

'Women Are Better Administrators Than Men'



*L-R: **M.V.Subbiah**, Retired Chairman, Murugappa Group; **Lakshmi Venkatesan**, Founding Trustee and Executive Vice-President, Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST); **Rumjhum Chatterjee**, Managing Director, Feedback Ventures; **Anu Aga**, Director, Thermax Ltd.; **Minal Vazirani**, Founder, Saffronart; Moderator: **Arun Maira**, Senior Advisor, Boston Consulting Group, India*

"It is time we accept that fact both men and women stand on equal footing and women are equally good or bad administrator as men are. There is no reason to discriminate on gender basis," said **Ms Anu Aga, Director, Thermax Ltd.**

She was speaking at the session on **'Are Women the Missing Link to Building Sustainable Business'** on the second day of the 3-day conference on ideas to turbo-charge India's developmental process, **'Ideas India 2008', organized by Aspen Institute India** here today.

The panelists discussed the issues related to 'women in business' and debated over whether there are marked differences in the way Indian women run companies such that it deviates from the 'business as usual' model. It became clear from the wide ranging discussions that new economic model will have to follow a path of inclusive growth with gender equality, in order for such growth to be sustainable on the long term.

"It is a reality that women bring more commitment to an organization. They listen better and are more sensitive to the needs and demands of other workers," said Ms Anu Aga.

"It is also unfortunately true that we as women are responsible in communicating the same gender-biased values to our children and in perpetuating this mindset through our actions," cautioned Ms Aga.

Ms Rumjhum Chatterjee, Managing Director, Feedback Ventures, said, "Though men must accept the management qualities of women, women on their part also need to pick up right level of confidence."

"It is a man's world where men and family decide and make their choices. But that leaves for majority of women no choice at all," she added.

Ms Lakshmi Venkatesan, Founding Trustee and Executive Vice-President, Bhartiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST), said, "Both poverty and gender inequality have virtually turned women into a silent majority."

"Having said this, I would like to stress on the role of awareness in the process of liberating women from this age-old discrimination," she said, adding, "In some way women are better administrator than men, as women rise up to the occasion faster and by nature they are better multi-taskers."

Ms Minal Vazirani, Founder, Saffronart, said, "There is a typical male chauvinistic mindset here which is very difficult to change. I feel there is external requirement. We need to ask whether we are ready to open up to be willing to change our perception."

The session was moderated by Mr Arun Maira, Senior Advisor, Boston Consulting Group.

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