

rainmaker
creating ethical workplaces

presents

SAFE PLACES TO WORK SURVEY 2020

powered by

FEMINA



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Disclaimer

The findings in this report are based on the data collected from the respondents and do not necessarily reflect those of Rainmaker or of any organisation mentioned. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this paper. However, the research is subject to limitations that have been outlined in the report, which are beyond the authors' ability to control or estimate precisely. While all effort has been made to ensure accuracy and completeness of the findings by the authors, readers are responsible for assessing the relevance and accuracy of the content of this research.

Introduction

The introduction of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, popularly called the PoSH Act, in 2013, has been a watershed moment for women's rights in the workplace. The Act compelled companies across India to take concrete steps to provide a safe and secure environment for women employees at the workplace. The Act also emboldened women to be aware of their rights and lodge complaints with the authorities when required. For example, as noted in a study released in 2019, awareness about PoSH has risen as evidenced by a 28% increase in the number of sexual harassment complaints received by BSE 500 companies (1,453 in 2018-19 against 1,138 in 2017-18). On the other hand, 42% of these companies have reported no sexual harassment complaints since 2015-16. However, these statistics foreground the perspective of the organisation and only after the complaints have been registered. What's still missing from the picture is the perspective of women employees, not just in the domains of compliance and complaint redressal, but also on the socio-cultural environment of these workplaces. It is with this objective that we, at Rainmaker, conceptualised and launched the Safe Places To Work Survey in 2019.

Safe Places To Work is aimed to be a nation-wide survey with a mission to foster a safe, inclusive and respectful workplace for all. The survey evaluates organisations on the degree of safety and inclusiveness they promote for female employees as a response to PoSH. The first survey conducted in 2019 garnered responses from 5682 working women from close to 50 organisations.



¹ Rusen Kumar, 'India Inc Yet To Walk The Talk On PoSH'. *India CSR Network*, 2021. Available at: <https://indiacr.in/india-inc-yet-to-walk-the-talk-on-PoSH/>

Introduction

This was before the pandemic was declared. 2020 has proved to be a paradigmatic shift in our collective histories globally, and has undeniably changed the way we work, think of workplaces, and build workplace relationships.

The Safe Places To Work Survey 2020-21 responds to this critical moment by not only upholding our commitment to assessing PoSH compliances and nuances of workplace harassment, but also extending the dialogue to the peculiarities of the virtual workplace. In our quest to create safer workplaces, we are proud to announce that Femina has come on board as our partner for this endeavour. The Safe Places to Work Survey 2020-21 is powered by Femina.

The principal aspects addressed in this survey include levels of awareness about PoSH, the nature and forms of sexual harassment, office culture and support, and existing redressal mechanisms for complaints. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic this year has warranted the consideration of the unique implications of work from home (WFH). Thus, the survey also takes into account various kinds of harassment on virtual workspaces, technological misuse, and the resultant blurring of personal and professional boundaries among others. This year, owing to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, 26 companies and 5235 unique respondents participated in the survey.

The online survey, which was developed based on extensive research and in consultation with an expert panel, was accessed anonymously by employees from the participating organisations. The final report and the accompanying recommendations are based on the analysis and scoring of responses from these participants. The report serves as both a point of reflection for the participating companies as well as a springboard to address and implement the highlighted areas of improvement.

- Antony Alex, Founder & CEO

Methodology

A survey methodology focusing on an in-depth sampling of individuals, in this case women in the corporate workforce, was employed. This was prefaced by a literature review to draw out critical epistemological frameworks, recent studies around women's participation in the workforce, and related contextual issues in India. The research was divided into three phases: preparation and desk research; the designing and dissemination of an online survey; and finally, analysis and writing, including feedback and recommendations from a panel of experts.



Methodology

a. Desk Research

Secondary research has been informed by government census data, newspaper articles, research reports, legal documents and articles from other journals and magazines. Many of these articles are primarily qualitative and investigative in nature and have helped understand the different aspects of the PoSH law, current challenges and compliance issues in the Indian workplace. Guidelines from the PoSH law have also been considered. Other existing data from reports of governmental and non-governmental organisations, research agencies and international bodies have also been included.





b. Survey

An online survey was developed based on extensive research and previous experiments conducted in this subject in collaboration with independent subject matter experts (SME). The questions were framed keeping in mind the unique nature of the Indian workspace and covered various aspects of organisational culture that ensure workplace safety. The scope of the survey was further expanded to include the new challenges that the pandemic ushered in, and in cognisance of the new workplace dynamics that could potentially lead to new forms of harassment.

The survey questionnaire contained 33 questions, of which 7 questions covered the respondents' profile such as their age, current location, their tenure, seniority level, and department in the organisation, and 15 questions covered the nature and forms of harassment.

The survey was conducted online, which respondents from participating companies accessed anonymously. The 26 companies that participated in the research received an individual report and score based on 20 of these questions. The survey was completed by 5235 unique respondents.

Methodology

c. Data Analysis and Report Writing

The data as received from the survey was analysed and triangulated against several parameters and predetermined hypotheses. This was further referenced against the different facets of the PoSH law. The companies were graded based on their survey scores, and the topmost safe places to work were identified. The individual reports analysed the different trends that emerged from the respondents' responses and, based on this, made recommendations to the companies. This report is the cumulative study of the overall survey responses and analyses the common trends that emerge from the data collected.

The report was then presented to the panel of experts who provided their feedback and recommendations.



Limitations

- Since the survey was aligned to the clauses and inclusions in the POSH law, there were particular stipulations that had to be adhered to. The POSH law specifically states that only persons who are biologically female can be considered as the subject of the law. Therefore the survey only includes women respondents. This is more to be in tune with the legal framework of the law rather than the actual ambit of who can be a victim of sexual harassment.
- Due to operational limitations, the survey was released only in English. The constraint around language may have acted as a barrier to access by those who may not be fluent or comfortable with English.
- The survey was specifically aimed at women working in white-collar jobs and did not include women employees in the different satellite roles that are present in a workplace, like a pantry, housekeeping, security, and others.
- The survey design was mindful of the complexity of power and representation of women in Indian society and in the corporate workforce. The depth of nuance in these contexts necessitated that the survey focused on specific aspects of representation and hierarchies. These included women's positions in the organisational hierarchy (seniority level, department, tenure) and triangulated with individual positionalities (age, marital status, economic contribution to the family) to underscore specific textures of the culture and contexts they operate in.
- While the survey was designed to be anonymous to ensure full and fearless participation, one cannot discount the fear of repercussion and mistrust that victims of sexual harassment may experience. A general unwillingness to be open about discussing harassment also acts as limitation in a study like this.

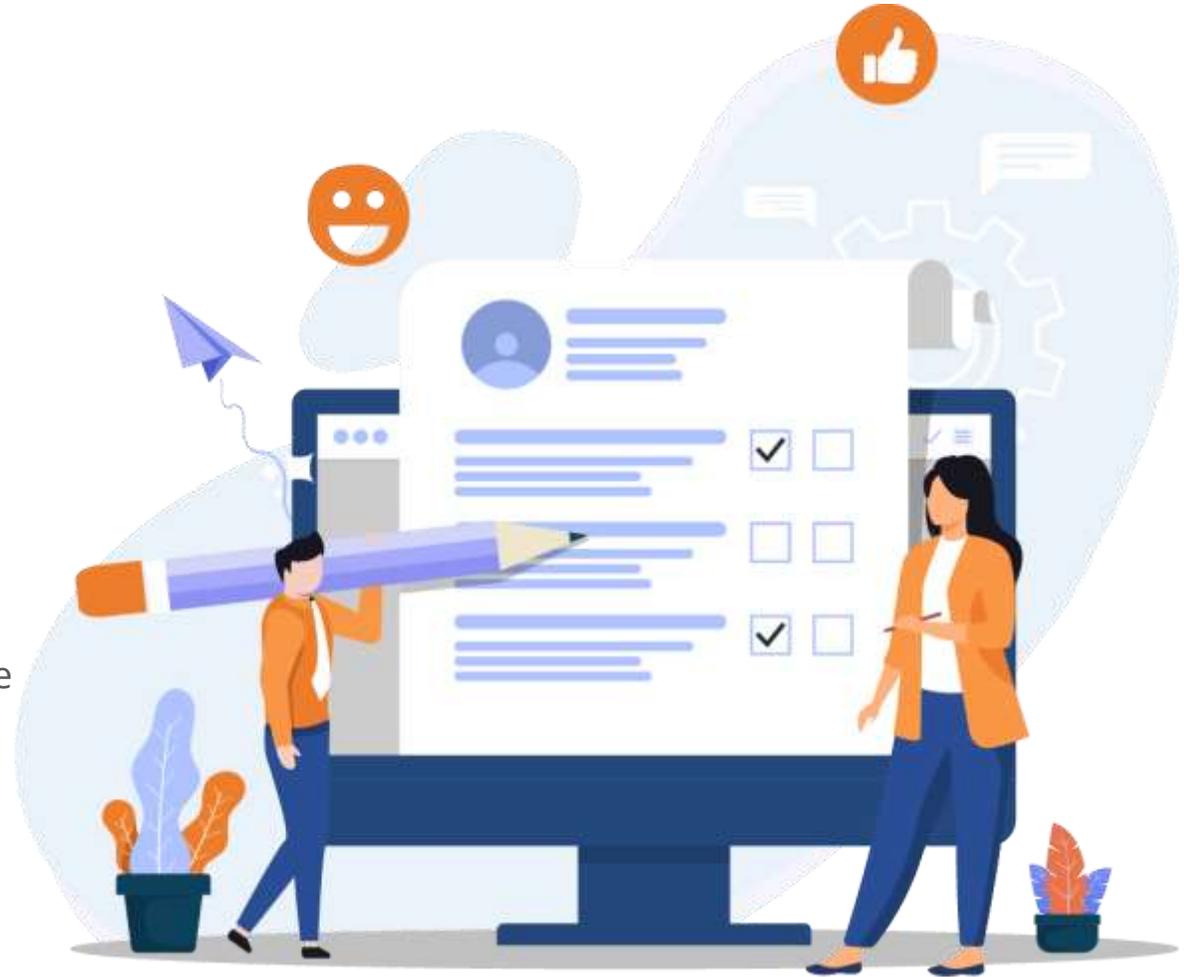
² Arnika Thakur, 'Fortune India 500: Why are there so few women leaders?', *Fortune India*, 5 January 2020. Available at: <https://www.fortuneindia.com/people/fortune-india-500-why-are-there-so-few-women-leaders/103961>

³ The Financial Express, 'Where are women in India's workforce? Slipping female LFPR is worrying trend', *The Financial Express*, 9 March 2021. Available [here](#).

Limitations

➤ The survey was open to all companies to participate, and the participation threshold was kept low due to low participation of women in the workforce, which stands at 20.8% in 2019, as per data from the World Bank. This also necessitated the incorporation of certain measures to ensure complete anonymity to survey respondents. A minimum threshold of women employees being 8 participants per company and/or at least 25% of the total number of employees was enforced. However, considering the aforementioned low participation of women in the workforce, maintaining this threshold continued to be a challenge.

➤ The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the availability of companies to take part in this survey. Lockdown restrictions, transitions within workplace environments and other unprecedented changes acted as deterrents to companies participating in the survey.

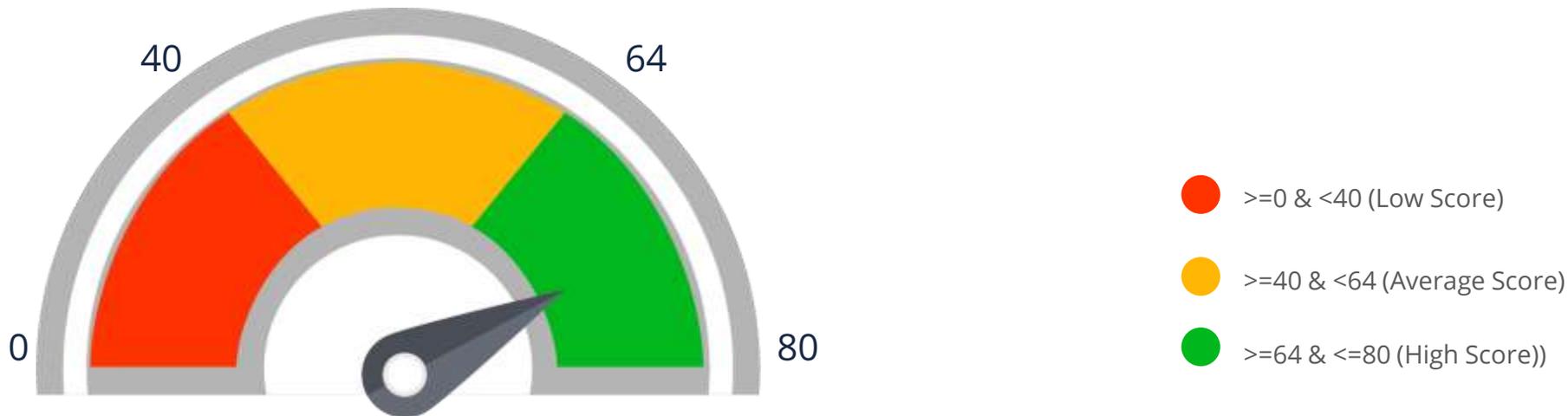


² Arnika Thakur, 'Fortune India 500: Why are there so few women leaders?', *Fortune India*, 5 January 2020. Available at: <https://www.fortuneindia.com/people/fortune-india-500-why-are-there-so-few-women-leaders/103961>

³ The Financial Express, 'Where are women in India's workforce? Slipping female LFPR is worrying trend', *The Financial Express*, 9 March 2021. Available [here](#).

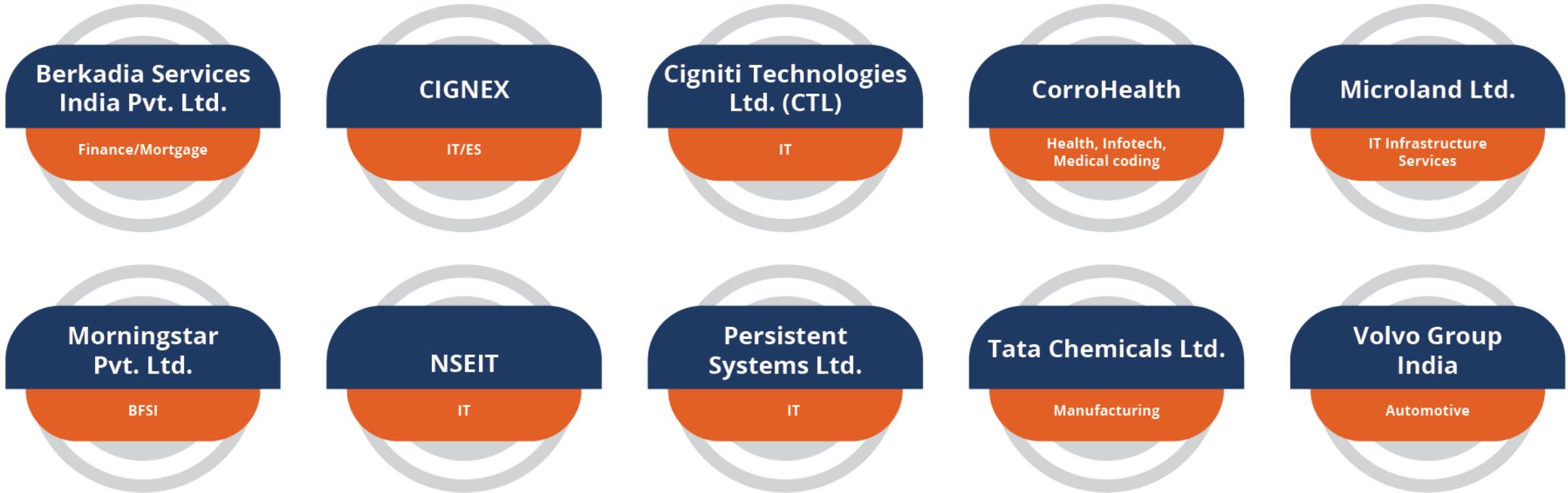
Participating Companies

Twenty-six companies in total participated in the survey. The companies that came on board for this were diverse in their areas of expertise and ranged between small, medium and large in terms of employee strength. The base criteria for judging the top ten companies was that the respondent company should have a minimum of 500 employees and from different hierarchical levels to ensure balanced representation of women amongst those employees. The diversity of the companies was also mapped in terms of their years of business ranging from conglomerate representatives to standalone enterprises. The respondent companies included fields such as heavy metal mining, IT, edutech, HR and staffing, hospitality, finance, automotives, media and PR, and NGOs, among others.



Participating Companies

Safe Places to Work - Certified*



⁴ Based on the scores obtained by the top 10 companies who took part in the 2020 survey.

Research Findings

a. Profile of Survey Respondents

The survey respondents represented a diverse pool based on their age, location, tenure, department, and their seniority in the organisation. In terms of age, 51% of the respondents were in the age group 25-34 years, followed by young graduates who formed 28% of the respondents.

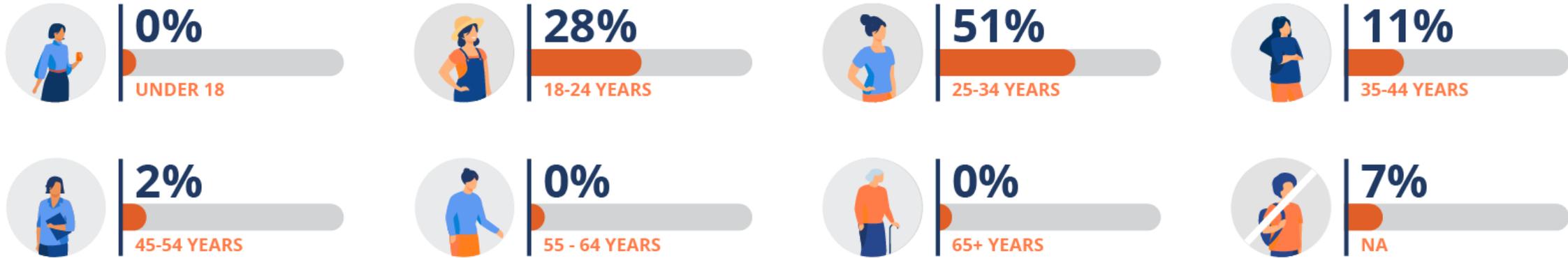


FIG 1: RESPONDENTS BY AGE GROUP

Research Findings

a. Profile of Survey Respondents

The Southern states, at 39%, were the most represented in the respondents' profile, while the North-East was the least represented with only 4%.

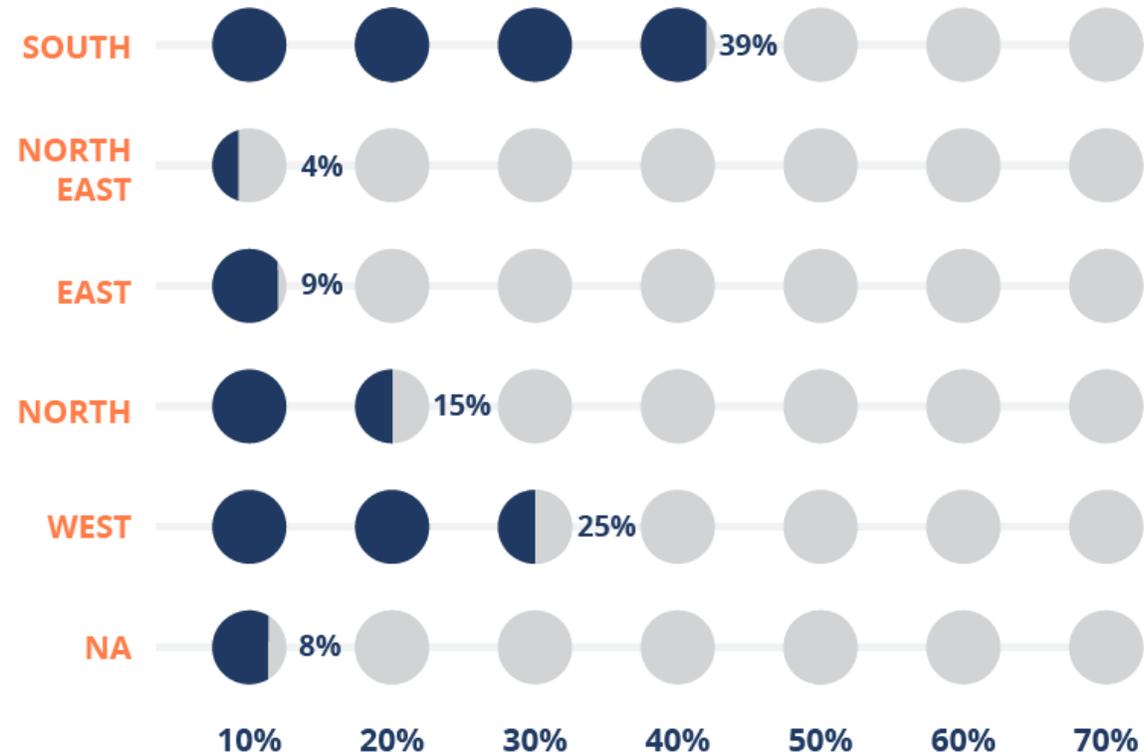


FIG 2: RESPONDENTS BY CURRENT LOCATION

Research Findings

a. Profile of Survey Respondents

More than half of the respondents were single (54%), while married women accounted for 37% of the total number of respondents. It must be noted here that 7% of the respondents chose not to disclose their marital status.

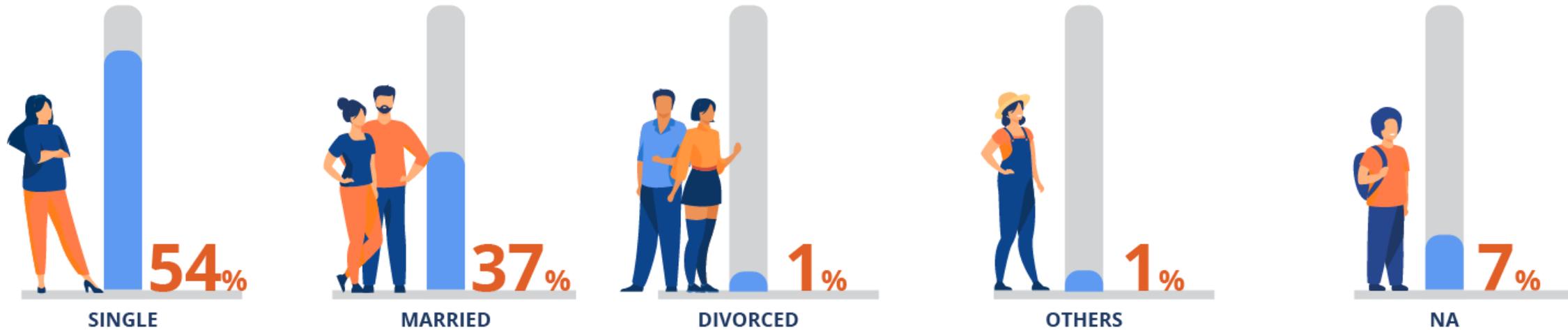


FIG 3: RESPONDENTS BY MARITAL STATUS

Research Findings

a. Profile of Survey Respondents

Among the respondents were a majority who shared the economic responsibilities of their households at 55%, while 37% were the sole earning members in theirs.

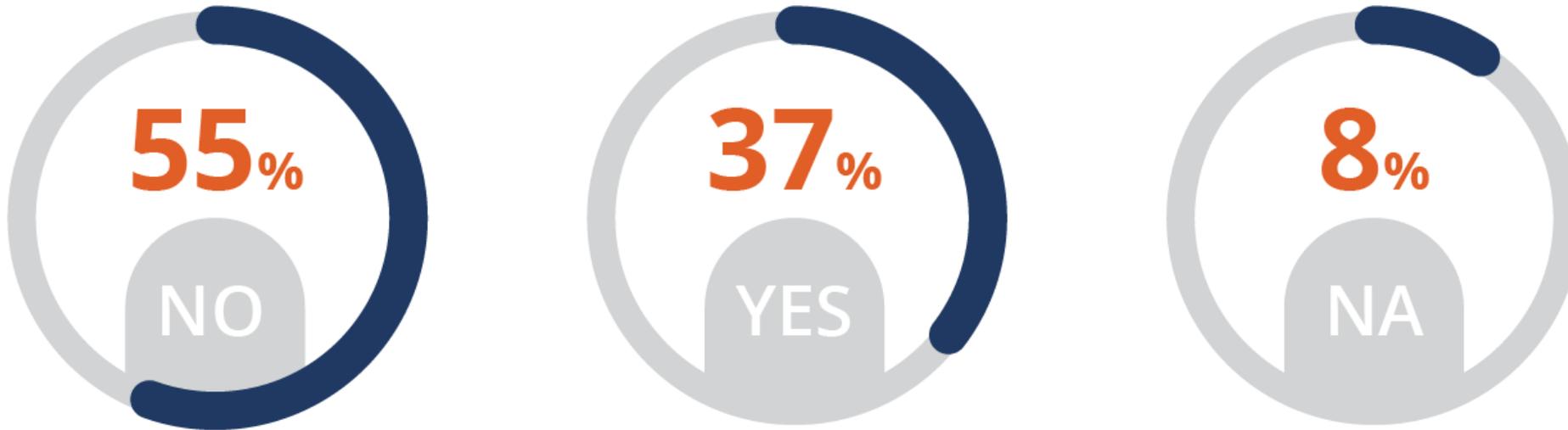


FIG 4: RESPONDENTS WHO ARE SOLE BREADWINNERS

Research Findings

a. Profile of Survey Respondents

Respondents were mostly from the Operations and IT departments (27% and 21%, respectively). Marketing was the least represented department in the survey, represented by only 2% of the total respondents.

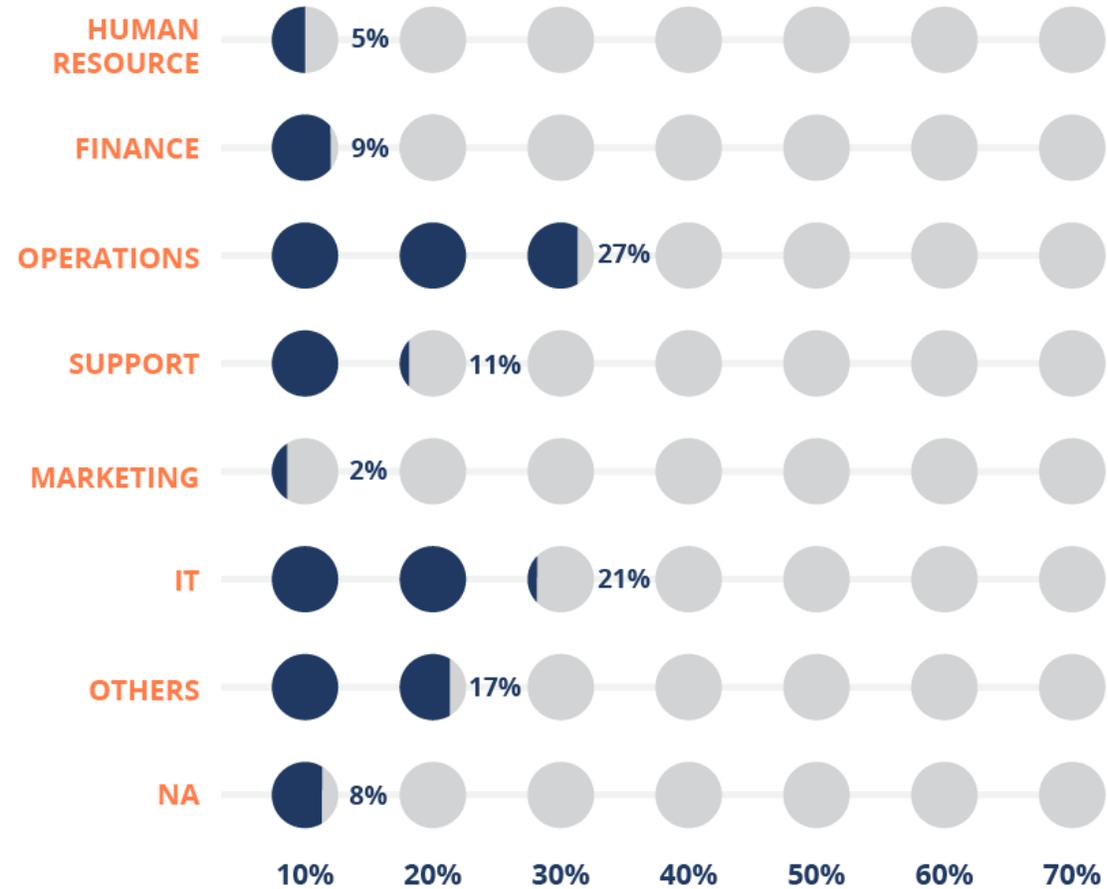


FIG 5: RESPONDENTS BY DEPARTMENT

Research Findings

a. Profile of Survey Respondents

With respect to the positions within the departments, 51% were in junior or executive roles, followed by middle management roles that accounted for 32% of the respondents. 3% of the respondents were in senior management roles.



FIG 6: RESPONDENTS BY SENIORITY LEVEL

The survey also showed that half of the respondents had spent less than 2 years in their current companies while a small percentage (9%) have been associated with their employer for more than seven years.

Research Findings

b. Key insights

Before delving into a detailed analysis of the responder data in the next section, the key insights that have emerged from the study are as follows:

Data shows that women across **AGE GROUPS AND SENIORITY LEVELS** face an **EQUAL AMOUNT OF HARASSMENT**.

In fact, harassment increases — if only marginally — as women climb higher up in the organisational hierarchy.

Single women are **1.2 times** as likely as married women to be harassed.



Research Findings

b. Key insights



of the respondents have faced **some form of sexual harassment**. This includes harassment in the physical workplace and on digital platforms while working virtually.



However, the harassment in the physical workplace is higher at 14% compared to 2% who face harassment while working from home in a virtual WFH environment.

Research Findings

b. Key insights



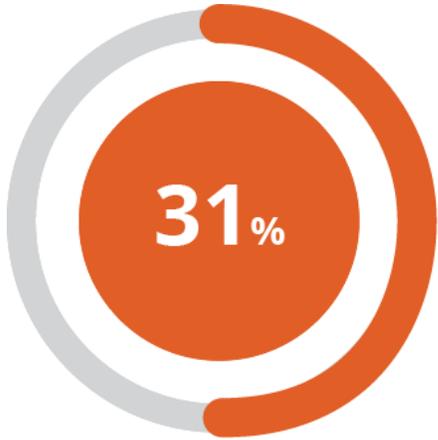
Among the respondents who faced some form of harassment, 14% were sexually **propositioned in exchange for a promotion/salary bump** or under the threat of a negative career impact.

18% of the women facing some form of harassment were **subjected to defamation/gossip for rejecting unwanted sexual advances**. This speaks to the critical role that power dynamics and company culture play in fostering a safe workplace.



Research Findings

b. Key insights



Diving deeper into the respondents who were harassed, we see that **31% of the respondents** in the respective areas of North East and East India face harassment.

Respondents facing harassment in the North East or East are **8 percentage** points higher than South or West.

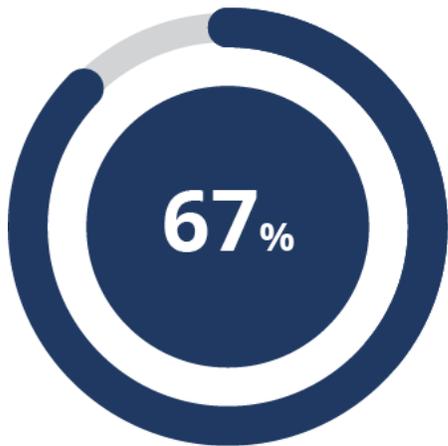


Research Findings

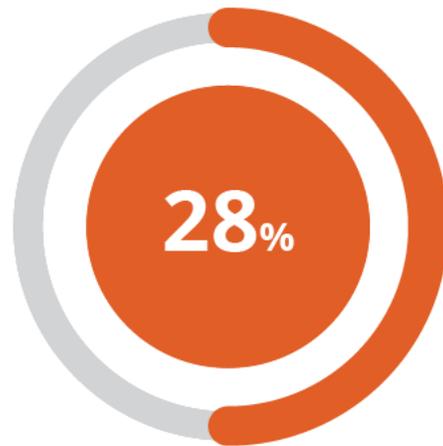
b. Key insights

While 24% of the women have said they faced some form of harassment, less than half, i.e. **only 11%, have identified** their perpetrators.

Out of the **563 women who have identified** their perpetrator



Supervisor



Colleagues



Customers

Research Findings

b. Key insights



When it comes to feeling safe in the workplace, 8% of the respondents said they **feel unsafe and vulnerable working late hours.**

A majority of the companies have ensured that they use safe/secure platforms for virtual calls and meetings.

More than 88% of the respondents surveyed **said they feel safe using their organisation's digital platform** for virtual calls and meetings.



Research Findings

b. Key insights

On digital platforms, the respondents facing harassment in the form of **unwanted messages at untimely hours from bosses / colleagues / subordinates / clients** rank highest. One in two women who face harassment on digital platforms face this form of harassment.



Research Findings

b. Key insights



87% of the female employees surveyed are **aware of the POSH Internal Committee**, and **90%** have answered that they **trust the system at their workplace to raise concerns**.

However, out of respondents who face some form of harassment, only 11% have brought this to the attention of HR / supervisor and action was taken following the complaint for 67% of them.



Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

The following section presents detailed analyses of the responder data based on 5 key areas of investigation: the nature and forms of sexual harassment, the perpetrators, levels of awareness about PoSH, digital harassment, office culture and support, and existing redressal mechanisms for complaints.

➤ Gender & Sexual Harassment

A key area of investigation in the survey was to examine gender and sexual harassment at the workplace – the number of women who face sexual harassment at the workplace, if there are any vulnerable sub-groups among women who have faced greater harassment, the most common forms of harassment, and the power dynamics of harassment. Each of these has been further elaborated below.



Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

➔ *What percentage of women face harassment?*

Of the 5235 women surveyed, 24% of the respondents face some form of sexual harassment.



FIG 7: PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN WHO HAVE FACED SOME FORM OF HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE

Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

The location and type of workplace is a factor in the amount of harassment women face. 14% of these respondents experienced harassment while working from a physical location (office). In contrast, 2% of those surveyed faced harassment on digital platforms alone while working from home virtually. 5% of the women face harassment in both the physical workplace and in digital platforms while working virtually.

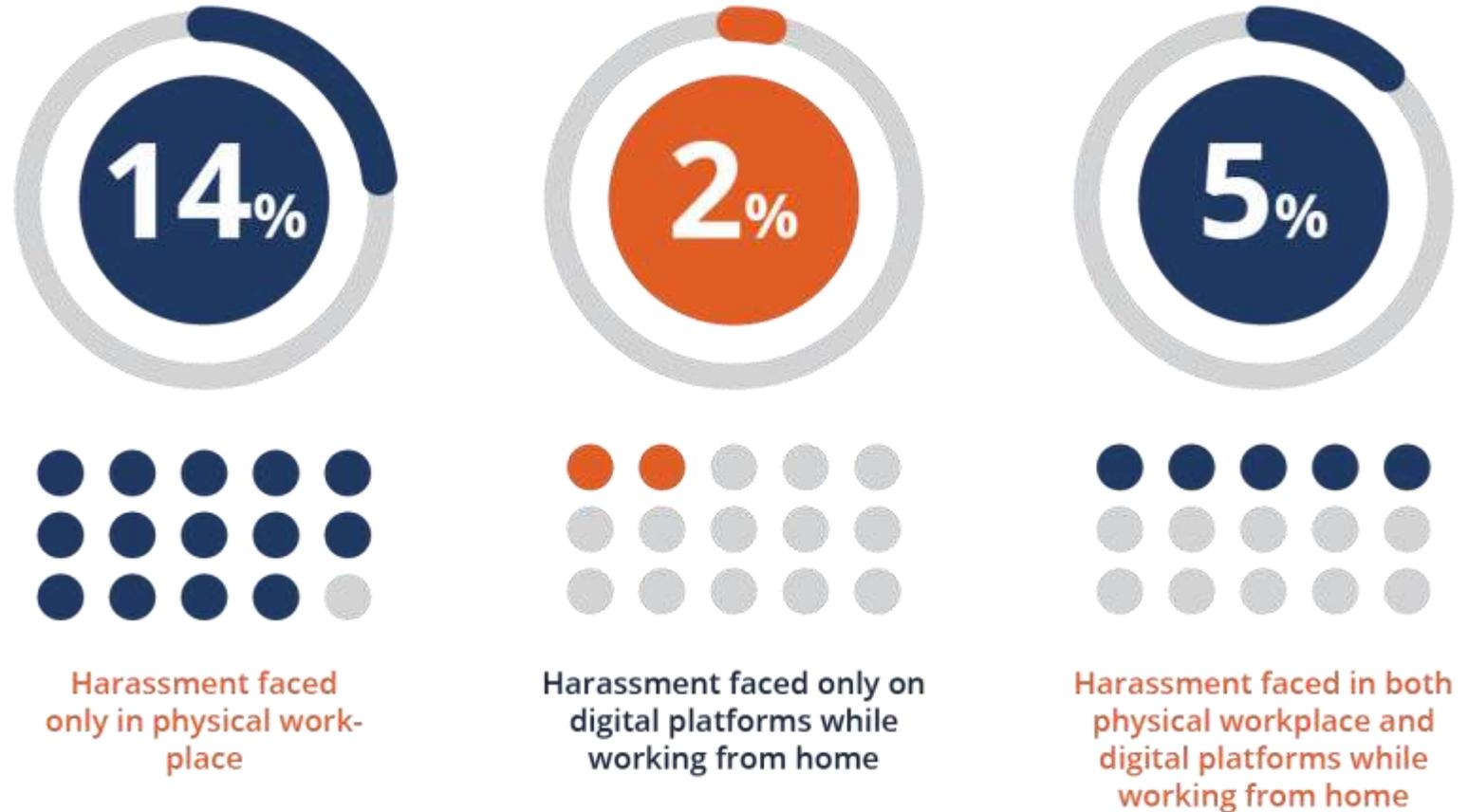


FIG 8 : % OF WOMEN WHO HAVE FACED HARASSMENT IN THE PHYSICAL, DIGITAL AND BOTH WORKPLACES

Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

➤ *What group of respondents are most subjected to harassment?*

The respondents were profiled across various parameters, both demographic as well as their position in the organisational hierarchy, in order to delineate certain groups of women who face more harassment than the others.

Data shows that women across age groups and seniority levels face an equal amount of harassment. In fact, harassment increases — if only marginally — as women climb higher up in the organisational hierarchy.



Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

BY AGE

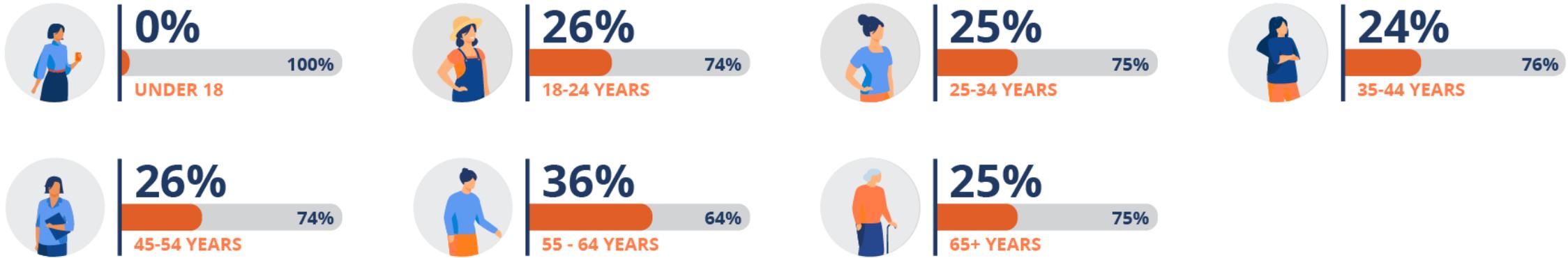


FIG 9 : SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE FACED HARASSMENT IN EACH AGE GROUP

Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

BY AGE

25% of the respondents face harassment in each age group (from 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54).

Even though the percentage of women facing harassment within the age group 55-64 is the highest, we have less than 0.5% respondents in this category. (We also have less than 0.5% respondents in the age group 65+). Please refer to Figure. 1 on the respondent profile for further details.



Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

BY SENIORITY

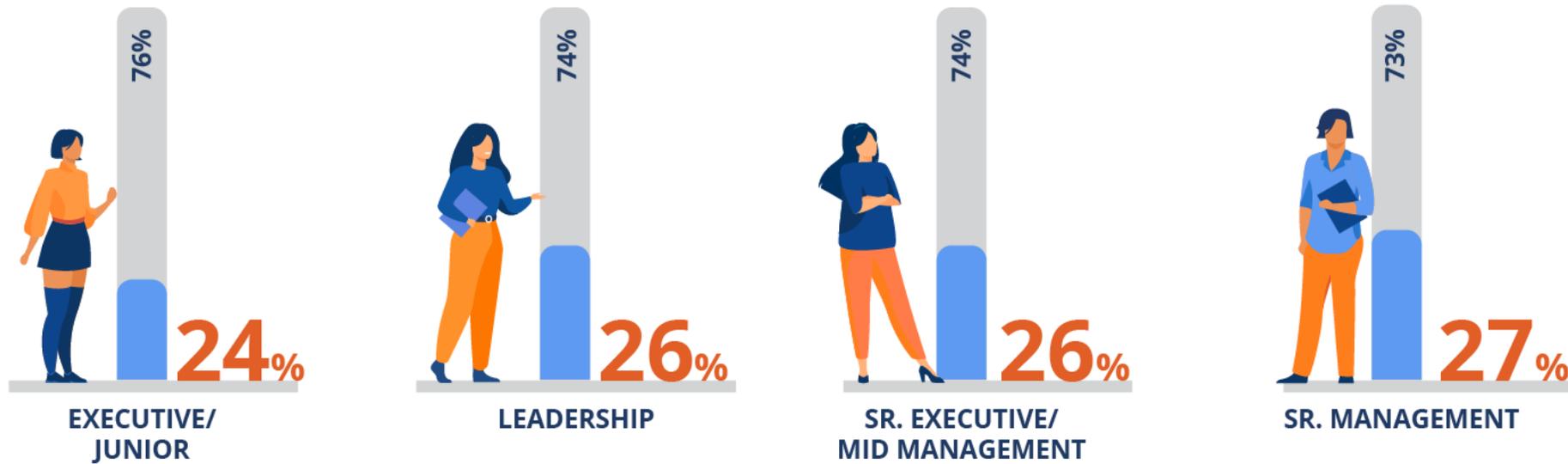


FIG 10 : SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE FACED HARASSMENT IN EACH SENIORITY LEVEL

⁵ Divya J Shekhar, 'Women hold 17% of board positions in corporate India, but only 11% leadership roles', *Forbes India*, 8 December 2020. Available at: <https://www.forbesindia.com/blog/missrepresent-women-gender-sexuality/women-hold-17-of-board-positions-in-corporate-india-but-only-11-leadership-roles/>

Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

➤ BY SENIORITY

Note that respondents facing harassment do not change across seniority levels significantly.

At the same time, one can still observe a marginal change, and it has gone up by 3 percentage points in the senior management compared to juniors and executive level.

However, it is critical to note that few women hold board and leadership positions in India, which also appears to be reflected in the pool of respondents surveyed, with only 9% of the total respondent pool from the senior management and leadership.



⁵ Divya J Shekhar, 'Women hold 17% of board positions in corporate India, but only 11% leadership roles', *Forbes India*, 8 December 2020. Available at: <https://www.forbesindia.com/blog/missrepresent-women-gender-sexuality/women-hold-17-of-board-positions-in-corporate-india-but-only-11-leadership-roles/>

Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

BY TENURE

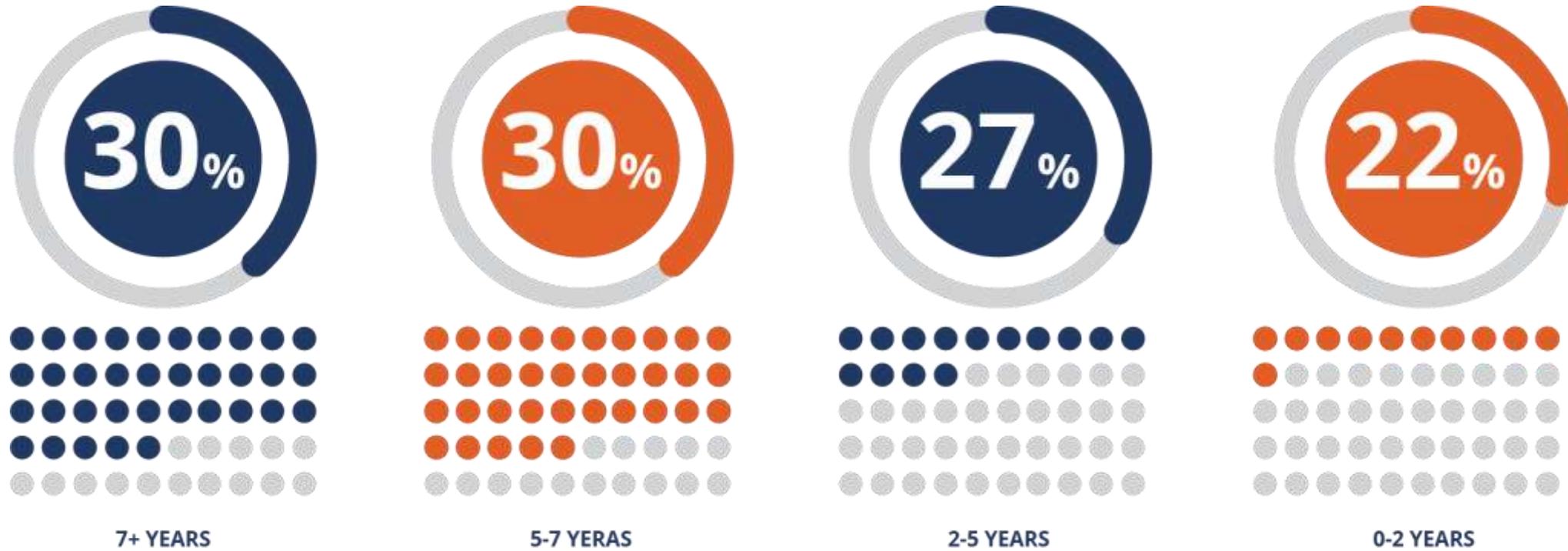


FIG 11: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE FACED HARASSMENT IN EACH TENURE GROUP

Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

➤ BY TENURE

Although marginally, the percentage of respondents harassed also goes up with the tenure in the organisation (by 8 percentage points from 0-2 years to 7+ years).

30% of the women who have been in the organisation longer than 7 years face some form of harassment in the workplace.



Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

BY DEPARTMENT

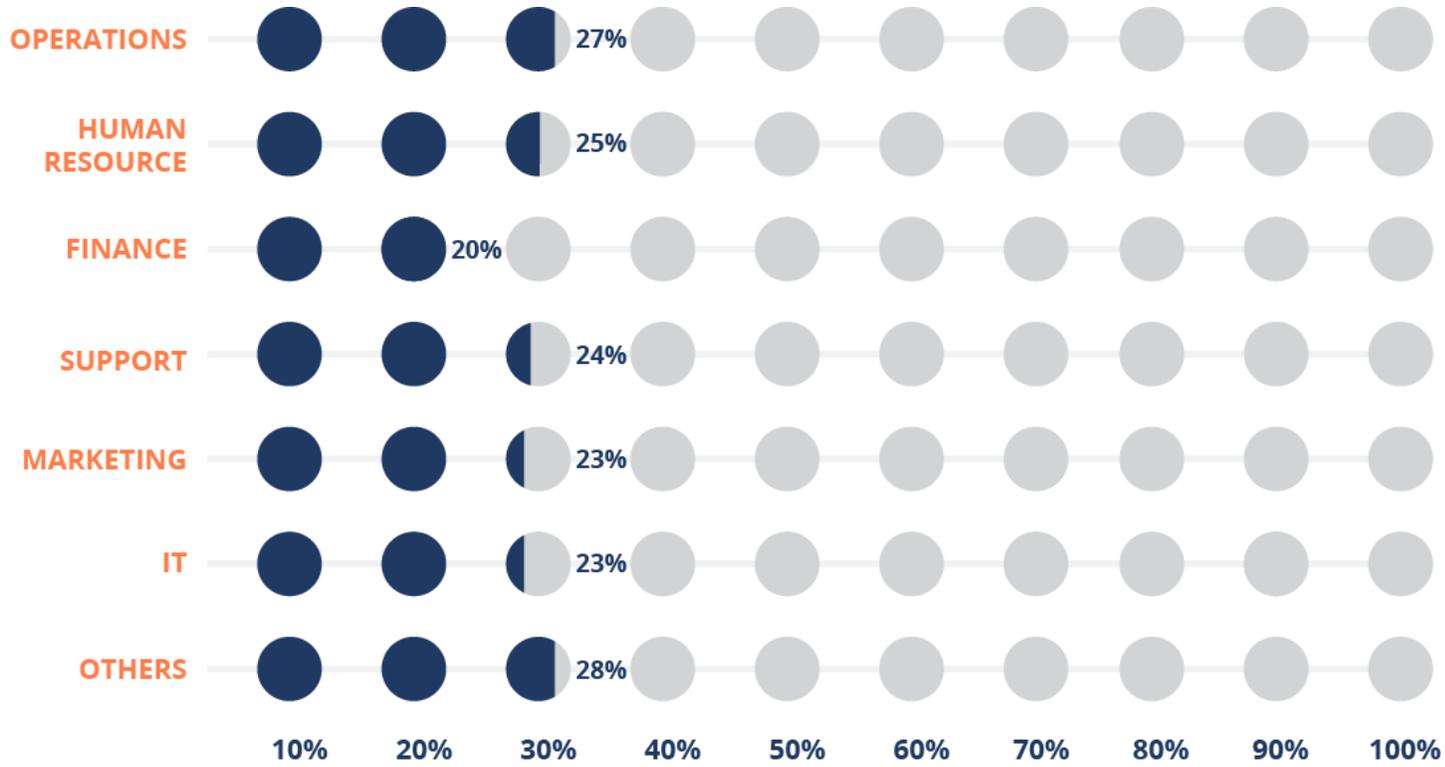


FIG 12: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE FACED HARASSMENT IN EACH DEPARTMENT

Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

BY DEPARTMENT

Operations and Human Resources are the two departments where respondents faced the most amount of harassment.

27% of respondents in the Operations department and 25% in Human Resources have faced some form of harassment.

17% of the total respondents were from 'Other' departments outside of the six specifically listed in the survey. Out of this 17%, 28% have faced harassment.



Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

BY CURRENT LOCATION

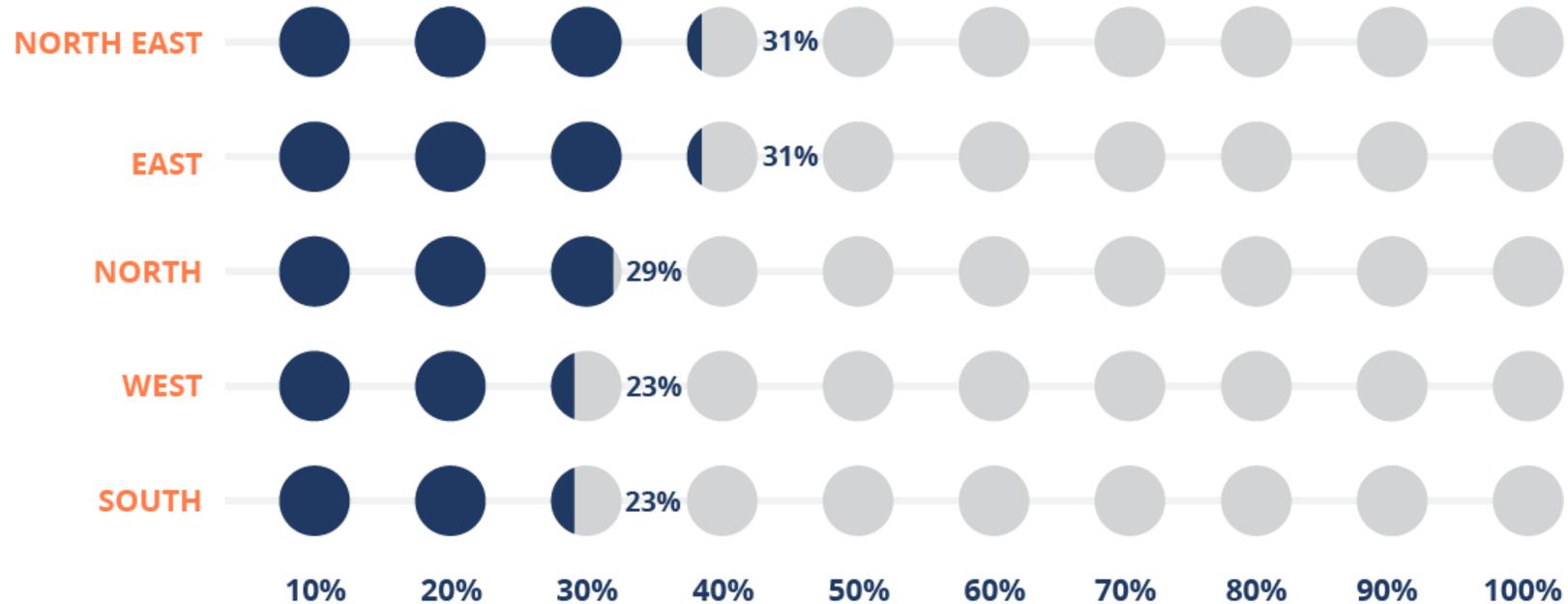


FIG 13: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE FACED HARASSMENT IN THEIR CURRENT LOCATION

Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

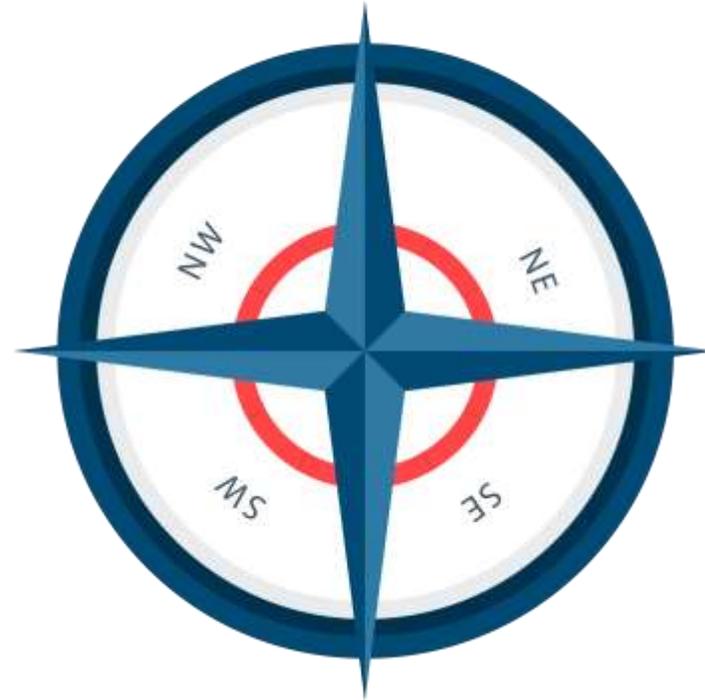
BY CURRENT LOCATION

31% of the respondents in the respective areas of North-East, East India face harassment.

Percentage respondents facing harassment in the East or North-East are 8 percentage points higher than in the South or West. 9% and 4% of our respondents fall in these two regions, respectively.

15% of the respondents are in the North, out of which 29% face harassment.

In the South and the West, 23% of the respondents face harassment, respectively. More than one-third of our survey respondents are in the South.



Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

BY MARITAL STATUS & ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION TO THE FAMILY



FIG 14: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE FACED HARASSMENT IN EACH MARITAL STATUS CATEGORY

⁶ Luis A. Andres et al., 'Precarious Drop: Reassessing Patterns of Female Labor Force Participation in India', *World Bank Group*, April 2017. Available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/559511491319990632/pdf/WPS8024.pdf>

⁷ Namita Bhandare, 'As Indian Women Leave Jobs, Single Women Keep Working. Here's Why', *India Spend*, 23 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.indiaspend.com/as-indian-women-leave-jobs-single-women-keep-working-heres-why-71758/>

⁸ Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 'Marital Status by Single Year Age and Sex', *Census of 2011*. Available at: <https://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/C-series/c-2a.html>

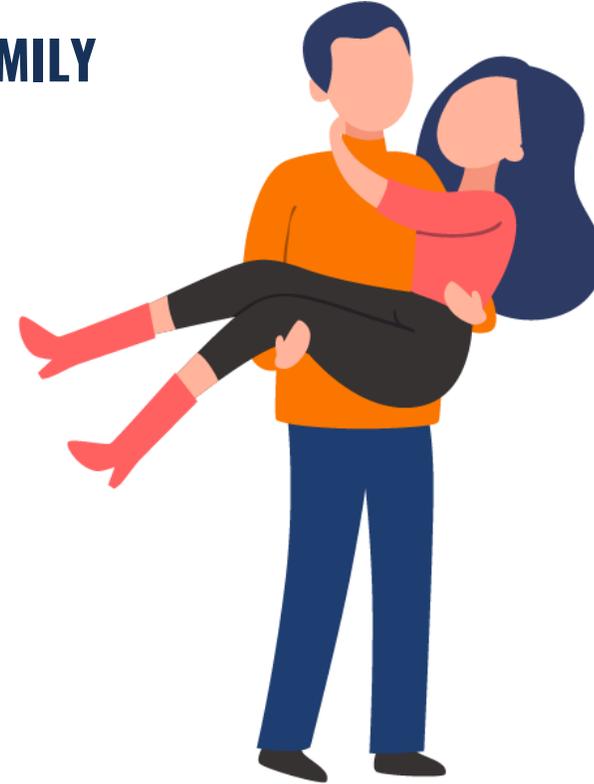
Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

BY MARITAL STATUS & ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION TO THE FAMILY

A 2017 World Bank report, drawn from India's census data till 2011 noted that female labour force participation dropped by 19.6 million women from 2004–05 to 2011–12. However, there is an exception to the general trend of women leaving the workforce, and it is single women. The census data shows a 39% increase in the number of single women – widows, never married, divorced, abandoned – from 51.2 million women in 2001 to 71.4 million in 2011.

A parameter unique to the Indian workforce is the marital status of women and the potential role it plays in the harassment they face at the workplace. Using this as a hypothesis, the survey sought information on the respondents' marital status and their economic contribution to the family.



⁶ Luis A. Andres et al., 'Precarious Drop: Reassessing Patterns of Female Labor Force Participation in India', *World Bank Group*, April 2017. Available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/559511491319990632/pdf/WPS8024.pdf>

⁷ Namita Bhandare, 'As Indian Women Leave Jobs, Single Women Keep Working. Here's Why,' *India Spend*, 23 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.indiaspend.com/as-indian-women-leave-jobs-single-women-keep-working-heres-why-71758/>

⁸ Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 'Marital Status by Single Year Age and Sex', *Census of 2011*. Available at: <https://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/C-series/c-2a.html>

Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

BY MARITAL STATUS & ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION TO THE FAMILY

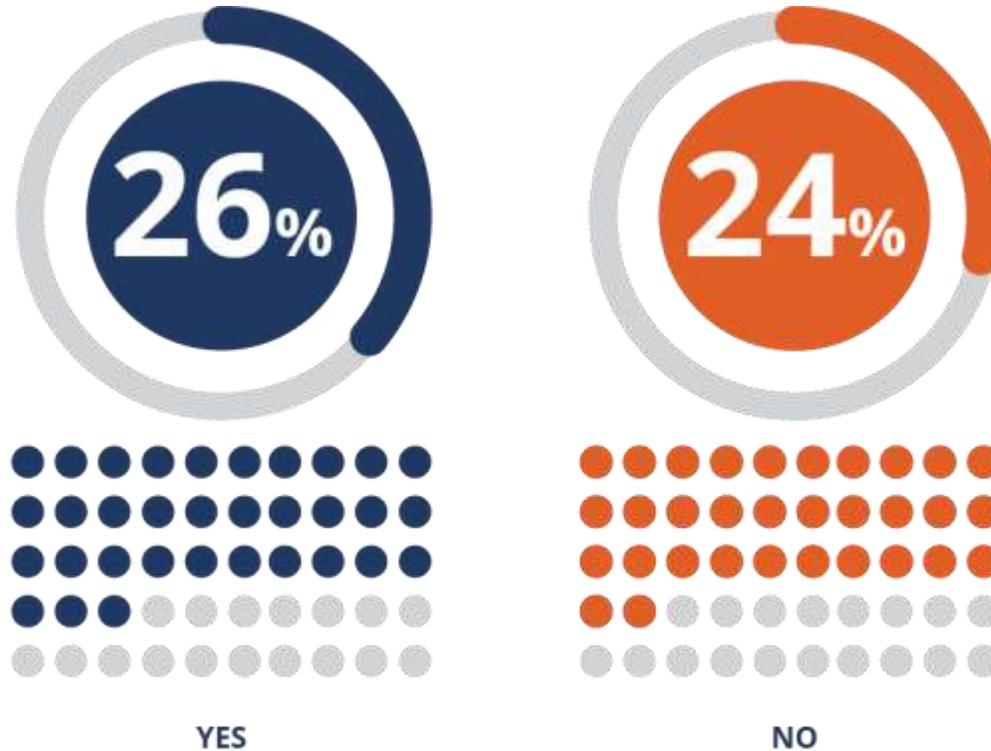


FIG 15: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE FACED HARASSMENT WITHIN SOLE BREADWINNERS AND OTHERS

Research Findings

c. Detailed survey analysis

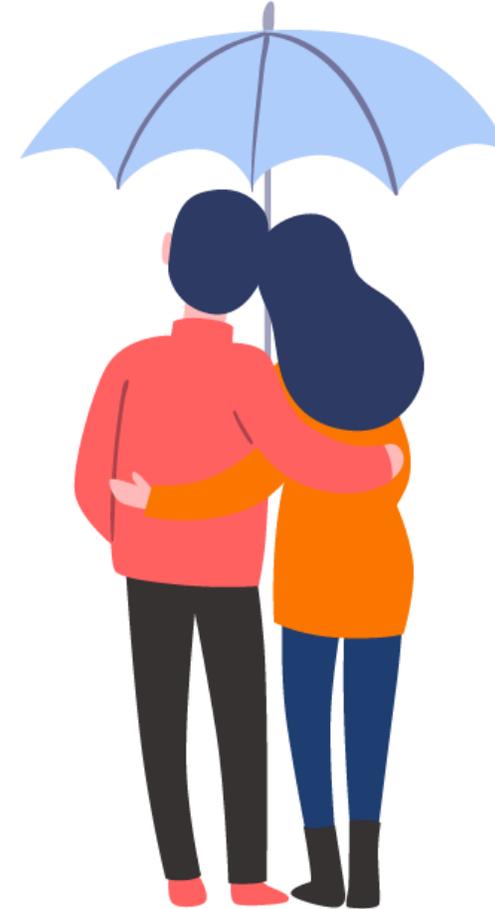
BY MARITAL STATUS & ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION TO THE FAMILY

Of all the polled respondents, 40% are married, and 58% are single.

Out of all the married respondents, 22% face harassment.

Out of the single women, 28% face harassment. They are 1.2 times as likely as married women to be harassed.

On the contrary, the female employee's economic contribution to the family as a sole breadwinner or otherwise has little bearing on the harassment they face. As the data shows, the share of respondents who are harassed does not vary significantly (only 2 percentage points) between women who are sole breadwinners and those who aren't.



Research Findings

➔ *What are the most common form of harassment in the physical workplace?*

Here, the data calculated is a percentage of women facing harassment in the physical workplace. Harassment in the virtual workplace or work from home situations has been delineated in the subsequent sections.

Unwanted looks or stares is rated as the most rampant form of sexual harassment faced by the respondents who were subjected to some form of harassment in the physical workplace. This is followed by unwanted comments/remarks about their physical appearance and dressing.



Research Findings

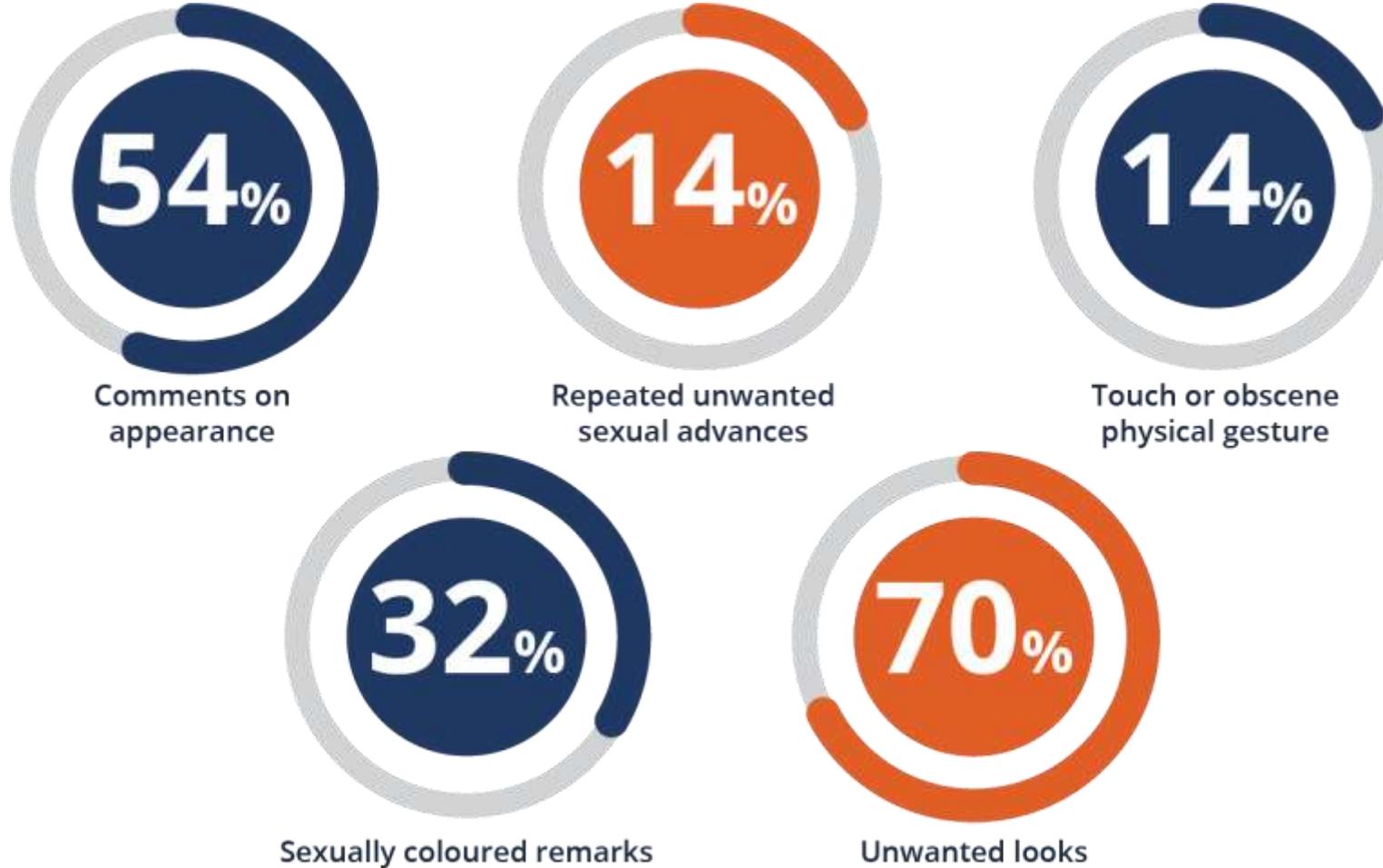


FIG 16: COMMON FORMS OF HARASSMENT IN THE PHYSICAL WORKSPACE

Research Findings

- 14% of the women who faced harassment in the office continue to receive repeated unwanted sexual advances after they have expressed disinterest, making them feel uncomfortable.
- Out of the 1262 respondents facing harassment in the physical workplace, 29% of the respondents were asked intrusive questions about their personal life making them feel uncomfortable.
- The other forms of harassment faced by respondents include being subjected to sexually coloured remarks and unwanted touch or obscene physical gestures.
- Safety, both actual and implied, were accounted for in the survey. Respondents were asked about their comfort with working late hours at their workplace. **8%** of all the respondents polled said they feel unsafe and vulnerable working late hours.



Research Findings

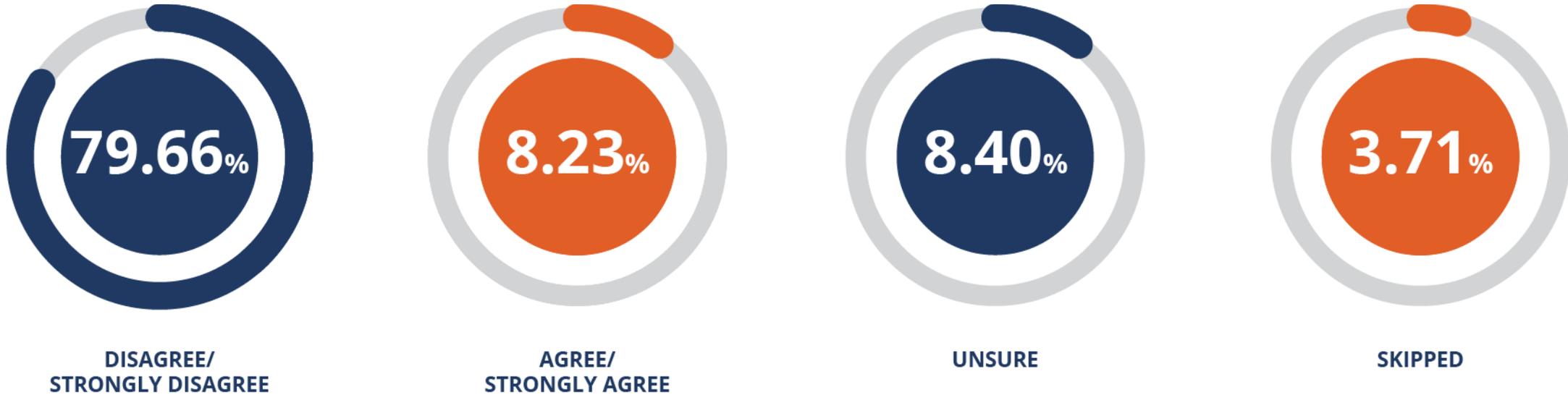
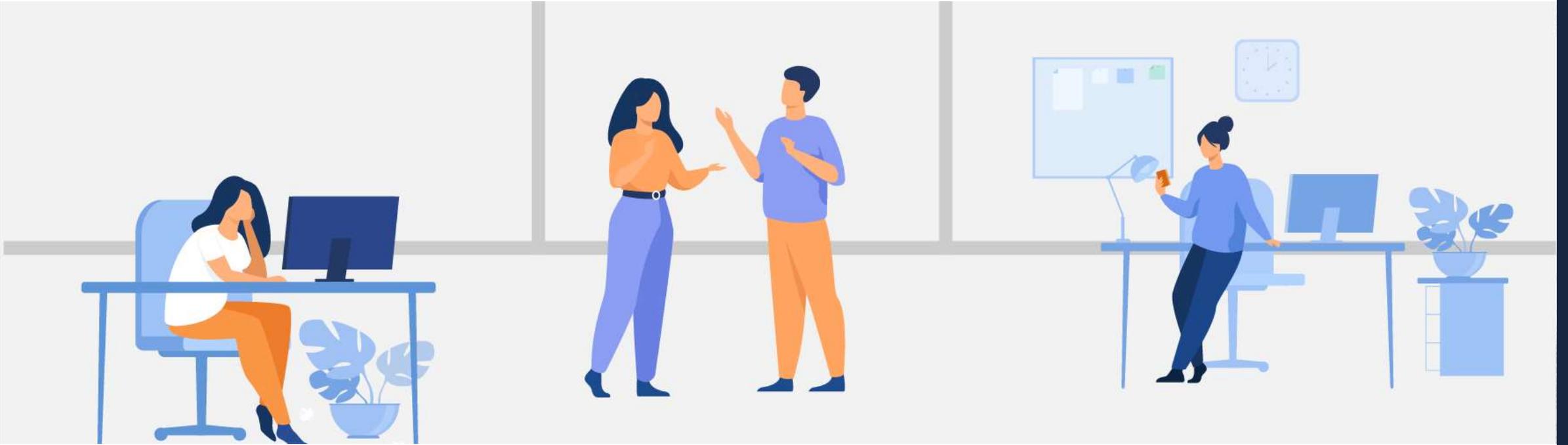


FIG 17: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO FEEL UNSAFE WORKING LATE HOURS/NIGHT SHIFTS

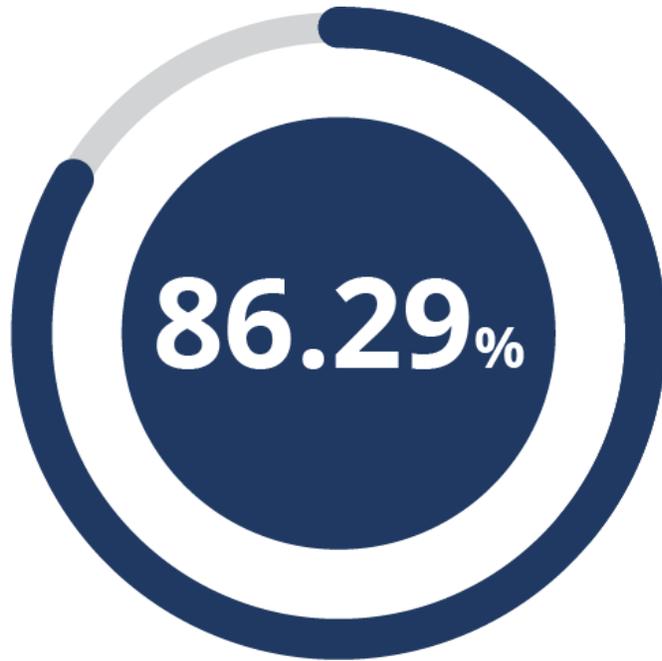


How do power and organisational culture determine harassment in the workplace?

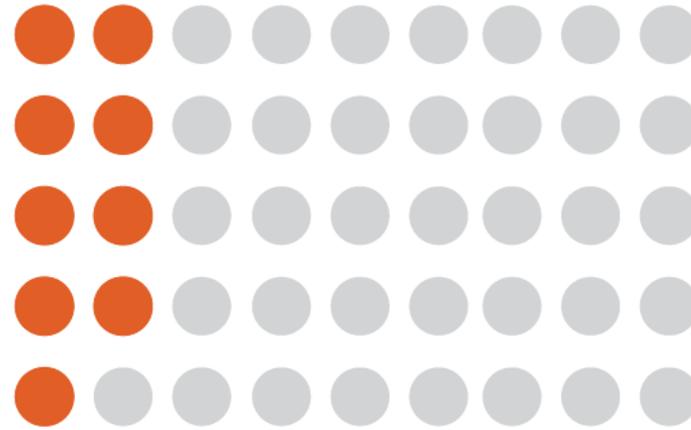
Within organisations, power plays a critical role in fostering a safe workplace. In order to understand the role power plays in augmenting harassment, we asked the respondents to contrast harassment against professional growth and organisational culture.

Out of the 24% of the respondents who faced some form of harassment, 14% of the respondents were sexually propositioned in exchange for a promotion/salary bump or under the threat of a negative career impact.

Research Findings



NEVER FACED HARASSMENT



13.71%

FACED SOME FORM OF HARASSMENT

FIG 18: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY PROPOSITIONED IN EXCHANGE FOR A PROMOTION/SALARY BUMP

Research Findings

18% of the women facing some form of harassment were subjected to defamation/gossip for rejecting unwanted sexual advances.



FIG 19: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO DEFAMATION/GOSSIP FOR REJECTING SEXUAL ADVANCES

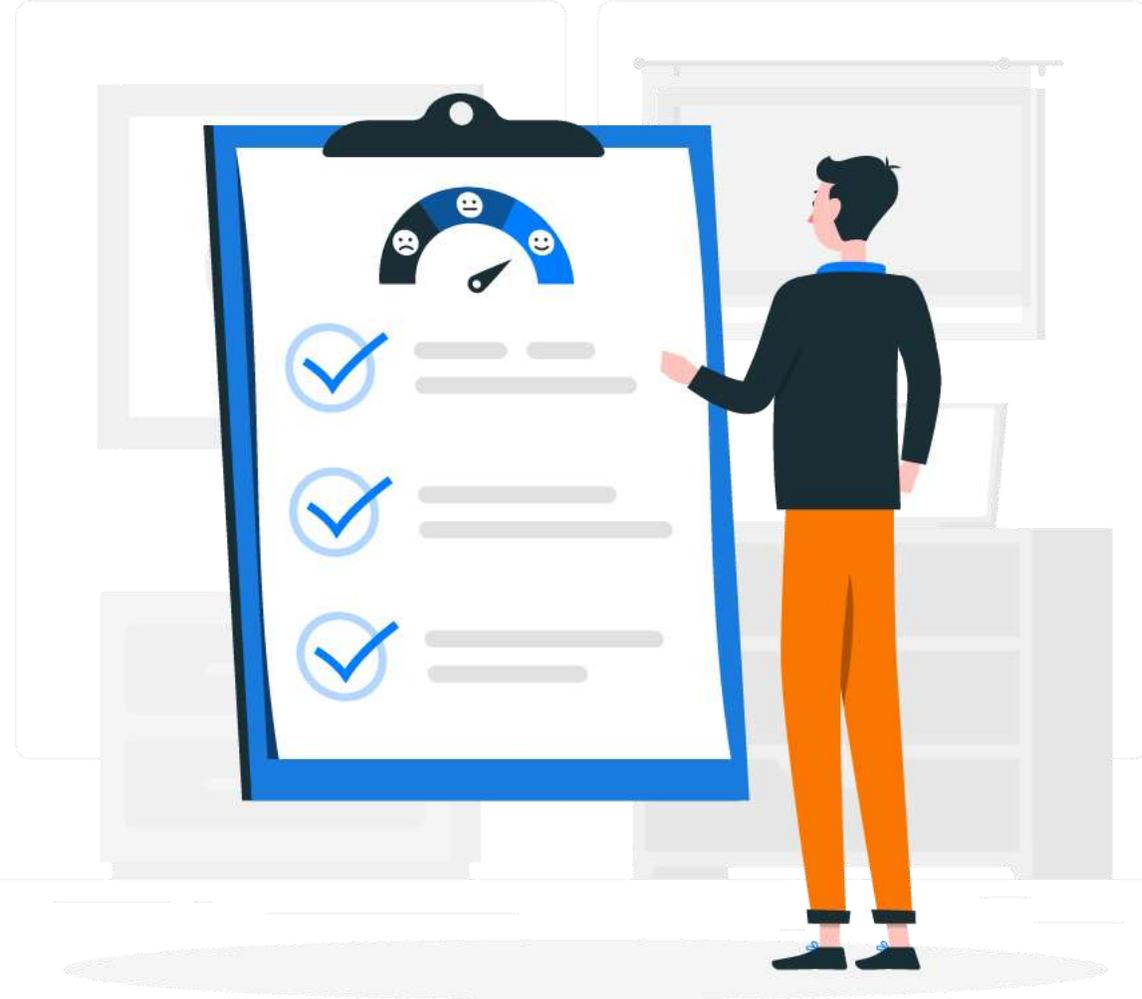
Research Findings

Who are the perpetrators?

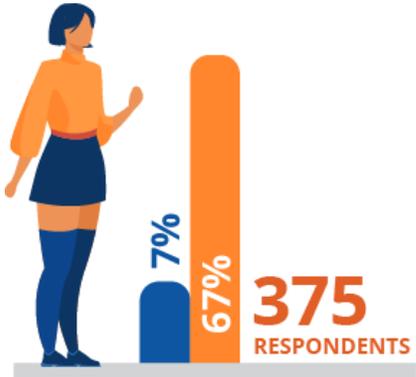
The respondents were further asked to profile the perpetrators of harassment from among superiors, colleagues and external partners (vendors/clients).

While 24% of the women have said they faced some form of harassment, less than half, i.e. only 11% have identified their perpetrators.

The table below enumerates the percentage of these perpetrators as against all survey respondents in Column B and against all respondents who have identified the perpetrator in Column C.



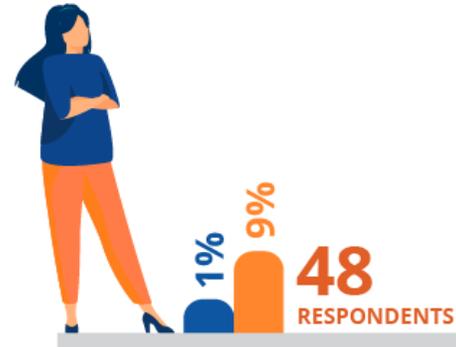
Research Findings



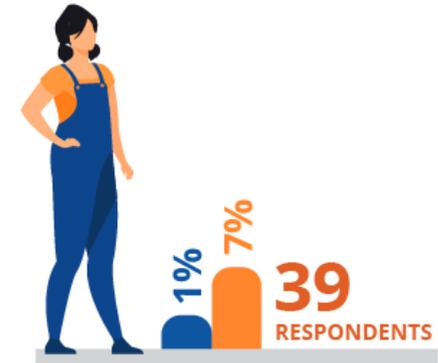
Superiors



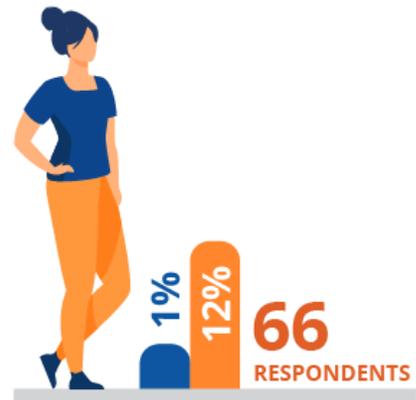
Colleagues



Third party personnel:
Eg. Consultants



Employees of
contractor/ vendor



Customer



Others



No Response



As a % of unique Respondents surveyed
(out of 5235 respondents)

As a % of distinct respondents who have
identified a perpetrator (out of 563 respondents)

Research Findings

Out of the **563** women who have identified their perpetrator



Supervisor



Colleagues



Customers

Research Findings

iii) PoSH compliance by the companies

In this section, the report looks at three significant aspects around an organisation's adoption and implementation of PoSH: the frequency of training/workshops conducted and the level of awareness about the PoSH Internal Committee among its employees.

How frequently are training sessions/workshops conducted?

As per the PoSH law, the employer is mandated to,

"...[O]rganize workshops and awareness programmes at regular intervals for sensitizing employees on the issues and implications of workplace sexual harassment and organizing orientation programmes for members of the IC (Internal Committee)."

The exact duration of these 'regular intervals' is not specified. Our research shows that 33% stated that sessions are conducted every quarter, whereas 18% of respondents believe that sessions are not conducted regularly enough. It seems that the frequency of the training vary considerably across organisations since there is no predetermined rule.

⁹ Nishith Desai Associates, *Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace*, p.17, December 2020. Available at: https://www.nishithdesai.com/fileadmin/user_upload/pdfs/Research%20Papers/Prevention_of_Sexual_Harassment_at_Workplace.pdf

Research Findings

Moreover, it was noted that almost 86% of the total respondents agreed that their organisation conducted PoSH awareness workshops for all their employees on an annual basis. This points to the fact that most organisations consistently conduct workshops at least once a year.

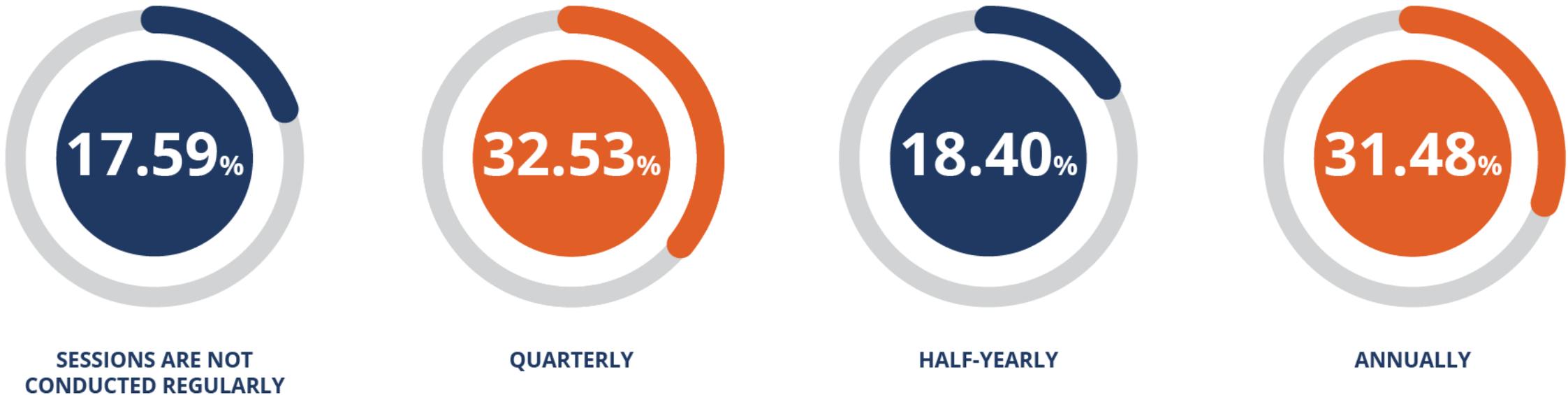


FIG 20: INTERVALS AT WHICH RESPONDENTS' ORGANISATIONS ENGAGE IN POSH AWARENESS

Research Findings

Are respondents aware of the PoSH Internal Committee at their workplace?

As per Section 4 of the PoSH Act, it is required for

“...[a]n employer to set up an ‘internal committee’ (“IC”) at each office or branch, of an organization employing 10 or more employees, to hear and redress grievances pertaining to sexual harassment”.

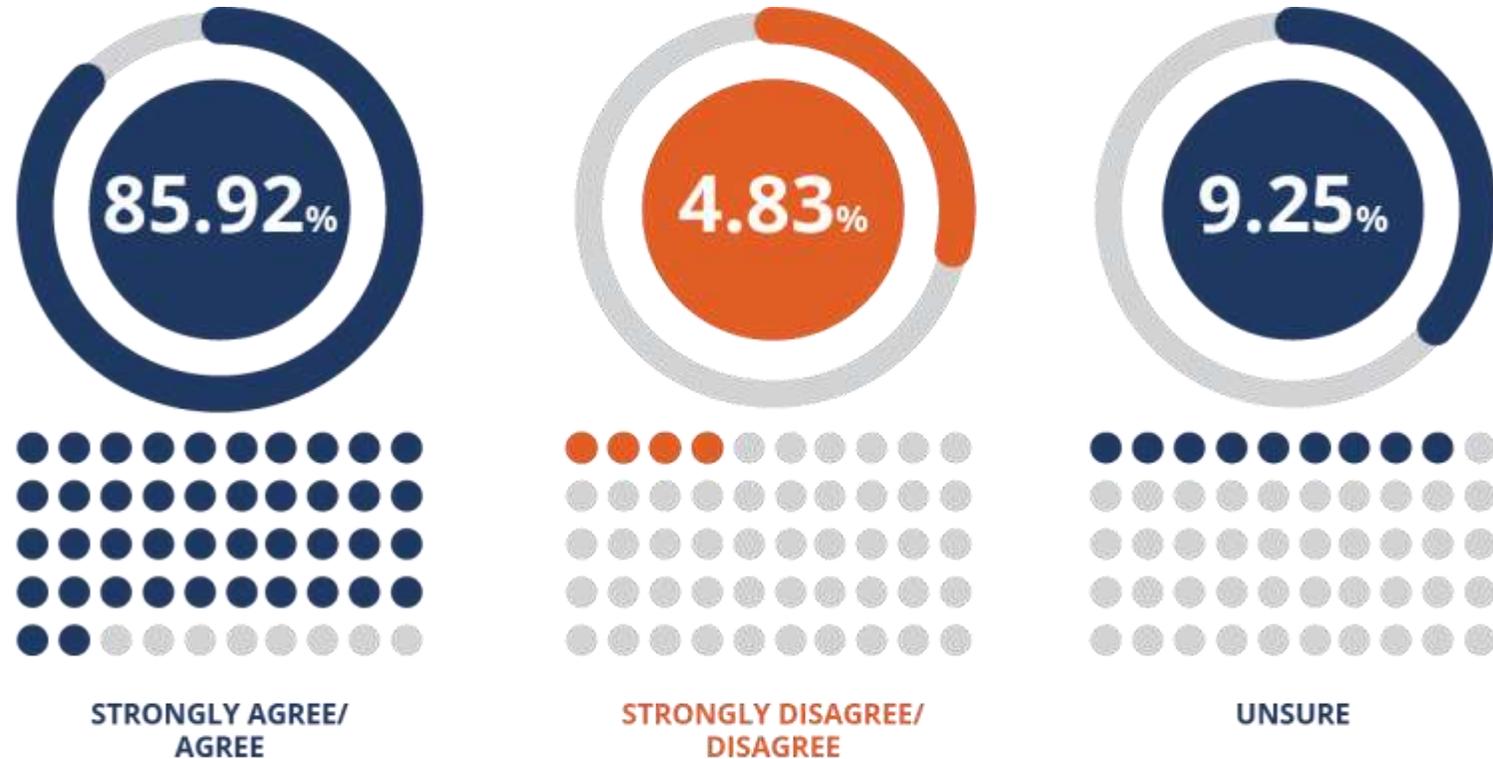


FIG 21: ORGANISATIONS CONDUCT ONLINE OR IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE POSH ACT FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

¹⁰ Nishith Desai Associates, *Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace*, p.7, December 2020. Available at: https://www.nishithdesai.com/fileadmin/user_upload/pdfs/Research%20Papers/Prevention_of_Sexual_Harassment_at_Workplace.pdf

Research Findings

Among 5235 respondents in this study, a vast majority of the respondents, i.e. 87% are aware of the PoSH Internal Committee at their organisation. This is a positive sign, indicating that not only do PoSH Internal Committees exist but they are also known and recognised by the employees.

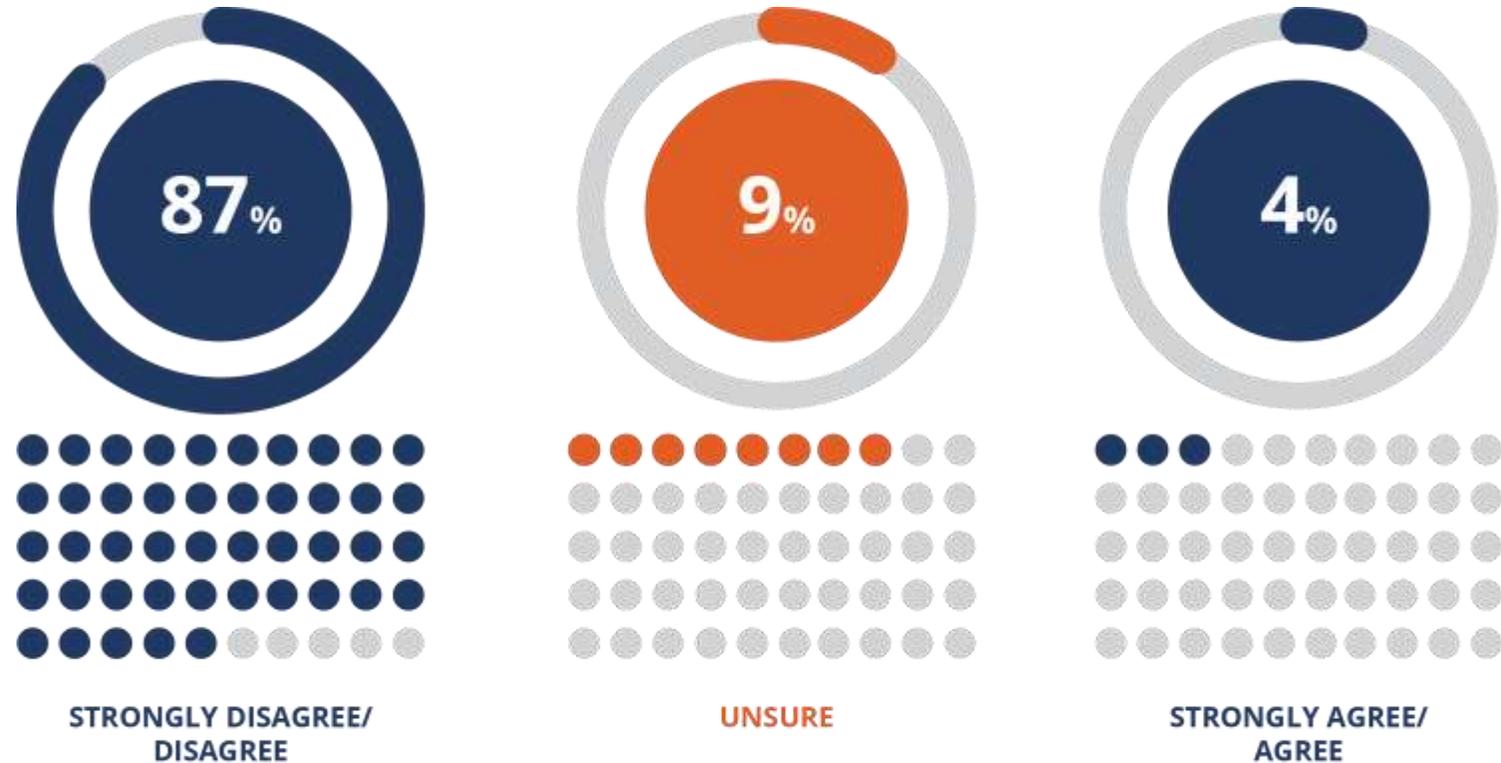


FIG 22: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO WERE AWARE OF THE POSH INTERNAL COMMITTEE

Research Findings

➤ Harassment in the new normal

The COVID-19 pandemic has warranted the consideration of the unique implications of work from home (WFH). A change in the 'workplace' has led to a change in the scope, form and platform of harassment at work. This includes, among others, the various kinds of harassment on virtual workspaces, technological misuse, and the resultant blurring of personal and professional boundaries. Since working from home on digital platforms has become what many call 'the new normal', the survey focused on gaining insights into the level and kinds of virtual harassment faced by women, how virtual harassment fares as compared to harassment at the physical workplace and the safety of digital platforms.



Research Findings

How has WFH impacted the safety of women?

7% of the total respondents face harassment on digital platforms while working virtually. This is significantly lower than harassment faced in the physical workplace.

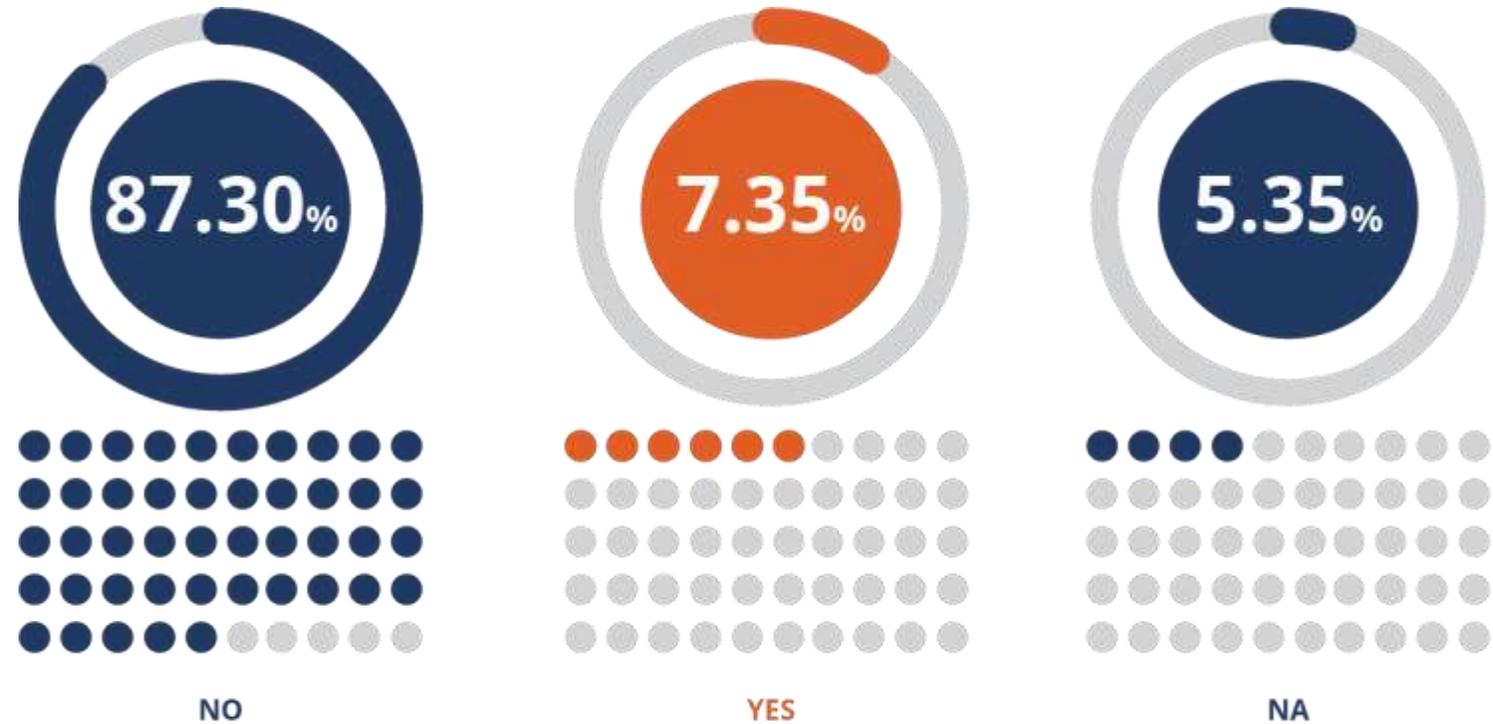


FIG 23: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE FACED HARASSMENT IN DIGITAL PLATFORMS WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

Research Findings

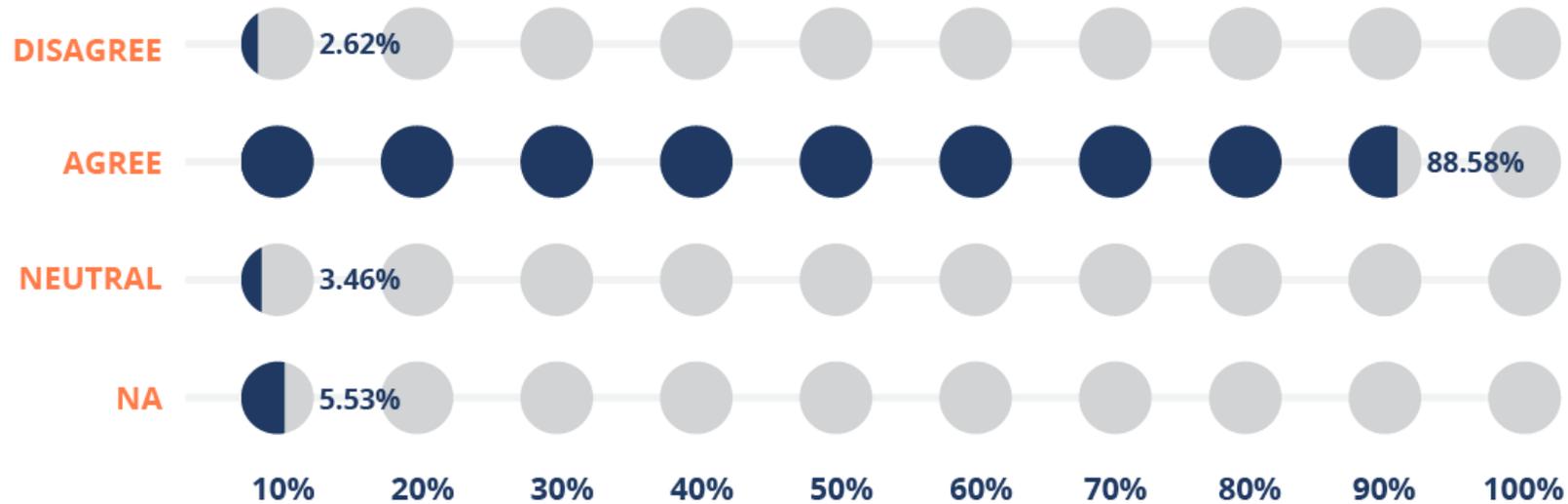


FIG 24: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO FEEL PLATFORMS FOR VIRTUAL CALLS ARE SAFE AND SECURE

Moreover, the survey garnered mostly positive responses to the question around the safety and security of digital platforms used at the workplace for virtual calls. 88% of the respondents surveyed feel safe using their organisation's digital platform(s) such as Zoom, Skype for Business, Microsoft Teams etc., for virtual calls and meetings, while about 3% disagree.

Research Findings

How does harassment continue in the digital/virtual environment?

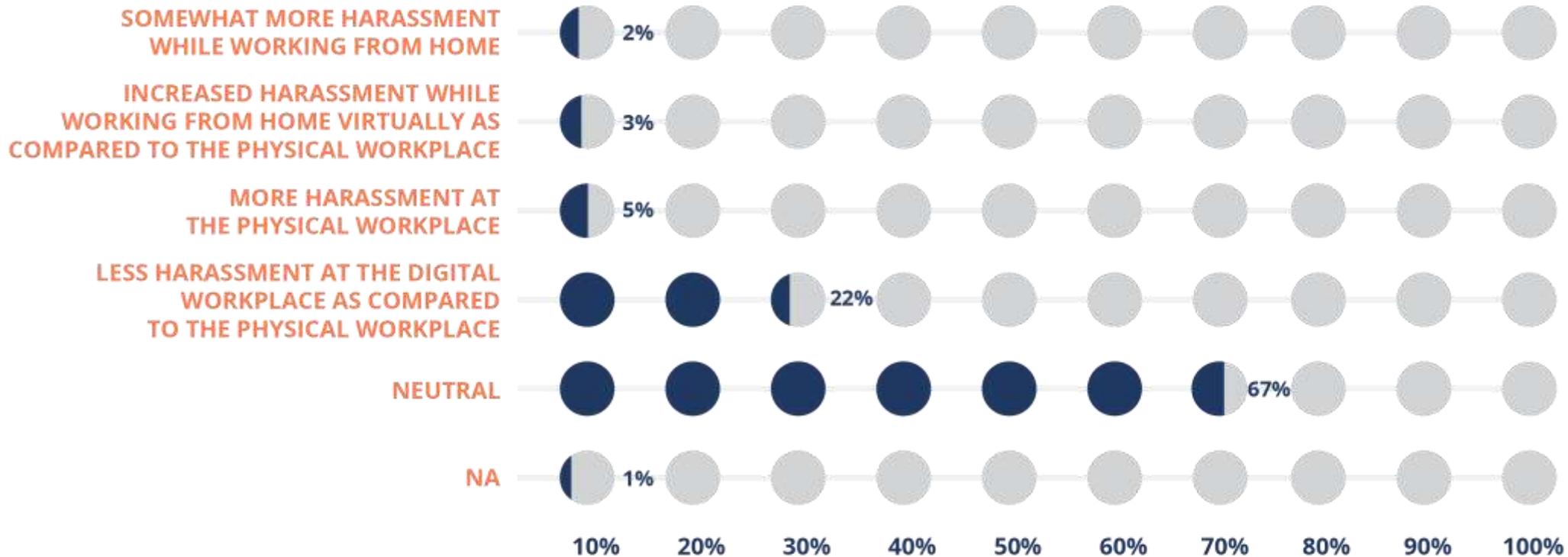


FIG 25: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO FEEL PLATFORMS FOR VIRTUAL CALLS ARE SAFE AND SECURE

Research Findings

The survey sought to find out whether respondents face more harassment in the work from home environment or in the physical environment. Out of the respondents facing harassment in the physical workplace, 67% feel neutral about both situations (i.e. they do not see much of a difference since a shift happened to the WFH system). On the contrary, 27% feel they face less harassment while working from home virtually as compared to the physical workplace.

In general, the limited data that is available as of now suggests that WFH is a better alternative for women in terms of the level of sexual harassment faced. While WFH is by no means devoid of harassment (as seen in the next section), it seems to be a safer 'workplace'. As the future of WFH unfolds, deeper studies will be needed to see how harassment against women at work evolves.



Research Findings

➔ *What are the forms of harassment faced by the respondents on digital platforms?*

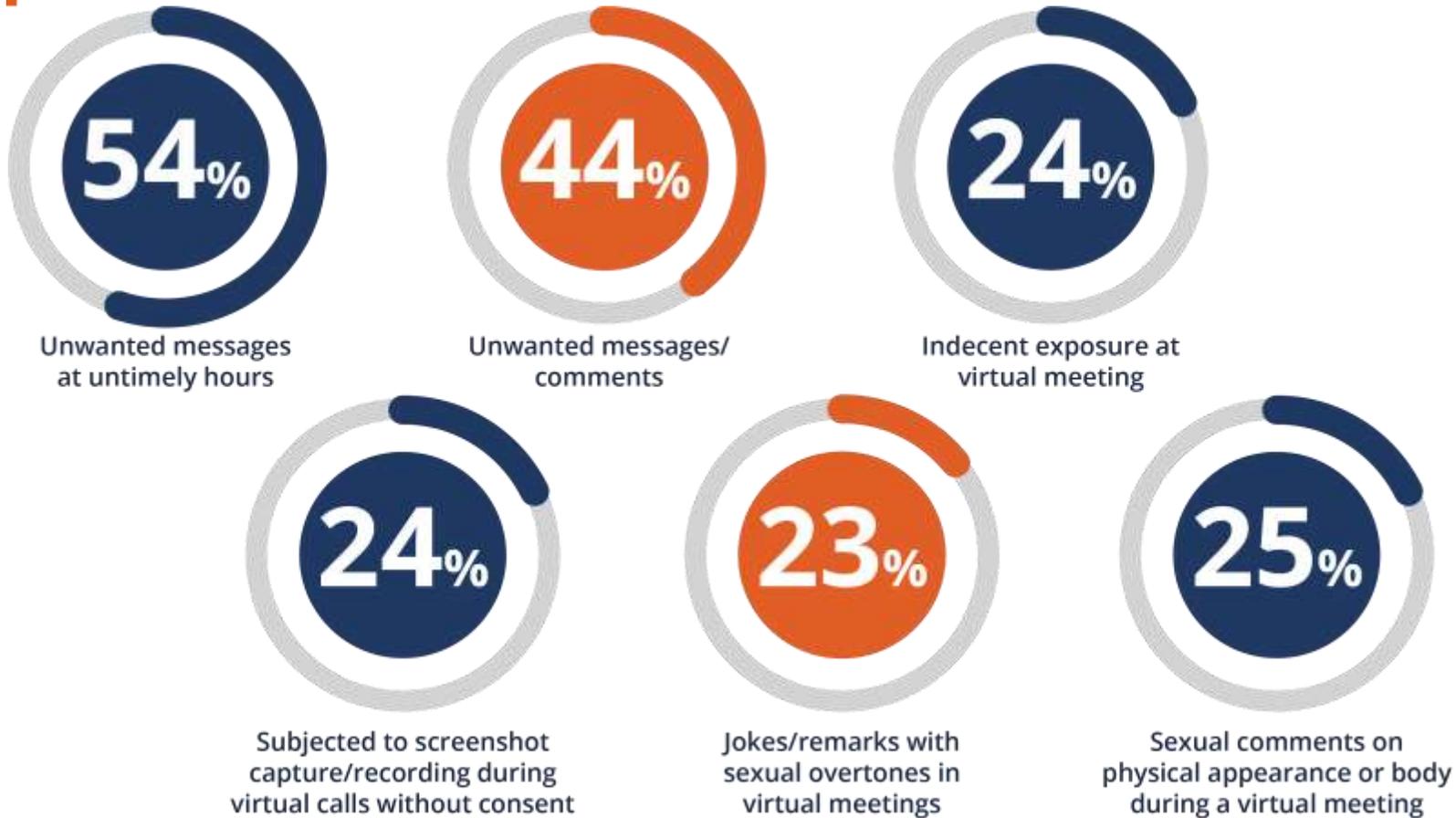


FIG 26: FORMS OF HARASSMENT FACED ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Research Findings

- Of all the different forms of virtual harassment, unwanted messages at untimely hours from bosses/colleagues/subordinates/clients ranks highest. One in two women who face harassment on digital platforms face this form of harassment.
- Following closely, 44% of the respondents receive unwanted messages from their bosses/colleagues/subordinates/clients.
- The percentage of women facing the remaining four kinds of virtual harassment is more or less similar.
 - One-fourth of the women facing harassment on digital platforms are subjected to screenshot captures or recordings without their explicit consent.
 - 24% of them are subjected to indecent exposure during virtual calls.
 - 23% are subjected to jokes/remarks with sexual undertones or innuendos, making them feel unsafe and uncomfortable.



Research Findings

➤ Reporting and organisational response

This section of the report looks at the comfort level of women while reporting cases of sexual harassment and the corresponding organisational response and redressal mechanisms. It delves into the trust women place on the systems at work, how this varies as per different parameters, the reporting of cases and subsequent actions taken. The section ends with a look into the thoughts respondents shared around measures that could be taken to make them feel safer.



Research Findings

Do respondents trust the system at their workplace to report cases of harassment?

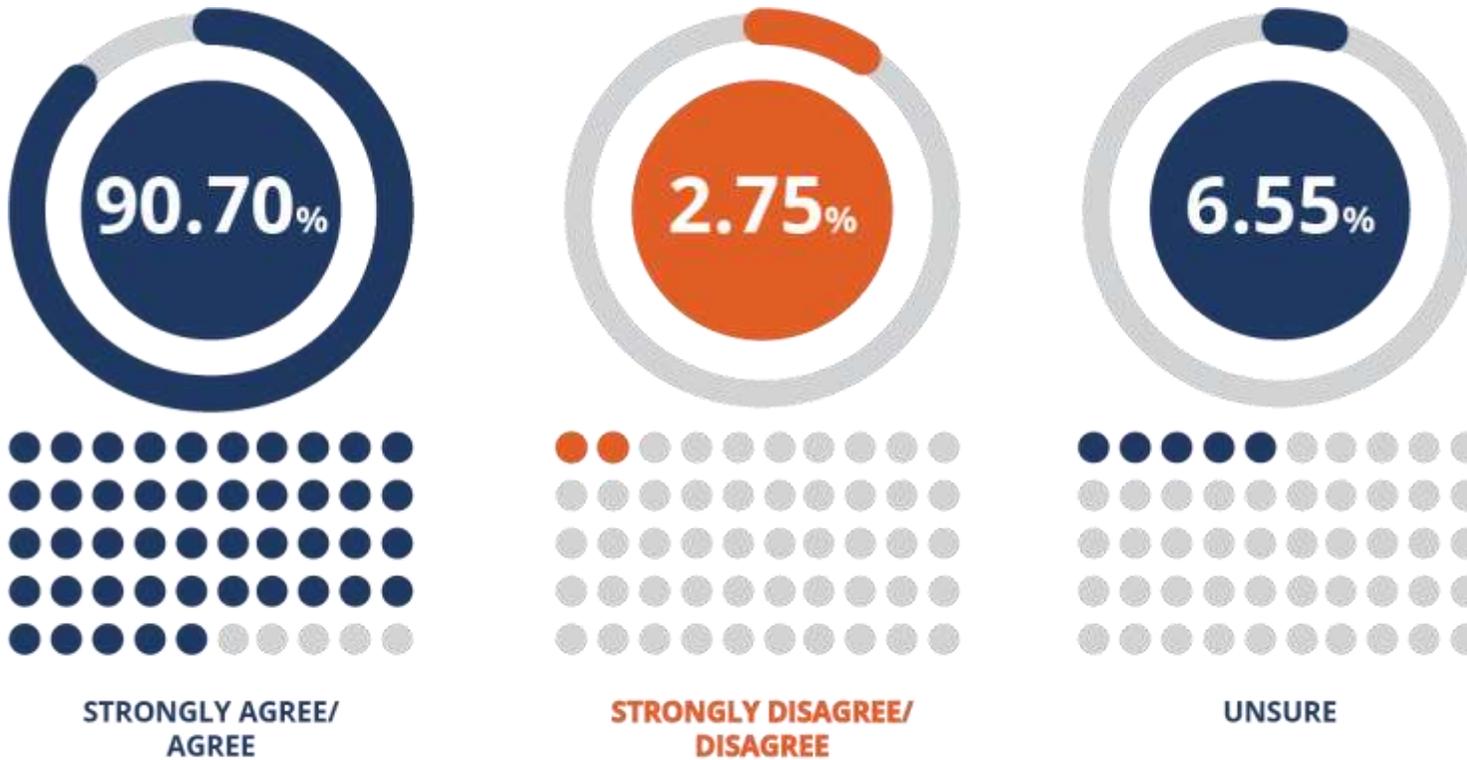


FIG 27: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO TRUST THE SYSTEM AT THEIR WORKPLACE TO REPORT CASES OF HARASSMENT

Research Findings

Have affected women reported any cases of sexual harassment?

Respondents were asked if they have ever brought instances of sexual harassment to the attention of their manager/HR and whether any action was taken. Out of respondents who have faced some form of harassment, only 11% have brought this to the attention of the HR representative or their supervisor. 27% explicitly answered that they did not bring instances of harassment to anyone's notice, while 60% chose not to answer this question.

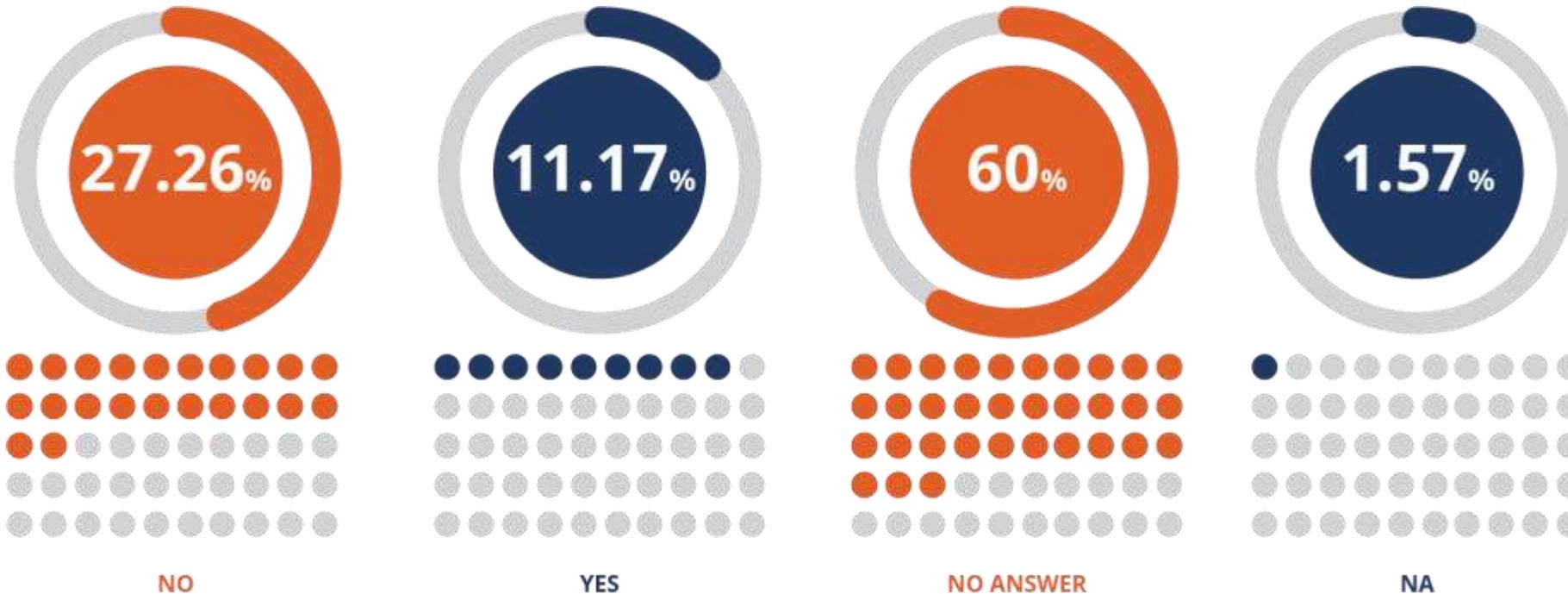


FIG 28: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO NOTIFIED THE HR/MANAGER ABOUT THE HARASSMENT FACED

Research Findings

An important note here is that even though 90% of the overall 5235 respondents state that they trust the system to work, out of the 24% who face harassment, 60% chose not to comment, and 27% chose not to report their harassment when it came to actually making the system accountable. This might indicate that while in theory, organisations may be trying to create spaces for women to raise concerns, there exist other reasons (beyond the scope of this study) that do not always make this easily actionable. The various reasons that discourage women from actually reporting cases despite the seemingly high levels of trust in an organisation deserve further investigation.



Research Findings

↪ *If yes, were there any actions taken?*

Out of the respondents who faced harassment and brought it to the attention of their manager/HR, 67% said action was taken following the complaint, while 18% said no action was taken. Another 15% did not want to reveal the outcome.

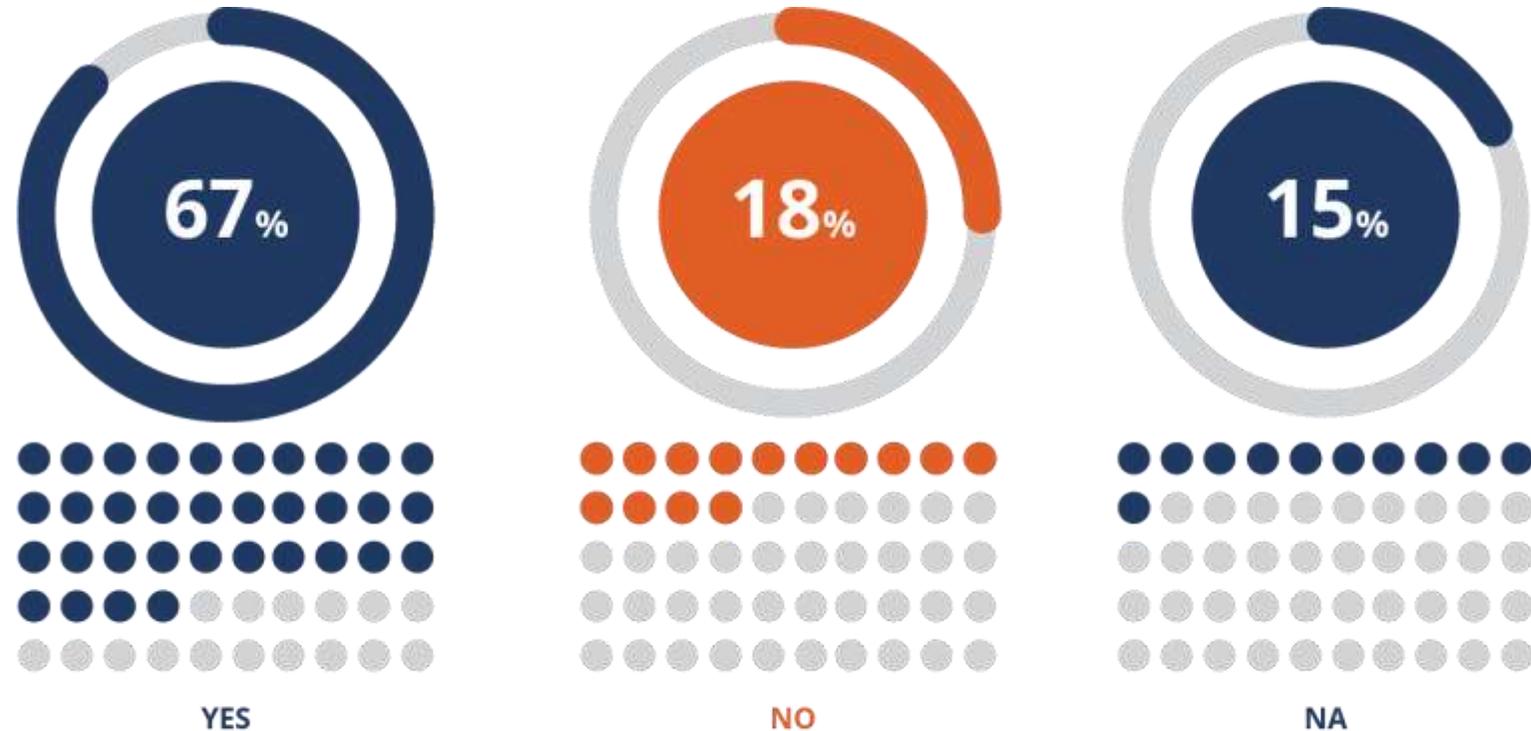


FIG 29: SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO'S HARASSMENT COMPLAINT WAS FOLLOWED BY AN ACTION

Research Findings

➤ *What would make women feel safer?*

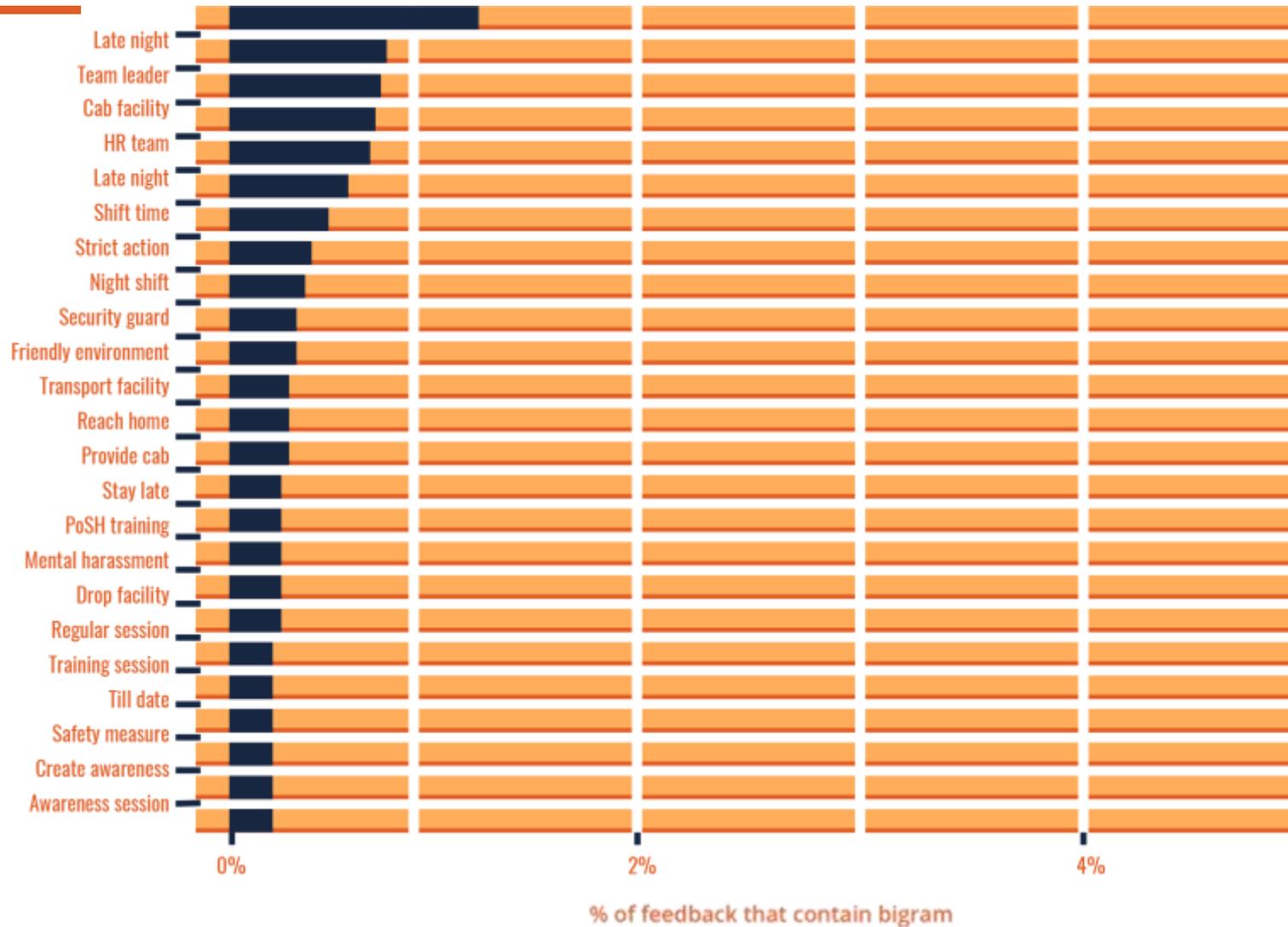
The survey asked respondents an open-ended question, asking them to share their thoughts on measures that could make them feel safer. As a first step to analysing these responses, feedback such as “nothing”, “na”, “yes”, “no”, “nil”, “nothing specific” was filtered out, and the remaining 2505 responses were analysed.

The rest of the feedback received was analysed using bigrams. N-grams are a continuous sequence of n-words in a given text. Consecutive words in a feedback are broken down into pairs, and the frequency (percentage of feedback containing these bigrams) of each pair is counted. The feedback received was first cleaned to remove commonly occurring words (such as articles and pronouns), the stem of the words have been removed (for eg: transportation, transporting would be stemmed to become transport). With the cleaned feedback, the pairs and their respective frequency are calculated.



Research Findings

FIG 30: COMMON BIGRAMS IN FEEDBACK FROM RESPONDENTS



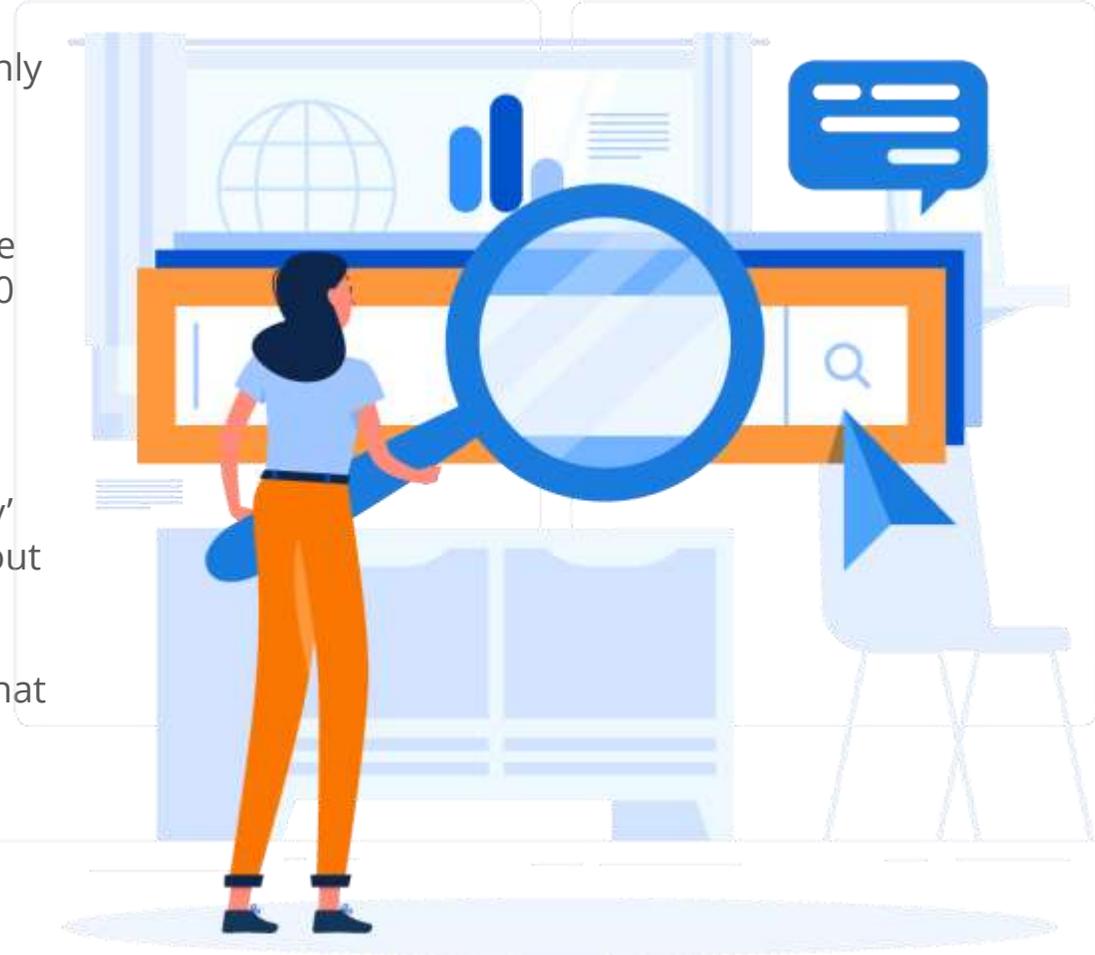
Research Findings

While analysing the responses, 2207 unique bigrams were generated. From the bigrams, one can see that the most commonly occurring words are related to work timings like 'late night', 'late hour', 'shift time', 'night shift', 'reach home'.

Word sequences or bigrams related to working hours such as 'late night', 'late hour', 'shift time', 'night shift', 'stay late' from the top 20 bigrams occur in 3.4% of the filtered questions (out of 2505 questions).

Word sequences or bigrams related to transport such as 'cab facility', 'transport facility', 'reach home', 'provide cab', 'drop facility' from the top 20 bigrams occur in 2.2% of the filtered questions (out of 2505 questions).

These are significant responses pointing to existing data trends that state that a significant percentage of women find that public transport is unsafe and may turn down better employment opportunities when the public transport system is unreliable or unaffordable.



Conclusion

The Safe Places to Work Survey, 2020-21 is not just a survey. It is a democratic exercise, where all female employees can anonymously and fearlessly voice their views on how safe they feel at their workplace. With our survey process, we ensure every woman can participate — not just handpicked representatives of the management or those conducting the survey.

And even though 2020-21 has been an unusual year, even with remote working, the data reiterates that Sexual Harassment at the workplace primarily remains an abuse of power, by a person with authority – it's also clear that there is fear among the respondents to identify their perpetrator, *even in an* anonymous survey.

This is illustrated by the following statistics:

Of the 5235 respondents, ~24% (1256) women said they faced some form of harassment, of which only less than half, i.e. 563 women identified their perpetrator. Of the 1256 women, ~ 14% (~ 176) women said they were sexually propositioned in exchange for a promotion/salary bump or under the threat of a negative career impact, and ~ 18% (~ 226) were subjected to defamation/gossip for rejecting unwanted sexual advances.

Out of the 563 women who have identified their perpetrator, 67% said it's their supervisor, 28% said they face harassment from their colleagues, and 12% said they face harassment from customers.

Conclusion

Consistent training and sensitization coupled with the creation of a very strong Internal Committee (IC) still remain the primary tools to mitigate or eliminate Sexual Harassment at the workplace. *Companies must ensure that survivors of sexual assault are made aware of their rights and are empowered to exercise them, providing them with support. And engendering an environment of accountability, where potential perpetrators must be made aware of the certainty of consequences.*

We, at Rainmaker, remain steadfast in our commitment to creating safer and ethical workplaces. A big thank you to our partners at the Art X Company, who managed every step of the survey process — from start to finish, all my colleagues in Rainmaker who have worked hard to ensure that the survey is conducted smoothly, and most importantly, each of the 5235 respondents who placed their faith in the survey and decided to wholeheartedly participate in it to ensure their voices are heard.

The Expert Panel



Akshaya Vijayalakshmi (Ph.D., Iowa State University) is an Assistant Professor in Marketing at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA). She teaches and researches topics related to advertising, gender, and violence using multiple methods of investigation. Akshaya and her colleagues were involved in understanding the impact of sexual harassment on informal workers for the National Human Rights Commission, India. Her work is widely published in international peer-reviewed journals and press outlets.



Manisha Lath Gupta is a marketer, banker and entrepreneur. She has worked with organisations like Unilever, Colgate Palmolive, Axis Bank and Uber. She founded IndianArtCollectors/Mojarto in 2005 - an online portal for artists, galleries and collectors of Indian contemporary art. During her stint with Axis Bank, she headed the PoSH committee for the bank. Manisha is an alumna of IIM Bangalore and holds a Masters degree in Biotechnology from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.



Major Sonam Bakshi comes with twenty years of senior Human Capital experience across the Indian Army and leading MNCs in the IT and financial services sector. She was part of the founding team at Clix Capital (erstwhile GE capital) and is the chairperson of the PoSH committee at Affle. Apart from holding multiple roles at WIPRO, she was also a part of their PoSH committee. She has been an Ordnance officer in the Indian Army and served the nation for 7 years. She is a recipient of the NHRDN National Best White Paper on Gender Diversity at the Workplace in 2014.

THANK YOU!

To Know More:

 +91 90290 00180

 info@rainmaker.co.in

