

what we heard

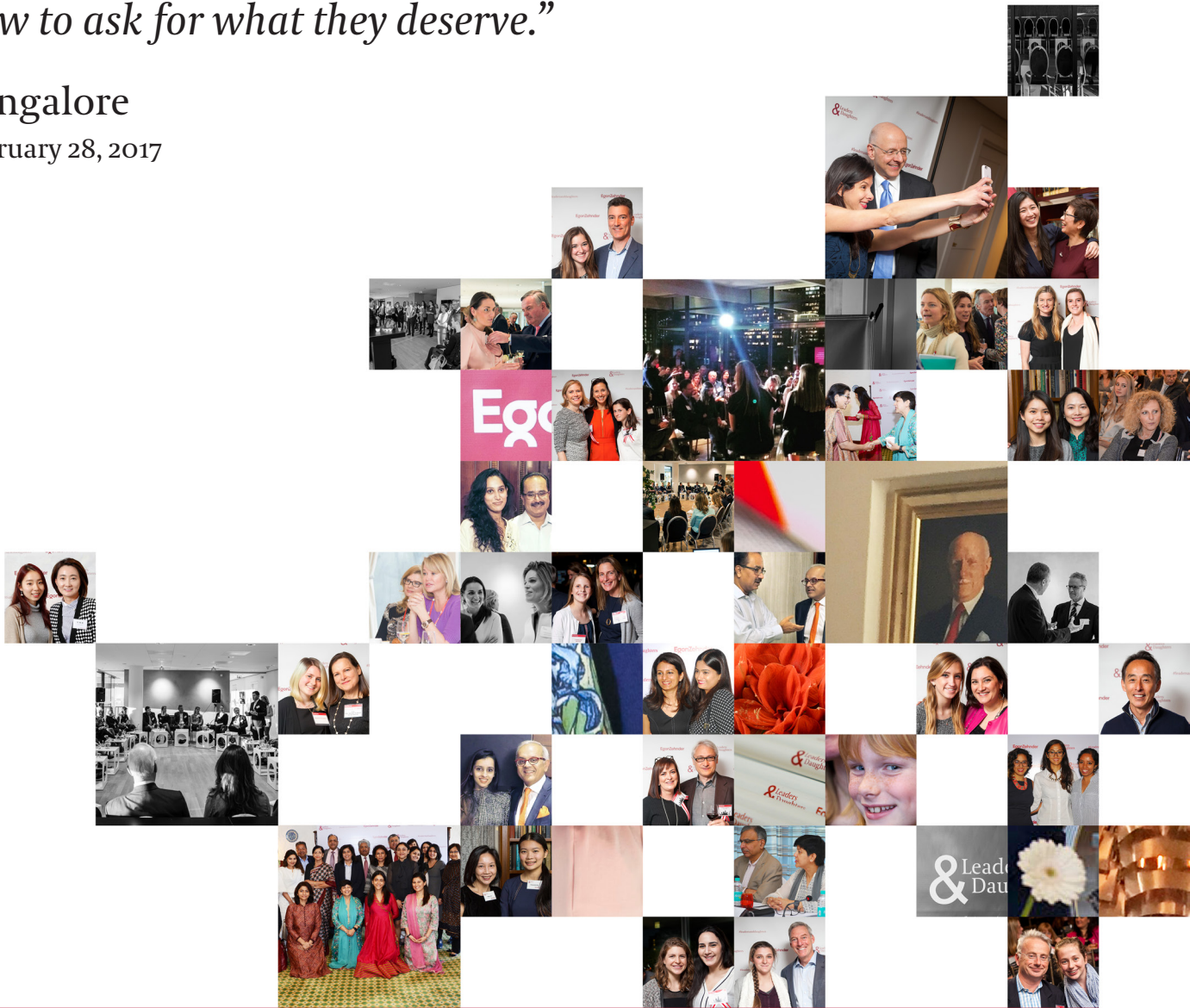
& Leaders 2017
Daughters

Leaders & Daughters

*“To empower women, we need to teach them
how to ask for what they deserve.”*

Bangalore

February 28, 2017



EgonZehnder



what we heard

On Feb. 28, 2017, Egon Zehnder Bangalore brought together 21 leaders and their daughters to discuss how women can reach their aspirations in India's corporate world and how the environment has changed. Led by Egon Zehnder consultants Pallavi Kathuria, Neeraj Sagar, and Gaurav Gupta, the roundtable format at the JW Marriott hotel in the city center provided an casual atmosphere for the group to share experience, goals, and ideas. The participants were drawn from diverse industries, from large corporations to family business to start-up entrepreneurs.

We were inspired by these remarkable leaders and their stories...

Battling stereotypes

Corporate leaders in India are battling entrenched gender stereotypes in bringing equal opportunities to the workplace, but are finding young hires and recruits that have studied abroad bring with them the attitudes needed to find solutions. While the group believed the challenges facing woman are being slowly overcome, participants acknowledged that much more progress is needed.

"Young women today want to do things that have a significant impact on the end output," Bharat Tandon, chairman and managing director of silk innovation company Sericare, told the gathering. "They desire to do roles where they can contribute in decision making."

Egon Zehnder partner Kathuria, based in New Delhi, said deeply held gender stereotypes and the difficulties of balancing work and private responsibilities emerged clearly from the roundtable as challenges for aspiring women.

"The energy of the young women in the room and their desire to make a difference was very heartening to see," she said. "While our socio-cultural progress on gender parity in India will take time, nothing can get in the way of advancement of these young women."

Young female recruits generally come into business eager to perform and advance their careers, participants in the roundtable said, but too often they lose momentum around mid-career as they grapple with cultural assumptions of a woman's role in the home. Among the leaders, many recalled their own childhoods when gender divisions were rigid and went unquestioned: men provided, and women cared for the household.

Focus on family policies, not women's policies

As elsewhere, attitudes toward gender roles and equality in the workplace are changing in India, but the process is slow and must be encouraged. The daughters, who were all educated in Europe or North America, said the experience helped to broaden their outlook on issues such as general fairness and meritocracies. They embraced policies, such as flexible work schedules, paternity leave, and on-site daycare, that could help women remain on their career paths and stand a better chance to reach the higher echelons of industry.

One young woman noted that these policies must be presented as family policies, not women's policies, to emphasize the common benefits. For example, the consultancy Accenture offers daycare at or near its campus in India and about half the children using the centers are dropped off by their fathers, not their mothers.

what we heard

Encourage assertiveness

The group also felt that women must be encouraged to be more assertive. “To empower women, we need to teach them how to ask for what they deserve,” said Rekha M Menon, chairman and senior managing director for Accenture, India. “Woman must accept that they need to ask for what they want from their companies, especially in terms of career advancement, and to negotiate their positions better.”

Bhairavi Madhusudan, idea cultivator at Back2basics, an organic agriculture company, added, “My father never told me what to do, he enabled me to think on my own and take my own decisions,”

One participant, however, said that while women must gain confidence in balancing the demands of career and home, men also have a role to play. Rather than leaving a working woman to do it all – career-work and housework – men must also escape their traditional role and learn to contribute more broadly at home and create greater equity in all aspects of life.

Menon from Accenture noted at the roundtable that as she was climbing through the corporate ranks, she had to learn that the world wasn’t fair, that you had to assert yourself and fight for what you want. Changing attitudes and her mother’s role-modeling, however, offers benefits to her daughter, Tulsi, also a conference participant, who is more assertive and ready to aspire to higher roles in the workplace.

And learning goes both ways. One male executive acknowledged that he was raised a privileged son among old-fashioned stereotypes, but his daughter is teaching him these concepts are not valid and probably never were. He said he’s working to model these new values.

“These young women are really pursuing their dreams,” Kathuria said after the event. “No one was following a cookie-cutter career path. The mood in Bangalore was very energizing in terms of what these young women can aspire to.”

what we heard

below

EZ hosts and participants
in discussion

right

Tulsi Menon,
Anthropologist,
The Womb, **Mitali Tandon**,
Co-Founder, MorningFresh
Shruti Shibulal, Director,
Strategy & Development,
The Tamara



above

Group picture of all
participants and EZ team

Below

Egon Zehnder team:
Pallavi Kathuria, **Neeraj
Sagar**, **Gaurav Gupta**

above

Picture of the daughters
who attended:
Mitali Tandon, Co-Founder,
MorningFresh, **Arshiya
Bose**, Founder, Black Baza
Coffee Co, **Nitya Khanna**,
HDFC, **Anjana Sastri**,
Sterling Developers, **Nirupa
Shankar**, VP, Chairman's
Office, Brigade Group,
Shweta Sastri, Executive

Director & Board Member,
Canadian International
School, Bangalore, **Pavitra
Shankar**, VP, Chairman's
Office, Brigade Group, **Tulsi
Menon**, Anthropologist,
The Womb, **Bhairavi
Madhusudan**, Idea
Cultivator, Back2basics
Shruti Shibulal, Director,
Strategy & Development,
The Tamara



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About Leaders & Daughters

To mark International Women's Day, Egon Zehnder conceived Leaders & Daughters, a global series of events that bring the world's most admired leaders and their daughters together to uncover the motivations, challenges and opportunities that face the next generation of professional women.

In 2017, we went further. In celebration of International Women's Day, we hosted Leaders & Daughters events in more than 40 cities worldwide – bringing together the voices of more than 3,500 participants to share their stories of success as well as the obstacles that are preventing progress. We share one common goal: to collectively pave a better future for the next generation of women leaders.

In addition to the events, we have also launched a campaign, “To My Daughter,” in which leaders write letters to their daughters about their hopes and dreams for the future. To participate, please visit www.leadersanddaughters.com.

Visit Leaders & Daughters at
www.egonzehnder.com

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