

# Opportunities galore for women at job fair

Staff Reporter

**CHENNAI:** K. Akhila (22), hailing from a village in Thanjavur, had a folder with her certificates neatly filed, certifying her as a first class holder in computer engineering. A job aspirant in the city for over six months now, she has been attending job fairs and off-campus placements regularly, and has also been taking extra coaching in Java to supplement her qualification. "I get to observe people here and refine my communication skills, which I think are hindering my employment. But with so many in the race for the same positions, my struggle would be more difficult today."

She was referring to *The Hindu Opportunities Fair* exclusively for women, jointly presented by Accenture and Sutherland, which attracted over 20,000 applicants on Saturday.

The job fair, at the Lalitha Auditorium, Kilpauk, that promised over 7,600 jobs evoked participation from women of different age groups and from different backgrounds. The recruiters were from IT, ITES, retail and automobile industries. Besides Sutherland and Accenture, the participating companies included Dell, Ford, Scope, Standard Chartered Bank, HCL and Wipro among many others.

## Fresh graduates dominate

Fresh graduates dominated the fair. "As a BBA graduate, a year of work experience



**WORTH THE WAIT:** Job aspirants at *The Hindu Opportunities Fair* for women in Chennai on Saturday. — PHOTO: R. RAGU.

will brighten my chances of getting admitted to a good B-school," said Trisha Shetty of MOP Vaishnav College.

Also among the participants were those who wanted to quit their present jobs that involved night shifts and those who had recently relocated to the city, apart from candidates who wanted a higher pay package, more responsibilities or a designation change.

"I am working in a small company that deals with e-brokerage. A bigger company would pay me much more," said Asha Suresh. For women seeking a work-from-home

facility, the IWIN-AVTAR section at the fair provided flexible work opportunities.

The short listing of the registered candidates involved various rounds of interviews and group discussions. While some companies offered jobs on the spot, many marked candidates for future rounds of selection to be held later.

## Specific conditions

Some of the candidates had very specific conditions. "I am looking at openings in the healthcare sector," said Preethi P.S., a biomedical engineering student from PB College of Engineering.

The job fair also saw women eager to return to work after a break. "Technology has advanced and so has competition, but with a few training sessions, I am sure I would fit in," said Padmaja Sripala, returning after a four-year break.

Also among the candidates was 45-year old S. Mangalam, who after 15 years of working as an administrative staff in various universities was looking for a job in the corporate world. "If they pay more, I would surely consider the offer," she said.

Outside the auditorium, parents, spouses and children

of the participants waited anxiously. "I have asked my daughter not to sign any bond, or accept any proposal right away," said R. Bharanidharan, father of a fresh graduate.

The candidates did not mind the wait given the number of jobs on offer. This meant time to discuss everything from the heat to the job scenario.

"Nothing better than to have many companies to choose from under one roof," said Preethi Ravindran, an engineer, flaunting the multiple job offers that she received at the fair.