

data center in Mumbai by 2017, a strategy that will help the company cater to a larger number of customers, especially those in the government or financial services industry since regulations in those

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sectors don't permit data to be transmitted outside the country. Google plans to set up "new cloud regions" in eight more locations at

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10: Clearly with that there will be more Internet to everybody and so therefore more ecommerce and more opportunities be it business to business or business to customer," he told ET.

recent expansion in Oregon resulted in up to 80% improvement in latency for customers." Singapore, Sydney and Brazil are among the locations where new data centers will be live in 2017.

for a couple of reasons. One is regulatory, and the second is latency. Existing customers who couldn't move some things because of regulatory issues have also moved now," he had said.

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**PAGE NO. 08**

# Women Accelerator, Tech Programs Slowly Gain

Zone Startups India, Dentsu Aegis Network and Nasscom are starting programs focusing on long term prospects for the entre

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**Bengaluru:** Dearth of women entrepreneurs in the startup ecosystem has resulted in Zone Startups India, Dentsu Aegis Network and Nasscom increasingly focusing on launching women driven accelerator programs and similar initiatives.

The programs focus on long term prospects for the entrepreneurs to raise seed rounds for research and creating prototypes within tech and finance oriented domains.

"Networking is one of the major hurdles we face as women entrepreneurs, accelerator programs can especially help with that. Some of the people we met through Zone Startup's accelerator

programs are individuals we are currently forging partnerships with, it also helps to raise seed rounds to sustain operations or develop prototypes," said Shivani Mohan, co founder of Saral Designs. Her startup has created a proprietary tech enabled machine that can produce up to 15,000 sanitary napkins a day, largely catering to women in rural India. Saral Designs won first place at Zone Startup's women accelerator programme Empower.

Zone Startup India's accelerator programme Empower is considered to be the first of its kind in the country, along with Google and the Department of Science and Technology partnering with the organization. The six week program received about 180 applications, a majority of which came from

women with business and technology backgrounds. The top 15 were selected, out of which 8 managed to raise seed rounds ranging from Rs.5 to Rs.10 lakhs. "A six weeks programme is not

long enough, so we provide the top 15 one year long support including provision of office space if they plan to be headquartered out of Mumbai, in addition to any required mentorship or networking,"

said Ajay Ramasubramaniam, director of Zone Startups India.

Majority of the applications they received included women in business or finance, many of whom had up to 10 years of work experience. "There are difficulties prevalent in the start up ecosystem too, there were many of whom we wanted to put in the top 15 but we could not find appropriate mentors for them in terms of their domain expertise or knowledge they possessed within deep technology and other such areas," added Ramasubramaniam.

According to a Nasscom report, the number of women entrepreneurs in India has gone up from 6% in 2014 to 9% in 2015. "We will be coming out with another report in October to see what kind of growth has happened in 2016, we



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## Entrepreneurs to raise seed rounds for research

have the WomenTechship program that enables women entrepreneurs to make use of the Nasscom warehouse facilities for highly subsidized rates, as well as connect them to mentors besides conducting coding meetups and hackathons. The end result is for them to network well and raise seed rounds, however more comprehensive women centered accelerator programmes like Zone Startups is needed," said Rajat Tandon, senior director at Nasscom. Nasscom has partnered with BlackBox Connect and Google to focus on women entrepreneur oriented initiatives.

Similarly, Dentsu Aegis Network has most recently announced a female foundry accelerator programme, where any female founded startup with a focus on tech-

nology based in any part of South or Southeast Asia can send in their applications till early October. However, the program looks beyond seed stage support as its necessary for the startup to have secured a seed round of funding in order to apply. Venture capitalists including Dentsu Ventures, Monk's Hill Ventures amongst others are likely to provide a second round of funding.

"About 70% of my company has women employees. The problem also lies with greater representation of women required within the startup ecosystem, from women being seen as mentors and investors to them

being present at panel discussions, instead of it being male dominated," said Anu Acharya, CEO of Mapmygenome.