
FROM FICTION TO FRAMEWORK: ANALYSING AMAZON PRIME'S 'DO YOU WANNA PARTNER?' THROUGH INDIAN LABOUR LAW

Ishita Bhatia, Jindal Global Law School

ABSTRACT

“Tum vese bhi kya karogi promotion ka? Strategy and all is too boring, you should be the face of the company.”

This dialogue from “*Do You Wanna Partner?*” (Amazon Prime) captures how prejudice, rather than competence, often shapes women’s experiences at work. Taking the series as a starting point, this paper explores gender discrimination through the lens of labour law. It first sets out the plot of the series, identifies the key legal issues, followed by a legal and critical analysis. The paper closes with my own reflections on the series along with reforms needed for genuine gender justice.

PLOT

Do You Wanna Partner? tells the story of Shikha and Anahita, two women who dream of starting their own beer company, only to realise that the real challenge is not the product or the market but people’s attitudes. From the start, they are judged for being women in a male-dominated field. Anahita, for instance, is put down in her previous job when her hard work is brushed aside with the remark that she cracked a deal only because of her smile. Things get worse when they meet investors- one says women are meant to run households while another dismisses the idea as “not for good girls.” Frustrated with this constant rejection, they invent a fictional male partner, David Jones, just so their business is taken seriously. The series shows how deeply gender roles and stereotypes still run, forcing women to put in twice the effort for the same result. This struggle is not limited to some occupations or levels, it is a reality across professions.

LEGAL ISSUES

To look at *Do You Wanna Partner?* through the lens of labour law, three issues stand out that are common across workplaces everywhere, and these are the ones I will be focusing on in this

paper:

1. Equal Pay and Bias in Opportunities
2. Hostile Work Environment
3. Structural Barriers

LEGAL & CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1. EQUAL PAY AND BIAS IN OPPORTUNITIES

In *Do You Wanna Partner*, Anahita is told repeatedly that her success is because of her looks rather than her ability. It looks like a small remark, but it shows how women's achievements are often belittled. In real life, these attitudes mean women are paid less or lose out on promotions even when their work is equal to men's.

The law tries to prevent this. Article 14 of the Constitution promises equality before law, Article 15 prohibits discrimination and Article 16 guarantees equal job opportunities. In **Randhir Singh v. Union of India**,¹ the Supreme Court highlighted that “equal pay for equal work” is not just a slogan, but a constitutional right. **The Code on Wages, 2019** also prohibit gender bias in pay and hiring. In **Lt. Col. Nitisha v. Union of India**,² the Court went further and said that even rules that look neutral can be declared discriminatory, if in practice, they hold women back.

But the reality is still disappointing. Women in India earn almost 19–24% less than men.³ One big gap is that the law only covers “equal pay for equal work” and not “work of equal value.” This means jobs mostly done by women, like teaching or nursing, are undervalued even if they require the same effort and skills as male-dominated jobs. On paper, the law looks strong, but in practice, it leaves women struggling for fair pay and recognition.

¹ *Randhir Singh v Union of India* 1982 SCR (3) 298.

² *Lt Col Nitisha v. Union of India* 2021 SCC Online SC 261.

³ Sunita Banerjee and Md Jiyauddin, ‘Closing the Gender Pay Gap in India: An Analysis’ (*Research Gate*, May 2025)

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/392112976_Closing_The_Gender_Pay_Gap_in_India_An_Analysis?_cf_chl_tk=dgmraP49JjezGdGqkxK72SANobHK4SruaamHfSEHvSw-1759339931-1.0.1.1-nMrftBdV3flaoF7pkYpoj5BqcC2N59uXmRerp0gF7TA> accessed on 30 September 2025.

2. HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT

In another scene, an investor offers funding but adds, “after all, three gorgeous women,” and continues to wink at them. Now this might seem casual, but such comments reduce women to their looks instead of recognising them as professionals. This is exactly how hostile work environments are created.

‘The **PoSH Act, 2013**, which came from the **Vishaka Guidelines**, makes it clear that harassment is not just about physical acts but includes sexually coloured jokes, comments or behaviour that causes humiliation. The Act requires every workplace with more than ten employees to set up an Internal Complaints Committee. It also protects interns, contract workers, and even covers online harassment linked to work.’⁴ In **Aureliano Fernandes v. State of Goa**,⁵ the Supreme Court stressed that every organisation must strictly follow these rules because dignity and safety at work are basic rights that women deserve.

Yet, many organisations still do not comply especially the one in the informal sector which employees over 90% of the female workforce. So, while the PoSH Act looks strong, weak enforcement makes it ineffective. The series shows the same reality: Shikha and Anahita continue to face humiliating comments, showing how much slower social attitudes are to change than the law.

3. STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

During the fundraising process, one of the investors, without hesitation, tells Shikha and Anahita that women should take care of their households rather than doing business. This reflects the deeper structural barriers women face at work. Women are often forced to leave workplaces due to household responsibilities, especially after they become mothers.

The **Maternity Benefit Act, 1961** tries to prevent this by giving 26 weeks of paid maternity leave and requiring big employers to provide creche facilities.

In industries like alcohol, women are often deliberately kept out due to the social stigma,

⁴ ‘Research- Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace’ (*Nishith Desai Associates*, December 2022) <https://www.nishithdesai.com/fileadmin/user_upload/pdfs/Research_Papers/Prevention_of_Sexual_Harassment_at_Workplace.pdf> accessed on 30 September 2025.

⁵ *Aureliano Fernandes v State of Goa* Civil Appeal No 2482 of 2014.

as is also seen in the series. In **Anuj Garg v. Hotel Association of India**,⁶ the Supreme Court struck down a law that stopped women from working in places serving alcohol, saying that the State's duty is to make workplaces safe, not to keep women out.

But once again, the gap between law and reality is clear. Many companies do not follow maternity benefit rules and facilities like crèches or flexible work are rare. As a result, women often leave the workforce after motherhood or because of family expectations. Without proper support, structural barriers remain rampant.

The series highlights this truth: Shikha and Anahita are smart and capable, but at the end they still needed to “create” a man to gain credibility, which shows how deeply these biases are built into the system.

MY OPINION & CONCLUSION

Even though the women in *Do You Wanna Partner?* are not technically “workmen” under the Industrial Disputes Act, I chose this series because their experiences mirror the discrimination women face in workplaces across roles and professions. What struck me most is that these women come from a place of privilege- they are educated, urban, upper-caste and financially secure. If bias and exclusion look this stark for them, we can only imagine how much harsher it becomes when caste, class, or rural background intersects with gender. Intersectionality reminds us that struggles are layered, and many women are pushed out of the workforce without the resources or visibility these characters still had.⁷

From a legal perspective, the problem is not that India lacks laws. The Code on Wages, the PoSH Act and the Maternity Benefit Act, all exist. The real challenge is ensuring they create impact on the ground. Reforms need to go beyond paper promises. Wage transparency, for instance, could make it harder for employers to quietly undervalue women's work. PoSH Committees must be more than a formality- members should be trained, processes must be made accessible and reporting should be monitored. For maternity benefits, extending childcare and crèche facilities into the informal sector would make a real difference, since that is where

⁶ *Anuj Garg v Hotel Association of India* 2008 (2) SLR 472.

⁷ Udisha Choudhary and Jyotika Teekchandani, ‘Intersectionality in the Workplace: Analysing the Effects Of Gender on Professional Opportunities’ (2024) 6 IRJHIS <<https://irjhis.com/paper/IRJHIS2403016.pdf>> accessed on 30 September 2025.

the majority of women work. Reforms could also include stronger penalties for non-compliance and incentives for companies that actively support women's participation.

Unless implementation becomes consistent and workplaces are truly held accountable, the gap between what the law says and what women actually experience will stay wide. The series makes this point well- legal promises by themselves are not enough. Real change only comes when those promises are backed by strong enforcement and proper support systems.