There are numerous legislations that have specific provisions to address women and their interests thereby providing a strong legislative basis for gender justice in India. These are:

1. *The Employees State Insurance (ESI) Act*, 1948: The objective of the Act is to provide for certain benefits to employees in case of sickness, maternity and employment injury. The Act is applicable to all factories (this includes factories owned by the Government) and any other establishment to which an appropriate government may extend the provisions of the Act, after giving one month’s notice. The Employee State Insurance (ESI) Corporation was established under this Act. Section 46 of the Act, which covers the benefits for employees, has provided for periodical payments to an insured woman in case of confinement or miscarriage or sickness arising out of pregnancy, confinement or premature birth of child. The word confinement has been defined under the Act as ‘labour resulting in the issue of a living child, or labour after twenty-six weeks of pregnancy resulting in the issue of a child whether alive or dead.’
2. *The Maternity Benefit Act (MB Act),* 1961: The 1961 Act was amended by the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2016, the amendments coming into effect from 1st April 2017. While the benefits of the ESI Act are available to insured women earning up to INR 21,000 per month, the MB Act applies to every woman employed in factories, mines, shops, commercial establishments that employ ten or more employees. There is no wage threshold under the MB Act.
3. *The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act*, 2013: As discussed above, the Constitution has enshrined the principles of gender justice in India under various Articles. Workplace sexual harassment was first recognized by the Indian Legislature in the case of *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan*, in which the Supreme Court framed certain guidelines, called the Vishaka Guidelines and issued directions to the Union of India to enact a law for combating sexual harassment at workplaces. Since a specific law on sexual harassment did not exist at the time of passing of the judgement, the Supreme Court formulated the Vishaka guidelines wherein employers were mandatorily directed to provide a mechanism to address and resolve complaints relating to sexual harassment at workplaces. Sixteen years following the judgement, an Act was brought into effect in accordance with the Supreme Court guidelines. The objective of the Act is to provide protection against sexual harassment of women at workplaces and for the prevention and redressal of sexual harassment and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The definition of ‘sexual harassment’ as provided under the Act falls within the definition in the Vishaka judgement. Sexual harassment, as defined under Section (2)(n) of the *The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act,* includes: (i) physical contact and advances, (ii) demand or request for sexual favours, (iii) making sexually coloured remarks, (iv) showing pornography, or (v) any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature. Interference with work or creating a hostile work environment, implied or explicit promise of preferential or treatment in employment and/or implied or explicit threat about present or future employment status, if accompanied with or connected to any act of sexual harassment may also amount to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment, as defined under the Act, is wide enough to cover implied and direct sexual conduct; such conduct means physical, verbal and written conduct. The Act requires an employer to set up an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) at each branch or office with ten on more employees. The ICC is to be composed of a minimum of two employees; external members are to be from non-governmental organisations or association committed to the cause of women. No less than half of the members are to be women. It is also required to set up a local complaints committee (LCC) to address complaints from women employed in organizations without an ICC owing to a workplace having less than ten employeesor when the complaint is against an employer. In cases where a complaint is received, the Committee has to follow up and complete an inquiry within a time period of 90 days. Upon completion of inquiry, the report is to be sent to employer or District Officer, as the case may be. They are required to take action on the report within 60 days of receiving it. There are penalties provided under the Act where an employer can be punished with a fine of up to INR 50,000 for non-compliance with the provisions of the Act.
4. *Women’s Reservation Bill:*The *Women’s Reservation Bill*is a pending bill which has sought to amend the Constitution of India to reserve thirty-three percent (one-third) of the total seats in Lok Sabha-the Lower House of Parliament and all state legislative assemblies for women. One third of the total number of the seats reserved for Schedule Tribes and Scheduled Castes are to be reserved for women of those groups in the Lok Sabha and legislative assemblies. The bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 9 March 2010. If passed by the Lok Sabha, the Act that will thereby come into force will be a momumental document for gender justice in India.
5. *The Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance,*2018: This ordinance provides the death penalty for rape of girls below 12 years of age. It amends the *Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, Indian Evidence Act,*and *Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.*The salient features of this ordinance are: minimum punishment of ten years for rape, minimum punishment of twenty years if the victim is a woman below sixteen years of age and minimum twenty years of rigorous imprisonment, extendable to life imprisonment or the death penalty if the victim is a girl aged below twelve. The ordinance also provides for disposing rape cases within six months.

The presence of legislation, however, does not imply a consistent implementation, or a levelling of the massive inequalities that still exist. The crimes against women committed at the hourly rate have gone from 21 in 2007 to 39 in 2016 (National Crime Records Bureau, 2016). . Of these ‘cruelty by husband or relatives’ was the most reported crime, accounting for 33 per cent of total crimes, while rape accounted for 11 per cent. While the conviction rate in 2007 was 30 per cent, the same went down to 18.9 per cent in 201 the lowest in a decade. It is therefore imperative for the State and civil society to collectively play a proactive role for meeting the requirements of gender justice in India.