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DIVERSITY PUSH LIFTS WOMEN INTAKE TO RECORD HIGHS ACROSS TOP CAMPUSES

Women Nearing 50% Mark at IIMs

Admission tweaks lift women's share across flagship MBA programmes

Sreeradha Basu

Bengaluru: A growing number of women are making it to India's most sought-after MBA classrooms.

At least four of the six old Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) have recorded their highest percentage intake of female students in the flagship two-year post-graduate programme (PGP) in management this year, as a sustained push to improve classroom diversity pays off.

IIM-Kozhikode, which has been the forerunner in driving gender diversity among IIMs, has enrolled 329 women—the most on record and making up about 66% of the 499-strong batch of 2026-28. This surpasses the previous highest of 59.1% (289 women in 480 students) in 2024-26.

At IIM-Bangalore, women account for 42% of the 541 PGP students in the new batch; while at IIM-Ahmedabad, it's 30.92% of the 414-strong batch. Women constitute 54.4% of the cohort of IIM-Indore's 2026-28 batch, the highest ever.

Overall, about 45.7% of the total PGP 2026-28 batch across the top five IIMs of Kozhikode, Indore, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, and



Gender Gains

At least 4 of top 6 IIMs recorded largest ever share of women in flagship MBA programmes

54.4%

women at IIM-Indore

65.9%

women at IIM-Kozhikode - highest across old IIMs

46%

of the total 2026-28 batch across IIMs Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Calcutta, Kozhikode and Indore are women

Over the years, our institute has been a pioneer in re-engineering the classroom demographic to reflect a more inclusive and progressive learning environment. We have consistently implemented a multi-layered approach to foster an inclusive cohort

Debashis Chatterjee
Director, IIM-Kozhikode

Calcutta are women, compared with 41.7% in the 2025-27 batch.

The gains come as IIMs increasingly look beyond entrance test scores to build more balanced classrooms, mirroring similar efforts by India Inc to shore up diversity within ranks. Alongside measures to improve gender representation, institutes are also actively trying to broaden academic diversity, arguing that varied perspectives enrich classroom discussions and prepare graduates better for corporate and leadership roles.

Recruiters too prefer diversity in potential hires, said campus sources. "Over the years, our institute has been a pioneer in re-engineering the classroom demographic to reflect a more inclusive and progressive learning environment," said IIM-Kozhikode director Debashis Chatterjee. "We have consistently implemented a multi-layered approach to fos-

ter an inclusive cohort."

Several institutes have diversity-focused measures in admissions.

IIM-Kozhikode said it continues to factor gender diversity into its multi-stage selection process, while placing greater emphasis on candidates' motivation, intent and experiences. IIMs Ahmedabad, Calcutta and Indore award gender diversity points during the admission process.

"IIM-Indore remains committed to strengthening its existing gender diversity initiatives and continuously reviews its policies and support systems to ensure they remain effective and relevant," said director Himanshu Rai.

"The institute will continue to build on its admission policies, mentoring framework, student support mechanisms, and campus engagement activities to encourage greater participation and leadership

among women," he said.

The number of female students at IIM-Indore has increased marginally to 265 out of 487 students this year, compared with 262 out of 487 last year.

"To increase the number of female candidates invited for interviews, we introduced gender diversity points for the 2025-27 batch and continued this practice for the 2026-28 batch," IIM-Ahmedabad chairperson (admission) Karthik Sriram said. At the institute, 128 of the 414 students in the new batch are women.

At the oldest among the IIMs, Calcutta, the percentage of female students has risen to 33% this time from 26.7% in the batch that joined last year. However, it is less than the 36% female students it enrolled in the 2024-26 batch. IIM Calcutta in its selection process of the MBA programme provides extra four points to all female candidates.

