

SBI WITHDRAWS RULE ON HIRING PREGNANT WOMEN

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Issues relating to Growth & Development - Banking, NPAs and RBI

Following outrage, the State Bank of India on Saturday withdrew a controversial order that termed women into their second trimester of pregnancy “unfit” for recruitment and promotions. The country’s largest public sector bank said it would return to status quo in appointments.

However, its employees union is not satisfied with the response as the earlier norms too discriminate against pregnant women.

In an e-circular issued on December 31, 2021, the SBI had informed its local offices across the country of its revised medical standards. According to these norms, a woman who is pregnant for more than three months would be considered “temporarily unfit” and would be allowed to rejoin work only four months after delivering a child. Following several representations from different employee unions, as well letters from the Delhi Commission for Women, and outrage over social media, the bank issued a statement suspending these instructions.

The unions also say that the new rules are an attempt to deny women their right to maternity benefits under the Code of Social Security, 2020. This entitles a woman to payment of average daily wage for up to 26 weeks of maternity leave, nursing breaks and permission to visit a creche four times a day as well as renders unlawful any attempt by the employer to discharge a pregnant employee.

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