A phenomenological study to understand gender diversity and inclusion in the tech industry

Faiza Khan1, Sanjay Bhattacharya2

1,2Symbiosis Centre for Management and Human Resource Development, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune, Maharashtra, India

*Corresponding author:
sanjay_bhattacharya@scmhrd.edu

Abstract
Various researches have established that diversity with inclusion yields a competitive advantage and promotes innovation in workplaces. Gender diversity and retention of top women talent, however, remains a problem. This study explored the reasons leading to the lower representation of women in the tech industry and the impact of the diversity and inclusion initiatives on the lives of working women. Purposive sampling has been used to select four women and two men working in tech, and in-depth interviews over the telephone were conducted for a phenomenological study. Analysis of data was carried out by Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The results highlight common issues women face in the tech industry and compare it to their male counterparts’ experiences. Women highlight unconscious biases, internal and external obstacles, lack of women mentors at senior positions, and family restrictions. This paper gives a deeper understanding of the lived experience of entry-level men and women currently working in the tech industry, which will help identify gaps in our current approach towards inclusivity and the way forward for these practices for employees in STEM fields.

Keywords
Gender diversity, Inclusion, Leadership, Phenomenology, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

1 Introduction
Diversity and inclusion are the most discussed topics today. Every organization is trying its best to implement different policies to create an inclusive environment for minorities and women. The focus on diversity increased in the early 1990s when the economic benefit was linked, observed Cox. Diversity leads not only to innovation and better ideas but also increases profitability for the company. While diversity has different aspects, this paper is limited to gender diversity in the engineering domain. It explores reasons as to why women remain underrepresented in tech.

Overall, the total number of women attaining higher education has considerably increased. However, only 47.7% of all women participated in the labor force globally in 2019. In India, this percentage falls to 23.4%, studied Catalyst. The first empirical study conducted by Adler highlighted a strong relationship between high profitability and promoting a greater number of women into the executive suite. The firms that consistently promoted women were more consistently more profitable, in his study by Johns.

Despite this strong correlation, women remain underrepresented in the top positions and boardrooms of the organization despite having an aspiration to lead. They are often confined to traditional “female” roles in an organization, stated Akpinar-Sposito. The arguments for gender diversity are on two grounds that is the economic benefit and ethical reasons. While the former argues gender diversity only for the firm’s competitive advantage and profits, the latter is based on ethical and moral reasons of not giving a fair chance to women, observed Campbell and Mínguez-Vera.

When considering the STEM field specifically, the demand for people has increased over the decades. The interest of women candidates, however, has diminished. Approximately 50% of women working in computation and engineering do not return to STEM fields after leaving their jobs. The reasons are varied from settling and family reasons to joining management, according to Glass, Sassler, Levitte & Michelmore. The cost associated with leaving professions such as en-
Engineering is high due to the curriculum and training requirements, study Ng and Feldman. The reasons for the underrepresentation of women in tech are varied, ranging from discrimination to unequal pay for similar work, lack of mentors and senior women leaders in the field, and lack of growth opportunities, observed Gonzalez-Gonzalez et al. The attrition rate for women in tech is twice that for men, which is also higher than any other non-STEM field, in a study by Hewlett et al., 2008. Subtle biases within and outside a woman lead to her not reaching the topmost positions in the hierarchy, in her study by Susan R. Madsen.

Most organizations are investing in diversity and inclusion, which is evident by the content on their official websites and appointing employees accountable for diversity and inclusion who present reports to the CEO directly, for example, diversity champions and officers, according to Anderson & Billings-Harris. There is still a gap in diversity for tech organizations. It becomes significant to probe deeper into the reasons behind the lower number of women working in the tech industry and formulate a strategy on how to make these organizations more diverse and inclusive and promote gender equality.

2 Literature review

Diversity and inclusion are often defined and understood as the same. However, while diversity focuses on the surface level and increases the representation of minorities and women, inclusion focuses on making them a part of the organization and accepting and valuing their authentic selves, stated winters. Diversity promotes innovation, but in the absence of inclusion, such a benefit is highly unlikely [1]. There are different inclusion constructs. It was proposed by Shore et al. that workgroup inclusion refers to an employee feels valued in his/her organization while being his true self. According to Cottrill, Lopez & Hoffman, leader inclusion is when a leader is his/her authentic self and encourages others to be authentic and voice their opinions, according to Cottrill, Lopez & Hoffman. Perceived organizational inclusion refers to fair policies of an organization wherein everyone has a part in decision-making, feels like a part of the workgroup, and has a fair share of resources and information within the workgroups, as observed by Barak & Cherin [2].

The Workforce 2000 report published in 1987 made it clear that the labor market will become increasingly diverse, making it important to include others in organizations, state Zanoni et al [3]. The focus on diversity, however, increased only in the early 1990s when the economic benefits of diversity emerged, state Cox. The economic benefit would also come with an “added value” with inclusion. Dedicated leadership anchoring can be the most effective to achieve advantages associated with diversity management [4]. When an external agency supports inclusive and diversity initiatives in an organization, the associated advantages may not be achieved due to a policy change, studied Sabharwal [5]. There are three steps to making the workplace inclusive: (1) increasing the diversity/diverse representation in the organization, (2) analysis of the perception of the employees about diversity and inclusion, and (3) ensuring inclusive practices are implemented at all the levels of hierarchy, study Barak, et al. An inclusive organization not just help an employee understand the responsibilities listed in the job description but also makes one feel a sense belonging to the organization, stated Nishii, which creates an environment where each unique individual is respected and appreciated for their authenticity and uniqueness and thus, an inclusive workplace, studied Mor Barak [6].

The slight mention of diversity gives rise to strong reactions emotionally in many individuals, observed Milliken and Martins. There can also be resentment on the part of other employees who are not directly benefitted through any of these diversity management practices observes Fiol et al. The best way out is to manage the issues and the benefits of a diverse representation by creating an inclusive environment, state Ferdman & Davidson. While organization increasingly wants to be innovative and generate profits, the disadvantages associated with diversity have to be addressed. Inclusion can be vital in solving this issue, states Nishii [7].

We will explore only the gender diversity in this study, i.e., whether our workplaces are gender diverse and how we can make the workplaces more inclusive for women. Women are ambitious, and they aspire to be leaders [8]. However, barriers at both individual and organizational levels limit women at different career stages, as Kossek, Su, & Wu observed. Research also suggests that women incline people-oriented tasks, according to Carlson & Mellor. They prioritize work-life balance whereas men, on the contrary, have careers as their priority, studies Hakim. In addition, there is also a backlash, gender bias, and unfavorable environment for women lead-
ers. Despite having similar credentials, organizations use different parameters for judging men and women for higher positions, as studied by Bohnet, van Geen & Bazerman [9]. The research suggests three dimensions to increase the representation of women in the workforce: ensuring a fair and unbiased work environment, acknowledging and utilizing women's talent, and supporting their needs, values, and interests, according to Kossek, Su, & Wu [10].

Research by Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) brought forward the gender pay disparity and other barriers women face. According to the report, women and minorities face different structural, cultural, and organizational barriers. In the cases where women did occupy senior positions, they were usually appointed in roles that were not the regular pathway to executive positions [11]. There is also a pay disparity between men and women in the organization due to family-work conflict or subtle biases coming into play for women at her workplace (GAO, 2003). The gap a woman takes in her career further increases her barrier to challenging roles and promotions. All this contributes to women not able to rise to their full potentials. Women respond to career barriers in three ways: they exit the organization, or raise their concerns or try to rationalize [12]. The organization’s approach to the career advancement of other women also influences other women’s responses, stated Hamel. Generic policies benefitting the women often fail to deliver the specific requirements of a particular organization and consequently lead to women being pushed out of the workforce. There are a series of organization-specific measures that need to be taken. Work flexibility and childcare initiatives solve the work-family conflict. Sponsorship and mentoring programs where the leaders of both sexes participate must be put into place, and effective pipelines to identify and develop talent should be created. A culture of inclusion should be embedded in the organization to give its women a fair chance to grow, observed Johns [13].

The attrition rates are even higher for women working in tech. A study found that close to 50% of women left their jobs in tech, primarily in engineering and computation, according to Glass, Sassler, Levitte & Michelmore [14]. Balancing family responsibility, the quality of the job, stress, and work flexibility are the main causes of attrition for women working in the IT sector, where managing family responsibilities leads to the highest attrition among women, as observed by Riemenschneider, Armstrong, Allen & Reid. Women excelling in STEM fields often face backlash and avoid talking about their experiences and accomplishments publicly, as studied by Rudman & Fairchild. Research suggests that women who leave their jobs in the STEM field do not rejoin the same field. Some may leave due to family reasons, while others take up management roles, as observed by Glass, Sassler, Levitte & Michelmore [15]. Women in technology face three kinds of barriers: (1) gender stereotypes since childhood, (2) the culture of workplaces, and (3) family and educational obstacles, studied by Lemons & Parzinger. For female employees, especially working in the IT sector, stress at the workplace and family responsibilities do not let them balance their work lives. At work, they are stressed about family. At home, the stress is about meeting deadlines and staying updated on the current trends, as observed by Riemenschneider, Armstrong, Allen, & Reid [16].

Women face internal and external biases and need help to be aware of their own internal biases. Men have been in the workforce for a significantly greater time than women, and their leadership styles are considered superior, in a study by Susan R. Madsen. Unconscious biases are often neglected when designing women’s development programs which is the foundation of these programs; observe Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb [17].

An important parameter to judge the organizational performance is the improvement in engagement survey scores, state Itam & M. Increased communication between the leaders and employees also supports inclusion in the organization, state Brimhall, et al. When inclusion is prioritized in the organization, retention rates as well as commitment towards organization and job satisfaction increases, as in a study by Brimhall et al Since men and women advance differently in their career, mentoring has a different outcome for both of them. Women face more discrimination, more male leaders in the hierarchy, and limited to no informal networks. Challenging projects help women get visibility, credibility and prepare women for career advancement, stated Tharenou. For example, a set of diverse mentors, a male, and a female mentor, can help women protégé better in progressing their career since they come with different experiences and learnings, in a study by Tharenou. According to research, organizational biases are the top contributors to gender inequality, and workplace motivation is the least in Memon & Satpathy [18].
3 Research methodologies

The study set out to answer the question of the level of inclusivity women face at present and probe into elements that come into play for women, which leads them to either not choose or leave tech organizations. There exists a huge gap in terms of gender diversity for tech organizations. This study aims to probe deeper into the reasons behind the lower number of women working in the tech industry and formulate a strategy on how to make these organizations more diverse and inclusive, and promote gender equality [19].

3.1 Research design

In-depth interviews with the participants were conducted for a phenomenological study. Phenomenology focuses on the lived experiences of people in their natural setting, that is, their ‘life world,’ observed Creswell. Thus, the researchers are more interested in studying the detailed experiences of the individual rather than the causes behind them, in a study by Eddles-Hirsch. The phenomenon in this study is ‘inclusion,’ where the purpose is to understand the current status of gender inclusiveness in tech organizations [20]. The phenomenon can be best understood through the lived experiences of men and women currently working in tech.

Basis the literature review, several reasons emerge behind the lack of representation from women in the organizations emerge [21]. The culture in the workplace, unconscious biases, and lack of women at higher positions primarily affect the gender inclusiveness of the organizations. In addition, balancing work and family, lack of informal networks and sponsors also impacts a women's career and, thus, the organization’s inclusivity [22]. Based on the literature review and the gaps identified in the literature, a detailed questionnaire was designed to understand the experiences of young men and women working in the tech industry. The questions for men and women were the same to observe if the responses are different for gender or if the issue is gender-neutral [23].

3.2 Sampling

Purposive sampling is the sampling method used to select the sample. The sample was selected based on judgment keeping the purpose of the study in mind, stated Schwandt, and identifying people who “have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched,” states Kruger, p. 150 [24]. The number of participants selected for the research should range from two to ten to reach saturation and observe Boyd [25]. The sample included four women and two men who are engineering graduates in 24-30 currently working in the tech industry [26].

3.3 Data collection

In-depth interviews were conducted over the phone, which lasted between 30 and 40 minutes. The purpose of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is to understand the detailed experiences of individuals. It involves two steps: (1) the individual’s interpretation of his/her experience and (2) the researcher’s interpretation of the individual’s interpretation. IPA is significant when the researcher interprets how individuals evaluate particular instances and interpret them, as studied by Smith & Osborn [27]. While the researcher’s subject knowledge and assumptions play an important role in making sense of the participant’s responses, the researcher must deliberately forget the thought process that led him to take up a particular study, as studied by Koch [28].

3.4 Data analysis

The interviews were transcribed and observed closely to obtain patterns. Data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) which included the following steps: (a) finding the unique and common elements for the participants, (b) interpreting the experiences of the respondents, (c) empathize with the participants and understand their perspectives, in research by Smith et al. After initially analyzing the experiences of the respondents, common themes were identified in the data. The comments made by the participants support each theme. The statements were analyzed individually and then keeping the participant's gender in mind to identify any common gender-specific themes. The analysis includes all the themes that emerged, and gender-neutral and gender-specific issues have been highlighted [29].

3.5 Validity and reliability

Validity can be referred to as truthfulness and accuracy of research. Le Comple & Goetz and reliability are associated more with consistency and stability of results. “Dependability” is one term that can be used instead of reliability for qualitative studies in a study by Golafshani. The terms validity and reliability are often not used by qualitative researchers.
Terms like credibility, consistency, truth, quality, applicability, and value are referred to as criteria for assessing qualitative research, as observed by Lincoln & Guba [30].

It is thus adopting different approaches, data sources, and researchers to minimize personal biases. Checking for representativeness of the data as a whole is another step that can ensure validity and reliability. Additionally, giving a “thick description” that provides a detailed account of the procedures and criteria used and the research setting, stated Brink. All these aspects have been taken into consideration in this study. Different research papers were read and reviewed to frame the research question and the literature review before starting data collection. The representation from male and female participants ensured that any issue pertinent to both genders is pointed out through this research. The transparency has been maintained throughout the research concerning the approach, background, and statements provided further in the analysis.

4 Results and analysis

The qualitative interviews were analyzed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA); a qualitative approach that provides detailed accounts into the personal lived experiences of people, observed Smith et al. Phenomenology is a process of producing the lived experience of people in their terms or setting. IPA is an interpretative approach since humans make sense. The researcher thus tries to make sense of the respondent making sense of a phenomenon. Additionally, IPA is a process of analyzing each participant’s detailed experience, making sense of it, and then moving to generalizations in a study by Smith & Osborn. IPA was used to identify themes that capture the phenomenon of inclusion through the lived experience of the women working in the tech industry.

**Theme 1. Inclusion is accepting people from diverse cultures and backgrounds as they are with their unique attributes and giving them equal opportunity**

All the participants in the study were asked to define inclusion according to their understanding. They defined inclusion as getting equal opportunities irrespective of their gender, race, or caste. One participant described inclusion as “Not being singled out because of any intrinsic reason such as gender, caste or race.” Another participant explained inclusivity as:

*Equality and inclusivity go hand in hand, and you cannot have one without the other. Some sections being too few in terms of numbers do not get enough representation to get equitable access to resources. The concept of inclusivity is to provide upliftment to the sections which need it so that in the end, everyone is at the same place.*

The participants agree that inclusivity helps get diverse opinions and, in turn, makes the team more productive. “This is the only way we can have diverse teams in our organization and value the diversity.” Both male and female participants had similar ideas about inclusion in the workplace and appreciated organizations with good inclusion practices.

**Theme 2. Better opportunity can make them leave their current organization**

When asked about their workgroups and how they felt about leaving them, the participants had mixed feelings. The question was asked to understand the current level of inclusiveness they feel in their workgroups. While most of them are open to better opportunities, there is also an attachment with the present workgroup that makes them hesitant to leave their workgroups. One participant explained her feelings as:

*I would miss the amazing people I have worked with, but at the same time, moving on means new opportunities and new experiences so that I would be happy too.*

Some female participants feel they can easily leave their workgroup and organization for better opportunities. They are not very happy with the culture of their organization and feel they do not belong here. One of them mentions:

*Sometimes, I feel left out at work from work activities. It is as if I do not belong here. People are not bad, but work culture is not very good. Probably, it will not be very difficult to leave.*

The inclusivity felt within the workgroups is particularly more for the male participants than the female participants. They are thus particularly more open to finding new and better opportunities and leaving their organizations.
Theme 3. Agree to get adequate support from the organization to learn

The participants feel that they have enough learning opportunities and get support from the management for the same. One participant feels:

*There is sufficient support from the organization for our learning. Our team lead organizes training frequently. These are technical as well as non-technical training to enhance our knowledge as well as leadership skills.*

There are also subscriptions to online platforms, helping them learn new skills and hone skills while working from home.

*Our organizations have provided us with a subscription of learning platforms like O'Reilly to learn and develop our skills, which helps in progressing our careers.*

The male and female participants agree to access learning opportunities equally and believe that the individual interest drives their learning in the organization. There is no dearth of learning new skills in organizations.

Theme 4. Female participants have either faced or have seen their women co-worker face discrimination at the workplace

While the organizations may be working actively towards reducing unconscious biases at the workplace, there have been different incidents and subtle biases in organizations specifically for women working in tech. One participant explains:

*There has been subtle discrimination I faced in the workplace. For example, we get feedback from our clients, which is optional and depend upon the clients’ discretion if they want to give or not. I got one such good feedback, and one of my colleagues just casually said that “women” usually get good feedback because of the way they “talk.” At the same time, my whole interaction with the client happened via mail. So, such kind of casual sexism is prevalent.*

While the female participants mentioned facing subtle discrimination at their workplace, the same was completely missing in the male interactions. Male participants believed that they had not faced discrimination or prejudice at workplaces. The senior management is strictly involved in taking strict action against such incidents if any occur. A male participant commented:

*I have not faced any discrimination in my work till now. Our organization has strict policies regarding this. Higher management takes strict action against anyone who is discriminating based on race, gender, or religion.*

There is also a dearth of role models and women in senior leadership positions in tech. The women participants feel that in the absence of women leaders, they do not have women leaders to look up to, which would have been a great encouragement. One participant felt, *“As a woman, I do identify people like me, but they are relatively few in numbers.”* Another participant explained, *“Women are not much in higher positions in my project. Usually, family constraints and internal politics do not let them be at the top.”* The male participants felt they had enough role models and people similar to them in the leadership positions and are confident of achieving the same in the future. One male participant noted:

*I can identify people similar to me in my current department at senior positions. I am willing to learn more from them so that I can progress in my career as them.*

Here, the responses of female and male participants were different.

Theme 5. Women in their career progression specifically face some obstacles

Female participants also agree to face obstacles that they feel are not experienced by all of their colleagues. There is an element of self-doubt in their mind. One female participant feels, *“While the participation in work processes is based on my willingness, I have in mind obstacles such as being given mediocre in the work I do.”* Another female participant shared, *“I have faced obstacles at one point in my career. I came across a completely different culture, where I felt there were latent biases in the ideologies of the colleagues I was working with.”*

The female participants also spoke about the various constraints they face due to their families and gender. A female participant explained:

*As a woman, the family does not allow you to work late in the office, and competitors turn it to their advantage to take you down.*

This discussion specifically came up while interacting with female participants. For male participants, the obstacles faced were more about their career path not shaping according to their way.
5 Discussions

The male and female participants working in the tech industry had similar perceptions of inclusion and access to learning opportunities in their workplaces. They agreed to intend to leave their workgroups and organizations when given better opportunities. The responses, however, were different when asked about the obstacles and discrimination faced at workplaces.

According to the participants, inclusion is the fair access of opportunities to every individual irrespective of their gender, caste, or race. It is feeling a sense of belonging towards their workgroups and organizations. Inclusion focuses on making minorities a part of the workgroup and organization they work for and accept and value their authentic selves. While diversity needs to be enforced, inclusion comes naturally, stated winners.

When asked about discrimination or biases in their workplace, the male participants strongly felt no workplace discrimination. They denied hearing any such incident in their organizations. The female participants, however, agreed to face subtle biases at their workplaces. Several studies point out the fatal nature of subtle biases, which can be even worse than open discrimination, observed by Jones et al. Some biases raised by the women were internal and existed only in their minds. Women face internal and external biases and need help to be aware of their own internal biases, as studied by Bolton. Men have been in the workforce for a significantly greater time than women. Their leadership styles are considered superior, as researched by Susan R. Madsen. According to research, organizational biases are the top contributors to gender inequality, and workplace motivation is the least observed by Memon & Satpathy. There is a need to accept that these biases do exist and working actively towards reducing these biases. They come into the picture in the smaller practices we follow or our opinion we convey to others. We are completely unaware of them.

The female participants specifically mentioned certain obstacles. The family responsibilities and time restrictions often do not permit them to work late in the night, unlike their male colleagues. Managers tend to underestimate women when it comes to balancing work and life when in reality, both men and women are equally capable of doing so, according to Lyness & Judiesch. Balancing family responsibility, the quality of the job, stress, and work flexibility are the main causes of attrition for women working in the IT sector. Managing family responsibilities leads to the highest attrition among women. Riemenschneider, Armstrong, Allen, & Reid

In addition, female participants felt a lack of women at senior positions in the hierarchy. This lack of women leadership at the top creates a paucity of mentors and women to look up to, as researched by Hoobler, Lemmon, & Wayne, which leads to various obstacles in the advancement of women. Women at the senior positions in the organizations tend to be more involved in mentoring, guiding, and appreciating the employees lower in the hierarchy than them, as Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen studied. Consequently, women lower in the hierarchy feel motivated and committed and improve their performances. An increase in the female representation leads to an increase in the firm performance, but when innovation is an element of the organization’s strategy, observed by Dezső & Ross. For example, a set of diverse mentors, a male, and a female mentor, can help women protégé better in progressing their career since they come with different experiences and learnings, stated Tharenou.

Concerning learning opportunities, the male and female participants feel that they have enough and sufficient resources and support from senior management. However, there is a concern regarding the work culture in their organizations among the female participants. The female participants find it slightly easier to leave their workgroups and their organizations. “Invisible” obstacles or barriers may exist in the culture of the organization, day to day processes which may at times be biased towards men even when they specifically value merit over everything else, in a study by Teelken & Deem, which may lead to lack of organizational commitment and enthusiasm towards a job in women, observe Channar, Abbassi & Ujan.

While the organizations have constantly been trying to improve the diversity in the organizations, subtle biases exist and emerge as the prime reasons for lack of belonging among the women participants in this study. However, what seems to be working in favor of the organizations is access to learning opportunities. Men and women agree to get equal learning opportunities that the women sometimes may not take up due to a lack of self-belief. The priority is to make the women feel that their quality of work will matter and
merit will prevail above everything else. The concerns raised in this study form the foundation of an inclusive organization. Organizations need to prioritize them to make our workplaces more gender-inclusive.

6 Conclusion and recommendations

The interest of women pursuing a career in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) has declined despite the demand in these fields increasing. While organizations are taking active steps to maintain gender diversity and make women feel included in the organization, the elements of subtle bias and discrimination still come into play. The majority agrees to be discriminated against or facing subtle remarks on their gender. The journey of women to power positions is very different from that of men. Thus, there is also a need for more female role models at the topmost positions to mentor these young women to take leadership roles.

There is certainly a lot to be done when it comes to unconscious biases in the workplace. Acceptance is the key. Organizations can start with assessing unconscious biases at the workplace. There are various methods for assessment; perception survey to understand the experiences of people in the organization, language analysis for job descriptions, and gender gap analysis, which could be in hiring, mentoring, or pay. The organizations can start with ensuring unbiased hiring and promotion opportunities for every individual. One simple way to do this could be Blind Evaluation. Blind Evaluation can be done online for the initial few interview rounds and helps reduce bias in the initial short listing phase. Transparent performance evaluation and a structured feedback form for not just accepted but rejected candidates can help in reducing biases. When it comes to being allies for inclusion, the senior leadership accountability helps propagate the same to other people in the hierarchy. Training to targeted individuals on unconscious bias also helps create awareness (ILO, 2017).

Flexible working has increased substantially in the workplace. It positively affects employees, especially women who can balance their personal lives better and manage family responsibilities, observed Singley and Hynes. The reasons for men and women opting for flexible timing are different. However, it is often assumed that women use it for managing their family responsibilities. In contrast, men use it to increase career spheres, which can only be changed when senior leaders, particularly male leaders, opt for flexible timing for family purposes which can be a good role model for the employees, according to Chung, Hee-jung & Lippe.

Despite substantial steps in making our workplaces more inclusive for women, the organizations still have to work on the smaller aspects to ensure gender-inclusive workplaces. This research focuses on women working in the technology industry in entry-level positions and their understanding and experiences of inclusion. The women in the tech industry have answered the initial question of inclusivity in the current context. There is a lack of inclusion felt by women in these organizations. They particularly do not feel they belong here, which can be attributed to the subtle biases and unique obstacles coming into the picture for the women, which require an organization-specific approach. Every organization has a different set of problems concerning inclusion that must be carefully analyzed to formulate a strategy to promote diversity and inclusion. Additionally, as pointed out by the participants, support and accountability from the senior leadership help build an environment of inclusion within the organization.

Statement on ethical issues

Research involving people and/or animals is in full compliance with current national and international ethical standards.

Conflict of interest

None declared.

Author contributions

The authors read the ICMJE criteria for authorship and approved the final manuscript.

References