

15th July 2025

Dr. Suresh Kumar Singhal
President, FTCCI
Hyderabad

Dear Dr. Suresh Kumar,

Sub: Input from Bulk Drug Industry on the Revocation of Prohibition on Women Employment in Hazardous Areas

The recent decision by the Government of Telangana to lift the prohibition on employing women in hazardous operations is a welcome and progressive step towards gender equality and women's empowerment. It reflects a commitment to removing institutional barriers and creating a more inclusive work environment.

However, while the decision is commendable in principle, it does present both potential benefits and challenges—especially concerning the psychological and health implications for women in high-risk roles.

In the case of the bulk drug industry, employment of women in directly hazardous manufacturing operations has traditionally been limited. Nonetheless, a significant number of women are employed across other critical departments within the manufacturing premises, such as Quality Control, Regulatory Affairs, Research & Development, and Administration. Therefore, the revocation of the prohibition may not have an immediate or widespread impact on our industry's current practices.

However, the implications for future workforce composition cannot be ignored. The bulk drug industry relies heavily on a mix of unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled labour. In light of increasing challenges in sourcing manpower, the inclusion of women in a wider array of roles, including those in hazardous areas, may gain momentum. This could lead to unintended consequences if adequate safeguards are not in place.

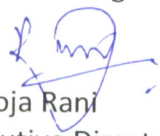
If implemented without clear checks and guidelines, women—especially those in unskilled categories—may be employed in environments that could adversely impact their physical and mental well-being. Exposure to chemical hazards, high-risk operations, and physically strenuous tasks can have long-term health implications, particularly for younger women or those with pre-existing conditions.

To balance the objective of empowering women with the responsibility to ensure their safety and well-being, the following measures may be considered for incorporation in the relevant laws:

1. **Restrict employment of unskilled women in hazardous operations**, unless the process is entirely automated and does not involve direct exposure to harmful substances or physically intensive tasks.
2. **Avoid placing women below the age of 35 in hazardous manufacturing roles**, particularly in areas involving toxic chemicals, high-pressure systems, or physically strenuous work.
3. **Mandate periodic health check-ups** for all women working in or around hazardous areas, with medical records maintained confidentially and monitored regularly.
4. **Establish clear redeployment policies** to ensure that women who develop any health-related issues due to occupational exposure are reassigned to safer, non-hazardous roles without any loss of pay or position.
5. **Provide awareness and training programs** focused on occupational health and safety for all women employees, so they are well-informed of the risks and safety protocols associated with their roles.
6. **Ensure availability of adequate infrastructure** such as clean restrooms, sanitation facilities, and emergency medical support, especially in manufacturing plants with hazardous operations.
7. **Encourage third-party audits and compliance checks** to ensure adherence to gender-sensitive safety norms and prevent exploitation or coercion of women into high-risk jobs.

In conclusion, while the revocation of prohibition is a step forward in promoting equal opportunities, its success will depend on the careful and responsible implementation of safety and welfare measures. The bulk drug industry stands committed to supporting this transition in a manner that ensures dignity, safety, and fairness for all women employees.

With Best Regards


M Roja Rani
Executive Director

