

[Diversity](#)

# IWD 2023: Mentorship and equal opportunities for women in the STEM ecosystem is need of the hour



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International Women's Day is celebrated to honor the sacrifices, struggles, and successes of women throughout history. This year the UN is celebrating [International Women's Day](#) under the theme DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality.

The Indian IT industry has shown tremendous improvement in bridging the gender gap and empowering women in technology.

"Gender parity remains essential to a resilient future, and there is a strong need to provide adequate mentorship and equal opportunities to women in the global STEM ecosystem. Moreover, organisations need to implement a consistent strategic approach to strengthen equality and foster an appropriate ecosystem with policies aimed at enhancing women's career paths and unlocking innovative upskilling possibilities and technology-based education, starting at the grassroots," says Sqn Ldr Dimple Rawat (Retd), Director HR at Barco India.

According to the UN, more [women](#) in the technology space results in more advanced solutions and has greater potential for innovations that promote gender equality. "It is imperative that the global STEM ecosystem step up and provide women and girls with innovative upskilling opportunities and technology-based education, starting from the grassroots, to unlock a sustainable future for the planet and humankind," says Rituparna Mandal, General Manager, MediaTek Bangalore.

According to Rituparna, organisations need to deploy a strategic and continuous approach to strengthen equality and equity by creating appropriate ecosystems and policies to grow their career path and to assist them in building long-term careers in tech.

## Bridging the digital gender divide

With the wave of digital transformation across sectors, it is also crucial to bridge the digital gender divide and create a future that is inclusive and equitable for all.

"The past few years have magnified the existing gender digital gap, but it has also presented an opportunity to accelerate our efforts towards digital as well as financial inclusion for women, enabling them to achieve their maximum potential. As women leaders, I believe it is our responsibility to advocate for policies and initiatives that will help close this gap and guarantee equal access to education, training, and job opportunities. We need to find more 'STEM girls next door' and encourage them to innovate, fail and most importantly, fuel the growth mindset," explains Vaishnavi Shukla, HR Head, Comviva.

Vaishnavi adds that the government and policymakers can help address this issue by investing in digital infrastructure and skill development and promoting gender equality.

"Women's advancement in the medical technology profession is addressing the crucial and long-overlooked need for improved gender equity within the healthcare industry. More women are pursuing graduate degrees in technology, science, and math (STEM). "The development of technologies today gives gender and race more consideration. Women are redefining the health technology sector by creating innovative, individualised healthcare solutions. the use of software that strongly includes artificial intelligence and machine learning," asserts Dr Priyanka Goyat, Co-Founder, Rejove Aligners.

According to Rakesh Prasad, Senior Vice President- Strategy and Solutions, Innover, a very formal and documented approach to diversity and inclusion has been implemented and included in hiring, promotion and all HR practices and the company measures the effectiveness of its diversity and inclusion practices regularly.

Mirunalini Mothilal, Director - India & Global HR, Volante Technologies, says as the world is evolving and inching towards attaining gender equity for women's advancement, it is critical for the emerging industries including IT, technology and telecom to overcome the long-existing gender prejudice and encourage the women to take up leadership roles by creating ample opportunities for them.

The modern trends like career comeback plans and customised career roadmaps in technology industry are imperative for modern organisations, suggests Mirunalini.

## Important societal pillars

Subhashini Ponnappa, Head HR & Administration, 75F, APAC region, says that women are crucial in paving the way for constructive change. "Despite facing significant barriers, they have been making incredible strides in the fields of science and technology and other unconventional sectors. Even though women have begun challenging the status quo by entering the otherwise male dominated industries, the percentage of women assuming leadership positions, especially in fields like IT, is very small," adds Subhashini.

