of organizations with existing gender-neutral policies towards hiring and working. Such a mix of data has made the present report well represented to be an accurate reflection of industry trends and the desired changes too have major consensus.

SUMMARY OF KEY TRENDS

Analysis of their responses revealed critical insights about the industry and societal perception about gender positioning in the security and safety industry. A few critical pointers that have emerged from the survey are:

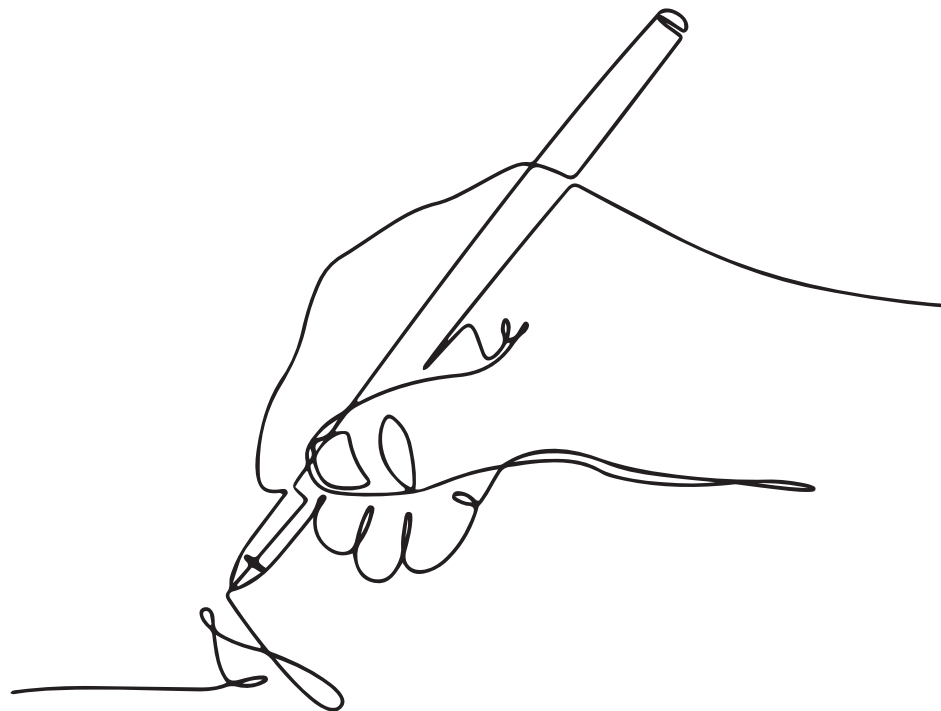
- **Representation at levels of senior management** - The survey results reflected the **lack of adequate representation of women leaders at senior management levels in teams of Security & Safety.** The present survey results show that while "Director of Security/ Safety" is the most commonly held senior-most designation within an Indian organization, the position is mostly held by men. Women in similar departments are mostly holding managerial roles, with only a few foraging ahead, with their Director and Vice President titles.
- **Differences in Work allocation** - The survey results show that **majority of the women who are part of safety and security teams, are allotted roles that are administrative in nature,** when compared to their male counterparts. Further, the results also display a trend that women team members are often allocated with tasks that are more "desk oriented" and therefore made responsible for functions like administration, compliance, risk analysis etc.
- **Differences in approachability for women officers** - The survey results clearly show that women/lady officers in Security & Safety teams are mainly preferred (over their male counterparts) for matters pertaining to administration or when involving harassment by a male colleague. The results also display that **women/lady officers are to be least contacted for matters requiring physical protection by their colleagues.**
- **Lack of adequate representation of women in relevant terms** - **Around 90% of the respondents agreed that their organization has a dedicated Safety / Security / Fire protection department. However, majority of the respondents also stated that the representation of women in such departments is less than 5% of the workforce.** Overall majority of the respondents to the survey agreed that women are under represented in Indian industry in the mentioned roles.

OVERVIEW OF FUTURISTIC TRENDS & CHANGES NEEDED

The results of the survey are encouraging in terms of representation and acceptance of more women in security roles across Indian organizations. Around **80%** of the respondents to the survey admit that there has been **increased participation/hiring of women within their organization** especially, in teams of security / safety / fire / cyber and other related security domains. Further, this is also backed by the acknowledgment that over 72% of the respondents agree that their **organizations have made conscious attempts** to have a shift in policy/ perspective to make hiring roles pertaining to Security & Safety more gender neutral.

Such positive trends showcase and what is needed is mainly some adjustments in perceptions and policies, for India to emerge as a country with a neutral approach towards a critical industry subset. A few such changes that have been discussed in this report:

- Overcoming bias in opening up more roles pertaining to protective services .
- Breaking down the organizational / societal perception and the tag of “male dominated teams” while setting up internal teams around safety and security.
- Inclusion of more and more women in the forefront of security roles and adequate senior management representation.



“In the future, there will be no female leaders. There will just be leaders.”

Sheryl Sandberg

Introduction

The concept of “gender equality” was incorporated in the early 1950s and since then corporations and industries across the world have been ideating its incorporation into the basic DNA of the company in a wholesome way.

Introduction of laws and norms around equality added an emphasis to ensure that roles across the organization are balanced not only in terms of the skill set but also gender. **Gender parity and representation in operations, board positioning and pay scale now form the key parameters of evaluation of a company’s growth and structuring.**

However, while a lot has been said about roles in core management and research, it cannot be denied that there is little data available to evaluate the position of women in security in emerging economies like India.

Security has come a long way in its penetration and corporatization in the context of the Indian ecosystem. It is now deemed as an essential function for every organization irrespective of the size and domain. The evolution of security is visible from the various sub streams of digital, cyber, physical, event and other intelligence-based offerings that have gained popularity over the years. India’s growth story in the last decade has indeed contributed to making the ecosystem realise the importance of security in building a robust organization. However, despite such a steep emergence curve, there is a lack of adequate data that can throw light on the gender parity within the security industry in India.

As professionals belonging to an industry that has emerged to be the backbone of the corporate ecosystem, it is important to take a look inwards and assess where we stand in terms of representation and skill set. There is no denying that women make up a significant quantum of the workforce in India and it is only but apt that their representation and contribution in the security domain should not go unnoticed.

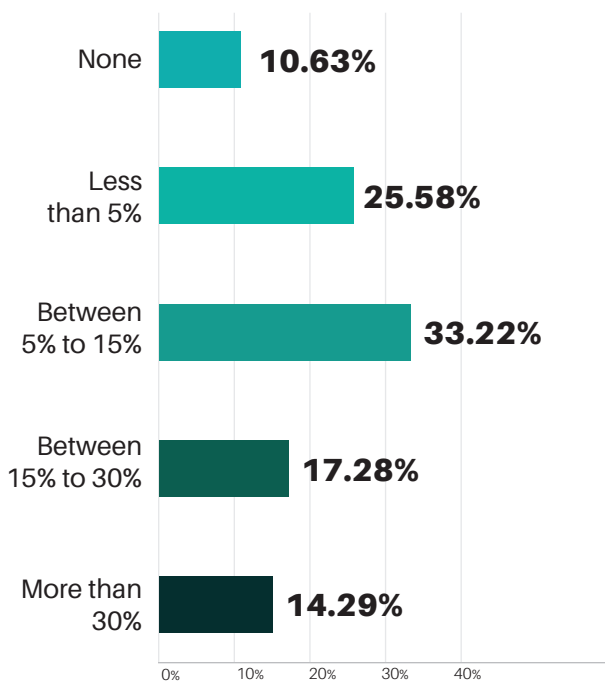
This survey is a joint effort by IIRIS and SECURITY TODAY to recognise the need of gender-neutral representation in the security teams across industries in the Indian ecosystem. This survey is one of the first attempts to collect data about the roles and representation of women in security in India. The results of this survey are based on a collation of questions that have been framed to gain insights into the structuring and working of various industries and their outlook towards roles and representations in security.

Women in Security Survey (WISS) 2022, aims to be a starting point of a much needed conversation around breaking barriers in what traditionally has been perceived as a male-dominated domain. It seeks to bring out the changes that India has proudly undergone to break such glass ceilings and at the same time highlight the areas that need further work and attention. The applicability of the findings can vary from organization to organization and therefore this document should not be treated as a consultative or suggestive report.

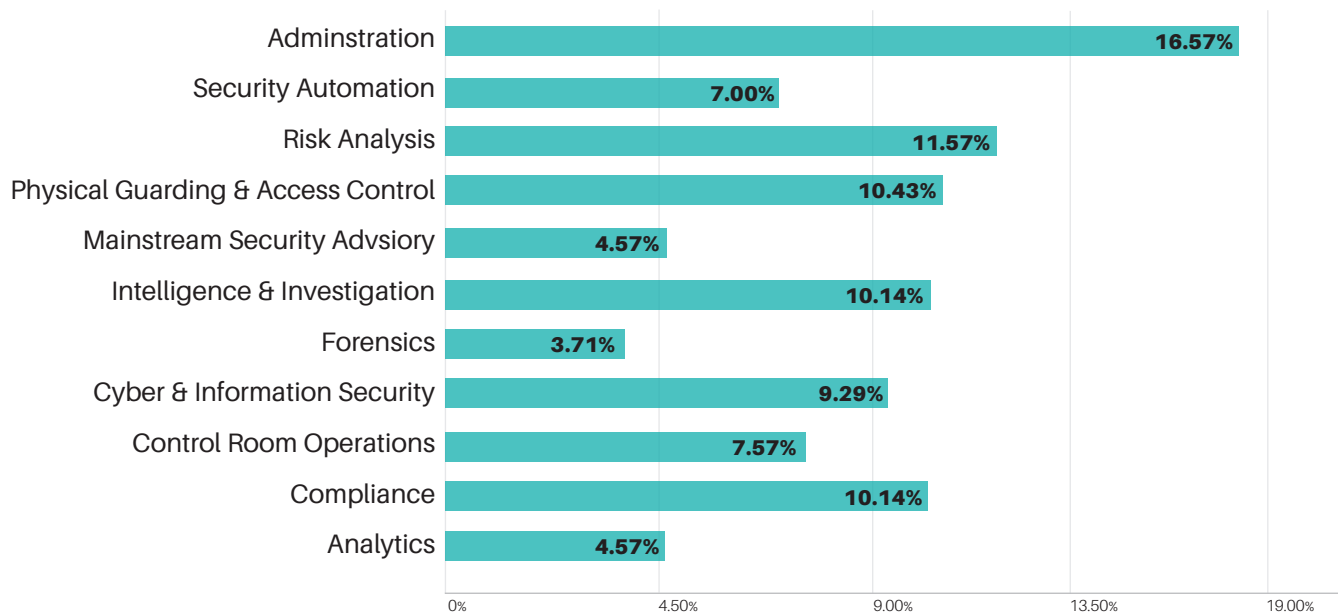
WISS Survey Overview - India

The survey received an encouraging response and has highlighted data that provides new insights on a few new, and established trends.

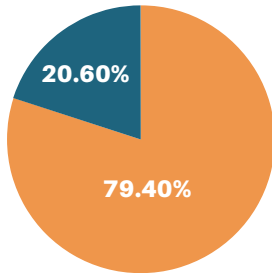
No. of Women in Security functions



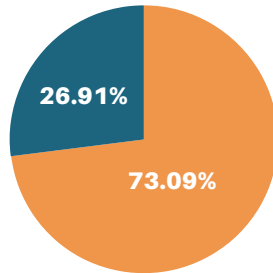
Core Functions Performed by Women



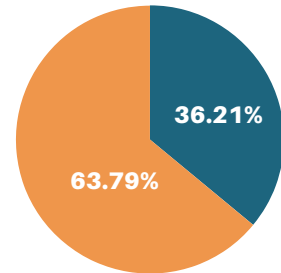
Factors, Trends And Drivers Shaping Role Of Women In The Security & Safety Functions Over The Last 5 Years



Has there been an increase in the number of women in the security & safety job roles?



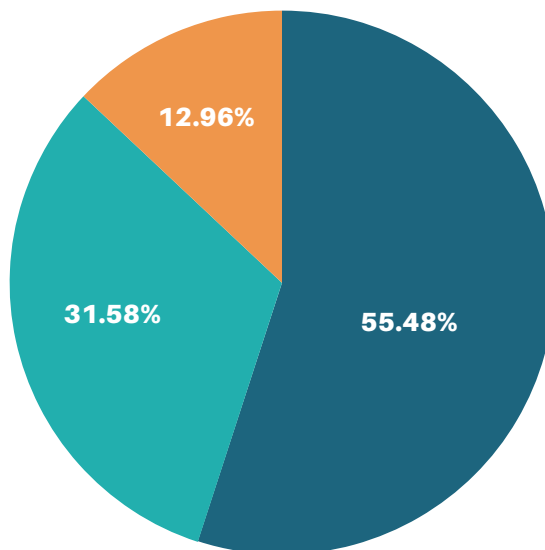
Has there been an organisational shift in policy making and perspectives to create gender neutral security & safety job roles?



Do organisations need to have policies that encourage women in security & safety job roles?

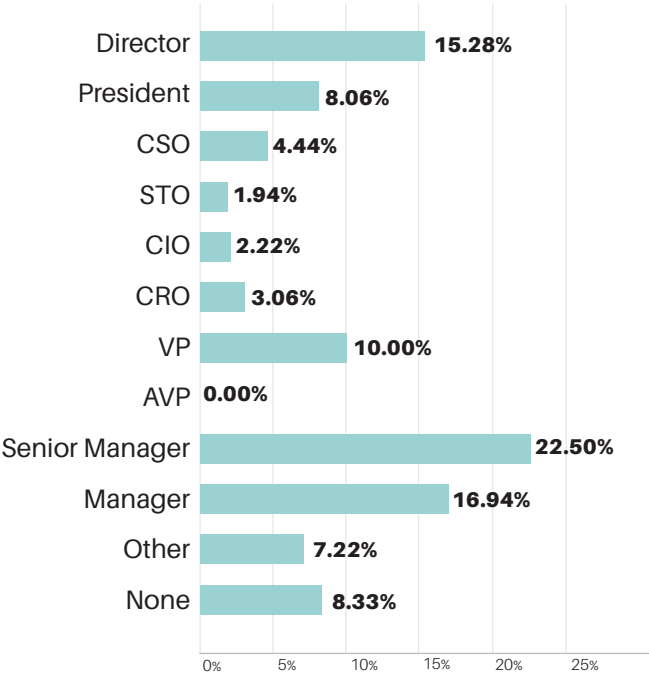
● Yes ● No

On Women Being Underrepresented In Security Roles



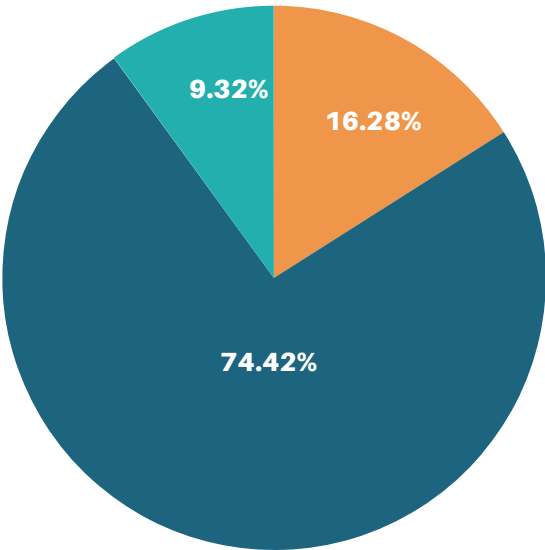
● Yes ● No ● No Response

Highest Designated Female Security Leader In Organizations



● Highest designated female employee serving in the security & safety functions

Refusal Of Jobs To Females On The Basis Of Gender

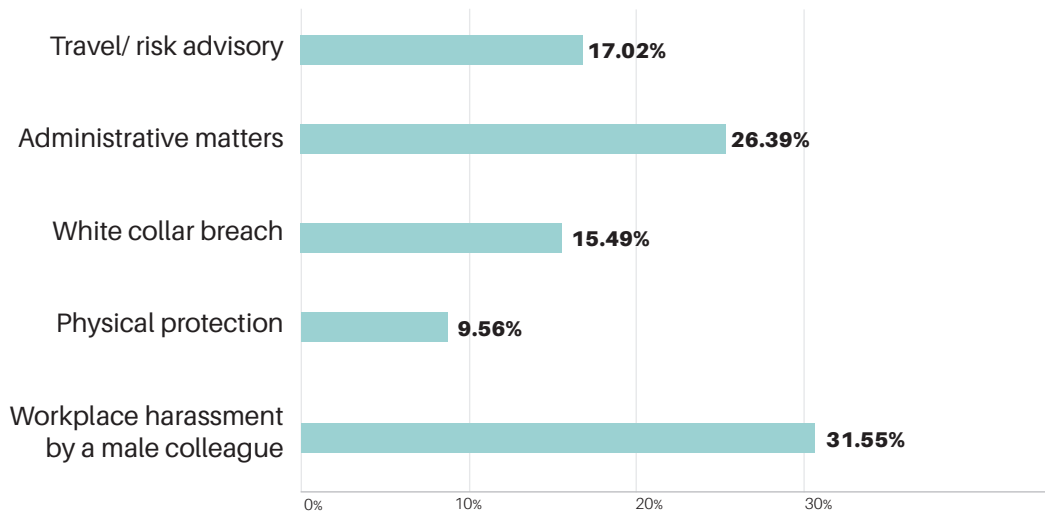


● Yes ● No ● No Response

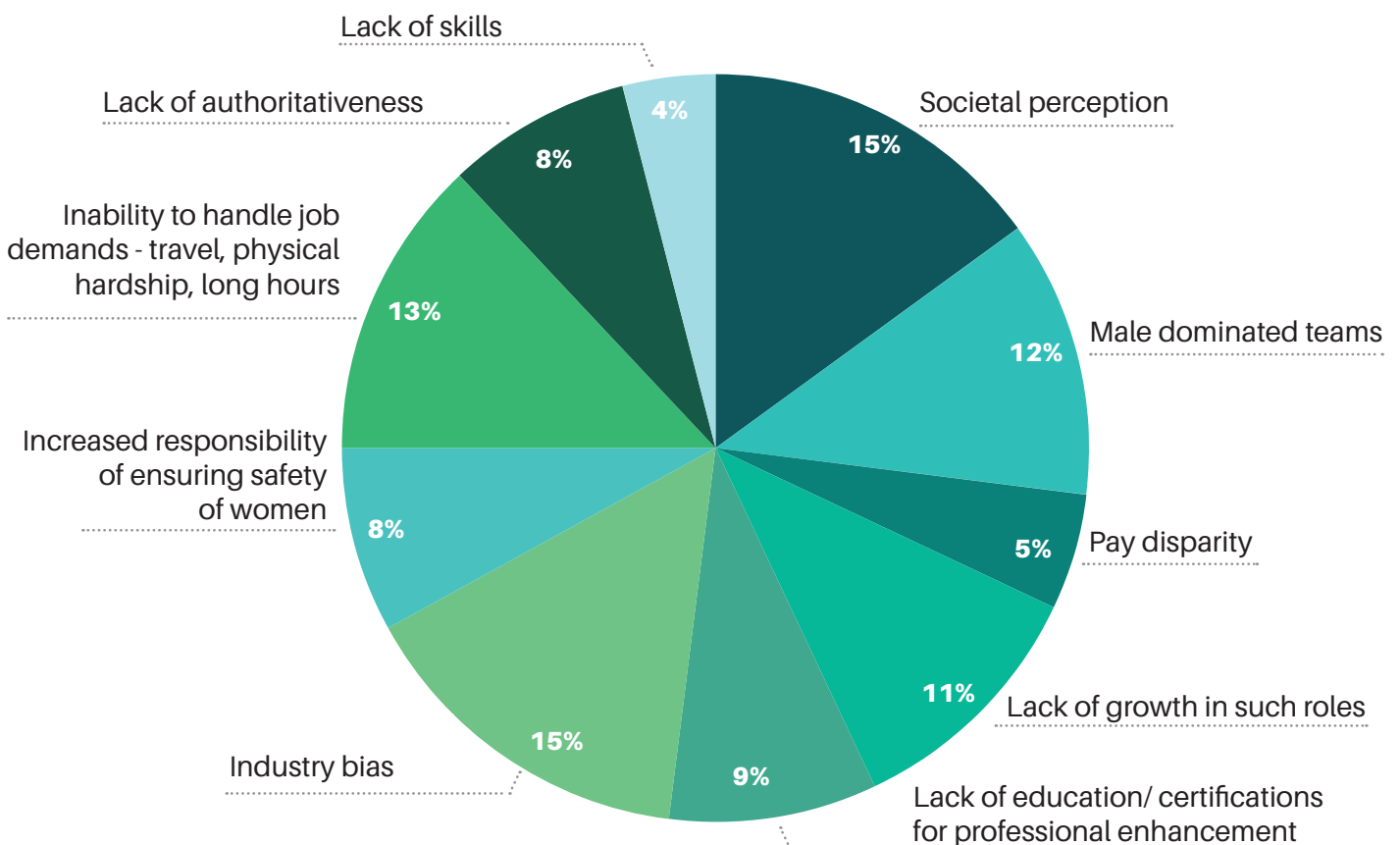
"Another world is not only possible; she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing."

Arundhati Roy

Preference of Women For Roles In



Deterrants For Women Joining The Security & Safety Functions



Survey Results Discussion

WISS 2022 includes a holistic representation of the main nuances surrounding women in security, across various industries in India. **Majority of the respondents (over 55%) represented organizations with a total workforce of above 1000 employees, with approx. 28% of the respondents commenting that there are over 500 women employees in their organizations. Also, over 90% of the respondents are representatives of organizations with existing gender-neutral policies towards hiring and working.** This initial data provides for the comfort that the survey results have been well represented to be an accurate reflection of industry trends and the desired changes too have major consensus.

A few trends that have emerged during the survey:

Representation of women in relevant teams

While organizations in India, have been mindful of including fair representation of genders across all critical teams, there has been a trend being witnessed that teams dealing with core operational security do not often have equal representation of women.

The majority of the respondents to the survey agreed that women are underrepresented in Indian industry in roles of Safety/Security/Fire Protection, Risk Mitigation, Cyber & Information Security. **Around 90% of the respondents agreed that their organization has a dedicated Safety/Security/Fire Protection department. However, majority of the respondents also**

stated that the representation of women in such departments is less than 15% of the workforce. Over the last few years, there has been a thrust to fill this gap and the emphasis on training more and more women for certifications and skill sets would probably attract organizations to reduce the gender gap.

Results also display that women/lady officers are to be least contacted for matters requiring physical protection by their colleagues.

Representation at levels of senior management

Similar to the above, organizations in India, in the last few years, have been mindful of the representation of their senior leadership and have made conscious attempts to be gender inclusive. However, much is desired to be reflected in departments and teams dealing with safety and security. The present survey results show that while "Director of Security/Safety" is the most commonly held senior-most designation within an Indian organization, the position is mostly held by men. Women in similar departments are mostly **holding managerial roles**, with only a few foraging ahead, with their Director and Vice President titles. Studies have shown that representation of senior leadership is a critical aspect of setting up organizational culture and creating impressions of growth within the industry. If the Indian organizations want to inspire more women to enter the domain of security, there needs to be more representation of senior leadership/positions of power held by women.

**“You educate a man;
you educate a man. You
educate a woman; you
educate a generation.”**

Brigham Young

Differences in work allocation

Security & safety is perhaps one of the most common term used within a company's lexicon, when it comes to responsibility allocation. Often, there are a myriad of tasks that range from administrative to protective to preventive intelligence/security that officers of such teams handle. However, while the overall nature of the job demands a sense of on-the-feet agility and presence of mind. The women representing such teams appear to feel differently. The survey results show that majority of the women who are part of such teams are **alloted roles that are administrative in nature**, as compared to their male counterparts.

Further, the results also display a trend that women team members are often allocated tasks that are more “desk oriented” and therefore made responsible for functions like administration, compliance, risk analysis etc. It is however encouraging to note that a subset of respondents have agreed that their organizations also encourage women task force to be allotted responsibilities pertaining to investigations and physical security. However, the survey clearly highlights that **less than 4%** of the respondents have witnessed women to be **handling mainstream security advisory** in their organizations - a fact that needs to change if women in security are to enter core domains and the industry is to encourage skill-based hiring (as compared to gender-based hiring).

Differences in approachability for women officers

Connected with the allocation of responsibilities is also the much-required change in mindset, to the approachability that is associated with women officers in the security and safety teams. The survey results clearly show that **women/lady officers in safety and security teams are mainly preferred (over their male counterparts) for matters pertaining to administration** or when involving harassment by a male colleague. The results also display that women/lady officers are to be least contacted for matters requiring physical protection by their colleagues.

Further, more than **55%** of the respondents have cited that for their women colleagues in roles of Security & Safety, they would **prefer those with experience in the armed forces** over those who may have experience based on industry learnings.

The answers reflect a perceived mindset that needs to undergo a change. Organizations need to build a culture where physiological differences are not associated with the person's ability to deliver a task and promote employees based on their ability and skills (over gender). Further, organizations need to evolve to understand that on-the-job trainings and certifications will be key in evaluation of candidates over their experience in prior combat/physically engaging roles.

Parallel Insights From Across The Globe

The topic of Women in Security has been under discussions in various jurisdictions across the globe. Interestingly if one looks at the surveys and studies published from developed and emerging economies, over the last decade, there are a few common trends that surface.

United Kingdom and Ireland

A study was conducted in 2020, by Perpetuity Research (sponsored by ICTS UK & Ireland) and focused on the experiences of women in security. While majority of the respondents expressed overall positive feedback about their association with the industry, a few critical characteristics/trends were shared that required attention. Summary of the critical observations from the survey/study are:

- 69% said their attitude to security had changed since joining the sector, 48% in a positive way, stating that they found the work more interesting and professional than they had originally thought. 21% had changed negatively, primarily due to gender discrimination and working conditions.
- **85%** of respondents felt that the **security industry is male-centered.**
- 56% of respondents viewed their pay as comparatively low.
- 48% felt that most security roles are not permanent.
- While 41% felt that men and women in their

workplace were equally likely to be promoted, 44% felt women were less likely to be and only 3% said women were more likely to be promoted than men.

- When asked whether their experiences in the security sector were affected by their gender, 66% felt that they had to prove their capabilities, compared to male colleagues who they regarded were automatically viewed as capable.
- Only 16% were aware of talks or information highlighting security as a career option for women.

Overall, the survey results highlighted the need for change in the industry to remove the barriers that women face, in order to make careers in security more appealing to everyone.

Survey in Cyber Security Industry

Over the last few years, there have been multiple surveys/studies across the globe trying to understand the key challenges faced by women in security roles and more specifically cyber security. The key findings as published by such studies can be summarized as under:

The 2020, (ISC)2 Cybersecurity Workforce Study, noted the following:

- The study found women and men in cyber security report similar satisfaction levels with

Survey Results Discussion

their work, with 69 % of women and 66 % of men saying they are either very or somewhat satisfied.

- The study also reveals that a majority of women cybersecurity professionals were successfully progressing in their careers. Nearly one-third (32 %) said they are “exactly where I was expecting to be with my career,” compared to 20 % of men. Another third (33 %) of women said they are “very close” and 22 % “moderately close” to where they expected to be.
- More women than men (22 % vs. 13 %) cited discrimination as a challenge they’ve experienced during their careers.

Overall, the study concluded that, while men still make up a majority of the cyber security workforce, the growing percentage of women, and their positions within organizations, suggests cyber security provides a rewarding career path for women who choose to pursue it.

There is no doubting that the strength of a woman comes from her womanhood. The innate qualities of endurance, empathy, creativity, tolerance, dignity, gentleness, kindness, multi-tasking and integrity, among others, that naturally come to women, make her a ‘woman of substance’. All accomplished women are those who have grasped the strength of womanhood.

Aman Singh

Chair, Women in Security Committee
ASIS International, Region 13A



Women need to be encouraged to join the security sector, and there needs to be a recognition that leadership from the top is crucial but women are underrepresented there. It is not sufficient to argue women are not represented at the top because they don't apply, the reasons why this is the case are fundamental.

Angela Osborne
Associate Vice President, Risk and
Emergency Management Solutions
at Guidepost Solutions

Being Woman

In his book, *Femina Problematis Solvendis*, David H Cropley raises a pertinent point for his readers. At the very outset of his book, he asks “Perhaps, it is no surprise that technological progress is faster now than at any time in human history precisely because women are able to take their rightful places in the community of creative scientists, engineers, and problem solvers in all disciplines? If diversity, especially gender diversity helps organizations to be better problem solvers, then it does not seem a stretch to assume that the same applies to whole societies!”

What Cropley stated, is in fact a deep analysis into the psycho metric and physiological evaluation of how women are better suited to be problem solvers, that in turn makes them a good fit for the security community.

It is a scientifically proven fact (to quote Zaidi ZF, *Gender Differences in Human Brain: A Review*, *The Open Anatomy Journal*, 2010) that females show advantages in verbal fluency, perceptual speed, accuracy, and fine motor skills, which in turn helps them be a better fit for analytical roles.

That, coupled with the traits of empathy, ability to work in groups and multi-tasking helps women emerge out of positions of stress with the ability to manage and supervise better.

A few of the inherent traits that help women be better suited for safety and security roles can be attributed to the following:

Analytical Decision Making

Studies by various cognitive psychologists show that science has ousted the myth that female intuition is based on deciding with the heart. Science puts on record that women resolve situations in a more analytical and rational way, and the interpretation of their basis is based on hardcore data and information. In a corporate setting as well, women have more clarity about their goals and a better and appropriate vision about what they need to unearth. This in fact makes them better leaders and more adept at solving problems related to security.

Creativity and Problem Solving

Traditionally in India, we have been surrounded with stories of wit of women in our mythological books, who have awed us with their creativity. While such figures are looked upon as fictional characters who possess super human traits, science tells us, that there is nothing abnormal about such characteristics. It is in fact an established fact that on the 3-facet model of creativity (quality, originality and elegance) females exhibit higher baselines of creativity.

This trend of creativity also propels women to be innovative to find solutions to problems using techniques that may not have been applied before. In light of the field of security/safety, such thinking on the feet/innovation comes in handy when ideating for complex solutions that require quick and effective mitigation. Such situations are common across instances faced in handling instances during physical risk mitigation or intelligence management.

“Of all the nasty outcomes predicted for women’s liberation ... none was more alarming than the suggestion that women would eventually become just like men.”

Barbara Ehrenreich

Empathy

One other myth that needs to be addressed is the common perception that women react emotionally to stress. In fact, on the contrary, women are rational, cautious and more balanced in evaluating their available options.

Yes, there is no denying that women are more programmed to respond to distress and pain, however it is time that the security industry stops seeing this as a weakness. On the contrary, the power of empathy is what makes women better negotiators, interviewers in situations of stress and help resolve tricky cases.

Teamwork

In their Women in the Workplace 2021 study, Mckinsey records its findings that compared to men (in similar positions) women managers work as better team players, helping their counterparts manage their workloads and navigate challenges.

In terms of teams dealing with security, one must not forget that the situations that present themselves are often filled with challenges that require expertise of multiple skill sets/resources. In such scenarios women with their innate ability to work in groups and bring out the best in individuals are better positioned to be preferred leaders, who can help create a solution-oriented culture.

Mentoring & Nurturing

One of the most common tags that a woman is often bestowed with is that of a “nurturer”. However, the skill set associated with the tag often goes beyond societal perceptions. Women have an innate ability to nurture and groom. When it comes to the security industry, this becomes an important trait, considering the flux that surrounds it. There is no denying that women as strong contenders for corporate security roles is a trend that is being witnessed only in the last decade. This needs more push if “gender neutrality” is to be a norm. The need of the hour is therefore strong leaders who can inspire more people to realise their dreams of corporate security and break the gender barriers. Women leaders in security, are therefore the best poised to lead this mentoring effort, coupled with their operational skillset, wisdom and empathy.



The Future Is Encouraging

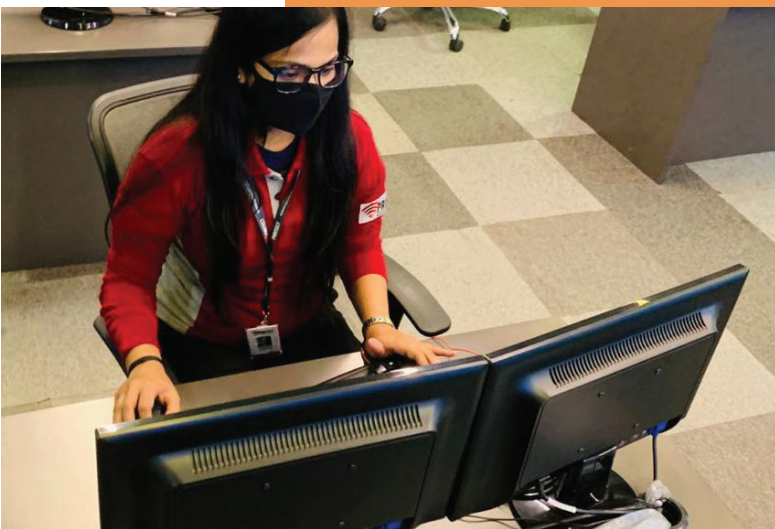
The results of the survey are encouraging in terms of representation and acceptance of more women in security roles across Indian organizations. Around **80%** of the respondents to the survey admit that there has been **increased participation/hiring of women within their organization**, especially, in teams of security/safety/fire/cyber and other related security domains. Further, this is also backed by the acknowledgement that over **72%** of the respondents agree that their organizations have made **conscious attempts to have a shift in policy/ perspective** to make hiring roles pertaining to Safety/Security/Fire Protection, Risk Mitigation, Cyber & Information Security more gender neutral.

Majority of the respondents have also agreed that they have not witnessed any biased hiring, nor do they feel that their organizational policies need any paradigm shift when it comes to treatment of women workforce.

It is encouraging to note that an overwhelming majority of the respondents agree and demand that participation of more women in safety and security roles across organizations will add to the overall organization's strength and culture.

“Whether I am meant to or not, I challenge assumptions about women. I do make some people uncomfortable, which I’m well aware of, but that’s just part of coming to grips with what I believe is still one of the most important pieces of unfinished business in human history—empowering women to be able to stand up for themselves.”

Hillary Clinton



Need For Change

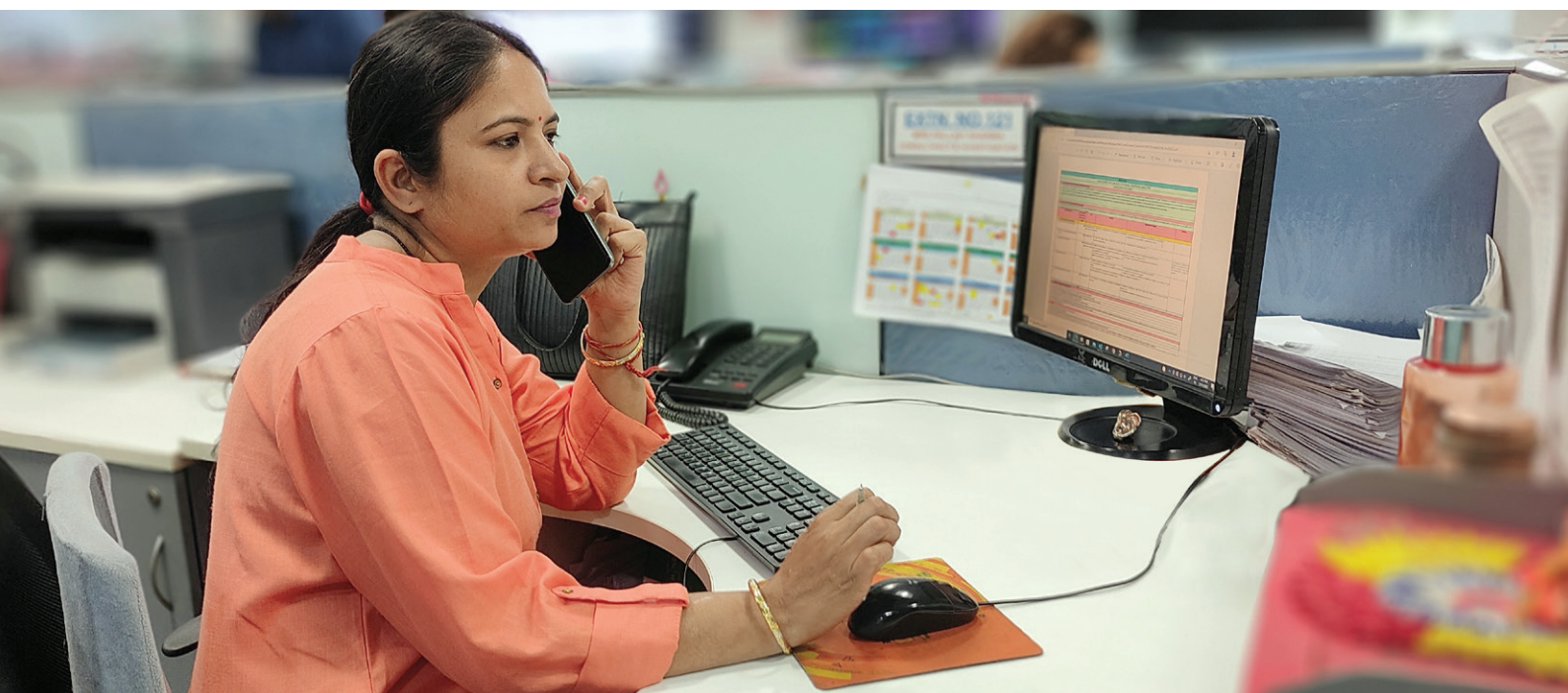
While the survey results clearly reflect a healthy summary of more and more industry affiliates wanting equal representation of women in roles of security and safety, there are also realisations about the changes that are needed.

When asked about the roles that need to open up more (within an organization) to attract more women in security, majority of the respondents still chose “administrative roles”. The emphasis on opening up of roles pertaining to protective services still ranked low, thereby reflecting the inherent bias that needs to be overcome from an organizational perspective.

The above is supported by the majority answer reflected in the survey, regarding the question of deterrents for women to join roles in safety and security in India. The most common answer

provided was of “societal perception” followed by “male-dominated teams”. The trends are clear that the top 3 reasons do not contain any skill-based reason and that it is mainly bias and perception that needs to be altered for organizations to set this right.

Respondents to the survey, have clearly highlighted “industry bias” to be the leading cause that needs to change to bring more and more women into the forefront of security roles. This, coupled with the organization’s sensitivity towards challenges of long working hours, commute, work-life balance, that form a critical aspect for the Indian workforce needs to be acknowledged to build a neutral atmosphere for women in security.



Conclusion

The WISS 2022 survey seeks to act as a benchmark for the Indian security and safety industry. At the outset the healthy participation establishes the criticality of the industry and reinforces the need for such a conversation.

The results are also encouraging for they establish the maturity of the Indian corporate ecosystem in setting up gender neutral policies towards hiring and employee management. However, at the same time, the study establishes key pointers for discussion that need to be addressed if India is to truly emerge as an industry benchmark for security teams across the globe.

The respondents in the survey have highlighted a number of potential barriers to women entering and

progressing in the sectors of security and safety, there indeed is a clear need to address these. The proposed changes in the report, not only speak of the desired results for the respondents who have participated but also have the potential to open up the industry doors for future induction and stronger retention of female security personnel.

We hope that this survey acts as a first step to dispel outdated perceptions around physical security roles and helps create working environments that are attractive to all, respects skill sets and talents and helps promote gender neutrality.

“Life is not a competition between men and women. It is a collaboration.”

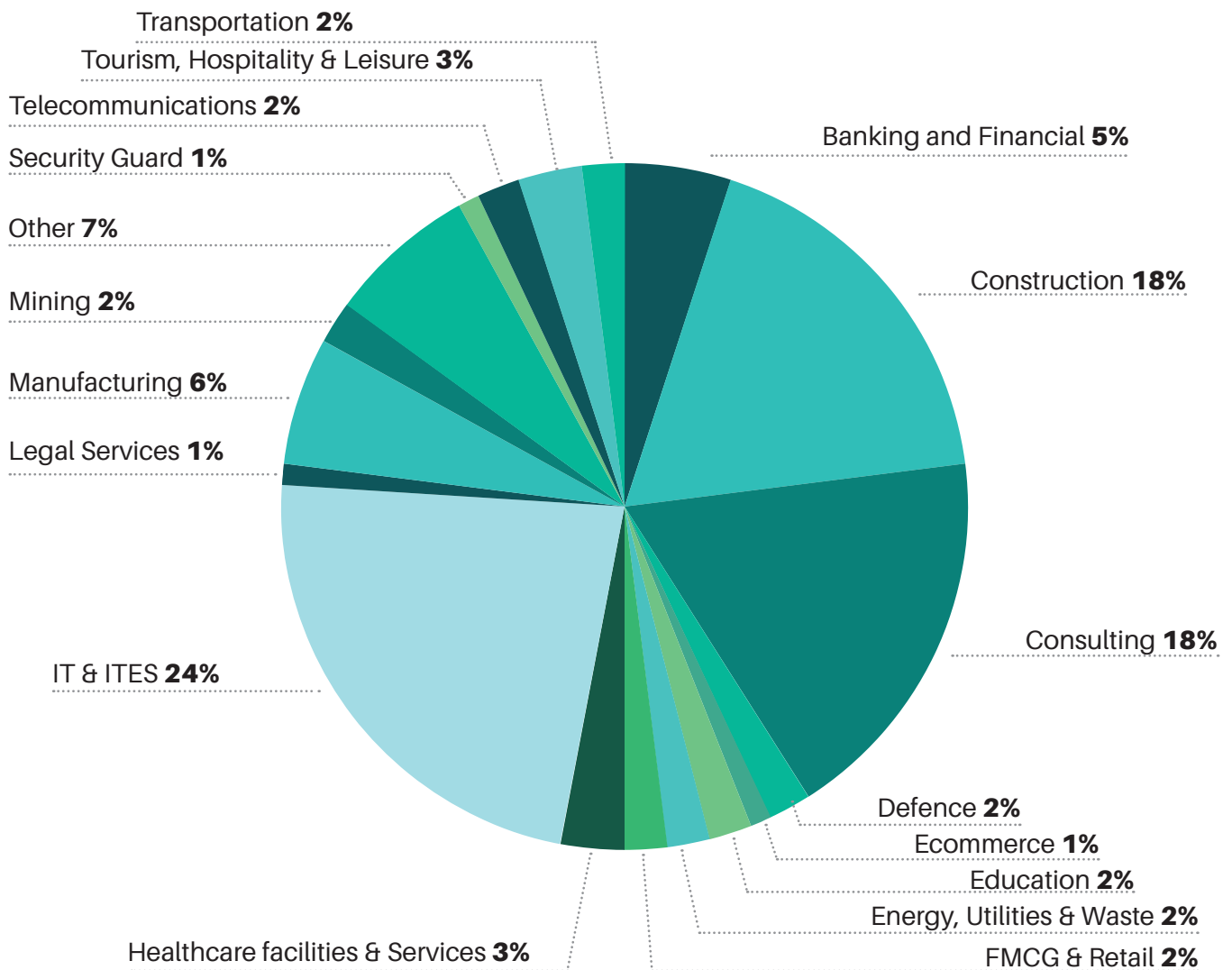
David Alejandro Fearnhead



Methodology

A well-crafted survey was made available to professionals to provide their fair and unbiased responses. A total of 301 respondents provided their responses to the survey. There was much

diversity among the respondents in terms of the type of industry, position in the organisation, geographic locations etc. A brief snapshot of the industry wise participation is provided below.



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