

Subhash Chandra spells out quality attributes of successful family-owned businesses

Ms. Archana Garodia Gupta takes over as President of FLO at 31st Annual Session

NEW DELHI, April 9, 2015. Dr. Subhash Chandra, Chairman, Essel Group, today spelled out the quality attributes that family-owned businesses in India possess which have enabled them to not only survive but face the challenges with equanimity, fuel the growth of their companies and make increasing contribution to the country's GDP.

Speaking at the **31st Annual Session of FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO)** on Thursday, Dr Chandra said the reason which family-owned businesses continue to grow is because they have been job creators. Most of such entrepreneurs have been thinkers and risk-takers and that is why they have been able to stay in business for generations.

He said when such entrepreneurs were in difficulty, for instance in an economic downturn, they faced it with grit and determination. Their women even gave up their jewellery to pay the debt incurred, he added.

Another attribute, he said, was persistence. Family-owned business managers do not take no for an answer. They persist in achieving their goals.

Dr. Chandra, however, cautioned against falling prey to the pitfalls of power. Absolute power, he said, corrupts the brain cells and stifles rational thinking. Family-businesses are not immune to this and those that have succumbed to it find the law catching up with them some day.

A quality enjoyed by family-business leaders is that they are givers. They not only provide for themselves, but also for the bad times, the next generation, the State as taxes, religious and other social causes such as education.

Such families also have a strong sense of purpose of existence which is beyond their immediate business interests; they never forget their roots, uplift people around their workplaces and nurse no egos.

Baroness Sandip Verma, Senior Minister for Energy & Climate Change, Government of UK, in her addresses, emphasized the critical role of assertiveness, leadership and mentoring to bring about a change in the lives of women who are denied an opportunity to carve out a niche for themselves.

She said she favored 40% representation of women at the middle –level management of companies. She said economic growth is generated because women tend to be the biggest consumers and wondered why in such a scenario India was not managing its discourse around women.

Arguing for a larger representation of women in company board rooms, she said a mixed board room enables one to take a diverse view of what consumers want.

Baroness Verma advised women business leaders to “reach out if you want help from others and reach out to help those who need it.”

Ms. Meenakshi Lehki, Member of Parliament and Spokesperson of the BJP, said that discrimination against women was all-pervasive, not just in the top echelons of society. “How many women gardeners, women cab drivers or women e-rickshaw drivers do you have?” she asked even as she noted that small entrepreneurs (including women) contribute up to 35% to the country’s GDP. And yet till yesterday, there was no government policy on soft loans to them, she added.

Dr. Jyotsna Suri, President of FICCI, noted that in two years FICCI has had two women as Presidents, a no mean achievement. She underlined the need to go to areas where women need help; to rural areas to create an awareness that there is no difference between a man and a woman in terms of ability and capacity to excel. “As responsible Indian women, we need to share what we have learnt by reaching out,” Dr. Suri pointed out.

On the occasion, FLO Rising Star Skill Awardees were felicitated for their determination in skilling themselves and finding a place for themselves in society.

At the conclusion of the annual session, **Ms. Archana Garodia Gupta took over as President of FLO** from the **outgoing President, Ms. Neeta Boochra**.