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Hindustan Zinc aims to have 30% women across levels

By Rica Bhattacharyya, ET Bureau Last Updated: Mar 26, 2024, 07:02:00 PM IST

Synopsis

The Vedanta group company has nine board members, of which five are women. Pointing out that there are barriers, including psychological, to inclusion of more women in the workforce, especially in male-dominated sectors of mining and manufacturing, Priya Agarwal Hebbar said, "It is also got to do with whether companies have the right policies to attract women."



Mining major [Hindustan Zinc](#) Ltd is aiming to increase the representation of women across levels to 30% by 2030 from 20% now, its chairperson, [Priya Agarwal Hebbar](#), told ET.

"We decided that we want to ensure 30% women across our employees and we gave a 2030 goal for that, and we

also made a decision that our leadership should be 30% women over time," said Agarwal.

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“It is very important that organisations consciously attract more women into leadership roles who can later be elevated to board positions,” said Agarwal, who is also non-executive director of Vedanta. “It is important to bring in the diversity of thought and a different point of view into boardroom conversations. [Board representation](#) need not just come from CEOs and CFOs, it should come from other verticals too, such as HR, ESG, etc., to add to the plethora of ideas.”

Agarwal said companies and entities should ensure that their provisions, “like [maternity and paternity policies](#) where women feel that even if they come back to work, they can still manage their work environment in the best manner possible”.

Pointing out that there are barriers, including psychological, to inclusion of more women in the workforce, especially in male-dominated sectors of mining and manufacturing, Agarwal said, “It is also got to do with whether companies have the right policies to attract women.”

Agarwal said companies must endeavour to retain and attract women employees through enabling policies such as [flexible work arrangements](#), which support them through key life stages such as maternity and caregiving.

“I think flexible work arrangements are very important... I don't think this is only for women,” she said. “This is across the board. During the pandemic, we learned that individuals thrive and even deliver better results when they have the flexibility of working from home...”

Hindustan Zinc is one of the first companies in India that has women working in underground mines. “We have mines that are led by women and technology has a big role to play here,” said Agarwal, adding that the company is designing a safety app for women.

“Of course, there has to be discipline and structure, but in terms of flexibility in work, it will only encourage more and more individuals to join the workforce, more individuals of different diverse backgrounds to join the

workforce, and I feel there are many positive benefits of the entire way forward,” she said. “We are working on these (policies), we are working on developing these further for the entire workforce.”

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