

SHRADHA SURI MARWAH

VP, ACMA and Chairperson & MD, Subros

Organisations have to mature as they really have no choice. Successful companies run on talent and not just on men or women. Talent is scarce and it cannot be segregated just on gender.

EVEN AS SHRADHA Suri Marwah, the Chairman and Managing Director of Subros, remains a strong proponent for increasing women's participation in the workforce, she emphasises that people should not be boxed into any gender stereotypes, as even men, especially those in their 50s, are increasingly looking to take a backseat in their careers to care for their aging parents. She goes on to explain that work should speak for itself and organisations need to mature and see that, rather than whether a person sitting across the table is male or female.

Offering insights into the role played by employers in increasing women's workforce participation, Marwah highlighted that while providing safety to the employees remains a matter of hygiene, an atmosphere of inclusiveness should be developed irrespective of gender, faith, and region, amongst others.

"The mindset has to change," she adds, emphasising the need for a non-judgemental work environment as biases need to be tackled. "The talent is scarce, and it cannot be segregated on gender," Marwah continues, before adding that companies should be able to embrace people for their skills and talent. She said that "50 percent of the workforce is women, and that cannot be ignored," adding that if we can actually attract them to come work for us, productivity, quality, profitability will increase. This dovetails with what she termed as this decade being India's decade and that the India plus one strategy is here to stay.

"The organisations have to mature as they have no choice, as companies run on talent and not on men or women," she further adds, explaining that there is a need to complete the overhaul of the education system right from the kindergarten stage.

Marwah, who is also Vice President of the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA), was speaking at a virtual webinar organised by *Autocar Professional* to mark International Women's Day, and the topic of discussion was "Paving the way for Higher Inclusion".

While acknowledging the challenges faced by women during certain phases of their lives, such as marriage, raising children,



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and managing families, she highlighted that the situation has drastically improved in recent years when compared to earlier. Also, structural changes like the ability to work from home, automation, software technologies, etc., have made it easier for people to do this. Marwah is of the opinion that if the challenges of women working night shift can be solved, then going forward, nothing should be able to stop the auto industry from reaching a 50:50 gender ratio in terms of its workforce.

The company's women workforce is between 17 percent to 20 percent and the company has a target of taking this up to 40 percent in the next three years, Marwah stated.

As of March 31, 2022, the total strength of women permanent employees was 83 out of 2647, the company's latest annual report suggests. Marwah said that when she first started out in her career, she was amongst a handful of women, including at Subros. At that time, the automotive field was mostly thought to be a male-dominated one, especially in manufacturing units where a lot of work was done by hand. Additionally, she stressed that women should be left to choose their own calling instead of imposing limitations on which fields they should enter and which ones they shouldn't.

In order to empower women for self-entrepreneurship and develop skills for financial independence, Subros says it runs a skill development centre at a village in Manesar. Several women from nearby villages have been trained and given facilities by the company.

Subros, a company that designs and manufactures thermal products for passenger cars and commercial vehicles in India, appointed Shradha Suri Marwah as Chairperson and Managing Director in May 2021. Her appointment followed the demise of the Chairman and promoter of the company Ramesh Suri in May of the same year. Marwah is an economics graduate from Delhi University with a Master's in International Marketing and Information Technology from London, UK. Marwah joined Subros in 2000 after a short stint with Six Continents, UK, and Reebok in India.

Shahkar Abidi

"Talent is scarce and that's a reality and it cannot be segregated on gender. Policies need to be made for all. An organisation should make itself a place where people want to work. It's the talent which will be a driving force - not male or female"

— **Shradha Suri Marwah**, VP, ACMA and Chairperson and MD, Subros

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