

Forging ahead: Vedanta's women shaping the future of aluminium manufacturing

Bhubaneswar: In Odisha's industrial belt, a landscape long defined by expansive operations and the unmistakable roar of heavy machinery, a quiet yet powerful transformation is underway. At Vedanta Aluminium's massive Jharsuguda smelter -one of the largest aluminium production facilities in the world, history is being rewritten every day by a determined group of women. Where the shop floor was once considered a male bastion, today, it's led end-to-end by an all-women team, which is an unprecedented feat in Indian manufacturing. These women are running a full potline—the heart of the aluminium production process, where alumina is transformed into molten metal. Here, they manage some of the most complex processes in metal production. In doing so, they are achieving the unthinkable and challenging decades of gender norms embedded in the indus-

try. It is a cornerstone of Vedanta Aluminium's bold plan to increase female representation in its workforce to 30% by FY2030. By carving out meaningful roles for women in one of the most male-dominated sectors of the economy, Vedanta Aluminium is creating a playbook for true inclusion in heavy manufacturing. yes, at Vedanta Aluminium, I'm the first female Room In-charge. For the last six months, I've overseen bottom operations, a high-pressure, precision-driven role. It's something I never imagined doing, and I take immense pride in being part of this change, shares Usha Roy, a veteran with 17 years at Vedanta. At the core of daily operations are women like Yashasvi Chauhan, Avita Bharti, and Vinita Kumari, each managing responsibilities that directly influence production quality, efficiency, and plant safety. As Technical In-charge, I monitor anode

effects, bath chemistry, metal bath height, and ensure that silica and iron levels stay in check. Our priority is always safety and stability, says Yashasvi Chauhan. I make sure our pots function optimally and that every team member works in a safe environment. It's not just about operations, it's about leadership on the floor, adds Avita Bharti, another Technical In-charge like Yashasvi. Vedanta Aluminium's commitment to inclusion and diversity extends beyond its plant walls. Initiatives like Project Sakhi and Project Panchhi focus on grassroots-level change, training rural women, ensuring they pursue higher education, supporting entrepreneurship, and mobilizing thousands into self-help groups and micro-enterprises in remote regions. As of today, Vedanta Aluminium's all-women potline at Jharsuguda is more than a pioneering step.