

More women join up IT firms, but many drop out, too

In fiscal year 2017, over a third of industry staff was women

OUR BUREAU

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The number of women employees in the \$155-billion IT industry has gone up to 34 per cent, as companies seek to improve their gender diversity ratio, but continue to struggle retaining top management women employees.

IT industry body Nasscom said that almost one-third of the employees in the sector are women – working across different job roles.

According to a report released in its 10th edition of Diversity and Inclusion Summit, Nasscom pointed out that the percentage of women working in the sector has gone up from 28 per cent in the 2016 fiscal to 34 per cent in the 2017 fiscal.

Further, the industry body expects that in 2017 the number of firms that have more than 20 per cent women at senior level will increase to nearly 60 per cent. The Indian IT and BPM sector employs 3.9 million people, according to Nasscom.

Additionally, nearly 51 per cent of firms will have more

than 20 per cent of women at C-suite or top management levels. While the industry has been traditionally getting a sizeable people of women employees at entry levels since the last half a dozen years or so, a lot of them do not make it to the top. "We have a lot of women employees who drop out post maternity or lack of support from their family and are working on ways to hold them back," said Partha DeSarkar, CEO of Bengaluru-based Hinduja Global Solutions. The company employees around 25,000 people.

Companies like HGS, along with others are offer-

ing their employees flexibility options such as flexi login times, work out of home options largely aimed at women who have to balance work and family. DeSarkar said that at HGS, around 15-16 per cent women employees are in leadership roles.

Sangeeta Gupta, Senior Vice-President, Nasscom, said its report can be used by the IT-BPM industry as a scorecard to benchmark their gender inclusive policies and practices. "The companies are moving in the right direction with regard to their gender inclusive policies but a lot more can be done," she added.

Logical reasoning

The industry points to logical business reasoning behind these initiatives. "We have noticed that attrition is not an issue and their commitment is much higher than able-bodied individuals," said DeSarkar.

Nasscom in its report points out that corporations with at least 10 per cent women on company Boards have 2.5-5 per cent higher returns on equity, firms where women are at least 30 per cent of C-suite have 15 per cent higher profitability than others.

