

# IT industry has to adhere to labour laws now

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**BANGALORE:** Information technology (IT) industry in the State, which has enjoyed a blanket exemption from the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 for 11 years, will now have to adhere to the rules under this labour legislation.

The Labour Department has decided not to renew exemption from the Act, which the industry had sought.

This means that IT industries, like all other industries that employ over 100 workers, have to define "with sufficient precision the conditions of employment under them" and make "these conditions known to the workmen employed by them".

The law is strict on classifying workers, working hours and shifts, wages, leave and attendance. The declared standing orders have to be approved by the Labour Department.

"From now on there will no



*Earlier, a sustained campaign was carried out against exemption from the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act.*

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blanket exemption to the entire industry. Exemption may be given only on a case-to-case basis," said Labour Commissioner S.R. Umashankar.

"The industries have six months time to adopt standing orders, which have to be certified by a deputy labour commissioner," he said.

Exemption from the law was last renewed in 2009 for a

period of two years. It expired on August 25, 2011. The industry has had 11 straight years of exemption on the ground that it does not fit the requirements of a knowledge-based industry.

The ITEC (IT and ITeS Employees Centre), a support group for IT professionals, and ITHI, a forum of women employees in IT and ITeS,

had been campaigning against exemption from the Act.

Members of the two forums had campaigned against exemption as well as the proposal to extend the working-hour deadline for women employees from the existing 8 p.m. They had said that extension of working-hour deadline will only help IT/ITeS establishments to get away from their responsibilities of transportation and security for women employees till 10 p.m.

ITHI had initiated an online campaign and a petition with signatures from 700 women workers had been submitted to the Labour Secretary and the Labour Commissioner.

The Karnataka State Women's Commission had also raised objections to the exemption given to the IT industry from the law on the ground that it leaves wide ground for exploitation of women in the sector.