

# EQUIPMENT TIMES

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## BREAKING BARRIERS

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# BREAKING BARRIERS

## WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURING & OPERATIONS

The construction equipment industry is in the midst of a defining transformation—one that goes beyond technology, infrastructure growth, and market expansion. It is a transformation driven by people, perspectives, and the steady rise of women who are challenging conventions and reshaping the very fabric of the sector. Long regarded as a male-dominated domain, construction equipment manufacturing and operations are now witnessing a gradual yet impactful shift toward inclusivity. From factory floors and design labs to project sites and boardrooms, women are stepping into roles that were once considered out of reach.

**Equipment Times** explores the journey of women in construction equipment manufacturing and operations, highlighting their growing contributions, the challenges they continue to face, and the opportunities that lie ahead.



**Shamita Nandi,**  
Chief Human Resource Officer,  
TIL



**Swapnil Gupta,**  
Director, Human Resources  
(HR),  
Putzmeister India



up and owning your space can be a powerful act of change. For me, empowerment lies in confidence, resilience, and the ability to contribute meaningfully without being defined by gender. My journey at Robbins has been one of continuous learning, strengthened by the guidance and mentorship I have received from my seniors in the Indian head office as well as from leaders in the US. Their support has played a crucial role in helping me grow and find my voice.

Women empowerment is not just about representation, but about creating environments where women can grow, lead, and belong. I hope to see more women step into such spaces, so that what feels exceptional today becomes completely normal tomorrow.

**Shamita Nandi, Chief Human Resource Officer, TIL,** The shift is real and accelerating. Women at TIL are no longer confined to support functions — they are on factory floors, in service engineering, client-facing sales roles, and leadership positions that directly shape business outcomes. Industry data puts women at roughly 19–20% of

India's manufacturing workforce, and that trajectory is clearly upward.

My own path to this role — spanning Financial Services, E-Commerce, Shared Services, Consulting, and Manufacturing across different parts of the country — gave me a broad lens on what it takes to build a compelling employee value proposition across very different organisational contexts. That cross-sector perspective is precisely what this industry needs more of, and it is the kind of experience women bring when given the opportunity. Organisations that build deliberate pathways for women across every function — not just the traditionally accessible ones — will be better positioned to attract the best talent and sustain growth.

**Swapnil Gupta, Director, Human Resources (HR), Putzmeister India,** The construction and mining equipment industry is steadily evolving as the nature of work becomes more technology-driven and process-oriented. This shift is enabling broader participation of women across multiple functions within our organization.

At Putzmeister, women are contributing across a wide spectrum of roles including engineering, sales coordination, marketing, communications, and service support. Importantly, key functions such as Product



Management and Human Resources are led by women, reflecting strong representation at leadership and decision-making levels.

Women are also actively engaged in operational and support functions such as Order Execution Department, Stores, Warehouse management, and Call Center operations, where process efficiency, coordination, and technical understanding play a crucial role.

The focus going forward is to further strengthen participation in core technical and manufacturing areas, while continuing to build leadership pipelines. We are actively seeking and nurturing gender-diverse talent, particularly encouraging skilled women professionals to grow in these areas. As opportunities expand, women will play an increasingly important role in shaping both operational excellence and strategic direction within the organization. ■



## Recruitment gets women through the door; culture determines whether they stay, grow, and lead.

**SHAMITA NANDI**  
Chief Human Resource Officer, TIL

**The construction and mining equipment industry has been historically male-dominated. How is the role of women evolving across functions such as engineering, manufacturing, R&D, sales, and leadership at TIL Limited?**

The shift is real and accelerating. Women at TIL are no longer confined to support functions — they are on factory floors, in service engineering, client-facing sales roles, and leadership positions that directly shape business outcomes. Industry data puts women at roughly 19–20% of India’s manufacturing workforce, and that trajectory is clearly upward.

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of experience women bring when given the opportunity. Organisations that build deliberate pathways for women across every function — not just the traditionally accessible ones — will be better positioned to attract the best talent and sustain growth.

**What specific initiatives has TIL Limited introduced to attract, retain, and empower women professionals?**

Our approach is systemic, not cosmetic. We have built the physical foundations — safe facilities, transportation, ergonomic workspaces — because infrastructure signals intent. On the talent side, we partner with technical institutes to source women engineers and technicians, run women-focused apprenticeship programmes within our plants, and invest in leadership development tracks designed to move women into management.

Retention demands as much rigour as recruitment. That is why our DEI blueprint is embedded in business strategy rather than



treated as a parallel HR agenda. Genuine inclusion — where every individual feels valued, empowered, and heard — is the standard we hold ourselves to.

**What are the most persistent barriers women face in this sector, and how should companies respond?**

The barriers are structural, cultural, and interpersonal — and they reinforce each other. Facilities were built for a male workforce. Flexibility and childcare support remain inadequate. Cultural assumptions about appropriate roles still close doors in field operations and industrial relations. And the scarcity of senior women creates a mentorship deficit that compounds over time.

Speaking from my own experience: a seat at the table is not the same as being heard. As I moved into leadership, I found that navigating that gap required resilience, strategic communication, and an unwavering belief in my own





capabilities. That experience has only deepened my resolve to advocate for environments where every voice genuinely carries weight.

Companies must act on all fronts simultaneously — upgrading infrastructure, revising hiring and promotion practices, investing in mentorship, and cultivating cultures where diverse perspectives are not just welcomed but actively sought.

**How critical is workplace culture to long-term retention of women, and what has TIL done to build that culture?**

Culture is the deciding factor. Recruitment gets women through the door; culture determines whether they stay, grow, and lead. Numbers without belonging are a short-term metric.

I am a strong believer that transparency and authenticity are foundational to building trust — both as a personal leadership philosophy and as an organisational imperative. By leading with integrity and fostering open dialogue, it is possible to build the kind of professional relationships that drive meaningful change. That belief shapes how we approach culture at TIL.

Our DEI blueprint is business-aligned. Our unconscious bias sensitisation programmes are designed to reshape day-to-

day behaviours, not just stated values. Physical infrastructure — facilities, transportation — sends a visible signal about who belongs here. And senior leadership has made a formal commitment to gender diversity, because culture follows leadership, not the other way around.

**What role do training, mentorship, and academic partnerships play in building a stronger pipeline of women in this industry?**

These three levers are most powerful in combination. Our apprenticeship programmes provide plant-based, hands-on learning. Our leadership development initiatives prepare women for management well before the opportunity arrives.

Academic institutions, however, need to step up — redesigning curricula for inclusion, embedding meaningful industry exposure, and proactively dismantling the stereotypes that steer women away from technical fields before they even enter the workforce.

Mentorship fills the gap that structured training cannot. It provides visibility, sponsorship, and the kind of informed guidance that accelerates careers. As more women reach senior levels, building formal mentorship ecosystems becomes not just aspirational — it becomes entirely achievable and essential.

**What is the business case for greater female participation — and what is your personal vision for a more inclusive industry?**

The business case is clear: you cannot build a sustainable, high-performing workforce by drawing from half the available talent pool. As the industry undergoes rapid technological transformation, diverse skills and perspectives are a competitive advantage, not a social obligation. Greater female participation expands the talent base, reduces attrition, and strengthens organisational resilience. A workplace where women genuinely thrive also signals meritocracy — and that attracts top talent across all demographics. Inclusion is not a cost. It is a measurable return on investment.

My personal vision goes further. It is not enough to increase diversity in headcount. Organisations must actively dismantle unconscious bias and create the conditions for organic bonds and genuine collaboration to form. True inclusion means every individual feels valued, empowered, and heard — not merely accommodated.

I aspire to contribute to a future where inclusivity is not a programme or a policy, but something deeply ingrained in how organisations think, lead, and grow — driving change that is both sustainable and meaningful. ■