

Narrating tales for gender inclusion at workplace

A storytelling session at a diversity and inclusion conference in the city gave an insight into the importance of gender inclusivity at workplace.



Eric Miller, director of World Storytelling Institute
Chennai:

The session conducted by Eric Miller, director, World Storytelling Institute, at the conference on Tuesday organised by AVTAR Group, used role play and storytelling to take the message of inclusion across. The participants included human resource personnel, who were asked to think of stories of inclusion and exclusion of women – stories they have come across in real life, or heard about, or seen in films and documentaries, etc.

“Gender inclusion doesn’t end with recruitment of women. It could be a range of other actions like not lending an ear to their suggestions or denying them promotions because of their gender,” Miller told *DT Next*. He has been using storytelling technique in his sessions with corporates for a few years now.

The other part of the activity was to imagine an ideal organisation in 10 years from now and the steps they must take it to make them ideal for women. The suggestions varied from onsite day care, flexible hours, maternity and even paternity leaves.

“The impact the stories have on the people who narrate is more because it comes from within them.” True to his words, a participant narrated the bitter experience of being ignored by a driver earlier because she was a woman. Miller enacted the role of the driver and the woman played herself and narrated the impact it had, displaying how she continued to be affected by it even many days after it.

He added that while folktales are largely employed in traditional storytelling workshops, the impact of a real-life experience explored as a story can be an effective medium in such contemporary events.