

## **Encourage women to enter boardroom for business necessity rather than to fulfil a legal obligation only, say top industry leaders**

**NEW DELHI, 30 July 2015:** Women must become a critical part of the top management because of business necessity rather than to fulfil a legal obligation only. India needs to move away from stereotypes that define the role of men and women in industry and corporate world.

This sentiment was today expressed by eminent industry leaders **Mr. Ajay Singh, Founder, SpiceJet; Mr. Shivinder Mohan Singh, Executive Vice Chairman, Fortis Healthcare Ltd.** and **Mr. Anil R. Gupta, Chairman & MD, Havells India Ltd.** at a session on **'How Women Influence Corporate Decisions'** organized by **Young FICCI Ladies Organisation (YFLO)**.

Women possess a balanced view and are better at management, **said Mr. Ajay Singh** and added that they also showcase higher integrity than their male counterparts and possess the ability to innovate. This has led to an increase in the number of women at top management positions in his organization. He urged women to enhance their technical capabilities and equip themselves with business acumen by imbibing new technologies to become effective contributors in a boardroom.

At SpiceJet, **Mr. Ajay Singh said** that a conscious decision was made to increase the number of women in the cockpit. The aviation company has almost 50 per cent female customers hence engaging women employee makes a business sense. There is no disparity in pay of male and female pilots. He added that SpiceJet runs career programs, provides secured transportation and organizes initiatives, designed specifically for women to encourage them to assume higher positions in management.

Enumerating the challenges that women face as a result of preconceived notions, **Mr. Shivinder Mohan Singh said** that it is assumed that women are bad with numbers and women themselves admit to it. The need is for women to display confidence and project their true capability. Similarly after entering family life, women tend to feel guilty about not being able to devote sufficient time to work. One must understand that the idea should be to accomplish and deliver work on time and not about the number of hours spent in office.

Mr. Shivinder Mohan Singh also underlined how women are apprehensive to take up a transferrable job because they do not have the freedom to talk about their career decisions. Women have been moving places to enhance their husbands' career, now it is time for men to support and move with their wives to her job destinations, he added.

Presenting a view of the manufacturing sector, **Mr. Anil Gupta of Havells India said** that manufacturing industry is male dominated and women are not encouraged to join it in a big way. The mindset needs a revolutionary change and towards this end, at Havells women were being enabled, empowered and engaged by way of various initiatives. Women were being enabled to realize their potential, were being provided with a safe environment to work in and engaged in business' decision-making process.

**Mr. Gupta said** that women need to be encouraged to take up diversified roles. At Havells, women form around 18 per cent of the workforce, which is higher than the industry's average of 10 per cent. Hence, there is a need to create

awareness about opportunities in the manufacturing sector, he added.

In her keynote address, **Ms. Archana Garodia Gupta, President, FLO**, said that studies have shown that three women are required to change boardroom dynamics, allowing them to become more vocal and their voices to be heard. Women are supposed to bring diversity which prevents group think, and brings additional perspective to any decision. Besides improving performance, it also improves corporate governance, as women tend to do the “right” thing more often, she added.

The panel was moderated by **Mr. Pranjal Sharma, Advisor, Public Engagement and Public Diplomacy, FICCI**.

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