India is Nielsen's biggest engineering base: CEO

AVIK DAS
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Audience-measurement company Nielsen is looking to strengthen its technology base in India by hiring engineers in large numbers, given the challenges thrown by Big Tech consolidating data and the multiple channels of content viewing.

The company in India recruited about 2,500 people in the past 12 months. They include 2,000 engineers specialising in artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), data intelligence, and data analytics. That translates into about 57 per cent of Nielsen's 3,500 engineers working in India. The country is also the biggest centre after its headquarters in New York with 5,000 people of the 13,000.

"We are in the next phase of tech disruption and for that we need engineering talent at base level. It will take you a while to hire 500 engineers in the United States and Europe as against the time taken in India, where we can execute at scale. What should take us three

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KARTHIK RAO, CEO, Nielsen

years (there) can be done in a year here," Chief Executive Karthik Rao told *Business Standard*.

Rao is following the footsteps of companies that, for the greater part of the past decade and a half, built their engineering base in a country that pro-

duces millions of engineers annually.

His effort is geared towards turning an audience-measurement firm into a media technology one.

Advertisement and content measurement have evolved as more content is now delivered by internet protocol, which allows for precision targeting at scale.

"You pick attributes rather than just age or gender and add context to content for connecting it to humans. While that offers more monetisation opportunities, to get there we need to have a strong technology backbone," he added.

Technology here means building panels and attaching them to home devices to gauge audience viewership.

Rao said there was a limit to what the company could do with that data. "We need to use that (data) as a source but also complement it with a lot of raw data from other devices."

This is because people consume multiple forms of content across devices such as laptops, desktops, smartphones, and legacy television.