



Message from the Chairperson

Dear all,

This year as we begin to celebrate 50 glorious years of CACCI and 10 years of CWEC, I am looking forward to meeting, once again, all our members during the CACCI Conference in Taipei, Taiwan on 23-25 November, 2016.

CWEC has constantly strived and played a catalyst role in the development of women. We have created access to entrepreneurship and leadership training, communication skills, business planning, marketing, finance, negotiation and other acquired competencies, which help increase their success.

CWEC has further created opportunities to make women access funds and learnings to enhance themselves. The Council has also made possible access to leadership contacts, by removing barriers to meeting role models and to help in building an image and positive attitudes about their own personal capabilities.

I am happy to state that there has been an increase in women's labour force participation and entrepreneurship. This has helped in the economic growth and societal transformation of the Asia Pacific.

On this important milestone let us once again join hands to increase and address these relevant issues. Still we have miles to go...

With Warm Regards,

*Mrs. Mukta Nandini Jain
Chairperson
CACCI Women Entrepreneurs Council*



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30th CACCI Conference

November 23-25, 2016, Taipei, Taiwan

CACCI to Launch 1st Asia-Pacific Women Entrepreneur Award at 30th CACCI Conference in Taipei [Read more >>](#)

CACCI is pleased to announce the launching of the 1st Asia-Pacific Women Entrepreneur Award, a project of the CACCI Women Entrepreneur Council (CWEC).

To be held as part of the activities to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of CACCI in 2016, the Asia-Pacific Women Entrepreneur Award aims to recognize excellent women entrepreneurs in the Asia-Pacific rim who not only are successful in their business but also advocate corporate social responsibility for the good of their country.

Conferred every two years by CACCI in conjunction with the CACCI Conference, the Award is open to women entrepreneurs nominated by any CACCI Primary Member. Presentation of the 1st Asia-Pacific Young Women Award will be made during the 30th CACCI Conference which is to be held on November 23-25, 2016 at The Marriott Hotel in Taipei, Taiwan.

Selection criteria of nominees include:

- Must be engaged in her country-based or international-based profit organization that has been in existence for at least five years and actively involved in the global market
- Must be actively involved in a business-related non-profit organization or in a CACCI Primary Member country's activities
- Must exercise excellence in entrepreneurial and business leadership
- Must be regarded in her country with integrity and known for practicing good business ethics

The winner of the Award shall also be selected on the basis of her outstanding achievements in the following areas: (1) Business Acumen; (2) Involvement

in Non-profit Business Organizations or Associations and/or Involvement in CACCI activities; (3) Leadership Qualities; and (4) Integrity.

30th CACCI Conference

The 30th CACCI Conference, scheduled to take place on November 23-25 in Taipei, Taiwan, will be co-hosted by the Chinese International Economic Cooperation Association (CIECA) and the Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce (CNAIC), with the CTBC Bank as major sponsor. It is designed to provide another valuable platform for CACCI members and invited experts to exchange views on measures that the business sector and governments in the region can undertake to take full advantage of the opportunities offered not just by markets in the Asia-Pacific region but by countries in other parts of the world as well.

Focusing on the theme "The Rise of Asia: Taking a Bigger Role in the Global Economy", the 30th CACCI Conference this year will address the following questions: How can Asia play a much bigger role in shaping the global economy in the 21st century than it did in the latter half of the 20th century? What challenges would Asian countries – individually and collectively – face in playing such a role and how will they meet these challenges? How should Asia – which in the past was heavily dependent on exports for its growth – nurture its new "second engine of growth", which is domestic demand, in order to sustain its strong performance?

Eminent speakers will be invited to speak during two Plenary Sessions which will focus on timely and relevant issues, including the following:

Plenary Session 1: Gaining Traction from Regional Economic Integration

Plenary Session 2: Promoting SME Development for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth

In addition, parallel sectoral roundtable discussions and special session will be organized that will gather government and private sector experts for dialogue and panel discussion on important sectoral issues, particularly on woman entrepreneurship, Information and Communication Technology, youth entrepreneurship, and food and agriculture. ■



ADB channels US\$ 100 mn to fund women-led SMEs

By Ananda Kannangara

The Asian Development Bank hopes to develop Sri Lanka's Small and Medium sized enterprises (SMEs) by granting needy partners with US\$ 100 million through local Bank auctions.

The first such Bank Auction will be held on March 31 and all recognized local public and private banks will be required to reach targets on lending to female-led companies and firms outside Colombo and for first time borrowers. The objective of ADB is to channel more and more funds to smaller Sri Lankan firms that are always struggling for necessary funds they need to develop their enterprises.

It is said that 30 percent country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is coming from Small and Medium Enterprises in the country and they also help to create 30 percent jobs to local youth.

At a media briefing held in Colombo ADB South Asia Department, Senior Financial Specialist Donald Lambert said that providing such a large sum of fund to needy enterprises will not only help to grow existing enterprises or new enterprises that are to be commenced, but also to generate large number of employment opportunities to local youth population.

The ADB provide funds to local banks and the banks will thereafter lend funds to Small and Medium Enterprises at a specific interest rate at each US\$ 12.5 million auction to be held eight times over the coming four years.

Lambert said there is no market price for lending to Banks if the Banks are required to lend the funds to the least –well served SMEs such as new or rural borrowers or those led by women. “As this should be below normal



ADB's senior financial specialist Donald Lambert and senior investment officer, Thusitha Molligoda. Picture by Thushara Fernando

borrowing cost, it should encourage banks to work more energetically to disburse the funds that country's SME's so urgently need.

ADB channels US\$

He also said that currently many SMEs in the country fail to grow due to lack of credit and also the inability of borrowing money from banks. “Banks should deal with higher operating and credit expenses and often cannot recover these costs through higher loan pricing.”

Responding to a question Lambert said both public and private local banks of good standing are eligible to participate in the auction. Meanwhile, the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction will also provide a complementary US\$ 2 million technical assistance grant for business development and financial literacy training for women entrepreneurs in promising export generating sectors to promote SME demand for funding, independent administration of the action and developing plan for a national credit guarantee scheme for SMEs.

Source: Ceylon Daily News, March 29, 2016



Female entrepreneurs flock to crowdfunding site in Japan

Women bypass banks via crowdfunding sites for projects

By Leo Lewis

The proportion of Japanese women seeking to raise money for entrepreneurial or non-profit projects via the country's largest online crowdfunding site in the past year has risen to 50 per cent, says the platform's founder.

After a year of diluted equality legislation, reduced promotion targets and a court ruling that women must take their husbands'

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Female entrepreneurs

...Continued from page 3

surnames, it seems some of Japan's women are betting against prime minister Shinzo Abe's so-called womenomics programme and taking their chances on crowdfunding.

The pitches that have successfully raised funds on the ReadyFor? site range from cafés and kindergartens to medical devices and solar-powered dairy farms. Most of the projects seek the equivalent of about \$40,000, though targets are expected to grow significantly more ambitious.

Half the donations made to the projects also come from women, who describe themselves in social media forums on the site as "sympathetic", both to exploring new business ideas and the obstruction faced by women trying to raise money via traditional channels in Japanese.

Haruka Mera, who founded the ReadyFor? site while studying at university in Tokyo, says she expects the number of projects her company supports to continue rising. Ms Mera believes crowdfunding will replace bank loans as the seed capital for small entrepreneurs.

The site was deliberately crafted to make shy people feel unabashed about stating their ambitions.

In 2011, the company raised money for 40 projects. Last year, the total was just over 1,750. The expansion has come as conservative attitudes undergo what Ms Mera sees as a long-overdue shift.

In November, Goldman Sachs added its expertise to ReadyFor?, providing legal consultancies to small businesses raising funds.

Ms Mera says: "Compared with the US or UK, the whole concept of crowdfunding does not come naturally to the Japanese. But I think that things have changed a lot since the [2011] earthquake.

"Japanese society was given a very big reminder

that it needs to work together to make things happen and to take the country forward."

Crowdfunding, says Aiko Okawara, founder of the Japan chapter of the WomenCorporateDirectors group, has proved especially attractive to a generation of Japanese women who have little incentive to battle for acceptance in corporate Japan and can spot no shortage of business niches.

"The thing that was most lacking was the training required to set up companies: it has never traditionally been given to women. Making a small crowdfunded project is the best training ground," she adds.

Frustrations abound in Japan despite Mr Abe's much-vaunted womenomics policies, which have so far served mainly to expose the deeply embedded prejudices that prevent women assuming more senior positions in corporate and public life.

In December, a previously stated target of filling 30 per cent of Japan's "senior positions" with women by 2020 was watered down to a fraction of that.

Most of the female entrepreneurs who use ReadyFor?, says Ms Mera, are women in their 30s and 40s — the generation that, by convention, left their jobs to take maternity leave and were not offered the chance to return when their children started school.

Those women, she adds, have been the quickest to see that small-scale crowdfunding is capable of filling in for bank financing or other sources of capital.

Until recently, says Ms Okawara, the ability of Japanese women to take a risk on a business idea was also limited by difficulties convincing banks to lend to them or of presenting their ideas to a wide enough audience of potential investors.

Although Japan's banks have gradually become more open to the idea of lending to women, the financial industry suffers from the legacy of now-reformed Japanese bankruptcy laws that effectively obliged female entrepreneurs to have their businesses guaranteed by

men.

Many of the business ideas arise from the day-to-day experience of working Japanese women who find little government or social support in their attempts to combine work with the expectation that they will bear the lion's share of childcare duty.

The bulk of the most successful projects, says Ms Mera, have been small-scale childcare operations.

Source: *Financial Times*, January 8, 2016

The screenshot shows the ReadyFor? website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Look for a project', 'Start a project', and 'First toward'. The main content area features a project titled 'The Save the disaster areas in the drone! The w'. Below the title, there's a description: 'To be active using the "map" in the event of a disaster, and trying everyone the power of the unprecedented world's first citizen dron'. The project is led by 'Earth Furuhashi (DRONE BIRD captain)'. The support total is '4,170,000 yen' with a 'remaining' amount. A progress bar shows 'Ten percent' completed. At the bottom, there are three promotional banners: 'プロジェクトをはじめる', 'ビジネス応援キャンペーン', and '環境・動物'.

Platform for female entrepreneurs

By Ruby Lim



WIN advisor Datin Zamzarina Zamri (fifth from right) and Norhimah (seventh from right) together with WIN members celebrating the signing of the MoU.

Aiming to create more business opportunities for women entrepreneurs, Persatuan Wanita Inspirasi Negara Malaysia (WIN) and Asiaspace Sdn Bhd have come together to launch WIN Mall.

Also launched in conjunction with WIN's third anniversary, the collaboration was in line with the government's effort to increase the number of entrepreneurs and contribute toward making Malaysia a high income nation by 2020.

Powered by amaxMall, WIN Mall offers an online platform where WIN members can create their own virtual stores to showcase their products and services.

"Small businesses often face budget concerns on advertising to promote their companies.

"This platform serves as a marketplace where WIN entrepreneurs can not only promote what they have to offer online, but also advance into a bigger community with an affordable cost," said WIN president Norhimah Aziz.

With as little as RM20 a month, one will get 50 stores in WIN Mall, in which you can promote 50 different products or services; RM2.00 will be charged for every successful transaction above RM50 made by the purchaser.

Asiaspace Sdn Bhd chairman Datuk Abdul Ghani Abdullah said the platform gives WIN entrepreneurs the opportunity to expand their business.

"This platform is not limited to registered

companies, but also available to individuals who wish to venture into online business," he said.

"If you have extra stores to spare, you can even make money by sharing the stores or inviting other business owners to take up the remaining spaces," said Norhimah.

Compared with other e-commerce platforms which manages virtual store on behalf of entrepreneurs, WIN Mall allows business owners to take control of their own business, from store management to shipping and payment configuration.

To add value for WIN members, the collaboration offers the necessary entrepreneurship training on online and offline skills, to ensure WIN's entrepreneurs are competent and can be more competitive online.

InspiraComm co-founder and editor Nurlina Hussin, who is a WIN Mall entrepreneur, said that the platform was an ideal way of sharing information and engaging with one other within the community while helping other business owners promote their companies.

"WIN Mall helps to reach out to my target market, and at the same time, it gives my business an opportunity to grow," said AnnkayKnowledge Sdn Bhd managing director Noor Khairil Akmar Mohd.

Interested entrepreneurs and purchasers can log on to: www.amaxmall.com/mystore/winmall

Source: The Star, March 1, 2016

Turkey's female entrepreneurs overcome barriers

A number of state policies and NGO initiatives are pushing more female entrepreneurs to enter the labor market. An upward trend was recorded in female labor force participation last year. Successful female entrepreneurs share their stories to inspire more women to establish sustainable enterprises.

By HÜMEYRA ATILGAN BÜYÜKOVALI



Mevlûde Uygun, CEO of baby-wear brands İdilbaby and Mamino



Melek Pulatkonak, founder of TurkishWIN

In a week where it was revealed that Turkey's richest businesswoman has a \$2.2 billion fortune, Anadolu Agency (AA) has been meeting a new generation of female entrepreneurs. Many have said that an elaborate system of state subsidies for would-be businesswomen have provided a strong platform from which to build. "I cannot forget my amazement and happiness over the first bit of financial support from the state, which was crucial in the process of increasing the extent of my business," Mevlûde Uygun, the 2015 winner of Turkey's Woman Entrepreneur Competition, told AA.

Uygun, CEO of a baby-wear shop with 19 branches across Turkey, sets a very good example for her fellows who want to get a start in the business world.

Turkey, in its National Employment Strategy 2014-2023, aims to reach 41 percent female participation in the labor market - an issue touched on in ongoing 2016 budget talks in Parliament.

In order to achieve that goal, there are ongoing government policies encouraging female labor force participation by providing flexible working-time arrangements, maternity leave, affordable childcare facilities and positive discrimination for female entrepreneurs.

Uygun, for instance, is one of those who benefitted from the state support through the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization (KOSGEB), which has been providing soft or non-recourse loans to help establish successful and sustainable enterprises.

KOSGEB grants have been recently increased up

to TL 50,000 (\$16,800) while interest-free soft loans increased to TL 100,000 for women with business ventures. The female entrepreneurs' first business will also be free from taxes for the first three years. In addition to financial help, the public institution also provides training and workshop studies for a minimum of 60 hours to support entrepreneurship

Uygun had been a contract manufacturer for local and international textile

companies for years and launched her own brand in 1998 at a time when the financial crisis in the country badly affected the sector. "A lull in the market made me take steps towards producing my own brand, which I had always wanted but could not dare to do," she said. "It was the most significant step of my life." However, there were several difficulties waiting for her, as she described: "The first one was persuading the family to believe that you would succeed." She said she ignored all the negative comments about her business venture and looked ahead. Currently, Uygun has two brands, İdilbaby for infants up to 2, and Mamino for infants up to 4. Among a total of 217 employees, 179 are women, with most of the managerial staff being women as well. "Between a female and a male applicant who have almost equal qualities for a new post at the company, we prefer women," she says: "This is our contribution to female participation in labor."

All around the world women are less likely than men to participate in the labor market. It is the same for Turkish women, who constitute over 49 percent of the country's almost 79-million-strong population. Nevertheless, female labor force participation has an upward trend, reaching 31.8 percent in October 2015 with an increase of 0.9 points when compared to the same period in 2014. According to data from "Woman in Turkey, August 2015" a report from the Family and Social Policies Ministry, this rate was 23.3 percent in 2004 increasing to 26 percent in 2009. "More female

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Turkey's female ...Continued from page 6

participation in labor can be achieved through education, employment, and entrepreneurship cycle," said Sanem Oktar, president of the Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey (KAGİDER).

Oktar said the current number of female entrepreneurs in Turkey is around 100,000, with 82 percent being in the service sector.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) "Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2015" report says only 1.2 percent of female workers in Turkey are employers, a rate which is higher than Japan's 0.9 but below the OECD average of 2.2. Melis Abacıoğlu Sezener, 29, is one of Turkey's few female employers. Director and founder of Actifit Sports and Health Services in the Beşiktaş district of Istanbul, Sezener previously worked in the healthcare sector and admits to being "utterly unhappy" with her career. While helping her husband bring people to go jogging together as a group she realized that her true passion was "to inspire people to become physically active," and that is how she decided to start Actifit in 2013.

Today, she organizes weekly sports events for over 7,500 members with an aim "to create a local community of sport' lovers where they can connect with one another over their interests." Actifit also works with the human resources departments of several companies with a focus to design fun and interactive well-being programs for employees. Although she did not get state support for her company she says government support can go a long way, especially when it comes to "social-impact driven businesses like Actifit." Sezener said KAGİDER and TurkishWIN - a women's network - have been crucial in her development as an entrepreneur:

"In these platforms, I met other men and women who are successful entrepreneurs. I met mentors who have introduced me to the right contacts to help me get new business.

"This is exactly what an entrepreneur needs." Oktar from KAGİDER agrees with and points to the significance of the projects offering women entrepreneurs guidance and counseling as well as training and networking where "role-model women come together with new entrepreneurs."

In September 2016, the association will organize the Women Vendors Exhibition and Forum in Istanbul which will bring over 350 women entrepreneurs and buyers from across the world to create an aimed business volume over \$10 million. TurkishWIN has chapters in Ankara, Istanbul, New York, Boston, San Francisco, Zurich, Washington DC and London.

The network, which is also an enterprise itself, collaborates with international companies and NGOs to empower women to realize their potential with their

motto: "If she did it, so can I." Melek Pulatkonak, the founder and curator of TurkishWIN, left her career at Microsoft Turkey in the summer of 2013 "to invest in women." "I believe women are the most untapped natural resource of Turkey," she said. "As an entrepreneur, I want to change or touch the lives of millions and make a difference."

Her company - a team of five women and "an army of volunteers" including 90 female university students in 40 colleges - aims to make an impact in the participation of women in the labor force. "Women have low labor force participation due to cultural elements in our society, a lack of role models, mentoring and experience-sharing platforms and lastly lack of networks," Pulatkonak said. At TurkishWIN she said they are creating an alternative world where women come together to share and invest in each other. Having worked and lived for 20 years in the U.S., Pulatkonak said after she returned to Turkey she "benefited from my lack of experiences in Turkey and therefore prejudices of what can and cannot be done as a woman or an entrepreneur." "If there is the will, there is always a way."

An example of a strong will comes from 52-year-old Münteha Adalı, a successful entrepreneur from Turkey's eastern Urfa province.

"I had always wanted to set up my own business," Adalı told AA. She came to Istanbul for education reasons when she was a teenager and later worked at a bank for nine years, where she says "always looked for a difference."

Having regarded her banking career as "a training course for which she was also paid," Adalı said: "Otherwise, that period would have become too difficult for me, who has a free spirit and is always willing to take the initiative."

Adalı, who "yearned to experience creativity and innovation through her own decisions," founded Güvensan Cleaning Services in 1992 in a male-dominated sector. The company provides cleaning, pest control, garden and plant care services, as well as the sales of related equipment and products. "I just focused on becoming more and more successful, ignoring my gender," she said. Today, around 800 employees work in her company with 55 percent being females. Adalı said she preferably works with female employees to support women in the labor market. "Economies with high female labor force participation rates experience economic growth slowdowns less often, indicating a higher resilience to adverse economic shocks," says International Labor Organization's (ILO) world employment and social outlook 2015 analysis. "With more women in the labor market, an economy makes greater use of its productive potential."

Source: *Daily Sabah*, March 1, 2016

■

Corporate Japan struggles to promote women workers

By Leo Lewis and Yukio Ishizuka

For those hoping to empower Japan's women and unleash the economic might of the country's "silent asset", the term *kensetsu komachi* offers hope. It literally means "construction — young women" and relates to a generation of females working in Japan's chauvinistic building industry.

Many people worry that further progress on gender diversity will be little more than cosmetic, as Japanese society is still run by conservatives — of both genders. Corporate Japan does not yet believe in the importance of diversity, says Keiko Tashiro, who chairs Daiwa Capital Markets America and is a board member of Daiwa Securities. While women may occupy senior roles, their jobs are often in parts of companies considered safe for women, such as public relations and human resources, keeping them away from the profitmaking, managerial side of business.

The last time Japan attempted serious reform was in 1986, when a new Equal Employment Opportunity Law required recruiters to avoid discrimination against women. They complied, if only on a numerical basis: recruits for large companies were streamed into two "tracks" — one clerical, the other managerial. Very few managerial places went to women and almost none of the clerical ones were staffed by men. Optimism faded as women realised their career development was not a priority for employers. That generation of women, now in their mid-50s, would ideally be entering senior management today, but not enough of them are available.

"It is only natural that women are hesitant about a promotion or a raise, because they are not trained to be ready for it," says Ms Tashiro. Corporate Japan must show it is serious about the issue, she adds, via "affirmative action and intensive training".

Change, furthermore, is essential if Japan is to cope with a shrinking workforce and ageing population — and it is in the building industry where some of the more positive signs can be seen. By taking up construction jobs in numbers large enough to generate new vocabulary, women are demonstrating that a demographically stretched Japan needs them immediately — even in roles previously considered unsuitable.

Miyuki Kashima, a senior executive at BNY Mellon in Tokyo, says the *kensetsu komachi* phenomenon is proof of change. This is despite recent surveys by the Japan Institute for Labour and Training that found only 16.1 per cent of female executives at larger companies wanted promotion, compared with 65.7 per cent of men.

"When I first saw those surveys I guessed that



With the plan: female Japanese construction workers

women didn't want to admit that they wanted to be promoted, because they didn't want to set themselves up to fail," says Ms Kashima. "The results will change dramatically when women come to see that the game is fair for all," she adds. "Time will prove that the surveys were carried out in an environment that has since changed into one of acute labour shortage."

While some see the *kensetsu komachi* as limited grounds for optimism, more pessimistic observers argue that Japanese companies, reluctant to embrace the cultural changes sought by the government's so-called womenomics programme, use a variety of tricks to give the appearance of female advancement.

Naoko Ishihara, editor-in-chief of *Works* magazine and an expert on women in the workforce, identifies problems with efforts to place women in senior roles. It has been difficult for women to establish long careers at Japanese companies if they go on maternity leave. Now that companies are under government pressure to fill directorship roles with women, they do not have sufficiently deep pools from which to draw.

Hence, says Ms Ishihara, "companies are rushing to appoint women directors" by hiring experts from outside their own ranks and Japan generally. Therefore, "you cannot say confidently that progress has been made in women empowerment in the workplace." Bias is a further problem, she adds. The likelihood that those women who are promoted to senior roles will be working in areas such as PR, HR and corporate social responsibility means they will not be on the route to the very top.

Japanese culture is the main obstacle, argues Aiko Okawara, a successful entrepreneur and co-founder of the Japan chapter of the Women Corporate Directors group. Japanese women tend towards non profit-generating

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Corporate Japan

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divisions of their companies because male-dominated areas such as sales involve lifestyles that are not compatible with motherhood in a society where domestic help is rare and women are expected to bear the brunt of child-rearing.

Although Japanese women such as Ms Okawara have proved to be skilful investors and business people, society has not been keen to let them loose in the wide world of entrepreneurship. The possibility of that changing, with women gaining access to more borrowing, for example, represents one of the brighter hopes of womenomics.

“Japanese women would be risk takers if given the chance but the government never supported women or entrepreneurs,” says Ms Okawara. “We have not been able to borrow as much as men and it is only now that there are more low interest loans available.”

“The outside world may think progress is very slow but Abe has moved us forward and there is no way back.”

Womenomics explained

Shinzo Abe’s “womenomics” campaign has promised to raise the female employment rate from 68 per cent to 73 per cent by 2020. It also aims to encourage rapid promotion of women into management roles so that they occupy about a third of what Mr Abe broadly labels “leading positions” by the decade’s end.

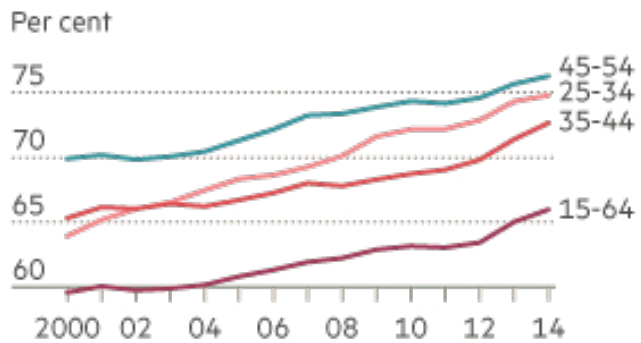
The prime minister has established legislation obliging large companies to publish targets for future ratios of female managers. Even the campaign’s supporters, however, agree that reshaping corporate Japan will take time. Sexism, they say, is adaptable to changing circumstances — especially when its roots are so entwined around the national culture. December saw a lowering of campaign targets, supposedly to reflect a more realistic aim. Big companies are now required to appoint women to 15 per cent of senior positions by 2020, compared with 9.2 per cent today.

The Abe administration believes that its continuing appeal to elderly voters lies in not undermining rigid views on gender roles.

Many Japanese, for example, disparage new mothers who return quickly to work. Such views are in turn blamed for Japan’s failure to provide more supportive childcare.

Source: *Financial Times*, January 11, 2016

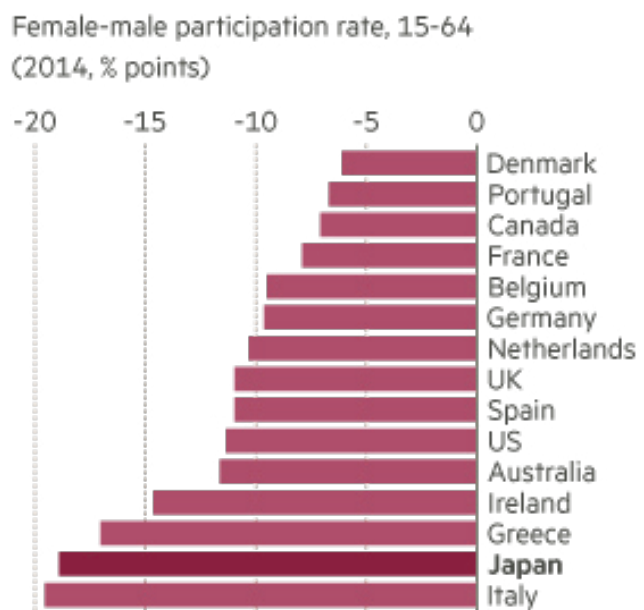
Japanese female labour force participation rates increased across all age groups...



... as did female presence on corporate boards ...



... but its gender gap in labour force participation remains one of the biggest of advanced countries



Sources: MSCI; OECD

FT

Women in Banking

Despite a widespread acceptance that gender should be no barrier to career progression, women continue to be under-represented at senior levels across the UK, particularly in the banking sector.

Our research, sponsored by RBS, highlights that there is still an ingrained belief that women in banking face more barriers than their male counterparts in their career progression.

What we found

Barriers to progression

A third of women starting in their banking career said they already believe there are barriers to their career progression. To attract more female graduates into banking, the industry needs to provide roles with a clear progression route. Graduate training schemes, networking and mentoring will help to create a talent pipeline.

Meritocracy

Only 22% of all respondents agreed that ‘people here are promoted based on merit alone’. In contrast almost half agreed that ‘in my organisation, promotion is determined by who you know’. This indicates banks need to develop more effective systems of performance management.

The glass ceiling

Although women at all levels still identify a glass ceiling, their male colleagues are far less likely to recognise it (overall 26% of men compared to 41% of women).



 Banking

Banks need to measure diversity instead of focusing on quotas. Organisations keen to increase the flow of female talent into senior positions can set targets for recruiting, training and promoting women. They should also track their retention rates for women returning from maternity leave or career breaks.

Career confidence

Just 29% of female senior managers expect to reach board level in the next 10 years. It is possible that banks could make use of sponsorship, coaching and mentoring all of which can play an important role in raising women’s aspirations and self-confidence.

Our previous report on Ambition and gender in the workplace may also be of interest regarding the gender gap in confidence.

Lack of female role models

41% of women felt that a lack of role models was a barrier to progression in their organisation and just under 50% felt that a stronger female presence at board level would be a benefit to their organisation. Additionally women indicated that they’d like to have more female role models with families and children, who had not sacrificed their personal life to get ahead.

Banking employers have an opportunity to raise the voice and visibility of successful female leaders across their organisation. They can actively seek out women in senior roles and help to build their reputation and profile internally.

Flexible working

Both men and women felt that banks need to introduce or improve flexible working to make a difference to women’s career progression.

There is a large cultural problem around working practices in banking. Our survey identified a cultural resistance to flexible and remote working, even when schemes are in place.

Source: *Mirror Business*, March 10, 2016 ■



Twitter launches #PositionOfStrength to empower women

Twitter stated it seeks to engage and empower more women in India to find their voices online!

By Anumeha Chaturvedi

Twitter launched its women empowerment initiative #PositionOfStrength in India on February 26, 2016 to help bridge the gender equality gap online in the country.

Twitter stated it seeks to engage and empower more women in India to find their voices online, communicate safely with confidence, and network with other like-minded women and the global community at large.

Twitter has partnered with the FICCI Ladies Organisation, and Observer Research Foundation for the initiative and is also getting on board Delhi based NGO Breakthrough and the Centre for Social Research.

As part of the #PositionOfStrength movement, Twitter and its partners will be hosting a series of closed-door roundtables and workshops with women leaders to discuss how to increase empowerment and safety for women, both online and in the physical world, across the nation throughout the year. The first of the series of roundtables took place today with India's women influencers, including Sowmya Rao, Sairee Chahal, Chavvi Rajawat, to understand their perspectives on using the platform to build up their profile and as a force for good in society.

In relation to promoting a safer online environment for Twitter users in India, the Twitter Safety Center is now also available in Hindi.

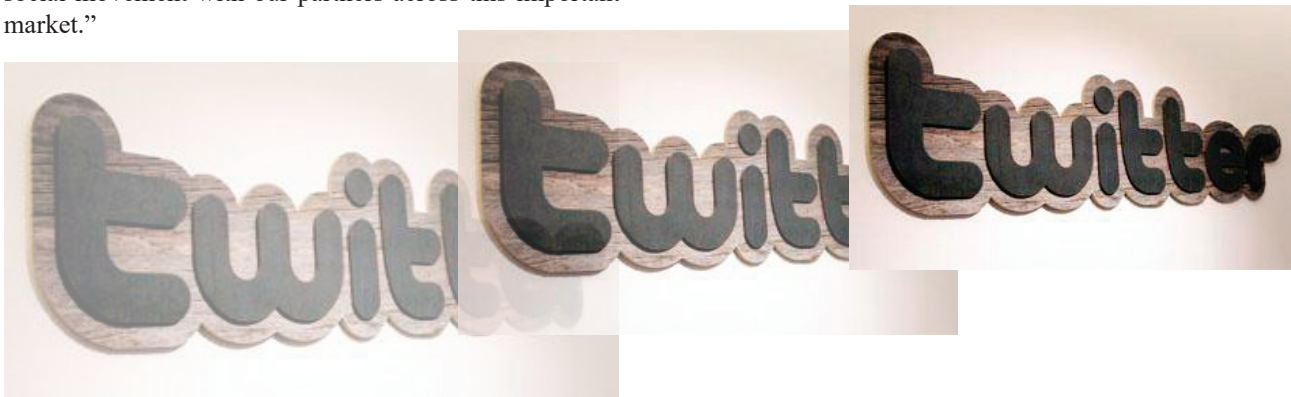
Patricia Cartes, head of Global Trust and Safety Outreach, Twitter said, "Safety is at the core of Twitter. We have introduced measures to empower our users with tools to mute, block and report abusive behaviour. More importantly, we recognize that it's critical that we engage and educate women locally to use the platform safely and with confidence. For the first time in Asia, we're pleased to bring #PositionOfStrength to India, as well as launch Twitter's Safety Center in Hindi, as we are committed to increasing our safety efforts and rolling out this social movement with our partners across this important market."



Mahima Kaul, Public Policy Head, Twitter India said, "We have heard from many women influencers on Twitter who have used the platform to drive awareness on the gender pay gap, childcare, domestic violence, healthcare and flexible work. With the introduction of our #PositionOfStrength initiative, we hope to strengthen the women empowerment movement in India by encouraging more women to amplify their voices through Twitter in a secure and confident manner."

"Technology is neutral, but initiatives like #PositionOfStrength help align them with progressive values," said Arun Mohan Sukumar, head, Cyber Initiative, Observer Research Foundation. "Bringing gender equality into vibrant digital spaces is one of the most important policy questions of our time. In offering a sustainable, creative and effective platform for women to realise this goal, Twitter and #PositionOfStrength have a natural partner in the Observer Research Foundation."

Source: ET tech, February 26, 2016 ■



FICCI's Film Festival to be an ode to woman power



The Power to Empower

The women's wing of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci), also known as FLO (Ficci Ladies Organisation) has launched the first edition of the FLO Film Festival. Showcasing over 30 films themed on women empowerment and gender sensitivity, the festival aims to change gender stereotypes and foster social change through the medium of film.

The festival was launched in the presence of senior vice president of FLO Vinita Bimbhet, director general of the films division Mukesh Sharma, governor Ch Vidyasagar Rao, chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, national president of FLO Archana Garodia Gupta and actor Sonam Kapoor.

Kapoor was present to talk about her upcoming movie *Neerja*, which has a strong message on women empowerment.

The festival is the brainchild of FLO chairperson (Mumbai chapter) Falguni Padode. "The intention is to give a platform to the huge amount of work that FLO is doing in terms of advocacy for women's issues, creating entrepreneurial motivation amongst women, skilling and training women, and encouraging them to take up non-traditional roles. Through this event, we hope to further fuel the work of FLO."

The festival has been spearheaded by festival director Rashmi Lamba, also a filmmaker and a FLO member, and strong support from Axis Bank VP Amruta Fadnavis, UN Women, and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Tiss) among others.

The films for the festival have been curated by Meenakshi Shedde and Prasad Khatu — international features and documentaries, Indian films, student films from Tiss, Whistling Woods and many more.



Actor Sonam Kapoor, chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, governor Ch Vidyasagar Rao and national president of FLO Archana Garodia Gupta at the launch

"As per research, women played only 30.2% of all speaking roles or named characters in the 700 biggest Hollywood box office films from 2007 to 2014 and only 28 of those films were directed by women. We would like this to influence filmmakers to first, portray more women on screen and then, portray them in varied and non-traditional roles. A script could easily have a woman cab driver, a woman security guard, a woman scientist or a woman manager without affecting the storyline. Why can't Indian cinema aspire to set new benchmarks for women representation?" asked Padode.

"Imagine the impact this could have in terms of changing gender stereotypes and fostering social change, if reiterated? After all, films in our country have great reach."

During the festival, experts and attending filmmakers will also have discussions and Q&A sessions with well known film bloggers, and eminent magazine and newspaper editors. Close to 4,000 delegates are expected to attend the festival.

Source: DNA India, February 23, 2016

Sanofi strives to empower working women

By Park Eun-Jee

Only 6.9 percent of executives in Korea's top 10 pharmaceutical companies are female, a figure that reinforces the local drug industry's image as a male-dominated club.

Voices insisting more female workers should be hired are increasing, following a series of reports that concluded companies with a balanced gender ratio perform better than firms with a disproportionate ratio.

The low ratio was disclosed by the Financial Supervisory Service.

In terms of female leadership, French multinational

pharmaceutical company Sanofi Aventis has set a good example for local companies, as women make up over 40 percent of staff in the firm's Asia-Pacific region and Korean office.

Kay Kyungeun Bae, Korea country chair of Sanofi Aventis, and Leah Goodman, regional head of DCV in the Japan and Pacific region, symbolize the rising status of women within the company.

The multinational drug maker pools resources at cultural and policy levels to ensure that women can also

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thrive in their work environment.

Bae, who took over the Korean office as the first female head in the country in 2013, now jokingly said that male workers talk of reverse discrimination due to the growing proportion of women.

The Korea JoongAng Daily sat down with the two executives on March 22 to discuss Sanofi's direction in empowering female workers along with a program aimed at boosting the confidence and efficiency of women workers.

"In the Asia-Pacific, there are so many reasons why women can't or won't develop their output," Goodman said. "One of them is the societal pressures, especially in countries like Japan.

"That is related to the preconceptions of the older generation about what women can and can't do. Our responsibilities include creating an environment where women can succeed," added Goodman, who visited Seoul for the support initiative called the "Catalyst Program" that ran from March 22 to 24.

The program was open to female workers of different career levels and regions, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Australia, India and Philippines, though the majority came from China, Korea and Japan.

About 60 workers are invited to the sessions which are held three times a year.

Goodman said the three-day program consists of various sessions, including role modeling and group mentoring. "The program is designed to listen to women in the Asia-Pacific. So how do you help women understand or deal with work-life balance and help them to be enabled with knowledge to make choices about their career," Goodman said.

In the role-modeling session, participants watch videos of other successful women throughout the world.

Bae said that the benefit of the program is reflected in the numbers, as 24 percent of participants succeed in being promoted after taking part in the sessions.

Putting aside the numbers, the two have witnessed personal changes in participants as they serve as mentors in the program.

"I remember a medical director in Malaysia. She attended the program held in Shanghai," Goodman said.

"She had previously not seen herself as someone who could take on regional roles and was reluctant to relocate herself. But after the program, she became more confident and is now in discussions with the company for a senior role outside of Malaysia."

Another important pillar of the program is the group networking of diverse women who are at a similar level. The small group interaction is designed to create a network to have conversations about various challenges.

Bae said there are other frameworks inside Sanofi to promote gender balance and broader issues concerning diversity.



Leah Goodman, regional head of diabetes and cardiovascular in the Asian-Pacific region for Sanofi Aventis, left, and Korea Country Chair Kay Kyungeun Bae at the "Catalyst Program" aimed at supporting female workers at Sanofi Korea's office in southern Seoul. [PARK SANG-MOON]

"We have a regional women leadership council and country-level leadership council. This is because each country has different issues and cultures," she said. "So the council members meet on a regular basis to discuss what should be done to improve diversity in the company."

Such efforts have translated into a growing proportion of female managers and women workers in general.

In the Asia-Pacific region, 48 percent of Sanofi workers are women, while female workers account for 42 percent above managerial levels.

The Korean office has a similar picture with 46 percent women workers. Above the managerial level, women account for 45 percent.

She noted, however, that the issues addressed in the program and the council are not solely about empowering women.

"We want to go beyond gender diversity, as we look at generational diversity, broad parental issues and how we manage different conflicting views. So we are turning our attention toward more comprehensive themes," she said.

Still, Goodman acknowledged that a lot of help is needed for female workers to advance in Asia, since cultural factors will likely drag down their motivation to move up the corporate ladder.

To better support women workers, she stressed that a company should have strong recognition that the company would do a better job if it has a more diverse view of planning, investment and other areas of business.

In line with the view, Bae said that it is important for a company to judge performance based on the output, not the hours people put in. "Traditionally in Asia, it's important to stay in the office for a long time to be seen as a competent worker. This pressure can make married women stay away from returning to work after having babies."

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Sanofi strives . . . Continued from page 13

The Korean head introduced a number of measures to make a woman-friendly environment. Among them is a policy called “Family Day,” in which workers are allowed to leave at 5 p.m. every Friday to spend time with their family.

Other examples include flexible work hours for mothers.

“After the maternal leave, some of them want to spend more time at home to be with their babies,” she said. “For those women, we allow them to remotely work

at home in different time slots at their convenience. It can be two days a week or three days a week.”

But she acknowledged that there is still room for improvement since there is a skewed gender proportion department by department.

“When we look at Sanofi Korea, the medial and R&D organization is very much female-dominated, but men still make up 70 percent in the sales department,” Bae said. “So we need to work on gender diversity in positions and roles.”

Source: Korea JoongAng Daily, April 4, 2016 ■

Indonesian ‘Cinderella’ Enterprise on Show Down Under

When a young Indonesian woman visits Australia next month as part of a government funded exchange program her luggage will be packed with “Batik Girl” dolls – the product of her innovative social enterprise in which Barbie-like dolls dressed in traditional costume are made by female prison inmates.



Lusi Efriani

Lusi Efriani founded the “Cinderella from Indonesia Centre” almost four years ago after her marriage broke down and her family life fell apart.

The experience was enough to push her to develop a program to help single mothers set up small businesses. With some initial funding she established a learning centre, women’s shelter and day-care facility and soon after moved to working with women prisoners.

In that time she came up with the idea for “Batik Girl” – a Barbie-like doll dressed in traditional Indonesian batik and jilbab (headscarf) that is handmade by female inmates from her hometown of Batam and the Indonesian capital, Jakarta.

The proceeds from the sale of the dolls go to local charities as well as the women prisoners.

“Many of the women we helped had been in jail for drugs, and that’s when I got the inspiration to work with women prisoners,” Efriani told her local media when the Batik Girl project was launched.

Her fledgling social enterprise was noticed by the US Embassy in Jakarta and she was funded to take part in their International Visitor Leadership Program in economic and community development. From there, Efriani received a grant from the US State Department to



train 100 female inmates to make 1,000 Batik Girl dolls.

The Batik Girl project came to the attention of Pro Bono Australia founder Karen Mahlab AM at a recent Department of Foreign Affairs philanthropy delegation to Jakarta which revealed how Australian philanthropic funds, even in small amounts, can make a significant difference in countries like Indonesia.

“It was such a pleasure to meet Lusi. She’s an incredibly ambitious and vibrant woman who worked out early on that getting an education was the way through her life difficulties,” Mahlab said.

“She has not only developed into a successful business woman but with very little time in her life created a social enterprise that assists other women.”

Efriani will travel to Australia in April as part of the Australia Indonesia Youth Exchange Program’s Young Muslim Exchange, which began in 2002, and aims to establish good relations between Muslim communities in both countries.

So far 52 Australians and 132 Indonesian participants have participated in this program.

“After I started my social mission, so many opportunities came to me. After going through one of the worst times in my life, I felt like Cinderella. That’s how I came up with the name for the centre,” Efriani told her local media.

“I believe every woman can have her Cinderella story, whether she is a single mother or a prisoner.”

Source: Pro Bono Australia, March 10, 2016 ■

Int'l Women's Trade Expo concludes on a high note

The '1st International Women's Trade Expo 2016' concluded in Kathmandu on April 3, 2016, recording transactions of around Rs 50 million. According to officials of the Federation of Women Entrepreneurs' Associations of Nepal (FWEAN) - the organizer of the event, the three-day event drew 50,000 footfalls.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, FWEAN President Rita Bhandari said the event was highly successful. "Some had questioned the ability of women entrepreneurs to organized event of this scale. Today we have proved ourselves," Bhandari said, adding, "The event has not only become successful in promote products of women-run firms, but will also be a milestone in women entrepreneurship development."

She also heaped praises on women entrepreneurs throughout the country for staying in business despite lack of opportunity, market, capital and support from the government.

Addressing the event, Iswari Ghimire, executive director of Trade and Export Promotion Center (TEPC), said that the government was overwhelmed by the success of the exhibition. "The exhibition helped us to assess the situation of women entrepreneurship in

Nepal," Ghimire added. Stating that development of women entrepreneurship plays crucial role in national economy, Ghimire said that TEPC would provide every possible support to promote women entrepreneurship in Nepal. "I have urged National Planning Commission (NPC) to bring new plans and policies to support women entrepreneurship," he added.

Ghimire also urged FWEAN officials to apprise different government agencies of their problems and propose plans for the coming fiscal year.

On the occasion, Sharada Rijal, vice president of FWEAN, said the success of the event has encouraged them to make the exhibition bigger and better in the coming year.

The expo had a total of 75 stalls. These stalls showcased products like candle, soap, carpet, clay craft and garments, and agri-business products like honey, pickle, dairy products, spices, tea, coffee, juice, natural fiber, cotton, and cardamom, among others.

On the occasion, FWEAN officials handed over certificate of participation to all the exhibitors.

Talking to Republica, exhibitors, mainly those coming from rural areas, said lack of market and capital are the major problems that they are facing. Niru Chaudhary of Nepalgunj, who is involved in production of different household and office goods, said: "We have not been able to take our products to city areas where we could get good price." She, however, added that the event has given them the much-needed exposure.

Similarly, Champa Nepal of Biratnagar said that women were facing difficulty in expanding their business due to lack of capital. "Women can come to business mainstream if the government provides us different incentives," Nepal added.



KATHMANDU, April 3: The '1st International Women's Trade Expo 2016' concluded in Kathmandu on Sundy, recording transaction of around Rs 50 million.

Source: My Republica, April 3, 2016

Empowering the Filipina in the workforce with ‘Ahon Pinay’



In celebration of National Women’s Month, Ariel lends its support to the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) in its drive to empower women with “Ahon Pinay,” an advocacy program to be launched on March 16, 2016 at the Manila Hotel.

Ahon Pinay is an advocacy that celebrates the modern-day heroine in every Filipina, aiming to eliminate boundaries in gender professional capabilities and to open dialogue on issues women face in their respective industries. Part of PCW’s objectives is to include women’s concerns in leadership platforms and the government’s development agenda.

To this day, gender equality is still a challenge faced by women in the Philippines. According to a study conducted by the Asian Development Bank, 94% of women contribute to the growth of the Philippines’ economy. Although gender gaps have been reduced in the labor sector, women still suffer from gender equality deficits and are being looked down on.

The report recommends that corporate businesses expand employment prospects and offer lucrative opportunities in order to achieve inclusive growth for women.

Various groups have already put gender equality under the spotlight. Among them are PCW and the Department of Social Welfare which have adopted the theme “Kapakanan ni Juana, Isama sa Agenda!” (Include Women in the Agenda) and have already actively called for gender-balance in leadership and decision making positions in public and private sector.

Several laws like Republic Act 9710 have also been enacted to protect women’s rights and that companies be strictly non-discriminatory, even in the fields of military and police. A successful implementation is seen in the Bureau of Fire Protection as it now employs women as front liners.

Ahon Pinay campaign is the Philippine leg of Ariel’s “Rise Women” South East Asian campaign. To give life to

the campaign, various women’s advocacy groups have been tapped.

In Vietnam, Ariel partnered with the Vietnam Women’s Union (VWU) and Saigon Coop, a local supermarket chain to support female initiatives. For this leg, the Rise Women campaign provided a grant to winning women awardees in various fields to acknowledge their contributions. Many outstanding women from diverse sectors such as agriculture, scientific, and industrial were lauded.

In the Philippines, Ariel supports PCW in its efforts to uplift, empower, and inspire women by raising gender equality awareness and bringing relevant issues not only in the workforce but in daily lives. As a laundry brand, Ariel is the progressive woman’s perfect partner that ensures tough stains and piles of laundry don’t hold her back from pursuing other passions and dreams.

Procter & Gamble’s Ariel is throwing its all-out support behind the modern-day Filipina through Ahon Pinay. Aiming to uplift and encourage women in their selected vocations, Ahon Pinay will also be supporting the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority’s (TESDA) Women’s Center through a grant that will help women through training courses.

In a separate event on March 27 to May 15, several Ariel Ahon Pinay nominees from selected Puregold stores nationwide will share their success stories as women entrepreneurs. In partnership with Puregold’s Tindahan ni Aling Puring, five outstanding women entrepreneurs will be given recognition for their contribution in boosting the economy and at the same time, fulfilling the role of womanhood in society.

Ahon Pinay is one of the many programs initiated by Procter & Gamble and Ariel in support of women empowerment, expected to be launched in time for National Women’s Month.

Source: Manila Bulletin, March 16, 2016

Women-managed hotels flourishing in Mustang

By BINOD TRIPATHI

A new trend of having women-only floors in hotels is gaining popularity in Mustang. Most of the hotels here are run by women limiting the role of men in the hospitality industry.



Pemadoka Thakuri, 63, has been running a hotel for the last 25 years. She never went to school, and obtained basic training in operating a hotel when she was 15.

“Initially, I did not know much about operating hotel. But I started to learn gradually,” said Thakuri, the senior-most women hotel entrepreneur in the district. “If women are trained, they can operate hotels efficiently and earn money.”

Thakuri, along with her sisters, run a traditional hotel which has 14 rooms. She said that many tourists preferred to stay in old and traditional hotels, and so had no plans to build a new facility.

There are more than 100 tourist standard hotels in Mustang, including 20 in Kagbeni and 18 in Muktinath. The operators of almost all the hotels are women. As hotels have been earning more revenue than other sectors, a number of five-six storey hotels have been established in the district.

“We make a handsome income during the tourist season. As hotels are packed and the existing rooms are not enough to cater to tourist demand, entrepreneurs have started to build big hotels,” said another women entrepreneur Hiran Bhattachan, who has been operating a hotel at Muktinath for the last 13 years.

She, however, said that due to the development of motorable roads, tourists normally return on the

same day. “Tourists used to stay for at least a couple of days in the past when there were no motorable roads,” Bhattachan said. “As a result, business has dropped slightly compare to what it used to be some years ago.”

Women do all the work, from taking loans from banks to making investments. “Women are also the decision makers,” said Tshering Gurung, president of a local women association. “As a result, more women are being involved in entrepreneurship, particularly in the hospitality industry.”

Besides hotels, homestays run by women are also popular in the district. Interestingly, hotels run by women have never incurred losses. A woman works more efficiently than a man by using less energy



to achieve the same or even better results, said another local woman Yutin Gurung.

“I have never heard that hotels run by women have suffered a loss,” she said. They are more efficient in financial transactions and managing guests and hotels compared to men. In terms of hygiene, hotels run by women are comparatively cleaner than those run by men. According to a Tourism Ministry survey entitled Tourism Employment Survey 2014, women’s engagement in the tourism industry is nominal. Around 20 percent of the employees were female in the hospitality industry.

Source: Kathmandu Post, March 9, 2016

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