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Women power world's second-largest alumina refinery run by Vedanta in Odisha

Hundreds of young women from villages across Kalahandi and Rayagada stepped into professional roles at Vedanta Aluminium

By Our Bureau

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Priyanka Mahakhud at Vedanta's alumina refinery at Lanjigarh, Odisha

Priyanka Mahakhud, born and raised in Lanjigarh, a village in the interior of Odisha, never imagined that she will one day manage the Distributed Control System, the nerve centre of the world's second-largest alumina refinery, run by Vedanta, with 5 million tonne per annum (mtpa) capacity.

As a Control Room Operator, Priyanka monitors vital process parameters such as temperature, pressure, flow and levels thr eal-time

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digital systems. The role requires precision, analytical thinking, quick decision-making and close coordination with field operators and process controllers, especially during starting up, shutdowns and emergency situations.

Mahakhud is the first girl in her family to have studied at DAV Vedanta International School – the only English medium school in the area – and moved to Bhubaneswar to pursue B.Sc (Hons) in Zoology from Maharishi College of Natural Law. She is currently pursuing post-graduation in Biotechnology through distance learning, balancing both studies and a demanding technical role at the company.

Mahakhud is among hundreds of young women from villages across Kalahandi and Rayagada who have completed their post-graduation and stepped into professional roles at Vedanta Aluminium.

Setting an example

She has paved the way for other women in her family as well as the society to not only pursue higher studies but also go for professional ambition. Today, her sister is pursuing law in Cuttack and her brother is studying engineering in Bhubaneswar.

Mahakhud's presence in a core production control room reflects a quiet but significant shift. In a sector traditionally dominated by men, more women from local communities are stepping into roles that come with higher responsibilities, backed by education, training and opportunity.

Stories like Mahakhud's underline how schooling and skill development can help youths careers in the same ecosystem.

From a student in Lanjigarh's school to operating the refinery's central control systems, her journey demonstrates how opportunity, when created locally, can empower women to contribute directly to industrial growth and community progress.

Through a sustained focus on education and inclusive employment, Vedanta Aluminium is not only ensuring young women in Lanjigarh dream big, but also achieve them.

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