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Hotel Chains Open Hiring Doors to All

Hospitality cos push the diversity envelope, onboarding differently-abled, marginalised

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1 **New Delhi:** Aashin Moitra is joining The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group as the general manager of Kitty Su, its chain of nightclubs across locations such as Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chandigarh. Prior to her transition as a transwoman, Moitra, in her previous identity, had worked with the chain as director of sales and marketing in Mumbai.

"I am coming back to the group because I wanted to be with a company that understands what I bring to the table," said Moitra.

From launching an all-women's run hotel, to operating cafes run by acid attack survivors and roping in DJs and other staff that is neuro divergent or differently abled, listed as well as private hotel chains are pushing the pedal on diversity, equity and inclusion.

"A lot of people define diversity as adding more women to the work-

place. That's basic for us. 50% of our senior leadership comprises of women. The communities we want to represent such as the LGBT community, the neuro divergent community and acid attack warriors form a big part of our workforce," said Keshav Suri, executive director at The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group.

Some key steps by cos: all-women run hotel, cafes run by acid attack survivors, hiring neuro divergent and the differently abled

Chalet Hotels launched the country's first all-women run hotel, the 168 keys Westin Hyderabad HITEC City last year and MD and

CEO Sanjay Sethi said the feedback has been 'very positive'.

"A few years back, our diversity ratios were 13%, and the industry was at 11%. We have now moved to 22%," he said. "We worked with various organisations to see what has been the cause of success when

it comes to diversity improvement. This includes women as well as those from the LGBT community besides differently abled employees and those from economically weaker backgrounds," he added.

Lemon Tree Hotels' diversity and inclusion initiative is in its 17th year; and post a short pause during the pandemic, the

chain has re-focused its efforts on hiring Employees with Disability (EWD) and Employees from Economically and Socially marginalised segments (EcoSoc) over the last two years, said Aradhana Lal, senior VP-Sustainability and ESG at the chain. "Our total employee base is currently 8350. Of this 5% are EWD and 9% are EcoSoc employees, making the overall diversity 14%. We call this Opportunity Deprived Indians (ODIs)," said Lal. "We have set a target of 30% ODI and 15% women by financial year 2026 and are building towards that every year," she added. As much as 11% of Lemon Tree employees are women.

Arif Khan, regional VP, HR for India and Southwest Asia at Hyatt India Consultancy, said in India, it has tied up with local NGOs to support its differently abled and LGBTQIA+ colleagues.

Sabu Raghavan, VP, HR-India at Hilton, said in 2023 it hired over 40 employees under its DEI agenda.



VARANI SAHU