

FICCI women's arm set to add more chapters

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Ms Namita Gautam, President, FLO

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THE FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO), which turned 20 this year, proposes to add more chapters.

It currently has five chapters - in Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Coimbatore.

"We are looking at setting up a chapter in Gujarat soon," said Ms Namita Gautam, FLO President and Director of Sheela group (manufacturers of Sleepwell brand products).

Stating that the vision of FLO was to empower women and promote entrepreneurship and professional excellence among them, she said: "Today FLO has over 1,000 members. In order to intensify operations and extend its reach, FLO seeks to eventually open a chapter in each State."

The organisation is open to collaborations with other like-minded organisations.

Speaking to *Business Line*, Ms Gautam said that apart from increasing the number of regional chapters, the organisation is also focusing on young entrepreneurs.

"We are taking up a survey on young women and their aspirations. The survey, supported by Hanns-Seidel Foundation of Germany, will be initiated in the first week of June."

FLO, which has undergone an image makeover with a logo change and a new punch line, `Power to empower', recently launched Young FLO (YFLO), a forum for the career women of today.

According to Ms Gautam, it is a community of career women between 20 and 39. YFLO has already enrolled 100 members.

A separate committee is to look after it.

On the issue of whether Government policies are entrepreneur-friendly, Ms Gautam said: "Government policies are good but there is not enough awareness about them. The schemes need to be spoken about and the agencies involved need to change the mindset of the people regarding schemes."

On the most preferred business area for women entrepreneurs today, she agreed that the traditional businesses like beauty parlour, garments and leather products remain popular.

"However, the trend is changing and a lot of women are now going into the service industry. In FLO, we are planning to hold a training programme for women who want to get into this industry."