

Tata Power CHRO on Talent strategy, D&I achievements and L&D initiatives

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Read by 1123 Industry Professionals

Highlights

- Tata Power has moved from a gender diversity ratio of 8% in 2019 to 15.7% now. The target is to increase this to over 18% in the next couple of years.
- The company is focusing on building leadership capabilities for the future through customised learning programmes, one-to-one coaching, and action learning projects.
- It is also in the process of inaugurating a customer care centre in Mumbai that will be operated entirely by PwDs (persons with disabilities).



Himal Tewari, Chief Human Resources Officer, Tata Power

In today's fast-paced world, leadership is often associated with hard driving, result-oriented individuals who push their teams to the limit. However, the true measure of leadership is not just about achieving results, but also about how well one leads with empathy and compassion.

Himal Tewari, Chief Human Resources Officer, [Tata Power](#), is one of the leaders who are leading their organisations with empathy and efficiency. Tewari's journey with [Tata Power](#) began four years ago when he joined the company from Tata Sons where he was working as Vice President - Group Human Resources. He was drawn to the organisation's transition phase and the critical role that HR played in it.

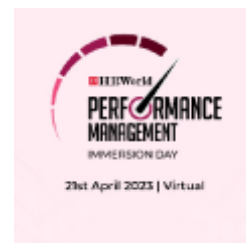
Tewari believes that the last four years have been very fulfilling and the company can now be called as Tata Power 2.0!

Tata Power currently has around 22,000 employees across various clusters and businesses, with women employees constituting 15.7 percent of the total workforce.

The company's [recruitment strategy](#) involves building its own timber by hiring from campuses and adding specialised natural talent through lateral hiring. It also has a clear value proposition for prospective candidates.

To further know about the company's journey and its workplace culture, let's delve into the insightful conversation that ETHRWorld had with Himal Tewari, [CHRO](#), Tata Power.

We have around 22,000 odd people across various clusters and businesses. This year, we should be adding around 1500 to 1700 in all of our divisions and this also includes our hiring that we do at the cadre level, which is intake of trainees and building out our own talent.



What will be the [recruitment strategy](#) to hire 1500-1700 people?

The approach is to build our own timber, so we will hire from the campuses and build it out.

There is an entire campus strategy that we have under which we hire the brightest of talent, brightest engineers, brightest MBAs, brightest diploma holders, and now, we are also looking to add new streams. There's an entire strategy on how we engage the talent, how we become relevant to them, and how we attract them through contemporary methods of both the messaging and also engagement.

The second strategy is hiring specialised natural talent, although it is much lesser in numbers, right now.

Also, as we have grown, there are certain areas where we are building capabilities, especially in the new age areas around technology, digital analytics, and customers etc.

Additionally, we also do lateral hiring which is very selective and specialised. For that, we have created a very clear proposition, around why prospective candidates should look at working with Tata Powers. They should know what our value proposition is?

With this, we are also working on ensuring that we deliver things promised when the employees join our organisation, whether it be your policy framework, benefits framework, or whether it be a learning framework.

How are you prioritising diversity and inclusion at the workplace? What is the current diversity ratio and how has it changed over the years?

Tata Power has moved from a gender diversity ratio of 8 percent in 2019 to 12 percent in 2021, 14.6 percent in 2022, and now it stands at around 15.7 percent. The target is to increase this to over 18 percent in the next couple of years.

We are a traditional industry; we are not a service industry; so, we keep increasing the bar, and there is a clear focus on inducting diversity of employees across levels.

Additionally, we are also trying to understand if we are an inclusive organisation. It starts from analysing things like if our roles are appropriate, if we are looking at breaking the biases that women cannot do technical work, project work and all of that.

So, for instance, you'll find a lot of women engineers doing mainstream roles like they're going out and doing maintenance work; they are working in plants; they are working in our remote project sites. And these sites are 150 kilometres to 100 kilometres away from main cities because that is where renewable projects are.

For this, we provide them with all the framework. We ensure that they are provided with the right safety.

Also, we are preparing women to take more and more leadership roles. For this, we induct a lot of women at different life stages, because they tend to drop out at various levels because of their personal responsibilities. So, we work on ensuring that the company supports them in those sensitive moments!

In that context, what are some of your women-oriented initiatives?

Glad that you asked this question! With many things coming in, we have a very strong external maternity leave, a surrogacy leave, an adoption leave, creche facilities and a nanny allowance as well.

In continuation to the statutory 26-weeks Maternity Leave, women employees can opt for an additional four weeks of Extended Maternity Leave. Surrogacy Leave and Adoption Leave of three months is applicable to women employees choosing to become parents.

Having said that, I think we now have our focus on the structural support we have for women employees. Like we run a complete mentoring programme for them. It's an extensive programme and they are mentored by senior leaders enabling them to manage

various professional and personal related issues. It's a very elaborate programme!

Moreover, we have a programme for returning mothers because, when they are coming back, they have a lot of anxiety about where they should be? How do they start things again? How do they start performing? So, we are working on how we can deliver that with sensitivity.

Then, there is also a flagship programme, called Anokha Dhaaga, a women empowerment, and livelihood initiative that works towards empowering women's collectives, increasing their household income, while enhancing their leadership skills and promoting handmade crafts. The initiative focuses on upskilling women members across India through phygital model for design, production support, and market linkages.

Tata Power has thermal power stations located in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal and Karnataka. How is gender diversity here?

We have all three aspects to it.

So, for power stations, we have our townships around it. These are very enabling environments and even if we are remote, we manage the ecosystem quite well. In these areas, a lot of the new women trainees are working too.

The second part is our distribution entities where we have a network either on a transmission side or on the distribution side. We are telling them to take more and more roles. For instance, there, we have our customer centres, which are manned by women. Additionally, more and more women are also taking operations and maintenance roles in our company.

Lastly, about three years back, we took a bold call to say why are we differentiating our women engineers not to go to project sites? So, we encouraged them in that manner, and today I'm very happy to share that some of our best project engineers are women engineers!

How is the company creating work opportunities for disabled people? Do you have some initiatives for them?

For our diversity and inclusion agenda, we actually have three legs to it. You can call it three strong pillars also. One is entirely on gender, which I told you about, and I mentioned the progress.

Post that, last year, we significantly started emphasising on PwD and we are already taking targets on bringing some specialised positions by onboarding some PwD candidates.

So, we have already taken a number of PwD candidates in the corporate job roles and this year, we will start looking at some of the other jobs roles as well.

For this, we have done an exercise where we took a target to onboard at least 5 percent of our overall (workforce) with the people of special abilities.

But that is only a start if you ask! For me, the numbers are not an issue. The issue is how I am making my organisation equipped to include these employees. So, work is being done not only from an infra point of view, but also from managers point of view, as to how we train them to deal with such employees because one requires a different level of sensibility to work with them.

In addition to this, we have initiatives like 'Pay Attention' which is a very unique programme and I think, India's first bridgital Autism support network. So here, Tata Power Community Development Trust (TPCDT) has partnered with the Centre for Autism and other Disabilities Rehabilitation Research & Education (CADRRE).

It aims to empower parents, caregivers, Anganwadi workers, public health centre workers, school teachers, staff of social development organisations and social workers to be the primary identification and support champions who will augment early intervention for children and young adults with Autism. The initiative aims to increase overall awareness about Autism and help people understand, accept and support individuals with Autism and their parents.

Therefore, by concentrating on employee sensitization, ensuring inclusion in mainstream jobs, establishing parity for PwD, adhering to acceptable standards, setting the correct expectations, raising aspirations, we are assisting them in achieving their objectives. We are also in the process of inaugurating a customer care centre in Mumbai that will be operated entirely by PwD.

As an organisation, how are you prioritising employee wellbeing?

Employee wellbeing is a front and centre agenda for all of us and we are working on it not from a Tata Power lens, but from a Tata company lens!

We have created a wellness health and wellbeing programme, we call it 'Fuller LifeSo' under The Fuller Life. We encourage our employees to reach their physical, mental and financial wellbeing goals.

We basically tell them that you should not only be an employee with skills and capabilities, but you should also be living a complete life! This includes aspects of physical health, mental health, psychological health, relationship health, and also financial health.

I think we should build enough awareness around the effect of health on a day-to-day basis like we have a large infrastructure and some medical centres etc.

Additionally, we are focusing on creating some bit of intervention as well, which means if some division has a particular endemic issue, there is a special thing that we should be doing for that on a cohort-based analysis.

The biggest cohort we have is women who are in their late 30s to mid 40s and are not taking care of their health. We have different sessions for them.

We are a very young organisation because 38 percent of our population is less than 30 years of age. So, we are working on how we can also address these people and how we can help them in their transition because they've not gone to campuses during the pandemic.

For mental wellbeing as well, we recently had a session where about 700 of our managers went on to a full training session. We believe that a key part to manage people is the manager because he/she is the person who is giving the experience to the employee. So, they were told how to be sensitive, what the issues with employees are, and how they can overcome these issues.

Also, we really promote a lot of sports, and we have an elaborate plan for it. There is a structure of about 23 to 24 sports that are run through the organisation and a lot of people participate in it. So, the key thing is we are also promoting physical wellbeing!

To promote financial health, we provide support across multiple cohorts and career stages. One critical area is the annual tax season, where we raise awareness around related investments and their pros and cons. In addition to these general resources, we also offer cohort-specific financial guidance.

For instance, we help individuals who are nearing retirement to plan for their future and ensure financial security. For young professionals, we offer guidance on how to manage debt, select appropriate insurance options, and assess their financial health. Working women also receive specific guidance on how to manage their finances and what aspects to consider. Our goal is to empower individuals to make informed decisions and achieve financial wellbeing.

Are there any special initiatives for the blue collared workforce too?

We are an industrial company and we are blessed with extremely cordial relationships with our unions. We have unions in many of our businesses, some of these unions have been there for the last 60 to 70 years.

So, they have been like partners in our success, and we treat them as our own part, because a lot of work goes into capability building for them.

Also, we put a lot of work around their health too.

What are the major developments in the field of Learning and Development?

When we started to work on Tata Power 2.0, we said we need to form the company for the future. So, in 2019, we set out to say that let us build the framework of capability and direction towards making it ourselves world class! For this, we wrote our leadership competencies in a very forward-looking fashion.

Our learning model is based on three things. There are programmes that have been curated and built with Tata Power context.

We run an elaborate leadership programme at the entry level; then for first time managers, we run a programme with XLRI which is called the 'Emerging Leaders Programme'.

Then at the mid-manager level, or for those who are aspiring to be at senior management, there is a programme, called the 'Advanced Leaders Programme', and it is in collaboration with SP Jain. It is a six months niche, contemporary, futuristic leadership development journey that is conceptualised and executed by Tata Power and is co-designed and delivered in collaboration with Tata Management Training Centre (TMTC) and SP Jain Institute of Management & Research, Mumbai (SPJIMR) for officers in mid/senior roles for readiness to take up higher responsibilities.

At the senior leadership level, we run a programme with IIM Ahmedabad, called the Senior Leaders' Development Programme. It is a 'By Invitation Only' exclusive programme for select consistent high-performing apex, top and senior leaders and comprises 15 months of campus Advanced Management Programme at IIMA delivered by renowned faculties, with a pedagogy of case-study based learning, with alumni status for participants.

In addition to this, we are focusing on *3 Key Areas*:

First, we provide deep domain academic learning that features curated content on future-oriented topics, such as new energy consumption technology, digital and blockchain, and AI. We also educate on what the new organisational and commercial models are going to look like, including consumer models and platform-based businesses.

Secondly, we offer one-to-one coaching to enable senior leadership participants to fulfil their leadership potential. This coaching is personalised, with one coach assigned to one person. Our aim is to provide holistic support to our participants, allowing them to gain the knowledge and skills required to succeed in their roles and beyond.

And, the third and most exciting part of our programme is the action learning projects that each participant undergoes. These projects are customised to the company's requirements, and each participant is mentored by a senior leader and a faculty member from the institution.

Many of our cutting-edge solutions have emerged from these projects, including the implementation of new peer-to-peer blockchain technology and the development of micro grid view solutions. We have also witnessed a couple of new restructuring options that have been developed through this process.

These projects are an integral part of our programmes, as they not only facilitate learning, but also provide tangible outcomes that can be implemented within the organisation. This complete approach to learning enables our participants to apply their newly acquired

knowledge and skills effectively.

Additionally, we are focusing on creating skills around sales. We felt that we need to create deep domain skills here which means focusing on things like project management, customer centricity, or customer service. And we did this because we were a B2B and B2G company and never a B2C company.

So, to focus on the sales part, a lot of focus on learning Sales fundamentals, processes, core and enabling skills have been identified as critical. Keeping in mind the different categories of customers, various specialised tracks have been designed to cater to particular segments with levels of certifications.

As we are on a journey to achieve Growth and Transformation, we also have a Digital Academy. It is built by the Digital & Information Technology team in collaboration with HR's capability & leadership development team.

This academy offers two tracks, namely, Data Evangelist track (for the Senior Leaders) and Data Practitioner track (Professional, Champion & Expert Level certifications for the officers) in partnership with Professors from UC Santa Cruz (University of California, Santa Cruz) and leading EdTech companies.

How are you leveraging HR tech in your organisation to streamline HR processes and provide better employee experience?

For effectiveness and efficiency both, we are using Automation Technology and AI. So, this is the curve that we are looking at. For instance, we are looking at completely new ways of engaging with employees.

A lot of the HR processes that we are looking at are digitised. So, it has enabled agility on the ground of delivering HR services, and has also created a sense of transparency for application of consistent policies.

Having said that, today a lot of our things are digital, are online, and are on the app. One can engage with them and that works seamlessly.

The other thing that we are now looking at increasingly is creating more and more advanced analytics on judgement, engagement, talent, and succession. So, we are using a lot of new AI tools that are available for us.

Since you are also heading CSR for Tata Power, what are some steps you are taking to make your employees socially responsible?

We have been a company that has CSR and sustainability quite deep in its commitment and also, this is something which is at the heart of our organisation! Like, wherever we work, with stakeholders, local communities, there we actually have a very significant volunteering programme.

To focus on this part, we partner with the Tata Group. They run a programme, called 'Pro Engage', and we in the Tata Group have the highest number of volunteer hours that we give out per capita due to that programme. So, we are amongst the companies that have a very high level of volunteering and we have a culture of volunteering.

Additionally, a lot of our employees in their free time are doing various levels of skill-based volunteering activities like blood donation, recycling, plantation, community awareness etc.

We also run a programme, called 'Tree Mitra', which is a forestation drive and a very unique flagship volunteering initiative. It is a virtual plantation drive by Tata Power under the Green theme, which aims at encouraging the employees and their families to adopt a tree, plant and nurture its survival.

Then we also have 'Climate Crew', under which we check how employees are embracing sustainability not only for the organisation, but in their own independent lives.

So currently, there are about 850 employees on it and by this month, we would increase it to 1,000 employees. We will try to engage our employees first and then we want to create it as a mass movement.

The aspiration is that we should be touching a lot of lives to create awareness on this!

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