

NICHE CLUB includes retired bureaucrats, professionals, serving CEOs, lawyers, CAs and close relatives of senior execs

65 of Nifty 100 Cos Share Some Ind Directors

Kiran.Somvanshi@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Each of the 65 companies out of the top 100 listed corporates in India shares a director with at least another in the group. A niche group of 60 independent directors — comprising retired bureaucrats, professionals, current CEOs of listed companies, lawyers, chartered accountants, and close relatives of senior members in India Inc — are the common link between two companies in the Nifty 100, according to information sourced from Prime Database.

About a dozen professionals come across as the most sought after independent directors of India Inc — being on the boards of several Nif-

ty-100 companies. (See Chart).

Interesting, however, board structures in India Inc are less 'connected' than those found in the US. A study of the top 50 companies of the S&P 500 in 2018 by Data Interview Questions revealed that 78% of the top 50 companies were linked with common directors.

Interconnection of boards in the US is believed to have certain positive spinoffs; a common board member brings in the experiences and best practices picked from one board. But it also reflects a paucity of professionals and a small pool of talented professionals leading companies can use, as well as a possible concentration of privileged information with a few.

In many Indian business groups,

often the same professional is appointed as independent director across multiple group companies. For instance, OP Bhatt is an independent director of three Tata group companies — TCS, Tata Motors and Tata Steel.

Most Favoured

Independent Directors on Nifty-100 Companies' Boards



Directors	No. of Companies	Directors	No. of Companies
M Damodaran	5	Vikram Singh Mehta	4
Shikha Sharma	5	Nirupama Rao	3
Omkar Goswami	5	Deepak Satwalekar	3
O P Bhatt	4	Ireena Vittal	3
Haigreve Khaitan	4	Adil Zainulbhai	3
Mahendra K Sharma	4	Punita Sinha	3

SOURCE: Prime Database

Balaji Rao J Doveton, Gita Pirmal, AN Roy and Naushad Forbes are on the boards of each of the four Bajaj group companies — Bajaj Auto, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv and Bajaj Holdings & Investments. Both Sanjeev Aga and Mukund

Chitale are on the boards of L&T and L&T Infotech.

TN Manoharan is on the boards of M&M as well as Tech Mahindra. Radhakrishnan Nair is an independent director on the boards of ICICI Bank as well as ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Co.

Often, one board membership of a large company begets another. For instance, Bobby Parikh was appointed an independent director on the board of Biocon in 2018. Last year, Parikh got appointed on the board of Infosys where Biocon founder Kiran Mazumdar Shaw has been an independent director.

Besides their professional standing, some of the directors may be in a position to enjoy a wider sphere of influence by being relatives of powerful names in Corporate India.