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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Two-thirds of listed companies boards would now need a woman: indianboards.com**

Following the Companies Act, SEBI too has now mandated the board of every listed company to have at least one woman director. This apparently opens up the doors for women to the boards in a big way. According to **indianboards.com**, a joint initiative of PRIME Database and NSE, as many as 966 out of a total 1456 NSE-listed companies or two-thirds, do not presently have a woman director, which means an immediate fulfilment of **966 women** directorship positions in the next 7 months.

According to Pranav Haldea, Managing Director, PRIME Database "this welcome move will surely bring in a much-needed perspective & diversity in the boardrooms. However, the stipulation should have been that the women should necessarily be independent directors otherwise compliance may mainly be achieved in letter by getting the mothers, wives, sisters, daughters and other relatives and friends of the promoter on the board, who will have the same voice, defeating the very purpose of genuine gender diversity. This would be akin to how all companies had earlier complied in letter with the requirement of each board to have 50 per cent independent directors as there too, there are no eligibility norms. It is hoped that the detailed regulations shall prescribe women to be independent directors."

As per **indianboards.com**, across all NSE-listed companies, there are just 488 women presently occupying 597 directorship positions. Of these, while 332 women are holding 366 non-independent directorship positions, only **174 women are collectively occupying 231 independent directorship positions** (18 women hold both independent as well as non-independent positions). Thus, if the requirement was for boards to have independent women directors, as many as **1240 companies (or 85 per cent of companies)** would need to meet the norm.

Among women directors, Ms. Renu Sud Karnad has the maximum number of board positions at 9 of which 6 are as an independent director followed by Ms. Ireena Gopal Vittal at 7 (all of which are as an independent director). Only 32 companies have a woman chairperson/co-chairperson, of which only 1 is an independent director. The company with the highest number of women directors is Apollo Hospitals Enterprise (4), though none are independent.

On an aggregate basis, there are a total of 9,009 persons occupying a total of 11,596 directorships in NSE-listed companies. Of these, only 597 positions are held by women, just 5.1 per cent.

Even in the 217 prominent unlisted financial institutions (AMCs, AMC Trustees, Insurance companies, Exchanges, Unlisted Banks, Clearing Corporations, Depositories, Pension Funds, Debenture Trustees and Primary Dealers) covered by **indianboards.com**, women directors occupy only **5.1 per cent** of total directorship positions. There is not even a single woman director in as many as **70 per cent** of such companies while **90 per cent** of such companies do not have a woman independent director. Across all such organisations, there are **54** women directors occupying **61** directorship positions.