



BOARD STEWARDSHIP

Enabling Future Boards



BOARD STEWARDSHIP WHERE WOMEN LEAD WITH PURPOSE

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One of the most persistent challenges in corporate governance globally remains gender diversity in the boardroom. While several countries have introduced quotas or regulatory mandates to improve women's representation on corporate Boards, India has adopted a regulatory approach that requires all listed companies to appoint at least one-woman director. This provision, introduced under the Companies Act, 2013, and reinforced by regulations of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), has played an important role in improving representation. However, meaningful gender diversity in boardrooms continues to depend not only on regulation but also on the commitment of institutions to promote inclusive leadership. For Board Stewardship, this challenge became the starting point of a deeper institutional belief: if organisations wish to see more women directors on Boards, they must first showcase that commitment within their own institutions. The effort to enable future Boards cannot remain theoretical. Institutions advocating better governance and greater diversity must themselves reflect those values in practice. This philosophy has shaped the journey of Board Stewardship from its earliest days. The platform was built on the conviction that meaningful conversations about governance must include women's voices and leadership and that institutions working to influence Boards must first lead by example. And indeed, their contributions have strengthened our culture, enriched our thinking, and played a pivotal role in building the institution we are proud of today. This cover feature celebrates that spirit of stewardship that women bring to leadership and to the institutions they help nurture and grow.



On this Women's Day, Board Stewardship salutes the women who quietly and powerfully hold up our mission. The UN theme 'Rights. Justice. Action.' feels written for you: you don't just speak about inclusion; you build it into the operating system of our institution. We are proud to be a women-majority organisation (65% women), with 25% women on our Advisory Board, not as a statistic, but as a statement of intent. From our first overseas Fellow, Roshni Wadhwa, to our first corporate member, Amisha Vora, and our first knowledge partner, Ashwini Prakash (Stanton Chase), your leadership has expanded our horizons and strengthened our credibility. Our 10% discount for women referrals and the growing representation of women in membership enrolment are small mechanisms with a big message: opportunity must travel faster than bias. To every woman behind Board Stewardship's success—thank you for your intellect, your integrity, and your steady courage. You are not “behind” this platform; you are at the heart of it. And we will continue to promote the cause of more women on Boards, until it becomes normal, expected, and overdue no more.

Shailesh Haribhakti

Non-Executive Chairman and Independent Director on multiple Boards



Board Stewardship is proud to be a women majority organisation. In promoting Stewardship values to board community, DEI is the very core of Board Stewardship values. Right since its inception Board Stewardship has Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in its very foundation, so as not only to preach this to the board community alone but also practice this successfully first at Board Stewardship.

Vikesh Wallia

Managing Director and Editor, Board Stewardship





Helle Bank Jørgensen

Sunita Rajakumar

Punita Kumar Sinha

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cross the global governance landscape, women leaders have played a defining role in shaping conversations around responsible leadership, sustainability, financial markets and corporate accountability. Reflecting this commitment to diverse expertise, Board Stewardship's International and National Advisory Boards include distinguished women whose experience helps guide the platform's governance dialogue.

Among them is Helle Bank Jørgensen, an International Advisory Board Member of Board Stewardship and founder and CEO of Competent Boards in Canada. A globally recognised authority on sustainability and board governance, she pioneered initiatives such as the world's first green account and integrated report and has worked with organisations including Nike and Unilever. Celebrated as a 'Steward of Sustainability,' her work in advancing ESG and climate accountability in boardrooms brings an important global perspective to Board Stewardship's initiatives.

Also serving on the International Advisory Board of Board Stewardship is Sunita Rajakumar, Founder and Chairperson of Climate Governance Malaysia and a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council 2025–2026. Her work mobilising private sector leadership across the Asia-Pacific region on climate governance and responsible corporate practices adds valuable international insight to the platform.

India's governance landscape is represented on the National Advisory Board of Board Stewardship by Preeti Malhotra, Chairman of the Modi Smart Bharat Group and the first woman President of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India. With over three decades of experience, she has

contributed significantly to discussions on corporate law reforms and governance standards in India.

Another luminary on National Advisory Board of BS is Deena Mehta, a veteran of India's financial markets who made history as the first woman to enter the trading ring of the Bombay Stock Exchange and later become its first woman President. Her role in major reforms such as the transition to online trading and the development of depository systems brings deep capital market expertise to the platform.

Punita Kumar Sinha, Independent Director at Tata Capital and Co-Founder of Pacific Paradigm Advisors. A global investment expert with leadership roles at Blackstone and board experience at Infosys and JSW Steel, she brings valuable financial market and governance insight to Board Stewardship's work as a member of the National Advisory Board.

Alongside these influential voices is a growing community of women members whose leadership reflects the changing nature of boardroom expertise across industries.

Among the leaders associated with the Board Stewardship ecosystem is Amisha Vora, Group Joint Managing Director and key shareholder of PrabhudasLilladher (PL Capital Group), one of India's prominent financial services institutions. Recognised for her transformative leadership and commitment to governance excellence, she is BS's honoured Board Laureate and Visionary Leader. With more than 28 years of experience, she has played a pivotal role in expanding the firm's institutional and investment banking businesses. Reflecting this shared commitment to governance, PL Capital became the first Corporate Partner of Board Stewardship, marking an important milestone in the platform's early growth.

Leadership advisory expertise within the ecosystem is represented by Ashwini Prakash, Managing Partner at Stanton Chase India. With more than two decades of experience advising organisations on leadership development, board composition and CEO succession planning, her work has





Preeti Malhotra

shaped leadership teams across organisations. Reflecting this alignment with governance and leadership development, Ashwini Prakash and Stanton Chase became Board Stewardship's first Knowledge Partner, reinforcing the role of leadership advisory in shaping future boards.

The platform's global reach expanded further with Roshni Wadhwa, HR Transformation Director for the SAPMENA region with more than twenty-seven years of leadership experience across global organisations including L'Oréal, Novartis and Future Group. Based in Singapore, she marked an important milestone when she became Board Stewardship's first International Female Fellow Member, reflecting the platform's growing international engagement.

Another pioneering member within the community is Ira Agarwal, Founder and CEO of EmergeAI Technologies and a recognised leader in artificial intelligence and digital transformation. With more than twenty-five years of experience in technology and innovation, and also serving as an Independent Director, she became Board Stewardship's first Female Fellow Member in India, highlighting the growing intersection of technology leadership and governance.

Strengthening the governance dimension of the network is Shanu Saksena, an experienced Corporate Governance professional with more than three decades of experience guiding organisations on compliance, ethics and sustainability frameworks. She also marked an important milestone by becoming Board Stewardship's first Elite Member, bringing deep governance expertise to the community.

Together, these leaders represent a diverse spectrum of expertise spanning



Deena Mehta



Amisha Vora



financial markets, executive search, sustainability, technology and governance advisory. Their participation reflects the evolving nature of Board leadership today, where diverse experience and perspectives are increasingly recognised as essential to responsible decision-making.

This commitment to diversity is also reflected within the organisation itself. Board Stewardship believes that institutions advocating stronger governance must demonstrate those values internally. Women are therefore, actively involved across the organisation's initiatives, contributing to research, editorial development, strategic partnerships, events and member engagement.

Behind every governance dialogue, knowledge initiative and member programme is a dedicated team working with focus and purpose. Thirteen women professionals form a significant part of the Board Stewardship Team, contributing to the operational backbone of the organisation. Through their work across research, editorial, partnerships and programme management, they help translate the platform's mission of enabling future-ready Boards into meaningful conversations and initiatives within the governance community.

Their reflections on leadership, opportunity and the evolving role of women in governance offer valuable perspectives on how institutions can nurture more inclusive and responsible leadership for the future. Here are their reflections on leadership, opportunity and the evolving role of women in governance.



**Ashwini
Prakash**



**Roshni
Wadhwa**



**Shanu
Saksena**



**Ira
Agarwal**