



# International Women's Day 2024: Insights from leaders on empowering women in Indian tech industry

According to top tech leaders, this journey toward inclusion is not just about numbers but about recognizing and embracing the diverse experiences, perspectives, and contributions of women in technology.



In India, there's been a longstanding shortage of women in top tech positions like management and CXO roles. However, a positive change is underway as more companies recognize the importance of having women in leadership positions. This shift is not just about adding diversity but also about inspiring inclusion in the tech industry.

As more women step into leadership roles in the tech world, they bring with them fresh perspectives, innovative problem-solving skills, meticulous attention to detail, and diverse viewpoints. These qualities enrich the tech landscape and foster a culture of inclusivity.

Companies are actively taking steps to support women in their career journeys. They understand that embracing diverse voices leads to stronger and more innovative teams. By providing opportunities and support to women, companies are breaking down barriers and challenging stereotypes in the tech sector.

We had the opportunity to speak with tech leaders from various IT companies to hear their insights and advice for women starting out in tech. Their perspectives highlight how inspiring inclusion can drive

positive changes and create equal opportunities for women in the tech industry. This journey towards inclusion is not just about numbers but about recognizing and embracing the diverse experiences, perspectives, and contributions of women in technology.

Sarada Vempati, Head of Enterprise Functions, Technology, Wells Fargo India & Philippines “Today, women stand as pioneers, reshaping every facet of the industry. For companies to thrive, there is a need to actively foster inclusion. Their increased participation across academia, workforce and leadership is a catalyst for economic growth. Yet, challenges persist, necessitating sustained efforts towards gender parity through inclusive policies and programs.

Kamolika Peres, Group Vice President & Managing Director, India/ South Asia, ServiceNow, said, "India's technology sector is a significant catalyst for the country's economic growth. For the tech sector to fully take advantage of its many possibilities, it is crucial to cultivate an inclusive workforce."

Anupama Katkar, Chairperson of Quick Heal Foundation and Chief Operational Excellence, Quick Heal Technologies Limited, said, "Women are inherently gifted multitaskers and relentless achievers, balancing various roles with grace and determination. I am immensely proud to be a part of this incredible community, where every success is not just an individual milestone but a testament to the indomitable spirit that characterizes us. Standing amidst remarkable female achievers encountered on my journey with Quick Heal, their countless stories of collective triumphs deeply inspire me."

Renu Shekhawat, Director & Head of Human Resources, India & ANZ at Pitney Bowes, commented, "Inclusion at the workplace is about taking everyone forward together. Women, just like men, are seeking challenging opportunities that empower them to succeed in their careers and it is the responsibility of organizations to provide them with an inclusive and bias-free environment. While equal opportunities are important, they alone are not sufficient for true inclusion. Organizations must approach inclusion through the lens of 'Intersectionality', recognizing that every individual has a unique starting point and that programs must be tailored accordingly."

Deepak Dobriyal, Senior Vice President, Global Talent Management and Corporate HR, Birlasoft, stated, "The information technology industry continues to evolve, notably in its efforts to enhance [diversity and inclusion](#). From a historically low representation of women in tech to now over 2 million women, the sector is progressing towards greater equality. To further improve women's representation and nurture their growth, the IT industry is implementing measures to support and retain women in STEM roles."

Mitalee Dabral, Country HR Leader - Wayfair India TDC, said, In an ever-evolving digital landscape, constant innovation requires diverse teams with varied perspectives, skills, and experiences. Creating inclusive workplaces fosters creativity and problem-solving. Women's presence is essential for both diversity and equity, as well as for fostering an inclusive and innovative digital future. It's also imperative for organizations to persist in promoting diversity and inclusion initiatives."

Bharathy Venkataraman, Director, Delivery Excellence, Mindsprint, said, "Accepting and valuing women's involvement in professional domains, especially in the IT sector, goes beyond diversity. Today, we stand at a juncture where companies recognize the changing norms and are reflecting the same in their culture. However, to propel in the right direction, we must move beyond the 'quantity of diversity' in the

boardroom and actively champion true inclusion, where 'the quality of outcomes' is the focus.”

Seetha Rani KP, Head of Human Resources, Philips Innovation Campus (PIC), Bengaluru, commented, “International Women’s Day is a day to acknowledge their time-tested and invaluable contributions. With technology being a leveller, and work flexibility more or less a norm, it is only fair to expect more women to unleash their hitherto restrained potential to envision grand possibilities, shatter barriers, and redefine the limits of achievement.”

Anjali Amar, Vice President & Country Head India and SAARC, Cloudflare, said, "Gender equality is a human rights imperative and cornerstone for fostering inclusive societies. In a world grappling with multifaceted crises, empowering women continues to be crucial to address global challenges and create a world that is more equitable for all.”

Smriti Mathur, Vice President People India & Global Talent Advisory, Pegasystems, said “Today, technology has empowered us to dismantle physical barriers, paving the way for equity in the workspace. Yet, it is the cultivation of a culture of mindful inclusion and belonging that truly propels an organization towards its full potential and success.”

Vidya Munirathnam, Vice President – Human Resources, Lowe's India, said, “Investing in women and cultivating their path toward accelerated career growth must transcend mere diversity agendas; it is a strategic imperative for progress.”

Ashish Saraf, VP and Country Director, Thales - India, said, “We believe that a diverse team can support higher performance in the workplace, and we remain committed to providing equal opportunities to women in an inclusive, safe, and respectful work environment.”

Ramya Parashar, Chief Operating Officer, MiQ, said “ As industry leaders, we have the responsibility and privilege to set an example for our organizations, that inclusion is not just a policy, but a core value lived out daily. Let’s commit to being architects of environments where every voice is heard, every contribution valued, and every success celebrated—collectively.”

Linnet D’Souza - Senior Director, Technology, Caelon Global Solutions, commented, “Holistic development of women professionals can be achieved only when equality is teamed with equity fostering a diverse culture that is inclusive to differences and addresses barriers.”

Harsha Solanki, VP, GM Asia, Infobip, said, "Investing in women is not just a moral imperative; it's a strategic decision with a demonstrably positive impact. Studies show that closing the gender gap could inject trillions into the global economy, and companies with near gender parity in leadership positions boasts a significant return on assets."

Vaishnavi Shukla, HR Head, Comviva, commented, "Our dedicated programs ensure women are supported at each of the crucial stages and milestones of their life and that they have equal opportunities to thrive and contribute meaningfully to our organization's success. We are constantly engaged in accelerating our women leader’s careers and creating a workplace where every voice is

valued and heard. From our comprehensive campus hiring programs to internal growth and promotions to an overall well-being intervention at each stage, we ensure a bias-free mindset. As a result of this, our Gender diversity ratio has seen a rise of ~4% and we are absolutely thrilled about it."

Monica Tomar, Regional Marketing Manager, South Asia Pacific, Axis Communications, revealed, "International Women's Day 2024 marks a pivotal moment for the global industry, celebrating women's indispensable contributions to innovation and inclusive workplaces. It is crucial to acknowledge that true progress toward inclusivity in the professional sphere extends beyond diversity quotas."

Smruti Guttal, Programs Lead from Bosch Global Software Technologies, said, "To truly accelerate progress in this industry, a strong emphasis on continuous learning, acknowledging challenges, and fostering mutual gender appreciation from the ground up is crucial. Staying perseverant, informed, confident, and standing your ground for decisions you make, will pave the way for success. Let's embrace the future and build a more innovative and inclusive world."

Kavita Sugandh, V Partner, QNET entrepreneur said, "We don't need a special occasion to recognize since women have all the qualities needed to excel in any field, including traditionally male-dominated ones. Success is gender-blind; it rewards dedication and hard work. Unlike, many parts of the world, where even today, girls are discouraged from utilizing their full potential, we believe in creating equal opportunities for all, where women can showcase their talents and leadership qualities with confidence"

Apoorva Aggarwal, office managing principal, ZS, said, "At ZS, we recognize inclusion and diversity as an engine for innovation and business growth. By fostering an inclusive environment that harnesses diverse perspectives, we unlock hidden talent and unleash a wave of different perspectives and ideas, leading to richer solutions that resonate with broader markets."

Ramya Narasimhan - Leader Product and Industry Practice, Altimetrik, commented, "Empowering women in tech is not a moral obligation anymore, instead it stands as a potent and strategic business imperative. A kaleidoscope of diverse perspectives and talents leading to innovation and sustainable growth can be unlocked once leaders decide on championing equal opportunities through hiring and progression across all categories in the industry."

Arti Agarwal, Head-Human Resources, Tata Asset Management, said "Diversity is a fact, inclusion , a choice! The catalyst of growth ,innovation and success lies in the unspoken words , unexpressed ideas, and contributions of employees been unrecognized. This Women's day I wish organizations to recommit in building an environment where every individual is welcomed, respected, and valued. A workplace where diversity and inclusion are not just ideals but living realities for all"

Shweta Patel, EY Global Delivery Services SAP & Consumer Industry Leader, said, "As a leader, I regard inclusion as a core value and strive to cultivate a safe and inclusive environment where women feel heard, understood, and valued. On this occasion, let us reaffirm our commitment to inspire and empower women to pursue their passions and achieve their full potential, driving positive change and innovation in the workplace and beyond."

Chris Williams, Director of DEI at Keysight Technologies, said “We live in an incredibly diverse world. When businesses reflect this diversity, and value bringing together people from different backgrounds, with unique perspectives, we can solve some of the greatest global challenges. There is still much progress to be made in diversifying the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) industry.”

Abby Payne, Chief People Officer, SailPoint, stated, “Organizations that are deliberate about creating spaces for women to learn from and support one another benefit from innovation that can only happen when people feel comfortable taking risks. At SailPoint, our ‘Women of Technology’ community provides that space for women and male allies. The community engages in candid discussions and champions women’s causes to drive increased engagement and productivity.”