

A LONG WAY TO GO

By Ashima Ohri

In this interview with BW Legal World, **Aastha**, Partner, Argus Partners elucidates on her journey in law and shares her thoughts on joining the BW Legal World Elite 40 Under 40 Club of Achievers 2021 with the prestigious BW Legal World 40 Under 40 Best Lawyers and Legal Influencers Award

How and when did you know becoming a lawyer was your life’s calling?

I am a first-generation lawyer and took up law without knowing if I would like it. I got lucky since as I went through the paces of law school, I really enjoyed studying law and it was very soon clear to me that this was what I wanted to do.

Please tell us about your specialisation and the array of work you handle at your firm.

My practice at the firm is focused on financing as well as corporate insolvency and restructuring matters. I advise banks, NBFCs, credit funds and corporate houses on financing transactions including, structured finance, syndicated lending, real- estate financing and corporate bond issuances.

I also advise various stakeholders including investors and lenders on corporate insolvency and restructuring matters. This involves providing strategic inputs and solutions on a range of contentious as well as non-contentious distressed situations. I regularly appear before the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) as well for various matters under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

What are your predictions for the year going forward?

I think with the economic rebound expected in 2022, we will see an increased investor participation in the Indian corporate bond market as well as an

increase in external borrowings.

As a new age lawyer, what to your mind is the one thing in the current legal ecosystem at the Bar, Bench, or in the Law Firms that needs our attention.

I firmly believe that technology and artificial intelligence are about to fundamentally revolutionise the legal ecosystem. Most of the tools we currently use are essentially the same as they were about a decade ago. We need to take a deep look at how technology can help improve the practice of law.

Many Congratulations on joining the BW Legal World Elite 40 Under 40 Club of Achievers 2021. What to your mind has helped



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you get to where you are and what advice would you have for others who want to set off in a similar direction?

I feel it is extremely important to truly enjoy the work you do, especially in a profession as demanding as ours. One can never get good at something they do not enjoy. I am really passionate about the subject of law and the thing I love most about our profession is that one continues to remain a student for life and con-

stantly learn.

As a final note, would you please recommend to our readers your favourite book that left a lasting impression on you.

I have learnt a great deal from Ben Horowitz's *The Hard Thing About Hard Things: Building a Business When There Are No Easy Answers*. Whilst the book is ostensibly about tech entrepreneurship, it has some very hard-hitting lessons on

managing teams, becoming a leader and fostering a positive work culture.

While it is encouraging to see the increase in statistics of women in law and in leadership roles, would you say things have become easier, or does the way to the top continue to be a journey through labyrinths and mazes for women?

I feel there is still some disparity in the number of women lawyers, especially at the mid-level. Whilst it is very heartening to see organisations becoming more and more gender-inclusive, there is a long way to go to ensure that women do not drop out and that needs supportive organisations, families and peers. **BW**