Twitter Thread by The Better India



The Better India
@thebetterindia

(1/14) The World Bank's 2017 report titled 'Precarious Drop' pointed out how nearly 20 million Indian women were 'missing' from the workforce during 2004-2012.



(2/14) While media reports and headlines might have put the onus on women themselves, it is hard to ignore that there are many challenges that hinder women from rejoining the workforce post a career-break taken for several reasons, including childbirth.

(3/14) Out of those who manage to rejoin the workforce, many women eventually drop out in less than 6 months. This was due to “lack of awareness about inclusivity” in corporate offices in the ’90s, points out Dr Saundarya, someone who chose to be the solution to this problem.

(4/14) Having experienced all the challenges of a returning female professional, she founded Avtar in 2000, as a diversity and inclusion platform that helps women get a second shot at building their careers.

(5/14) And, recently, in November 2020, she expanded her focus through MyAvtar — a job portal for people from marginalised backgrounds, to include the LGBTQ+ community as well.

(6/14) “These are women who are no strangers to the workplace – they have worked, been in the corporate environment before and then for a variety of reasons, decide (or are forced to) drop off.

(7/14) They need a lot of support – their skills need to be honed, their confidence re-built, and a sense of community created,” says Dr Saundarya.

However, starting such a platform that celebrates diversity and inclusivity was no easy task.

(8/14) Even after starting India’s first career service for women – Avtar I-WIN, in 2005, she realised that women were not encouraged to pursue a career or carve out individual identities, which contributed to the substantial workforce drop-offs.

(9/14) “Even as we convinced organisations to relook at their hiring and create more welcoming workplaces, we also felt that the intentionality was missing in many women. We asked ourselves this hard question — do women really make the most of it when given opportunities?

(10/14) The answer lay in intentional career pathing. This is a technique that helps women manage both the half-circles of their life,” she says.

It's this principle of creating career paths through inspiration & encouragement that separates Avtar from any other job portal.

(11/14) It is not about sending regular job alerts or flooding one’s mailbox with numerous unsuitable job opportunities, but about curating the best fits and guiding them through the process until they are placed in satisfactory positions.

(12/14) With this vision in practice, the 52-year-old social entrepreneur started with 480 women and has now touched the lives of over 40,000 women, helping them rediscover themselves and their careers successfully.

(13/14) Through her passion and perseverance, Dr Saundarya chose to change the narrative and rightly became part of the solution to empower women and the marginalised in society.

(14/14) Is your business making sensible and responsible decisions — be it empowering the marginalised, protecting the environment, or creating innovative products? Take a pledge to be on a #PathWithPurpose

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