Bouncers to bartenders, women storm the bastion

GENDER BENDER Female participation is also rising in sectors such as product delivery, manufacturing and realty

Himani Chandha & Timsy Jaipuria

NEW DELHI: Sakina Shaikh, 38, is a graduate in humanities and a married woman. Growing up she loved karate and Akshay Kumar’s Khiladi series of films, so it was not surprise when she pounced on the opportunity to become a bouncer.

“I just applied for fun and since joining I have not looked back. I could live my dream and at the same time get a good salary,” Shaikh said, who works with London-headquartered business security firm Topsgroup.

“In 2011, we employed 300 women bouncers. Now they number 25,000 out of a total workforce of 93,000 employees. This shows that more women are opting for this profession,” said a spokesperson of Topsgroup, which operates in India.

Female bouncers can earn between ₹25,000 and ₹50,000 a month, a good ₹5,000 over what male bouncers get.

But it is not just in front of the bar but behind it also.

“The industry has become more open to women working behind the bar and has started to hire female bartenders,” said a spokesperson at Grant, a blended scotch whisky brand from William Grant & Sons.

On an average, the salary of female bar tender is around ₹35,000 at medium-sized club, plus tips of about ₹5,000.

But handling intoxicated behaviour and serving drinks is not the only male-dominated vocation that women are venturing

into. Chandrika Gadkari, 26, was unemployed since leaving high school. One day, Gadkari enrolled into a scooter riding course organised by HeyDidi and Mahindra Finance. The deal was: learn riding, deliver products, earn money.

In 45 days, Gadkari became country’s first delivery girl. She is now employed by Everyday Gourmet Kitchen, a Mumbai-based food processing company, and earns about ₹8,000 per month. Soon, many others like Gadkari would start delivering for e-commerce portals, food retail and fashion portals.

Companies such as HeyDidi, which provides last-mile delivery services, also lend a helping hand. It had to employ 10,000 girls across 20 cities in three years.

Women are also opting for roles such as technicians in manufacturing companies and real estate brokers.

At agriculture and construction equipment major JCB India share of women employees has grown from 1.2% in December 2012 to 4% in March 2015.

At Maruti Suzuki, the representation of women candidates in the company’s manufacturing team went up from 274 employees in 2012 to 366 employees in 2014.

US-based aircraft maker United Technologies has even started an all-women assembly line at its air-conditioner manufacturing facility in Gurgaon.

But the going is not easy. Sangeeta Sharma Dutta, who works as a consultant at real estate consultancy firm Knight Frank India, says the battle starts after office hours. “I am running hard against time making sure nothing upsets my child’s schedule,” she says.