

IIMs Send a Mixed Message on Gender Diversity

Fewer women join two of top 3 old B-schools this year; IIM Calcutta, Lucknow, Kozhikode & newer IIMs do better

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New Delhi: Two of India's three top business schools — Indian Institutes of Management, Ahmedabad and Bangalore — will have fewer women in the incoming class compared with 2019. IIM Calcutta, the other B-school in the list, however saw the number of women qualifiers rise. The same was true for IIM Lucknow and Kozhikode and newer premier institutes in Kashipur and Raipur.

The different outcomes are in part related to these newer IIMs and that in Calcutta, Lucknow and Kozhikode assigning extra weightage to women candidates during the selection process. At IIM Ahmedabad and Bangalore, there is no such provision.

The proportion of women students has gone down to 21.7% from 23.71%

last year at IIM Ahmedabad. "Achievements (on women percentage) are slow as the goal is to not give extra credits or specify a quota for gender or other diversity attributes in the admissions process," said Errol D'Souza, director, IIM Ahmedabad. IIM Bangalore's newest batch has

29.9% women compared with 37% last year. "IIMB has not made any change to the selection process vis-a-vis women candidates in the past three years. Women fight for their place at IIMB alongside men," said Ashis Mishra, chairperson, admissions.

IIM Kozhikode stands out among those who have scored better on diversity this year. It had achieved a high diversity ratio of 50% in 2013. But in years that followed the ratio dropped to around 30%. This year, it is back at over 53%.

IIM Calcutta and Lucknow, which admitted 33% and 31% women in 2019, have diversity ratios of 35% and 33.5% this year, respectively. For IIM Calcutta, the percentage of women students is the highest over the last four years.

IIM Calcutta assigns extra points to women candidates and to those from non-engineering academic backgrounds at the interview stage. "Both these initiatives have resulted in improved academic diversity; this year about 20% of our incoming batch is from non-engineering backgrounds," said Megha Sharma, chairperson-admissions, IIM Calcutta.

