



#WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Propelling the wheels of women empowerment

International Women's Day celebrated amidst an array of time-befitting initiatives

There is an adage 'actions speak louder than words' and organisations like BAT Bangladesh are able to translate the connotations implied in these words into concrete actions – especially when it comes to empowering their female talents. They do not merely tout the idea of empowerment, rather they live these beliefs as a part of their ethos. Driven by a force forged with diversity and inclusion, BAT Bangladesh has been embracing equity in alignment with the theme of International Women's Day 2023.

Any goal is achievable only when you have the right strategies and policies in place. Over the years, BAT Bangladesh has been following progressive policies with a view to creating a workplace that's diverse, equitable, and inclusive for all. The outcome is very evident in its actions as several initiatives taken by the Company have instilled a sense of empowerment and a discrimination-free workplace in the female employees of this organisation.

BAT Bangladesh has a platform called 'Supernova,' an exclusive programme designed to groom female talents pursuing careers in the field of STEM and facilitate aspiring graduates with the confidence necessary to break the glass ceiling and rise above all societal stereotypes to work their way up. Mentored by women working in leadership positions of BAT Bangladesh, this programme helps female talents to receive proper guidance and get the opportunity to hone their skills for taking big leaps in their careers.

While as a nation, we have progressed to be more accepting of career-oriented women, BAT Bangladesh understands the still existing nuances that might disadvantage working mothers resuming their careers. BAT Bangladesh offers



working mothers six months of fully paid maternity leave with a return-to-work guarantee and flexible work options, including fortnightly day-offs. BAT Bangladesh offers a 7-day paid paternity leave as part of its commitment to equity. Mothers in geographically dispersed and continuous shift roles receive three additional months of unpaid leave from the



Company. The Company's "Angel's Nest," a cosy day care facility, allows employees' children to learn and play under professional supervision after joining back.

The end product of such female-friendly policies and ambiance is that female workers are flourishing to their full glory at BAT Bangladesh. From their factory to the corporate office to contracted farms located in the rural backwater, female employees are making their mark everywhere. As a part of its diversity and inclusion strategy ambition, the Company aims to increase the proportion of women in management

roles to 35 per cent by 2025. Owing to such epoch-making initiatives, BAT Bangladesh was accredited with the Global Equality Standard (GES) accreditation, the only Company in the country to achieve this.

The Company created detailed programmes and launched several new initiatives on International Women's Day 2023 to further promote workplace equity.



BAT Bangladesh kicked off 'Lean In Circle,' an employee resource group for all female employees to help them through their careers by providing career counselling, creating a support network, and fostering 'human leaders'. It is an excellent opportunity for all the female employees to share their experiences including the challenges and get insights from others about honing their leadership skills. The vision for this group extends beyond just their own turfs as it aims to inspire and positively impact corporate women nationwide.

Using Women's Day as a platform to uplift women in business, BAT Bangladesh also joined hands with 3 female-led organisations — Friendship Colors of the Chars (empowering minority Char women), TransEnd (developing the transgender community of BD), and ItsHumanity Foundation (sponsoring the education of underprivileged children). These organisations, led by inspiring Bangladesh

women, have been working to bring about positive changes within underrepresented communities. They were given the space to sell their products to BAT Bangladesh employees and the money earned from this will be spent on community upliftment.

To conclude the event, an all-female indigenous band called F Minor gave a spellbinding performance that captivated everyone. The celebration was a great success and showcased BAT Bangladesh's commitment to empowering females within and beyond the organisation.

The company's efforts to have an impactful and sustainable Women's Day went beyond just central celebrations and extended to its entire value chain. Enabled by BAT Bangladesh's female managers in trade, the Company's distributors launched a nationwide campaign aimed at recognising and celebrating female retailers and their allies. Through the "Agrani" award, these women were acknowledged for their exceptional contributions to women's empowerment. The campaign also included workshops focused on financial literacy, helping female retailers achieve financial independence.

BAT Bangladesh's commitment to creating an inclusive ecosystem within its own organisation and the wider industry is evident through its championing of female-friendly initiatives. While the event may have come to an end, the Company's dedication to excellence and empowering women in the workplace with the spirit of diversity and inclusion remains steadfast. BAT Bangladesh will continue to strive towards building a better tomorrow for all, reflecting their unwavering commitment to promoting equity and diversity in the workplace.

Photo: BAT Bangladesh