



केन्द्रीय विद्यालय संगठन  
Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan  
18, संस्थागत क्षेत्र, शहीद जीत सिंह मार्ग,  
नई दिल्ली-110 016  
18, Institutional Area, Shaheed Jeet Singh Marg,  
New Delhi - 110 016

फाइल सं.11-55/2000-KVS(Vig.)Pt.1/462 - 518

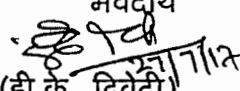
दिनांक: 27.07.2017

उपायुक्त  
केन्द्रीय विद्यालय संगठन  
समस्त क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय/  
आंशिक शैक्षिक एवं प्रशिक्षण संस्थान.

Sub: Forwarding of handbook on sexual harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and training module on sexual harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013) –Regarding,

उपरोक्त विषय पर यू.टी.-2 अनुभाग, मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली से प्राप्त स्वतः स्पष्ट पत्र संख्या 16-5/2017/यू.टी.-2 दिनांक 19.06.2017 तथा उसके संलग्नों की scanned copy इस आशय के साथ प्रेषित की जा रही है कि कृपया उपरोक्त अधिनियम का उचित कार्यान्वयन सुनिश्चित करें, ताकि मंत्रालय को तदनुसार सूचित किया जा सके।

यह सक्षम प्राधिकारी के अनुमोदन से जारी किया जाता है।

भवदीय  
  
(डी.के. द्विवेदी)

सहायक आयुक्त (सतर्कता)

संलग्न: उपरोक्त

वितरण:

1. डा. वी. विजयलक्ष्मी, संयुक्त आयुक्त (शैक्षिक) एवं संयोजक, शिकायत निवारण समिति, केन्द्रीय विद्यालय संगठन (मुख्या.), नई दिल्ली।
2. समस्त डिविजनल प्रमुख, केन्द्रीय विद्यालय संगठन (मुख्या.) नई दिल्ली
3. आयुक्त के निजी सचिव, नई दिल्ली
4. अपर आयुक्त (प्रशा. /शैक्षिक) के निजी सचिव
5. उपायुक्त (शैक्षिक), EDP Cell से अनुरोध है कि उपरोक्त परिपत्र को वेबसाइट पर अपलोड करवाने की व्यवस्था करें।
6. प्रवर सचिव, यू.टी.-2, मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली को उनके पत्र संख्या 16-5/2017/यू.टी.-2 दिनांक 19.06.2017 के अनुपालन में सूचनार्थ।
7. गार्ड फाइल

218

**F. No. 16-5/2017/UT-2**  
**Government of India**  
**Ministry of Human Resource Development**  
**Department of School Education & Literacy**  
**UT-2 Section**

\*\*\*\*

**B - Wing Ground Floor, Near Gate No. 5,**  
**Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi - 110001**  
**Dated 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017**

13.66.1270 2770 (21/06/2017)  
12/07/2017

The Commissioner,  
Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan,  
18, Institutional Area,  
Shaheed Jit Singh Marg,  
**New Delhi - 110016**

**SUBJECT: FORWARDING OF HANDBOOK ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL) ACT, 2013 AND TRAINING MODULE ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL) ACT, 2013.**

Sir,

I am directed to forward herewith a Circular No. C-23011/1/2016-Vig. dated 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017 alongwith its enclosures received from Shri Sanjay Kumar, Under Secretary (Vigilance), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education alongwith Handbook on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, which is self explanatory.

2. It is requested to ensure proper implementation of the Act and intimate implementation report to this Ministry for onward submission to Vigilance Section of this Ministry.

yours faithfully,

**(V.B. HARIHARAN)**  
Under Secretary to the Government of India

**ENCL: AS ABOVE**

आ/पु.आ.  
सं. 11/7  
स.आ. (सं. 11/7)

13.66.1270 2770 (21/06/2017)  
12/07/2017

11 JUL 2017

1654/m

12/7/17  
443/Mini/50(Vig.)  
12/7/17

219

No.C-23011/1/2016-Vig.  
Government of India  
Ministry of Human Resource Development  
(Department of Higher Education)  
Vigilance Section

Room No.106 "C", Shastri Bhawan,  
New Delhi, the 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2017

Sub: Forwarding of Handbook on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and Training Module on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

Ministry of Women and Child Development has developed a Handbook on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. The Handbook is meant for all workplaces, institutions, organisations to provide basic understanding of sexual harassment at places or work. It is also designed to explain to internal committee(s) and Local Complaints Committee(s) established under the Act with simple, user friendly information about their role, responsibilities and steps for conducting inquiry in the cases of workplace sexual harassment.

2. Furthermore, in order to create awareness and capacities about the Act, a training module has been prepared by Ministry through the Institute of Secretariat Training and Management (ISTM), New Delhi to build the capacity of Government Officers around the provision of the Act.

3. The Ministry of Women and Child Development has also empanelled 29 institutions working in various part of the country to provide training programmes on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

4. Handbook on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, Training Module for Two Day Workshop on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and the list of empanelled institutes may be viewed on the website of Ministry of Women and Child Development i.e. [www.wcd.nic.in](http://www.wcd.nic.in). A copy each of Hand Book and Training Module and list of empanelled institutes is enclosed herewith.

5. It is requested that copy of the aforesaid Handbook and Training Module may please be circulated to all Autonomous/Statutory institutions/organizations under the administrative jurisdiction of the respective Bureau in order to ensure proper implementation of the Act under intimation to Vigilance Bureau.

*Sanjay Kumar*  
(Sanjay Kumar)  
Under Secretary (Vigilance)

All Bureau Heads  
As per list attached

Encl. as above

*Direct action pl. for 14.6*  
*14.6*  
*15.6.17*  
*234307*  
*234307(U)*  
*SOPT-2*  
*SOPT-3*  
*14.6*  
*15.6.17*  
*234307(U)*  
*SA/RB*



# HANDBOOK

On

## Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace

(Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

for Employers / Institutions / Organisations/  
Internal Complaints Committee / Local Complaints Committee



Towards a new dawn

Government of India  
Ministry of Women and Child Development

NOVEMBER 2015



सत्यमेव जयते



# HANDBOOK

ON

*Social Management of Women at Workplace*

*(Prevention, Redressal and Rectification) A. S. 1993*

for Employers / Institutions / Organisations/  
Internal Complaints Committee / Local Complaints Committee



Towards a new dawn

Government of India  
Ministry of Women and Child Development

November 2015

520

# Contents

<b>SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 THE MANDATE	3
1.2 THE GENESIS	3
1.3 THE ACT	4
1.4 PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK	5
1.5 WHO IS THIS HANDBOOK FOR?	5
1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE HANDBOOK	5
<b>SECTION 2: WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT- WHAT IS IT?</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 WHO IS AN AGGRIEVED WOMAN	7
2.2 WHAT IS A WORKPLACE?	8
2.3 WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE?	9
2.4 KEY ELEMENTS OF WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT	9
2.5 EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOURS AND SCENARIOS THAT CONSTITUTE SEXUAL HARASSMENT	12
2.6 FORMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT	14
2.7 SCENARIOS	14
<b>SECTION 3: PREVENTION &amp; PROHIBITION</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1 PREVENTIVE AUTHORITIES	18
3.2 WHO IS A DISTRICT OFFICER (DO)?	19
3.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AFOREMENTIONED AUTHORITIES	19
<b>SECTION 4 : REDRESS</b>	<b>23</b>
4.1 WHO CAN COMPLAIN AND WHERE?	23
4.2 WHAT SHOULD THE COMPLAINT CONTAIN?	24
4.3 WHAT CAN AN EMPLOYEE/WORKER EXPECT?	24
4.4 KEY RESPONSIBILITIES	25
4.5 KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, TRAINING	25
4.6 DO'S AND DON'TS FOR COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE	26
4.7 NON-NEGOTIABLES DURING THE INQUIRY PROCESS	27
4.8 THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINT PROCESS	27
4.9 AT A GLANCE	34
<b>SECTION 5: MONITORING</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>SECTION 6: GLOBAL NORMS AND GOOD PRACTICES</b>	<b>39</b>



मेनका संजय गांधी  
*Maneka Sanjay Gandhi*

मं-री  
महिला एवं बाल विकास विभाग  
नारायणपुर  
नई दिल्ली-110001

MINISTER  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI 110001

### MESSAGE

With improved access to education and employment, millions of Indian women are entering the country's workforce today. Many working women face sexual harassment at the workplace on a daily basis. It is crucial therefore that as a country, we strive to eliminate work-place sexual harassment since women have the right to work in safe and secure environment. It is the responsibility of every employer to ensure safety of women in a work environment and improve their participation. This will contribute to realization of their right to gender equality and result in economic empowerment and inclusive growth and benefit the nation as a whole.

I am pleased to present this Handbook on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. It provides key information about the provisions of the Act in an easy to-use and practical manner. The Handbook has been developed with the aim to ensure that the citizens of India are aware of their rights and obligations in terms of creating safe workplace environment for women.

Government of India is committed to promote gender equality and women's empowerment across every sector. This Handbook reflects our commitment to empower women as economic agents and improve their ability to access markets on competitive and equitable terms. I am confident that this Handbook which advocates and enforces the rules as laid out in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, will be beneficial to everyone. The practical and user-friendly procedures outlined in the Handbook will be useful for actual implementation of the Act.

(Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi)

724

V. Somasundaran



सचिव  
महिला एवं बाल विकास विभाग  
शास्त्री भवन, नई दिल्ली - 110001

Secretary  
Government of India  
Ministry of Women & Child Development  
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001  
Website : <http://www.wcd.nic.in>

18<sup>th</sup> November 2015

**FOREWORD**

I am pleased to share with you this Handbook on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. This Handbook is of immense importance because combating sexual harassment involves developing deeper understanding of what is sexual harassment and change of attitudes in all - be it employer, employees, colleagues, friends, or the policy makers.

Sexual Harassment at workplace is an extension of violence in everyday life and is discriminatory and exploitative, as it affects women's right to life and livelihood. In India, for the first time in 1997, a petition was filed in the Supreme Court to enforce the fundamental rights of working women, after the brutal gang rape of Bhanwari Devi a social worker from Rajasthan. As an outcome of the landmark judgment of the Vishaka and Others v State of Rajasthan the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, was enacted wherein it was made mandatory for every employer to provide a mechanism to redress grievances pertaining to workplace sexual harassment and enforce the right to gender equality of working women. The Act is also unique for its wide ambit as it is applicable to the organized sector as well as the unorganized sector.

The legislation, however, requires the support and commitment of all stakeholders for its effective and successful implementation in preventing workplace sexual harassment. It casts an obligation upon the employer to address the grievances in respect of sexual harassment at workplace in a time bound manner. It is in this context that this Handbook would be very useful as it provides clear definition of what constitutes sexual harassment and explains how the complaint process works.

I am sure that the Handbook will be extremely useful to all agencies concerned and help them in taking pro-active measures to eradicate the problem/nuisance of workplace sexual harassment in the country.

(V. Somasundaran)



23

प्रीति सूदान  
PREETI SUDAN  
अवर सचिव  
Additional Secretary  
वि.सं.सं.सं.सं.सं.सं.  
वि.सं.सं.सं.सं.सं.सं.



भारत सरकार  
महिला एवं बाल विकास विभाग  
संघीय मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली  
Government of India  
Ministry of Women & Child Development  
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110011  
Website: <http://www.wcd.nic.in>  
Email: [idsudan@nic.in](mailto:idsudan@nic.in)

Dated: 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2015

## PREFACE

The Government of India is committed to ending all forms of violence against women that negatively impact society, hamper gender equality and constricts the social and economic development of the country.

Since, sexual harassment results in violation of the fundamental rights of a woman to equality as per Articles 14 and 15 and her right to live with dignity as mentioned under Article 21 of the Constitution, the Government of India enacted the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. The Act is an extension of the Vishaka Guidelines Issued by the Supreme Court in 1997. The Supreme Court of India, for the first time in the Vishaka Guidelines, acknowledged Sexual Harassment at the workplace as a human rights violation. Further, the Act also reflects the commitment of the Government to the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on July 09, 1993. This new legislation makes every effort to be a user friendly tool in the hands of the employers and employees, to create safe and secure workplaces for all women.

With the enactment of the Act, India is now a part of a select group of countries to have prohibited sexual harassment at workplace through national legislation. The Act is unique in its broad coverage which includes all working women from organised and unorganised sectors alike, as also public and private sectors, regardless of hierarchy. Effective implementation of the Act is a challenge. The Handbook is designed to be a Ready Reckoner for organisations vested with responsibility to enforce the law.

The Handbook is structured into six sections. The first section is an introduction and detail regarding the genesis of the Act, the second sets the context by defining the workplace and sexual harassment and impact of such behaviour, the third focuses on the key individuals and institutions involved in prohibition and prevention processes and their responsibilities, section four discusses the redressal mechanism followed by monitoring requirement in section five and important international frameworks and best practices on sexual harassment at the workplace in the concluding section.

226

It is the hope of the Ministry that this Handbook will be of considerable value for employers, employees and complaint committees alike, as it provides guidance with regard to the steps to be taken and the processes to be followed, in line with the requirements of the law. It will prove useful to all women workers particularly and be a step forward in promoting their independence as well as the right to work with dignity as equal partners in an environment that is free from violence.

  
(Preeti Sudan)



सिंधुपुत्र मोहन्ती  
Lopamudra Mohanty

227  
Phone: 23047573  
Fax: 23062546  
Telegamy: WOMEN CHILD

भारत सरकार  
महिला एवं बाल विकास विभाग  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
भारत सरकार, अर्थ विभाग, नई दिल्ली  
Jeevan Vikas, New Delhi-110 005, India

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In our journey towards preparing this Handbook, which required a lot of guidance and assistance from many people, whose names may not be enumerated, I am thankful to all of them for their contributions towards the completion of the task.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the UN Woman (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women) for their valuable contributions with their experience in women's movement and expertise in gender rights in supporting the Ministry to prepare the Handbook with key information on the Act in an easy-to-use practical manner and designing with appropriate illustrations.

I would like to acknowledge the important contributions made by Ms. Risha Syed, Legal Consultant for the hardwork put by her coupled with her experience and expertise as a legal professional and commitment to gender issues in bringing out the Handbook.

I am also thankful to Dr. Paramita Majumdar, Senior Consultant, Gender Budgeting for reviewing the manuscript with meticulous scrutiny and scholarly advice. I would like to mention with appreciation for Shri. Samuel Paul, Assistant Secretary for showing not only his keen interest on the subject, but assisting us in the review work.

We hope that this Handbook will be a guide and inspiration to all of us in creating an enabling environment of women in the workplaces.

  
(Lopamudra Mohanty)

10

*“The meaning and content of the fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution of India are of sufficient amplitudes to encompass all facets of gender equality...”*

Late Chief Justice J.S. Verma, Supreme Court of India, Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan

Introduction

"Whereas sexual harassment results in violation of the fundamental rights of a Woman to equality...."  
[Preamble, Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal) Act]

As enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution of India, "equality of status and opportunity" must be secured for all its citizens; equality of every person under the law is guaranteed by Article 14 of the Constitution.

A safe workplace is therefore a woman's legal right. Indeed, the Constitutional doctrine of equality and personal liberty is contained in Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Indian Constitution. These articles ensure a person's right to equal protection under the law, to live a life free from discrimination on any ground and to protection of life and personal liberty. This is further reinforced by the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 and which is ratified by India. Often described as an international bill of rights for women, it calls for the equality of women and men in terms of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural and civil spheres. It underlines that discrimination and attacks on women's dignity violate the principle of equality of rights.

Sexual harassment constitutes a gross violation of women's right to equality and dignity. It has its roots in patriarchy and its attendant perception that men are superior to women and that some forms of violence against women are acceptable. One of these is workplace sexual harassment, which views various forms of such harassment, as harmless and trivial. Often, it is excused as 'natural' male behaviour or 'harmless flirtation' which women enjoy. Contrary to these perceptions, it causes serious harm and is also a strong manifestation of sex discrimination at the workplace. Not only is it an infringement of the fundamental rights of a woman, under Article 19 (1) (g) of the Constitution of India "to practice any profession or to carry out any occupation, trade or business"; it erodes equality and puts the dignity and the physical and psychological well-being of workers at risk. This leads to poor productivity and a negative impact on lives and livelihoods. To further compound the matter, deep-rooted socio-cultural behavioural patterns, which create a gender hierarchy, tend to place responsibility on the victim, thereby increasing inequality in the workplace and in the society at large.

Handwritten initials and a circled number '230' in the top right corner.

Though sexual harassment at the workplace has assumed serious proportions, women do not report the matter to the concerned authorities in most cases due to fear of reprisal from the harasser, losing one's livelihood, being stigmatized, or losing professional standing and personal reputation.

Across the globe today, workplace sexual harassment is increasingly understood as a violation of women's rights and a form of violence against women. Indeed, the social construct of male privileges in society continues to be used to justify violence against women in the private and public sphere. In essence, sexual harassment is a mirror reflecting male power over women that sustains patriarchal relations. In a society where violence against women, both subtle and direct, is borne out of the patriarchal values, women are forced to conform to traditional gender roles. These patriarchal values and attitudes of both women and men pose the greatest challenge in resolution and prevention of sexual harassment. Workplace sexual harassment, like other forms of violence, is not harmless. It involves serious health, human, economic and social costs, which manifests themselves in the overall development indices of a nation.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 was enacted to ensure safe working spaces for women and to build enabling work environments that respect women's right to equality of status and opportunity. An effective implementation of the Act will contribute to the realization of their right to gender equality, life and liberty, equality in working conditions everywhere. The sense of security at the workplace will improve women's participation in work, resulting in their economic empowerment and inclusive growth.

The full scale of the problem is not known given the difficulties in documenting the experience of those who have experienced workplace sexual harassment. However, available studies on sexual harassment show that it is certainly prevalent in India today. This is why the legislation is an important step forward within the larger architecture of women's rights, as it tackles this issue to secure the rights of women workers across the country.

While the official figures for women's work participation are low, much of the work that women do is not captured in official data accounts. It is argued<sup>1</sup> that where this is to be captured, women's overall work participation would be 86.2 per cent. While the official data<sup>2</sup> shows that women's work participation rate is around 25.3 per cent in rural areas and 14.7 per cent in the urban areas, estimates indicate that there is a huge workforce of women. therefore there is a need to secure their workplace and entitlements. Given, that 93 per cent of women workers are employed in the informal sector, they remain unprotected by laws. With no laws or mechanisms to protect them, proactive measures are required to make their workplaces safe.

---

<sup>1</sup>Professor Jewali Ghosh, Paper on 'What Exactly is Work?' [http://www.zinnproject.org/wordpress/wp/pdf/Exactly\\_Work.pdf](http://www.zinnproject.org/wordpress/wp/pdf/Exactly_Work.pdf)  
NSSO 2011-12



It is well established that ensuring safe working conditions for women leads to a positive impact on their participation in the workforce and increases their productivity, which in turn benefits the nation as a whole. Economically, empowered women are key to the nation's overall development and this can only be achieved if it is ensured that women's workspaces across all sectors and all over the country have a safe and secure environment for work.

It is important as well to ensure that the emphasis is on prevention rather than punitive action. This calls for widespread awareness on the Act among employers, managers and the workers themselves. Frequently, women workers may face sexual harassment but may not be aware that it is a breach of their rights and that there is something they can do about it. They need to know that they can do something about it. Then there are others, who may believe that it is a personal matter that needs to be resolved by the people involved. In order to change this order of things, it is urgent that measures are taken to change mind-sets and attitudes by creating awareness about what constitutes sexual harassment and the steps that can be taken to address it.

This handbook will serve as an important tool to make workplaces safe and benefit both workers and employers alike, leading to mutual gains.

#### 4.1.2 WORKING LIFE

Today, all workplaces in India are mandated by law to provide a safe and secure working environment free from sexual harassment for all women.

#### 4.1.2.1 Bhanwari Devi

In 1992, a rural level change agent, Bhanwari Devi, was engaged by the state of Rajasthan as a *Sathin*<sup>1</sup> to work towards the prevention of the practice of child marriages. During the course of her work, she prevented the marriage of a one-year old girl in the community. Her work was met with resentment and attracted harassment from men of that community. Bhanwari Devi reported this to the local authority but no action was taken. That omission came at great cost – Bhanwari was subsequently gang raped by those very men.

The Bhanwari Devi case revealed the ever-present sexual harm to which millions of working women are exposed across the country, everywhere and everyday irrespective of their location. It also shows the extent to which that harm can escalate if nothing is done to check sexually offensive behaviour in the workplace.

Based on the facts of Bhanwari Devi's case, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed by Vishaka and other women groups against the State of Rajasthan and Union of India before the Supreme Court of India. It proposed that sexual harassment be recognized as a violation of women's fundamental right to equality and that all workplaces/establishments/institutions be made accountable and responsible to uphold these rights.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Sathin' means a friend

632

In a landmark judgment, *Vishaka vs. State of Rajasthan (1997)*<sup>4</sup>, the Supreme Court of India created legally binding guidelines basing it on the right to equality and dignity accorded under the Indian Constitution as well as by the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

It included:

- A definition of sexual harassment
- Shifting accountability from individuals to institutions
- Prioritizing prevention
- Provision of an innovative redress mechanism

The Supreme Court defined sexual harassment as any unwelcome, sexually determined physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct. Examples included sexually suggestive remarks about women, demands for sexual favours, and sexually offensive visuals in the workplace. The definition also covered situations where a woman could be disadvantaged in her workplace as a result of threats relating to employment decisions that could negatively affect her working life.

It placed responsibility on employers to ensure that women did not face a hostile environment, and prohibited intimidation or victimization of those cooperating with an inquiry, including the affected complainant as well as witnesses.

It directed for the establishment of redressal mechanism in the form of Complaints Committee, which will look into the matters of sexual harassment of women at workplace. The Complaints Committees were mandated to be headed by a woman employee, with not less than half of its members being women and provided for the involvement of a third party person/NGO expert on the issue, to prevent any undue pressure on the complainant. The guidelines extended to all kinds of employment, from paid to voluntary, across the public and private sectors.

Vishaka established that international standards/law could serve to expand the scope of India's Constitutional guarantees and fill in the gaps wherever they exist. India's innovative history in tackling workplace sexual harassment beginning with the Vishaka Guidelines and subsequent legislation has given critical visibility to the issue. Workplaces must now own their responsibility within this context and ensure that women can work in safe and secure spaces.

Having raised the bar of responsibility and accountability in the Vishaka Guidelines, the Supreme Court placed an obligation on workplaces, institutions and those in positions of responsibility, to uphold working women's fundamental right to equality and dignity at the workplace. Three key obligations were imposed on institutions to meet that standard, namely:

---

<sup>4</sup> AIR 1997 Supreme Court 3113.





- Prohibition
- Prevention
- Redress

In 2013, the Government of India notified the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (referred to as Act hereinafter). Consistent with the Vishaka judgment, the Act aspires to ensure women’s right to workplace equality, free from sexual harassment through compliance with the above mentioned three elements.



It is important to note that the Act provides a civil remedy to women and is in addition to other laws that are currently in force. Consequently, any woman who wishes to report instances of sexual harassment at the workplace has the right to take recourse of both civil and criminal proceedings.

**1.1 Purpose of the Handbook**

This handbook is meant for all workplaces/institutions/organizations to provide a basic understanding of sexual harassment at places of work. Additionally, it is designed to offer Internal Complaints Committee/s and Local Complaints Committee/s (Complaints Committee/s) established under the Act, with simple, user friendly information on sexual harassment; what is expected of Complaints Committee/s to redress a complaint; and what the inquiry process and outcome should include.

**1.2 Objectives of the Handbook**

This handbook informs the end user (an employee/worker) about workplace sexual harassment and their right to an informed complaint process in seeking redress as provided under the Act and Rules framed thereunder.

**1.3 Structure of the Handbook**

This Handbook has 6 sections, with each containing information for women, male co-workers as well as their employers, on how to deal with sexual harassment at the workplace in the context of the Act.

Section 1 serves as an introduction, as it details the genesis of the Act and the history behind it, as well as provides a brief description of the Act itself. This section also describes the purpose of this handbook and who it is designed for.

234



Section 2 sets the context by defining a workplace and sexual harassment. It provides the reader with key elements, such as examples of sexual harassment as well as scenarios and the impact of such behaviour.

Section 3 focuses on the key individuals and institutions involved in the prohibition and prevention processes and their responsibilities.

Section 4 is about redress. This section identifies and defines the key players involved in the complaint mechanism (including the complainant and the respondent). It details the stages of the complaint process. Particular attention is paid to the complaints committee which plays a very important role in this process.

Section 5 describes the monitoring requirements as per the Act.

Section 6 lists the important international frameworks and select best practices on sexual harassment at the workplace.



## Workplace Sexual Harassment: What is it?

*"No woman shall be subjected to sexual harassment at any workplace."*

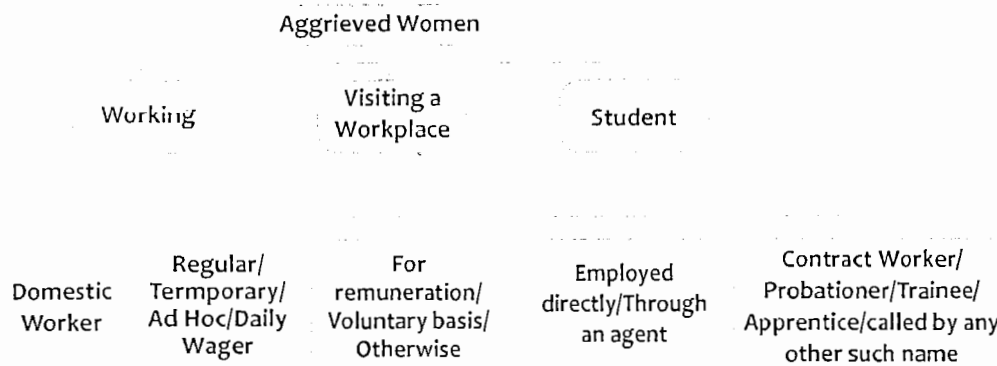
Section 3(1) of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

This section defines the aggrieved woman, workplace and sexual harassment as well as highlights key elements of workplace sexual harassment. It provides examples of behaviours through which a woman can experience possible professional and personal harm. It presents the user with scenarios from across section of work contexts to build clarity on different forms of sexual harassment as identified under the Act.

The Act recognises the right of every woman to a safe and secure workplace environment irrespective of her age or employment/work status. Hence, the right of all women working or visiting any workplace whether in the capacity of regular, temporary, adhoc, or daily wages basis is protected under the Act.

It includes all women whether engaged directly or through an agent including a contractor, with or without the knowledge of the principal employer. They may be working for remuneration, on a voluntary basis or otherwise. Their terms of employment can be express or implied.

Further, she could be a co-worker, a contract worker, probationer, trainee, apprentice, or called by any other such name. The Act also covers a woman, who is working in a dwelling place or house.



18  
236

A workplace is defined as “any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment, including transportation provided by the employer for undertaking such a journey.” As per this definition, a workplace covers both the organised and un-organised sectors.

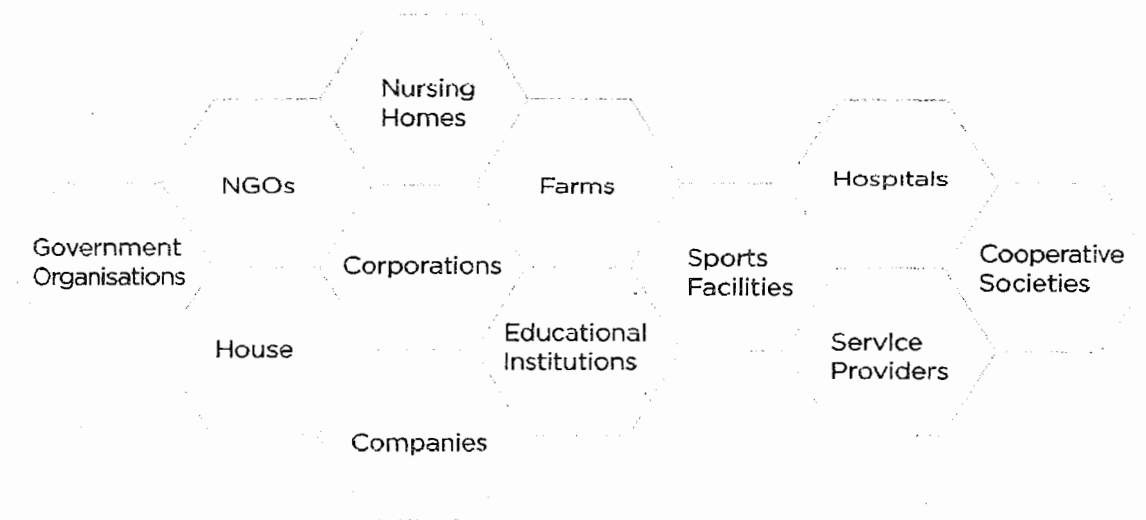
It also includes all workplaces whether owned by Indian or foreign company having a place of work in India. As per the Act, workplace includes:

- Government organizations, including Government company, corporations and cooperative societies;
- Private sector organisations, venture, society, trust, NGO or service providers etc. providing services which are commercial, vocational, educational, sports, professional, entertainment, industrial, health related or financial activities, including production, supply, sale, distribution or service;  
Hospitals/Nursing Homes;
- Sports Institutes/Facilities;
- Places visited by the employee (including while on travel) including transportation provided by employer;
- A dwelling place or house.

The Act defines the Unorganised Sector as:

- Any enterprise owned by an individual or self-employed workers engaged in the production or sale of goods or providing services of any kind;
- Any enterprise which employs less than 10 workers.

All women working or visiting workplaces, for example:



23  
A



### 3.1.1.1 What is Sexual Harassment?

“Sexual Harassment” includes anyone or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviour (whether directly or by implication), namely:

1. Physical contact or advances;
2. A demand or request for sexual favours;
3. Making sexually coloured remarks;
4. Showing pornography;
5. Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature



Very often situations that start off innocently end up in inappropriate and unprofessional behaviours. It is important to remember that workplace sexual harassment is sexual, unwelcome and the experience is subjective. It is the impact and not the intent that matters and it almost always occurs in a matrix of power. It is possible that a woman may experience a single instance of sexual harassment or a series of incidents over a period of time. It is important also to remember that each case is unique and should be examined in its own context and according to the surrounding circumstances as a whole.

The following table highlights the subjective nature of the experience and the impact it may have on the person involved, irrespective of the intent of such behaviour.

To enable prevention of sexual harassment at the workplace, it is critical to recognize and differentiate between welcome and unwelcome sexual behaviour. Listed are some examples of how “unwelcome” and “welcome” behaviour is experienced.

#### 3.1.1.2 Examples of Unwelcome and Welcome Sexual Behaviour

Workplace Sexual Harassment is behaviour that is

- Unwelcome
- Subjective in nature
- A subjective experience
- Not intent is what matters
- Often occurs in a matrix of power

Feels bad	Feels good
One-sided	Reciprocal
Feels powerless	In-control
Power-based	Equality
Unwanted	Wanted
Illegal	Legal
Invading	Open
Demeaning	Appreciative
Causes anger/sadness	Happy
Causes negative self-esteem	Positive self-esteem

**3.2.2 Negative Impacts of Sexual Harassment**

The impact of sexual harassment at the workplace is far-reaching and is an injury to the equal right of women. Not only does it impact her, it has a direct bearing on the workplace productivity as well as the development of the society. Below is a list of select examples of such negative impacts.









10. Physical contact such as touching or pinching.
11. Caressing, kissing or fondling someone against her will (could be considered assault).
12. Invasion of personal space (getting too close for no reason, brushing against or cornering someone).
13. Persistently asking someone out, despite being turned down.
14. Stalking an individual.
15. Abuse of authority or power to threaten a person's job or undermine her performance against sexual favours.
16. Falsely accusing and undermining a person behind closed doors for sexual favours.
17. Controlling a person's reputation by rumour-mongering about her private life.

Some examples of behaviour that may indicate underlying workplace sexual harassment and merit inquiry:

1. Criticizing, insulting, blaming, reprimanding or condemning an employee in public.
2. Exclusion from group activities or assignments without a valid reason.
3. Statements damaging a person's reputation or career.
4. Removing areas of responsibility, unjustifiably.
5. Inappropriately giving too little or too much work.
6. Constantly overruling authority without just cause.
7. Unjustifiably monitoring everything that is done.
8. Blaming an individual constantly for errors without just cause.
9. Repeatedly singling out an employee by assigning her with demeaning and belittling jobs that are not part of her regular duties.
10. Insults or humiliations, repeated attempts to exclude or isolate a person.
11. Systematically interfering with normal work conditions, sabotaging places or instruments of work.
12. Humiliating a person in front of colleagues, engaging in smear campaigns.
13. Arbitrarily taking disciplinary action against an employee.
14. Controlling the person by withholding resources (time, budget, autonomy, and training) necessary to succeed.

Some examples of workplace behaviours that may not constitute sexual harassment:

1. Following up on work absences.
2. Requiring performance to job standards.





favours to her advantage constitutes quid pro quo form of sexual harassment. Ravi's behaviour is unwelcome, sexual, and has a negative impact on Kamini.

### SCENARIO EXAMPLE 2

Renuka is employed as a domestic worker where she is expected to take care of all the household activities, other than cooking. Most of the days, the lady of the house leaves early. Renuka is therefore left alone in the house with a male member of the household.

Renuka finds the male member constantly leering at her when he is at home and often walks around the house wrapped in nothing but a towel which makes her very uncomfortable. On one occasion, while she was sweeping, he pinched her bottom. When she protested that she will complain to the lady of the house, he threatened to accuse her of stealing, and that he will ensure that she loses her job.



*What is Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment?*

In the above example, the male member by threatening Renuka to keep quiet about the unwelcome physical contact if she wants to continue with her employment commits quid pro quo form of sexual harassment. His behaviour occurring in a matrix of power, is unwelcome, sexual and has a negative impact on Renuka.

### SCENARIO EXAMPLE 3

Shamima is a lawyer who works as a researcher at an NGO in Delhi since 2013. Dr. Bhavan is the director of the organisation and has always advocated for the cause of human rights.

During an official field visit to Shimla for 2 days, Dr. Bhavan finds an opportunity to be alone with Shamima and makes a physical advance. Despite her protests, he forces himself on her while giving lurid and sexually explicit details of his relationships, both past and present, with women. When she chastises him and threatens to make his behaviour public, he threatens to destroy her career.

*What is Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment?*

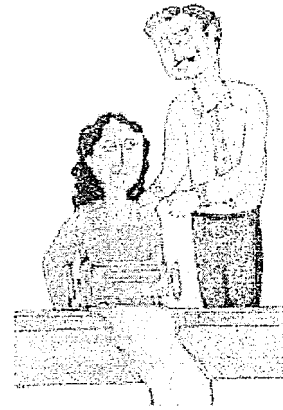
In the above example, by threatening Shamima with the destruction of her career, Dr. Bhavan commits quid pro quo sexual harassment. His physical advances and sexual conversation are unwelcome for Shamima and occur in a matrix of power.

*What is Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment?*

### SCENARIO EXAMPLE 1

Jayanthi works in a garment factory in Bangalore.

Varghese, Jayanthi's supervisor, often tries to touch her on one or the other pretext. For example, he adjusts her dupatta while she is sewing at her workstation on the pretext of covering her back. Jayanthi is very uncomfortable with his behaviour. Her colleagues at the workplace ridicule Jayanthi and mock her for the 'special treatment' by her supervisor. They often gossip about her and Varghese.



What is a Hostile Workplace Environment Sexual Harassment?

In the above example, the physical touching by Varghese is unwelcome and sexual in nature. The gossip, which is based on Varghese's behaviour towards Jayanthi at the workplace, is creating a hostile work environment for Jayanthi.

SCENARIO EXAMPLE 2

Sukhi is a daily wage labourer working at a construction site. Every day at lunch time, Sukhi sits under the shade of the tree to feed her 16-month old baby. She finds Jaswinder, a worker, staring at her from the distance. Sukhi feels uncomfortable and asks Jaswinder to stay away from her while she's feeding the baby. However, Jaswinder persists and always finds a place near her. The group of fellow construction workers now constantly catcall and whistle at Sukhi every time she walks their way to refill the cement or mortar. When she questions them, they tell her they are only joking amongst themselves.

What is a Hostile Workplace Environment Sexual Harassment?

Ogling, stalking and gossiping against Sukhi in the above example constitute a hostile work environment, a form of workplace sexual harassment.

SCENARIO EXAMPLE 3

Sumedha is a Captain with the Indian Army. She has refused an offer made by a Senior Officer for a relationship. Sumedha has kept quiet about this experience, but thanks to the rumour-mongering by the Senior Officer, she has acquired a reputation of being a woman of 'easy virtue'. Now she is being subjected to repeated advances by three of her senior officer colleagues. When she turns around and protests, she is singled out for additional physical training.

What is a Hostile Workplace Environment Sexual Harassment?

In the above example, Sumedha's refusal to the sexual advances of her Senior Officer, leads to her being subjected to rumours, gossip, character assassination, unwelcome sexual advances by other officers, and arbitrary disciplinary action. This constitutes Hostile Work Environment form of workplace Sexual Harassment.

245

#### SCENARIO EXAMPLE 4

Asha is a researcher at a media agency led by Dr. Purshottam, a well-known journalist.

In the first few months of Asha's employment, Dr. Purshottam is very pleased with her work and publicly appreciates her. Soon after, Dr. Purshottam frequently summons Asha to his office on the pretext of work and makes verbal sexual advances and sexually coloured remarks to her. He brushes aside her protests by saying that they would not be able to work as a team unless she interacted closely with him and they both got to know each other well. However, once she categorically rebuffed his sexual advances, he has stopped. Now he *ridicules her work* and *humiliates* her in the presence of colleagues and the staff. He *discriminates* against her by allotting projects to her and then arbitrarily withdrawing the work.

*Illustration of workplace sexual harassment leading to hostile work environment*

In the above example, the workplace actions are a result of Asha rebuffing the unwelcome, sexual advances of Dr. Purshottam and this constitutes hostile work environment form of workplace sexual harassment.

This section has listed and illustrated some of the behaviours that constitute the five parameters of workplace sexual harassment, viz., sexual, subjective, unwelcome, impact and power. This becomes the basis of the key elements of the Act, Prevention, Prohibition and Redress.

246

# Prevention and Prohibition

*"The meaning and content of fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution of India are of sufficient amplitudes to encompass all facets of gender equality..."*

Late Justice J.S. Verma

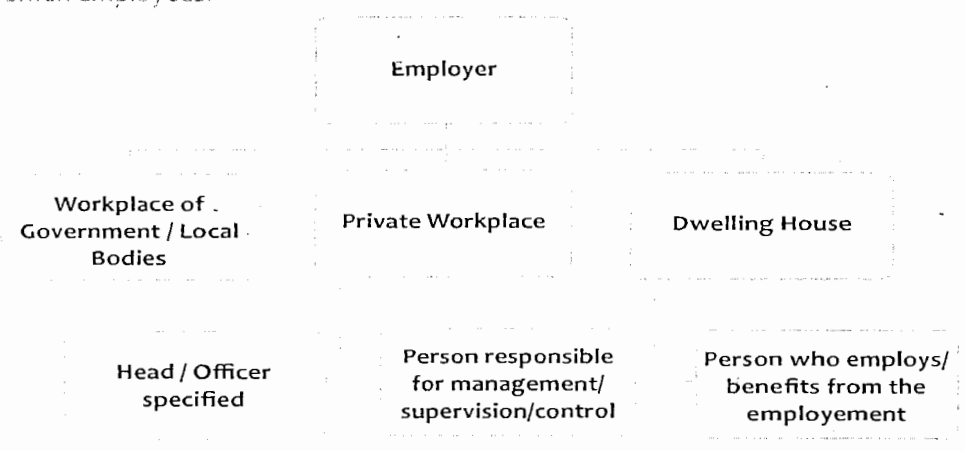
This section describes those who are both responsible and accountable to prevent workplace sexual harassment in compliance with the Act. It also highlights the role of workplaces in prohibiting workplace sexual harassment through an effectively communicated policy.

## 3.1 RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES

### 3.1.1 WHO IS AN EMPLOYER?

An employer refers to:

1. The head of the department, organisation, undertaking, establishment, enterprise, institution, office, branch or unit of the Appropriate Government or local authority or such officer specified in this behalf.
2. Any person (whether contractual or not) responsible for the management, supervision and control of a designated workplace not covered under clause (i).
3. A person or a household who employs or benefits from the employment of domestic worker or women employees.





248

No.	Position	Criteria
1.	Chairperson	Women working at senior level as employee; if not available then nominated from other office/units/ department/ workplace of the same employer
2.	2 Members (minimum)	From amongst employees committed to the cause of women/ having legal knowledge/experience in social work
3.	Member	From amongst NGO/associations committed to the cause of women or a person familiar with the issue of Sexual Harassment

Where the office or administrative units of a workplace are located in different places, division or sub-division, an ICC has to be set up at every administrative unit and office.

**ICC ARE MANDATORY**

The employee who had a fundamental right to a workplace free of sexual harassment, had complained about sexual harassment. According to the Court, had the organisation complied with the Vishaka Guidelines and set up such a Complaints Committee, the preventative benefit would have been three-fold:

1. Ensured a place where women employees could seek redress;
2. Sent a clear message to the workplace that such complaints would be enquired into by a specially designated committee with external expertise;
3. Prevented a series of litigation that followed.

Hence, the Madras High Court awarded Rs. 1.68 crores in damages to an employee for the non-constitution of a Complaints Committee by the employer, as per the Vishaka Guidelines (at the time of the complaint, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2013 had not been enacted).

*Ms. G v. ISG Novasoft Technologies Ltd. Madras High Court (Crl.R.C.No.370 of 2014 order dated 02.09.2014. Original Petition No.463 of 2012*

**2) Local Complaints Committee (LCC)**

The District Officer will constitute an LCC in every district so as to enable women in the unorganised sector or small establishments to work in an environment free of sexual harassment. The LCC will receive complaints:

1. From women working in an organisation having less than 10 workers;
2. When the complaint is against the employer himself;
3. From domestic workers





- |    |                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Chairperson       | Nominated from amongst the eminent women in the field of social work and committed to the cause of women                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2. | Member            | Nominated from amongst the women working in the block, taluka or tehsil or ward or municipality in the district                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 3. | 2 Members         | Nominated from amongst such NGO/associations/persons committed to the cause of women or familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment, provided that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least one must be a woman</li> <li>• At least one must have a background of law or legal knowledge</li> </ul> |
| 4. | Ex Officio member | The concerned officer dealing with social welfare or women and child development in the district                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

\*One of the nominees shall be a woman belonging to the SC/ST/OBC/Minority community notified by the Central Government.

### 3) External Members on the Complaints Committee/s

The Act refers to external members, which generally means persons who have expertise with the issue of sexual harassment. Given the largely intangible nature of workplace sexual harassment, there are a range of complexities involved in responding effectively to workplace sexual harassment complaints. For this reason, external third party/ members on the Complaints Committee/s (from civil society or legal background) should possess the following attributes:

1. Demonstrated knowledge, skill and capacity in dealing with workplace sexual harassment issues/complaints;
2. Sound grasp and practice of the legal aspects/implications.

Such expertise will greatly benefit Complaints Committees in terms of fair and informed handling of complaints to lead to sound outcomes. These external third party members shall be paid for their services on the Complaints Committees as prescribed.

A 'person familiar with issues relating to women' would mean such persons who have expertise in issues related to sexual harassment and may include any of the following:

- At least 5 years of experience as a social worker, working towards women's empowerment and in particular, addressing workplace sexual harassment;
- Familiarity with labour, service, civil or criminal law.



257

"...the time has come when women must be able to feel liberated and emancipated from what could be fundamentally oppressive conditions against which an autonomous choice of freedom can be exercised and made available by women. This is sexual autonomy in the fullest degree"

Late Chief Justice J.S. Verma, Justice Verma Committee Report, 2013

This section is about Redress. It provides helpful information on who can complain, to whom, and what a complaint should contain. It also gives information and lays out the steps involved when a complaint has reached the Complaints Committee, in terms of the process, findings and recommendations.

COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

In case of physical incapacity:

- Complainant's relative
- Complainant's friend
- Co worker
- Officer of NCW or SCW
- Any person who has knowledge of the incident with the written consent of the complainant

In case of mental incapacity:

- Complainant's relative
- Complainant's friend
- Special educator
- Qualified psychiatrist/psychologist
- Guardian/authority under whose care the complainant is receiving treatment/care
- Any person with knowledge of the incident, jointly with any person mentioned above

In case of Complainant's death:

Any person with knowledge of the incident with the written consent of her legal heir

In case Complainant is unable to file the complaint for any other reason:

By any person who has knowledge of the incident with her written consent

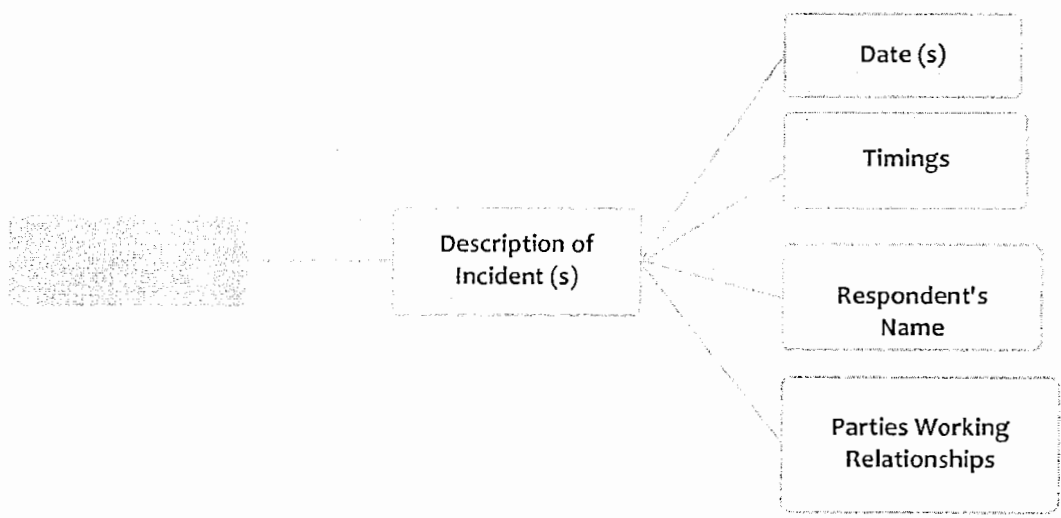
The Complainant

SH  
282

Generally, where there are less than ten workers, any woman employee can complain to the Local Complaints Committee with the support of the Nodal Officer, when required. It is the responsibility of the District Officer to designate a person as the Nodal Officer in every block, taluka and tehsil in rural or tribal areas and wards or municipalities in the urban areas, to receive the complaints of workplace sexual harassment from women. The Nodal Officer will forward all such complaints within seven days of its receipt to the concerned Complaints Committee for appropriate action. In most other workplaces, a woman employee can make a complaint to the Internal Complaints Committee.

4.2 WHAT SHOULD THE COMPLAINT CONTAIN?

The written complaint should contain a description of each incident(s). It should include relevant dates, timings and locations; name of the respondent(s); and the working relationship between the parties. A person designated to manage the workplace sexual harassment complaint is required to provide assistance in writing of the complaint if the complainant seeks it for any reason.



4.3 WHAT CAN A WOMAN EMPLOYEE/MEMBER EXPECT?

When it comes to redress for workplace sexual harassment, employee/worker has a right to expect a *trained, skilled and competent* Complaints Committee, a time bound process, information confidentiality, assurance of non-retaliation, counselling or other enabling support where needed and assistance if the complainant opts for criminal proceedings.

- An empathetic attitude from the Complaints Committee so that she can state her grievance in a fearless environment
- A copy of the statement along with all the evidence and a list of witnesses submitted by the respondent

283



- Keeping her identity confidential throughout the process
- Support, in lodging FIR in case she chooses to lodge criminal proceedings
- In case of fear of intimidation from the respondent, her statement can be recorded in absence of the respondent
- Right to appeal, in case, not satisfied with the recommendations/findings of the Complaints Committee

#### 4.2 RIGHTS OF THE RESPONDENT

- A patient hearing to present his case in a non-biased manner
- A copy of the statement along with all the evidence and a list of witnesses submitted by the complainant
- Keeping his identity confidential throughout the process
- Right to appeal in case not satisfied with the recommendations/findings of the Complaints Committee

#### 4.3 KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

To effectively address workplace sexual harassment complaints, a Complaints Committees must first be aware of their key responsibilities, some of which are highlighted below:

1. Be thoroughly prepared
2. Know the Act, Policy and/or relevant Service Rules
3. Gather and record all relevant information
4. Determine the main issues in the complaint
5. Prepare relevant interview questions
6. Conduct necessary interviews
7. Ensure parties are made aware of the process and their rights/responsibilities within it
8. Analyse information gathered
9. Prepare the report with findings/recommendations

Dealing with workplace sexual harassment complaints is often complex. Hence Complaints Committee/s must possess critical skills/capacity to effectively carry out their role. That includes a sound grasp of the Act, Vishaka Guidelines, applicable Service Rules, relevant laws and an understanding of workplace sexual harassment and related issues. Complaints Committee skills must include an ability to synthesise information i.e. relevant documents, the law and interviews. They should also be able to communicate effectively, write clearly, listen actively and conduct interviews. They should be competent at showing empathy, being impartial and being thorough. They should be able to identify sexual harassment and its impact.

254

A Complaints Committee/s is required to be trained in both skill and capacity to carry out a fair and informed inquiry into a complaint of workplace sexual harassment. An absence of such training will lead to unequal and unfair results, which can cost employers, employees, complainants as well as respondents.

**UNFAIRLY PROCESSED COMPLAINT**

Within 6 months of joining The Statesman newspaper, Rina Mukerhjee lost her job. While the company alleged that her work was “tardy” and “lacking in quality” it suppressed Rina’s complaint of sexual harassment against the news coordinator, Ishan Joshi. Within her first month of work, Rina had taken her complaint directly to the Managing Director, Ravinder Kumar. Time passed, nothing happened and Rina was fired. In a rare display of social context insight and clarity, the Industrial Tribunal (West Bengal) rejected the Statesman’s claim that Rina only referred to “professional” harassment in her complaint to Mr. Kumar. In the Tribunal’s view, Mr. Kumar’s failure to dig deeper was clearly suspect- “... it becomes clear that there was no Committee on Sexual Harassment, as per the Hon’ble Supreme Court’s direction in Vishaka vs State of Rajasthan, existing in The Statesman, at that relevant time. ...to expect the lady workman to file a written complaint and not to believe the same, when it has been filed ‘at a later date’ is sheer bias.” The Statesman was ordered to reinstate Rina and grant her full back wages.

M/s The Statesmen Ltd. and Smt. Rina Mukherjee. Order of K.K. Kumari, Judge, dated 06.02.2013, Fourth Industrial Labour Tribunal (West Bengal)

**DO’S**

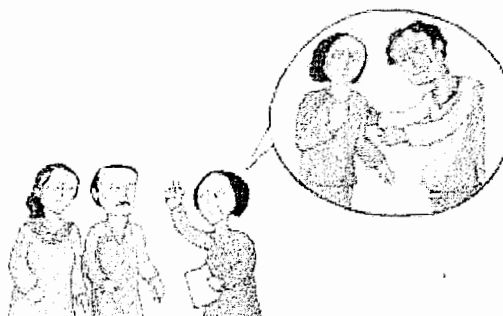
**DO’S**

- 1. Create an enabling meeting environment.
- 2. Use body language that communicates complete attention to the parties.
- 3. Treat the complainant with respect.
- 4. Discard pre-determined ideas.
- 5. Determine the harm.



**DON'TS**

- 1. Get aggressive.
- 2. Insist on a graphic description of the sexual harassment.
- 3. Interrupt.
- 4. Discuss the complaint in the presence of the complainant or the respondent.





256





Upon receipt, the complaint should be reviewed for:

1. In the context of workplace that the sexual harassment complaint is to be met with under the Act, such as, Service Rules, Workplace Policy, Vishaka Guidelines and related laws.
2. Clarity in the complaint.
3. Additional information needed from the complainant.

The complainant will be notified in writing to acknowledge receipt.

#### Elements of the Behaviour

The complaint needs to satisfy the following elements:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  The respondent displayed a potentially improper and/or offensive conduct which may come within workplace sexual harassment; |  The behaviour was directed at the complainant; |  The complainant experienced harm. |  The behavior occurred in the workplace or at any location/any event related to work. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

#### Step 2: Meet and Talk to the Complainant to Explore Options for Formal and Informal Resolution

The complainant needs to be informed about the ensuing process and the informal or formal options available for the redress.

#### Step 3: Informal Mechanism

If the complainant chooses to adopt the informal process to resolve her complaint/experience of workplace sexual harassment, then it is the responsibility of the person designated to receive and manage the Complaints Committee to explore enabling ways to address the complaint. This can include counselling, educating, orienting, or warning the respondent to promptly stop the unwelcome behaviour or appointing a neutral person to act as a conciliator between the parties to resolve the complaint through conciliation.

However, before recommending conciliation, the Committee must assess the severity of the situation and if necessary, advise and enable the complainant to opt for the formal route. At no point, the Complaints Committee will advise the complainant to resolve the matter directly with the respondent. Where such an informal process is successful, such resolution is to be recorded by the conciliator and forwarded to the ICC/LCC who in turn will forward the same to the employer/District Officer for further action based on the resolution. Employers/District Officers are responsible for taking steps to ensure that the complainant is not subject to any backlash.

The choice of a formal process rests with the complainant even if the person responsible for managing the complaint believes that this can be resolved through an informal process.

#### Step 4: Formal Mechanism

1. If the complainant opts for formal redress, or the nature of the complaint is serious which calls for formal redress, then the Complaints Committee responds to the complaint.





2. Complaints Committee/s members must be free of any conflict of interest with either the concerned parties or with the outcome.
3. Ensure that the independent third party member has sound knowledge, skill, and experience in dealing with workplace sexual harassment complaints.

#### Step 5: Respondent and Response

1. As per the procedure provided in the Service Rule; or in absence of the same
2. Within seven days of receiving a complaint, the Complaints Committee will inform the respondent in writing that a complaint has been received.
3. The respondent will have an opportunity to respond to the complaint in writing within ten days thereafter.

#### STAFF WORKS AT WORKS OFFICE

#### Step 6: Prepare the File

A sound inquiry relies on sound preparation. This includes taking into account the following steps:

##### 1. Documentation

Create an independent confidential file of the complaint and all subsequent related documentation.

##### 2. Review Law & Policy

Have a clear knowledge and understanding of the Act/Rules as well as the relevant Service Rules, Workplace Policy, Vishaka Guidelines, existing practices and related laws

##### 3. Make a List

Make a list of all the dates and events relating to the written complaint as well as the names of witnesses, where applicable.

The complaint may include the names of people believed to have witnessed the alleged incidents or those who may have been aware of other information directly related to the complaint. The respondent may also include the names of witnesses. In addition, the Complaints Committee also has the discretion to call any person as a witness, who it believes, has something to contribute to the inquiry process.

##### 4. Supporting Documents

Obtain and review all supporting documents relevant to the complaint, including those presented by the complainant and the respondent.

258

5. Act Quickly

Create a plan. This can be used as an initial checklist to ensure that all of the critical elements are covered. It includes:

- a. The names of the parties and witnesses to be interviewed
- b. Any documentary support that needs to be examined
- c. Timeline

Preparing the Pre-Set Questions to Consider:

- 1. **Defining the Issues**
  - What is the complaint
  - Questions or points that require clarification
- 2. **Determining a violation of the Policy/Act**
  - What information is needed to determine that there has been a violation
- 3. **Logistics**
  - Venue for conducting the interviews. Are special logistics required
  - Creating timelines for each
- 4. **Critical Information**
  - What documents need to be looked at
  - Witnesses to be questioned and in what order
- 5. **Areas of Questioning**
  - Questions for each specific incident and party/witness
  - Questions for each particular issue
  - Issues likely to require follow-up

Step 7: Consideration

1. Interim Measures

While a complaint is pending inquiry, a complainant can make a written request for her transfer or the transfer of the respondent, or for leave (upto 3 months). She can also request the Complaints Committee to restrain the respondent from reporting on her work performance or writing her confidential report or supervising her academic activities (in case she is in educational institution). Even in the absence of such a request, the Complaints Committee must take corrective action. It is essential to take these actions in order to prevent potential ongoing sexual harassment.

2. Support

Maintain clear, timely communication with the parties throughout the process. Provide complainants with any specific assistance they may require, such as counselling, addressing health-related concerns or sanctioning of leave.

**Step 8: Prepare an Interview Plan for the Hearing: Complainant, Witnesses, Respondent**

1. Based on the results of the previous steps and before conducting interviews, the Complaints Committee should decide which issues need to be pursued for questioning.
2. Interviews are meant to obtain information that is relevant to the complaint from individuals.
3. Interviews should be conducted with each person separately and in confidence. The complainant and the respondent should not be brought face to face with each other.

The following table provides a summary of the key elements of an interview plan for the hearing.

<p><b>1. Introduction</b></p> <p>Questioning the parties and witnesses in a situation of workplace sexual harassment is a sensitive task. The Complaints Committee must therefore proceed with empathy, while appreciating at times, a different version of the facts.</p>	<p><b>2. Questioning</b></p> <p>Determine beforehand the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date, time, place and order of interviews</li> <li>• Questions and their order</li> <li>• Time for each interview</li> </ul> <p>Generally rely on questions related to who, what, where, when and how. Remember:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions ought to be clear and focused.</li> <li>• Obtain as much information as possible through the interview.</li> <li>• Do not share information gathered from other sources.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Choose an Appropriate Location</b></p> <p>To create trust, comfort and openness</p>	<p><b>4. Explain the Interview Process</b></p> <p>Explain how the interview will be conducted and what is expected</p>	<p><b>5. Records of the Interview</b></p> <p>Take notes and explain the need for a proper record</p>
<p><b>6. Manage the Interview</b></p> <p>The Chairperson of the Complaints Committee is responsible for ensuring the interviews are correctly carried out and the process followed.</p>	<p><b>7. Sign Statements</b></p> <p>At the conclusion of the interview, have those interviewed, sign and date statements made and recorded before the Complaints Committee</p>	

Handbook  
2020

**Step 9: Assess the Completeness of the Information Collected**

At this stage, the Complaints Committee should review the information gathered and their factual relevance to each aspect of the complaint. This will help determine whether there is enough information to make a finding on the complaint.

STAGE 10: REASONING

**Step 10:** Once the information and review is complete, the Complaints Committee will make its reasoned finding(s), which involves having to:-

- Identify the substance of each aspect of the complaint.
- Determine, whether or not, on a **balance of probability**, the unwelcome sexual harassment took place.
- Check that such behaviour/conduct falls within the definition of sexual harassment set out in the relevant Act/Rules, Policy, Service Rules or law.
- Comment on any underlying factor(s) that may have contributed to the incident.

**Step 11:** Create a timeline to help establish the sequence of events related to the complaint.

**Step 12:** Compare similarities and differences within each of the statements made by the interviewees.

STAGE 13: FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Step 13: Finding**

Based on the above, the Complaints Committee must arrive at a finding of whether the complaint is upheld, not upheld or inconclusive.

Provided, where both the parties are employees, before finalising the findings, the ICC/LCC shall share its finding with both the parties and provide them an opportunity to make representation against it before the Committee.

**Step 14: Recommendations**

Based on its findings, the Complaints Committee shall then make appropriate recommendations which may include:

1. Where the Complaints Committee is unable to uphold the complaint, it shall recommend no action.
2. Where the Complaints Committee upholds the Complaint, it may recommend such action as stated within the relevant Policy or Service Rules, which may include a warning to terminate.

in case service rules do not exist, recommended action may include:

- Disciplinary action, including a written apology, reprimand, warning, censure;
- Withholding promotion/ pay raise/ increment;
- Termination;
- Counselling;
- Community service.

3. The Complaints Committee may also recommend financial damages to the complainant, while deciding the amount they shall take into consideration:

- Mental trauma, pain, suffering and emotional distress caused;
- Medical expenses incurred;
- Loss of career opportunity;
- Income and financial status of the respondent.

If the amount is not paid it can be recovered as an arrear of land revenue.

4. The Complaints Committee can also give additional recommendations to address the underlying factors contributing to sexual harassment at the workplace.

#### Annexure - 1

##### Step 15: Writing the Report

The Complaints Committee will prepare a final report that contains the following elements:

- A description of the different aspects of the complaint;
- A description of the process followed;
- A description of the background information and documents that support or refute each aspect of the complaint;
- An analysis of the information obtained;
- Findings as stated above;
- Recommendation(s).

An inquiry must be completed within 90 days and a final report submitted to the Employer or District Officer (as the case may be) within ten days thereafter. Such report will also be made available to the concerned parties. The Employer or District Officer is obliged to act on the recommendations within 60 days. Any person not satisfied with the findings or recommendations of the Complaints Committee or non-implementation of the recommendations, may appeal in an appropriate forum or forum, as prescribed under the Service Rules or where no such service rules exist, in such manner as may be prescribed.



Given that most workspaces today are gender unequal and male-dominated, it is important that complaints by women be treated fairly and not dismissed. The mere inability to substantiate a complaint or provide adequate proof will not attract legal action against the complainant. However, making a false or malicious complaint or producing a forged or misleading document is an offence.

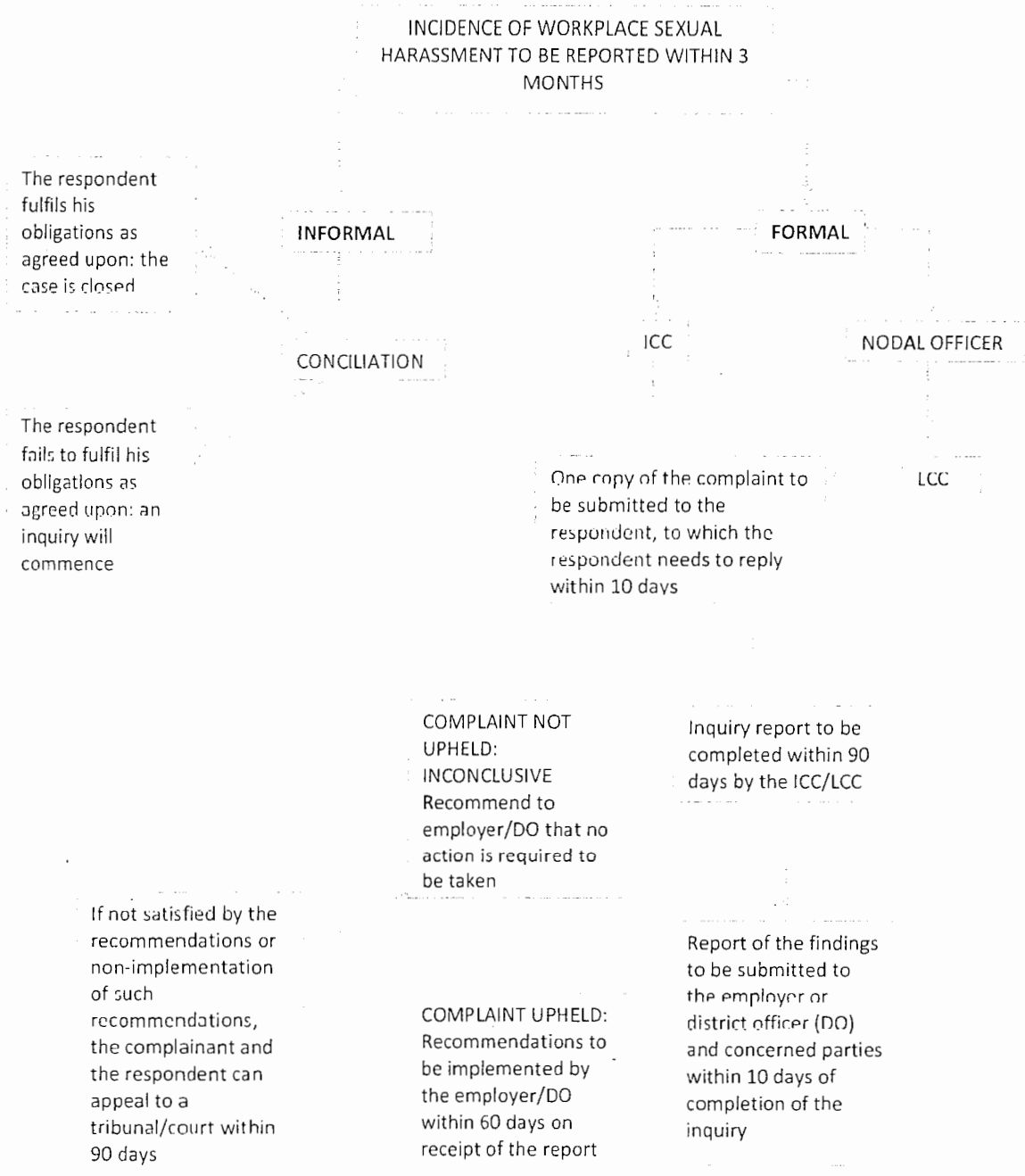
4.7.4. PROCEDURE

1) Complaints Investigation Checklist

- Review the written complaints and response to complaints
- Review the applicable policy, the Act/Rules, Vishaka Guidelines and other relevant laws
- Develop a plan
- Meet with the complainant
- Meet with the respondent
- Meet with the witnesses
- Record statements and have them dated and signed
- Review and adapt the plan, as needed
- Proceed with further interviews, as needed
- Analyze all the facts to develop reasoning
- Arrive at the findings
- Give recommendations
- Prepare the report
- Submit the file to the organization or District Officer for implementation of the recommendations and for safe keeping.



263









09  
09  
09  
09  
09  
09  
09  
09

10/10/2019 11:11 AM

"Child's eyes voting for all women"  
Whanoveri Devi

This section refers to ways in which application of the Act at all workplaces is monitored. Monitoring is a way to ensure compliance of the Act on the ground. As an additional means of monitoring, the Act mandates the submission of Annual Reports with specific information as well as specific consequences where compliance is lacking.

The Act authorizes Appropriate Government to monitor the implementation of the Act. As per the Act, Appropriate Government means:

- i. in relation to a workplace which is established, owned, controlled or wholly or substantially financed by funds provided directly or indirectly:
  - a. By the Central Government or the Union Territory Administration, the Central Government;
  - b. By the State Government, the State Government;
- ii. In relation to any workplace not covered under sub-clause (i) and falling within its territory, the State Government;

Thus to monitor the Act, the Appropriate Government has the authority to undertake any of the following measures:

In relation to workplace sexual harassment, when it is in the public interest or in the interest of women employees, every employer/District Officer can be ordered by the Appropriate Government i.e. State and Central Government, to make available any information, record or document, including opening of workplace for inspection relating to the same.

The Appropriate Government is entrusted with the monitoring of the implementation of this Act and for maintaining the data on the number of cases filed and disposed of under it. In particular, the Act mandates submission of an Annual Report by the ICC/LCC to the employer/District Officer.

266

The District Officer will forward a brief report on the annual reports to the appropriate State Government. Such reports must include the following information:

- a. No. of complaints received;
- b. No. of complaints disposed of;
- c. No. of cases pending for more than 90 days;
- d. No. of workshops/awareness programmes carried out;
- e. Nature of action taken by the employer/DO;

The Report of ICC will be forwarded to the DO through the employer.

#### *Penalties*

An employer can be subjected to a penalty of up to INR 50,000 for:

- Failure to constitute Internal Complaints Committee
- Failure to act upon recommendations of the Complaints Committee; or
- Failure to file an annual report to the District Officer where required; or
- Contravening or attempting to contravene or abetting contravention of the Act or Rules.

Where an employer repeats a breach under the Act, they shall be subject to:

- Twice the punishment or higher punishment if prescribed under any other law for the same offence.
- Cancellation/Withdrawal/Non-renewal of registration/license required for carrying on business or activities.

Monitoring is a critical yardstick to measure success in terms of compliance with the Act. Additionally, it highlights those areas, in terms of law and practice, which may require improvement and/or additional information and guidance at both the State as well as the workplace levels.

\$11



## International standards on workplace sexual harassment

Increasing awareness and compliance with international standards is a reminder that we must not lose sight of the goal. Over the years, the international community has developed benchmarks that provide guidance on what the laws around workplace sexual harassment should look like in practice. The key benchmarks are listed below:

1. Recognition that workplace sexual harassment is a form of human rights violation.<sup>1</sup>
2. Recognition that sexual harassment is a form of gender-specific violence.<sup>2</sup>
3. Equality, dignity and worth of a human person must be emphasized.
4. Gender-based violence includes sexual harassment and impairs the enjoyment by women of several basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.<sup>3</sup> Some of these rights include:
  - The right to life, the right to liberty and security of the person.
  - The right to equal protection under the law.
  - The right to the highest standard attainable of physical and mental health.
  - The right to just and favourable conditions of work.<sup>4</sup>
5. Eliminating violence against women and advancing women's equality includes the right to be free from workplace sexual harassment.<sup>5</sup>
6. Legislation on violence against women should define violence to include sexual harassment. Such legislation should also recognize sexual harassment as a form of discrimination and a violation of women's rights with health and safety consequences.<sup>6</sup>
7. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has also drawn specific attention to domestic workers, who have a right to "enjoy effective protection against all forms of abuse, harassment and violence."<sup>7</sup>

In terms of practice, international law and policy frameworks have an important role to play in encouraging the adoption of an understanding of sexual harassment as a fundamental human right and equality issue, and not just a problem for labour/employment law to solve.

Translating these concepts into practice involves constant monitoring and adapting to changing circumstances. As a start, six simple steps to keep in mind and practice in any workplace should include the following:

269



1. Make sure there is a policy that has been “effectively” communicated to all workers, irrespective of whether they are paid or volunteers.
2. Display details of both informal and formal ways available to a worker to address/complain about workplace sexual harassment.
3. Undertake orientation on workplace sexual harassment for all workers in respective organizations, establishments or institutions.
4. A Complaints Committee which is trained in terms of skill and capacity is critical for building trust.
5. Encourage senior persons/leaders/supervisors or any person who can influence employment-related decisions, to become role models.
6. Men and women should be included in building a culture which no longer tolerates workplace sexual harassment.

Legally, workplace sexual harassment can no longer be dismissed as some moral transgression. The Vishaka Guidelines raised that bar, when for the first time it recognized “each incident of sexual harassment” as a violation of the fundamental right to equality. That notion has found its way into the Act, which promotes the right of women as citizens to a workplace free of sexual harassment. Complaints Committees at all workplaces are now charged with the role to ensure that the right remains intact, through a fair, informed, user-friendly process of redress.

Prioritising prevention and establishing a redress mechanism, which comprises of 50 per cent women, a woman chair and an external third party expert, is India’s innovative model in responding to working women’s experience of sexual harassment. Assuming adequate changes follow, in both law and practice to meet global benchmarks, that model can evolve into an exemplary best practice. To get there, workplaces in India today, must rise to the requirement of promoting gender equality.

<sup>1</sup> General Recommendation 12 of 1989, Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

<sup>2</sup> General Recommendation 19 of 1992, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

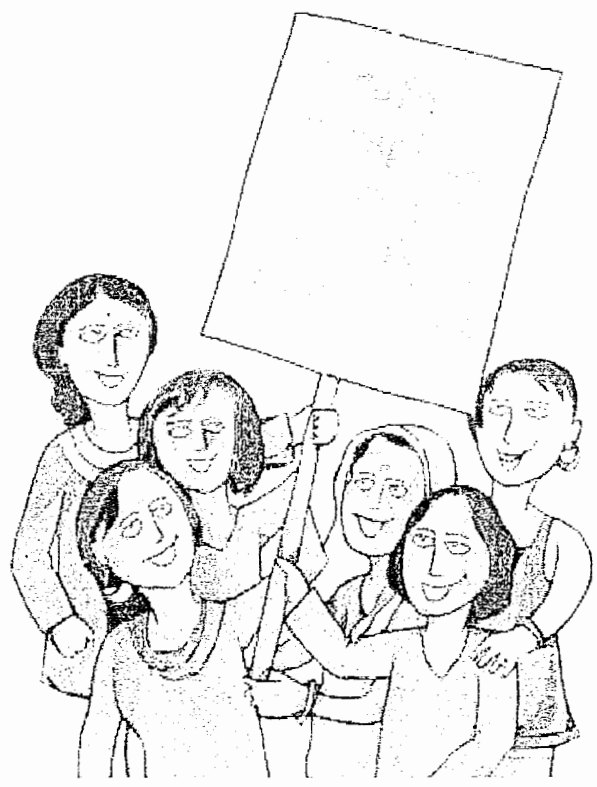
<sup>4</sup> Article 3, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> The Beijing Platform of Action drawn at the United Nations’ Women’s conference in Beijing in 1995.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations’ The Division for the Advancement of Women *Handbook for Legislation on Violence Against Women* (UN Handbook).

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/handbook/handbook%20for%20legislation%20on%20violence%20against%20women.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Article 2, ILO Domestic Work for Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).



270



Towards a new dawn

Government of India  
Ministry of Women and Child Development

No.13016/5/2015-WW  
Government of India  
Ministry of Women & Child Development  
(Women Welfare Division)

---

**Recommended Panel of Institutes/Organizations for imparting training programmes/workshop under Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**

1.1 Government of India has enacted the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (hereinafter referred to as the Act) to ensure safe and secure environment to women at the workplace.

1.2 The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) focuses on "women living with dignity and contributing as equal partners towards the development of the country in an environment free from violence." The broad mandate of the Ministry is to have holistic development of women and children. The Ministry formulates plans, policies and programmes; enacts/amends legislation, guides and coordinates the efforts of both governmental and non-governmental organizations working in the field of Women and Child Development.

1.3 In order to create wide spread awareness about the Act across the country, MWCD being the nodal Ministry for the advancement of women has identified a pool of resource institutions willing to provide training on the Act. These institutes/organizations/companies have been selected from a large number of applications received from various organization/institutes/companies conducting training programmes/workshops on women rights or on the Act in different part of India. The list of institutes/organizations/companies empanelled for providing training under the Act is as follows:

1. Accounts and Administrative Training Institute, Gangtok, Sikkim
2. Adarsh Saraswati Shiksha Samiti, Sonapat, Haryana
3. All India Minority Welfare Action Group, Chowk, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
4. Athencottasan Muthamizh Kazhagam, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu
5. Civil Rights Awareness Mission, Chandauli, Uttar Pradesh
6. Cosmopolitan Plus, New Delhi
7. C-Quel Management Services Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata, West Bengal
8. Department of Women's Studies, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
9. Department of Women's Studies, UCG Women's Studies Centre, Patna University, Patna, Bihar
10. Dr. MCR Human Resource Development Institute, Hyderabad, Telangana
11. Harijan Adivashi Mahila Kalyan Samiti (HAK), Munger, Bihar
12. Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh
13. Independent Thought (iThought), Noida, Uttar Pradesh
14. J&K Institute of Management Public Administration & Rural Development, MA Road, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir
15. Jeevan Prakash, Delhi
16. Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan, Kutch, Gujarat
17. Mahila Janswasthya Shishu Kalyan Kendra, Bokaro, Jharkhand
18. Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology, Allahabad, UP
19. Morning Glory Public Society, Rewari, Haryana
20. M/s Legal Intellectuals, New Delhi
21. Pondicherry State Social Welfare Board, Puducherry

- 232
22. POSH at Work, Mumbai, Maharashtra
  23. POSHCA, Gurgaon, Haryana
  24. Project Concern Organization, Delhi
  25. Regional Centre for Urban & Environmental Studies, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
  26. Santulan EAP, New Delhi
  27. Saraswati Educational Society, Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh
  28. Shri Sai Educational and Welfare Association, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh
  29. South Vihar Welfare Society for Tribal (SHRAY), Ranchi, Jharkhand


1.4 The above mentioned Institutes/Organizations/companies are empanelled for one year from the date of issuance of this notification that is 16.02.2017. The contact details of the empanelled Institutes/organizations/companies are at **Annexure-I**. The empanelled Institutes/Organizations will abide by following stipulations:

- (a) That the empanelled Institutes /organization/company's name and contact details will be displayed on MWCD's website as an Institutes/organization willing to provide training on the Act;
- (b) That the empanelled institute/organization/company will provide a quarterly report (i.e. by 15<sup>th</sup> April, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 15<sup>th</sup> January) to MWCD having following details:
  - (i). Number of training programmes/workshops provided;
  - (ii). Date and period of each and every training/workshop and name of the organizations for which it was conducted;
  - (iii). Number of the participants attending each training programme/workshop;
  - (iv). Name and details of Resource Persons (for each training/workshop separately) conducting training/workshops;
  - (v). Photographs of each and every training programme/workshop.

The information so received under sub-clause (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v) of clause (b) will be published on the MWCD's website.

- (c) Six months after the publication of the list, MWCD may assess the capacity building initiatives undertaken by the empanelled Institutes/organizations/company on the basis of information submitted in the quarterly report.
- (d) The empanelled Institutes/organizations are free to negotiate the financial arrangements with the Institutes/organizations requesting training program/workshop on the Act.

1.5 The empanelment of an Institutes/organization/company for providing training programmes/workshops on the Act by MWCD does not in any way vouch for the veracity of the empanelled Institutes/organization/company. The organizations availing empanelled Institutes /organization/company's services for conducting training programmes/workshops are encouraged to conduct a background check to verify their antecedents.



(M. K. Prabhat)

Under Secretary to the Government of India,  
Ministry of Women and Child Development  
Government of India  
A-Wing, Room No.313,  
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001  
Tel. : 011-23381970

Dated : 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2017



**Annexure-I**

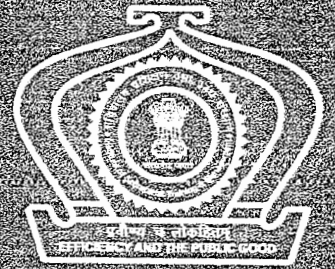
S. No.	Organization Name	Address	Contact Detail
1	Accounts & Administrative Training Institute Department of Personnel, ADM. Reforms & Training Government of Sikkim	Sonam Tshering Marg, Gangtok, Sikkim-737101	Phone: +91-3592-202347/203715(O) Fax: +91-03592-202347 Email id: <a href="mailto:aatisikkim2015@gmail.com">aatisikkim2015@gmail.com</a>
2	Adarsh Saraswati Shiksha Samiti, Haryana	Sant Garib Nagar, Gali No.2, Kakroi Road,, Sonipat-131001 Haryana	Mob: (+91) 9416014026 Fax: 0130-2244440 Email Id: <a href="mailto:myindiaa@gmail.com">myindiaa@gmail.com</a>
3	All India Minority Welfare Action Group, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	215/6, kha Subhash Marg, P.O-Chowk, Luknow-3, Uttar Pradesh	Mob: (+91) 09450916309 0522-4104110 Fax No: 0522-2391168 Email Id: <a href="mailto:aimwagroup@gmail.com">aimwagroup@gmail.com</a>
4	Athencottasan Muthamizh Kazhagam, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu	7-46 B, Naduvoorkarai Road, Mondaikadu-629252, Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu	Phon: 04651-222356, 223382 Email id: <a href="mailto:amkcentre@gmail.com">amkcentre@gmail.com</a> , <a href="mailto:amkhospital@yahoo.com">amkhospital@yahoo.com</a> Mobile: 9444691456, 9566406556
5	Civil Rights Awareness Mission, Chandauli, Uttar Pradesh	Tapeshwari Kuteer, Nai Basti Mahmoodpur Mughal Sarai, Dist. Chandauli(UP)	Phon: 9839170195 Email id: <a href="mailto:cramindia@rediffmail.com">cramindia@rediffmail.com</a>
6	Cosmopolitan Plus, New Delhi	1255, Gautampuri Phase-1, Badarpur, New Delhi-110044	Mobile: 9811054440, 9873764440 Tele Phone Number: 011-40571643 Email id: <a href="mailto:cosmoplus902@gmail.com">cosmoplus902@gmail.com</a>
7	C-Quel Management Services Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata, West Bengal	PS Srijan Corporate Park, Unit No. VIII, Tower-1, 13 <sup>th</sup> Floor, G-2, Block EP & GP, Salt Lake, Sector V, Kolkata-700091	Mobile: 9830119000, 9830028234 Fax: 033-4062260 Email Id: <a href="mailto:info@cquel.com">info@cquel.com</a>
8	Department of Women's Studies, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu	Department of Women's Studies, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore-641046, Tamil Nadu	Mob: 9942930137 Fax: 0422-2425706 Email id: <a href="mailto:kmangaiapdws@buc.edu.in">kmangaiapdws@buc.edu.in</a> <a href="mailto:mangayarkarasik@yahoo.com">mangayarkarasik@yahoo.com</a>
9	Dr. MCR Human Resource Development Institute, Government of Telangana	Jublee Hills, Road No. 25, Hyderabad-500033	Mob: 09391049802 Fax: 23557584 Email Id: <a href="mailto:valathai@gmail.com">valathai@gmail.com</a>
10	Department of Women's Studies (UGC Women's studies Centre), Patna University, Patna, Bihar	Department of Women's Studies, SAP Building Darbhanga House Patna University, Ashok Raj Path Patna-800005	Tele Phone Number: (+91) 9771459859 9334961738 Email Id: <a href="mailto:padmalatathakur@yahoo.com">padmalatathakur@yahoo.com</a>
11	Harijan Adivashi Mahila Kalyan Samiti (HAK), Munger, Bihar	Veer Kunwar Singh Colony Dalhatta Bazar, Munger-811201, Bihar	Phon: 06344-224489, 09430669235, 07782054711 Email id: <a href="mailto:harijanadivashi@rediffmail.com">harijanadivashi@rediffmail.com</a>
12	Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh	P.O. Shakrah, Sub-Tehsil Dhami, District Shimla, Himachal Pradesh-171011	Tele Phone Number: (+91) 01772779802/803 Fax No: 01772779802 Email Id: <a href="mailto:scrainaclc@gmail.com">scrainaclc@gmail.com</a>
13	Independent Thought (iThought), Noida, Uttar Pradesh	E-52, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Sector-20, Noida-201301 Delhi NCR	Phon: 0120-4340451, 09971384994, 09971884900 Email id: <a href="mailto:admin@ithought.in">admin@ithought.in</a> <a href="mailto:vikram.ithought@gmail.com">vikram.ithought@gmail.com</a>
14	J&K Institute of Management Public Administration & Rural Development, Jammu & Kashmir	MA Road, Srinagar-190001, Jammu & Kashmir	Tele Phone Number: (+91) 9419448083 Fax No: 0194-2472825 Email Id: <a href="mailto:bjalccas@gmail.com">bjalccas@gmail.com</a>
15	Jeevan Prakash, Delhi	F-2/215, Sector-16, Rohini, Delhi-110085	Phon: 01147060508 Email id: <a href="mailto:jpacs2004@yahoo.com">jpacs2004@yahoo.com</a> Mobile: 9711324916, 9711711594
16	Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan,	36, Banker's Colony,	Phon: 02832-222124, 22311

	Kutch, Gujarat	Aiya Apartment Street, Nr. Gate No.1, Bhuj-Kutch, Kutch, 370001, District: Kutch, Gujarat	Email Id: <a href="mailto:kmyskutch@gmail.com">kmyskutch@gmail.com</a> Mobile: 9426921526, 9825306398
17	Mahila Janswashya Shishu Kalyan Kendra, Bokaro, Jharkhand	H.O-Shri R.N Singh, Kailash Nagar, Chas, Dist- Bokaro, 827013, Jharkhand	Phon: 9431743764, 7250795943 Email id: <a href="mailto:majshikk@gmail.com">majshikk@gmail.com</a> , <a href="mailto:sourabhvinod@gmail.com">sourabhvinod@gmail.com</a>
18	Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh	Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, PIN-211004	Tele Phone Number: (+91) 94150-14473 0532-2545190/2271102 Fax No: 0532-2545341/ 2545677 Email Id: <a href="mailto:director@mnnit.ac.in">director@mnnit.ac.in</a> , <a href="mailto:wqc@mnnit.ac.in">wqc@mnnit.ac.in</a>
19	Morning Glory Public Society, Rewari, Haryana	H.No. 103, Gali No. 5 Shakti Nagar, Rewari, Haryana	Phon: 09416576111 Email id: <a href="mailto:sal.r.mgps@gmail.com">sal.r.mgps@gmail.com</a> , <a href="mailto:mgps_sal@yahoo.co.in">mgps_sal@yahoo.co.in</a> Tele Phone Number: 08607051100
20	M/s Legal Intellects, New Delhi	32/5, Lower Ground Floor, Old Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi-110060	Mobile: 9953821105, 011-41444555 Email id: <a href="mailto:legalintellects@yahoo.com">legalintellects@yahoo.com</a>
21	Pondicherry State Social Welfare Board, Puducherry	No. 26, III Cross, Shanthi Nagar, Puducherry-605011	Phon: 0413-2245264 Fax No: 0413-2247074, Email Id: <a href="mailto:pondicherrysswboard@yahoo.co.in">pondicherrysswboard@yahoo.co.in</a>
22	POSH at Work, Mumbai, Maharashtra	Flat No. 8, Milan, 15 <sup>th</sup> Road, Khar West, Mumbai-400052	Phon: 09004521614, 09004099796, 09819897851, 09664946599 Email id: <a href="mailto:contact@poshatwork.com">contact@poshatwork.com</a>
23	POSHCA, Gurgaon, Haryana	H-34, GF, Residency Greens, Greenwoods City, Sector-46, Gurgaon-122003, Haryana	Phon: 9891091166 Email id: <a href="mailto:info@poshca.in">info@poshca.in</a> & <a href="mailto:surabhi@poshca.in">surabhi@poshca.in</a>
24	Project Concern Organization, Delhi	D-66, Old Seemapuri, Shahdara, Delhi-110095	Phon: 08826879700/9540252479 Email id: <a href="mailto:projectconcern@gmail.com">projectconcern@gmail.com</a>
25	Regional Centre for Urban & Environmental Studies, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	Adjacent Registrar's office, University of Lucknow-226007, Uttar Pradesh	Mob: (+91) 7839470399 9044319979 Tele Phone Number: 0522-2740108, Fax: 2740165 Email Id: <a href="mailto:ad.rcueslko@gmail.com">ad.rcueslko@gmail.com</a>
26	Santulan EAP, New Delhi	F 60, Bali Nagar Near Ramesh Nagar Metro Station, New Delhi-110015	Phon: 011-25913469, Email id: <a href="mailto:connect@santulan.co.in">connect@santulan.co.in</a> Mobile: 9873807160, 9810208575
27	Saraswati Educational Society, Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh	V. & P.O- Harthala Sonakpur, Distt. - Moradabad(U.P) 244001	Phon:09412240596 Tele Phone Number: 0591-2951396 Fax: 0591-2451296 Email Id: <a href="mailto:saraswatieducational96@gmail.com">saraswatieducational96@gmail.com</a>
28	Shri Sai Educational and Welfare Association, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh	H.O. 376/1, Mohan Makine Society, Sector-5, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad-201012	Phon: 9971521133, Tele Phone Number 0120-4561173, Email id: <a href="mailto:ssewa.ngo@gmail.com">ssewa.ngo@gmail.com</a>
29	South Vihar Welfare Society for Tribal (SHRAY), Ranchi, Jharkhand	H.No. 134, Khunti Bhawan, South Office para, Daranda, Ranchi-834002, Jharkhand	Phon: 0651-2413084, 08603706996 Email id: <a href="mailto:svwst.ranchi@gmail.com">svwst.ranchi@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:svwst@svwst.org">svwst@svwst.org</a>

---



सत्यमेव जयते



## TRAINING MODULE

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL) ACT, 2013

INSTITUTE OF SECRETARIAT TRAINING & MANAGEMENT  
(AN ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED INSTITUTION)  
MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSION  
(DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL & TRAINING)  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



नए समाज की ओर  
Towards a new dawn



In collaboration with  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT, GoI



11/276

**TRAINING MODULE**  
**SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE**  
**(PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL) ACT, 2013**



**INSTITUTE OF SECRETARIAT TRAINING & MANAGEMENT**

(AN ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED INSTITUTION)

Ministry of Personnel Public Grievances & Pension  
(Department of Personnel & Training)  
Government of India

In collaboration with  
Ministry of Women and Child Development, GoI



सत्यमेव जयते

मेनका संजय गांधी  
*Maneka Sanjay Gandhi*



मंत्रि  
महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय  
भारत सरकार  
नई दिल्ली-110001  
MINISTER

MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI-110001

### MESSAGE

The Government of India is the largest employer in the country employing 30.87 lakh people to carry out its various functions. As per the Census of Central Government employees, 2011, women constitute 10.93% (3.37 lakhs) of the total regular Central Government employees.

To ensure safety and security of women at workplace, the Government of India has enacted the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. The Act aims to uphold the fundamental right of equality guaranteed under Article 14 and 15 of the Indian Constitution, right to live with dignity under Article 21 and right to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business which includes a right to a safe working environment free from sexual harassment.

The Act covers all women, irrespective of their age or employment status and protect them against sexual harassment at all workplaces both in public and private sector, whether organized or unorganized. The domestic workers are also included under the ambit of the Act.

Hence, in order to ensure the effective implementation of the Act, the Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) and Institute of Secretariat Training and Management (ISTM), New Delhi has developed a training module for the training of Complaints Committee members constituted in various Central Ministries and Departments. The Training Module provides guidance with regard to the steps to be undertaken and processes to be followed in line with the requirement of the law while conducting inquiry of any complaint related to workplace sexual harassment.

We hope that private organizations will also use this training module for conducting capacity building and awareness generation programmes after customizing the same as per their extant service rules.

*Maneka Sanjay Gandhi*  
(Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi)

कृष्णा राज  
KRISHNA RAJ



सत्यमेव जयते

राज्य मंत्री  
महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय  
भारत सरकार  
नई दिल्ली-110001  
MINISTER OF STATE  
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI-110001

कार्यस्थल पर यौन उत्पीड़न महिलाओं की लैंगिक समानता, जीवन तथा स्वतंत्रता के अधिकार का उल्लंघन है। इससे कार्यस्थल पर असुरक्षित तथा प्रतिकूल माहौल पैदा होता है जिससे महिलाओं की कार्य में भागीदारी हतोत्साहित होती है। कार्यस्थल पर महिलाओं की सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करने के लिए, भारत सरकार ने महिलाओं का कार्यस्थल पर लैंगिक (निवारण, प्रतिषेध और प्रतितोष) अधिनियम, 2013 अधिनियमित किया है।

इस अधिनियम के प्रभावी क्रियान्वयन सुनिश्चित करने के लिए, महिला एवं बाल विकास तथा सचिवालय प्रशिक्षण और प्रबंधन संस्थान (आईएसटीएम), मंत्रालय कार्मिक और प्रशिक्षण विभाग (डीओपीटी) और नई दिल्ली के सहयोग से एक प्रशिक्षण मॉड्यूल विकसित किया गया है। यह प्रशिक्षण मॉड्यूल केंद्रीय सरकार के विभिन्न मंत्रालयों और विभागों में काम कर रही आंतरिक शिकायत समिति के सदस्यों को उपयोगी जानकारी प्रदान करता है तथा कार्यस्थल पर होने वाली यौन उत्पीड़न से संबंधित किसी भी शिकायत की जांच करने के दौरान लिये जाने वाले चरणों के संबंध में मार्गदर्शन प्रदान करता है।

मुझे महिलाओं का कार्यस्थल पर लैंगिक (निवारण, प्रतिषेध और प्रतितोष) अधिनियम, 2013 पर आधारित इस प्रशिक्षण मॉड्यूल को साझा करते हुए बड़ी प्रसन्नता हो रही है तथा मुझे विश्वास है कि यह प्रशिक्षण मॉड्यूल शिकायत समिति के सदस्यों की क्षमता बढ़ाने में बेहद उपयोगी होगा तथा कार्यस्थल पर होने वाले यौन उत्पीड़न के मामलों की सही जांच प्रक्रिया को अपनाने में मदद करेगा।

(कृष्णा राज)

कार्यालय : कमरा नं. 756, 'ए' विंग, शास्त्री भवन, डा. राजेन्द्र प्रसाद रोड, नई दिल्ली-110 001, दूरभाष : 23382361-63, फैक्स : 23070704  
Off. : Room No. 756, 'A' Wing, Shastri Bhavan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi-110 001, Tel. : 011-23382361-63, Fax. : 011-23070704  
निवास : 404, कावेंरी अपार्टमेंट, डा. विशम्भर दास मार्ग, नई दिल्ली, दूरभाष : 23721834, ई-मेल : mos-mwcd@gov.in  
Resi. : 404 Kavan Apartment, Dr. B.D. Road New Delhi-110001, Tel. : 011- 23721834, E-mail : mos-mwcd@gov.in

लीना नायर  
Leena Nair



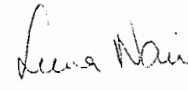
सचिव  
भारत सरकार  
महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय  
शास्त्री भवन, नई दिल्ली - 110001  
Secretary  
Government of India  
Ministry of Women & Child Development  
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001  
Website : <http://www.wcd.nic.in>

#### MESSAGE

I am pleased to share with you this Training Module on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. It provides useful information to Internal Complaint Committee members and other employees working across Ministries and Departments of Central Government with regard to the provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 as well as guide them towards the correct procedure to be adopted for conducting inquiries in cases of violation as prescribed under the service rules.

Sexual harassment at the workplace is a universal problem and India is now a part of the countries who had prohibited sexual harassment at workplace through the enactment of national legislation. This Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 is unique in nature as for the first time it recognises workplace sexual harassment as an infringement of women's fundamental rights as provided under Indian Constitution.

I am sure that this training module will be extremely useful in building capacities of ICC members which in turn will help them to adopt the correct inquiry procedures while conducting inquiry in cases of workplace sexual harassment.

  
(Leena Nair)

---

Shastri Bhawan, Dr. Rajender Prasad Road, New Delhi-110001  
Tel. : 011-23383586 Fax : 011-23381495 E-mail : [secy.wcd@nic.in](mailto:secy.wcd@nic.in)

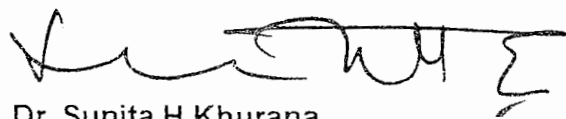
28

## PREFACE

Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and the subsequent Rules have been framed and put to operations on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2013. However, the effective use of this legislation is possible only through awareness generations among the masses. A large chunk of Government work force is still in the dark about the provisions and effectiveness of the statute.

Training intervention is the first step to make all employees aware about the salient features of this Act and various provisions. The promulgation of the Act itself is not panacea to solve the problem of sexual harassment at workplace but having information and knowledge about it is certainly an empowering instrument. There are not many organizations who have the capacity to conduct quality training programme covering topics as varied as rights of the victims at one end and duties of representatives of employer while processing subject complaints – on the other. HR Managers also need to be trained to be responsible for sensitizing all the employees about the fine line between healthy mixing of colleagues of different sexes and the behaviour amounting to sexual harassment. ISTM has been conducting Gender Sensitization programmes for a long time. This time, the focus is on the specific issue of sexual harassment at workplace – its prevention and redressal of complaints if it happens.

I would like to convey my sincere thanks to Ms. Risha Syed, Legal Consultant, Ministry of WCD, Ms. Anju Pandey, UN Women India, Mr. M.S. Kasana, Retd. Joint Director (ISTM), Dr. L.R. Aggarwal, Retd. Director, Government of India, and others for their contribution and valuable input in the development of this training module.



Dr. Sunita H Khurana

Director, ISTM



281  
(1/3)

**TWO DAYS WORKSHOP ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE  
(PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL) ACT, 2013**

---

**AIM:**

To equip the government officers with knowledge on the subject to prevent sexual harassment and develop in them professional competence for implementation of the statute i.e. the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

**OBJECTIVES:**

Participants will be able to list out / describe / define:

1. Gender Issues
2. Gender Discrimination
3. Sexual Harassment
4. Workplace
5. Related Judicial Pronouncements
6. Recommendations of Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee
7. Provisions of the Act
8. Constitution of Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)
9. Duties and Roles of ICC Presiding Officer / Member
10. Third Party Harassment
11. Role of an Employer
12. Preventive Policies (organization)
13. Organizational Best Practices
14. Conduct and Service Rules
15. Steps to Conduct Inquiry

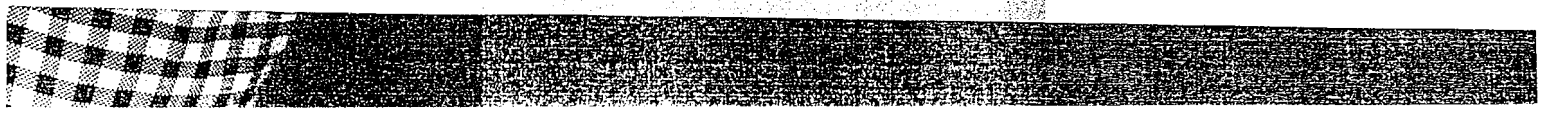
202

### SESSION PLAN

Day I Forenoon (3 Sessions)	9.15 am to 10.30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration, Inauguration Introduction</li> <li>Workshop overview and expectation sharing</li> </ul>	*
	<b>TEA BREAK 10.30 AM TO 10.45 AM</b>		
	SESSION - II 10.45 am to 12.00 noon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender Issues including Gender Discrimination</li> <li>Sexual Harassment and Gender Discrimination</li> <li>Dimensions and types of SHWP</li> <li>Concept and importance of prevention of SHWP</li> </ul>	
	SESSION - III 12.15 pm to 1.30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vishaka Guidelines and other important judicial pronouncements</li> </ul>	*
	<b>LUNCH BREAK 1.30 PM TO 2.30 PM</b>		
Afternoon (2 Sessions)	SESSION - IV 2.30 pm to 3.30 pm	SHWP (PPR) Act, 2013	*
	<b>TEA BREAK 3.30 PM TO 3.45 PM</b>		
	SESSION - V 3.45 pm to 4.45 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SHWP (PPR) Act, 2013 (contd.)</li> <li>Relevant provisions in the Act (with or without Service Rules)</li> <li>Fair Procedure</li> </ul>	*
Day II Forenoon (3 Sessions)	SESSION - I 9.15 am to 10.30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SHWP Act, 2013 in the light of Service and Conduct Rules</li> </ul>	*
	<b>TEA BREAK 11.00 AM TO 11.30 AM</b>		
	SESSIONS- II & III 10.45 am to 1.30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medha Kotwal Lele case - implications</li> <li>Steps to conduct inquiry as per DoPT OM No.11013 2 2014 Estt (A-III) dated 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2015 and other subsequent decisions</li> </ul>	
	<b>LUNCH BREAK 1.30 PM TO 2.30 PM</b>		
	Afternoon (2 Sessions)	SESSION - IV 2.30 pm to 3.30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mock Inquiry Session of ICC</li> </ul>
<b>TEA BREAK 3.45 PM TO 4.45 PM</b>			
SESSION - V 3.45 pm to 5.30 pm		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mock Inquiry Session of ICC</li> <li>Valediction</li> </ul>	* faculty to be decided on programme to programme basis

283

# DAY 1



## DAY 1 – SESSION 1

REGISTRATION	REGISTRATION OF TRAINEES AND DISTRIBUTION OF KITS
SESSION 1	Introductory Session: Welcome and Introduction to the Course
INTRODUCTORY SESSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Welcome the Trainees</li> <li>◆ Introductory address by Director, ISTM</li> <li>◆ Briefing on objectives, schedule and activities</li> <li>◆ Self introduction and expectation sharing by trainees</li> <li>◆ Briefing on trainers' expectations</li> </ul>
ICE-BREAKING EXERCISE	Ice-breaking exercise / games
DURATION	75 minutes
TRAINING METHOD & MATERIAL	Self-information dissemination, pen and paper, pre-written flip-charts, material for ice-breaking exercise
LEARNING OUTCOME	The trainees will be able to describe the objectives of the course

### ICE BREAKING EXERCISE

#### Pre-training activity for Trainers

- Get catch words relating to each of the objectives of the Course printed in bold big font capital letters on hard A4 size colour sheets (use four light colours: yellow, pink, blue and green)
- Cut each of the sheets diagonally to get two halves of triangular shape, with incomplete writings on them.
- Mix all such triangular halves in a box together.
- Make sure, there are as many halves as number of trainees – if their number is odd, keep one half for you.

#### Activity

- Request each of the trainees to come and pick up one triangular half randomly from the box.
- Ask them to look for their respective partners having the matching triangular half.
- Once they find their partners, give them two minutes to know each other.
- Request them to come forward in pair and introduce the partner and show the objective.
- All with same colour will form a group – thus there will be four groups who will sit together.

# UNIT 1 - SEXUAL HARASSMENT

<b>SESSION 2</b>	<b>SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE IS A FORM OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION</b>
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	To understand the concept of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, workplace and two basic types of sexual harassment at workplace and how it is related to gender discrimination
<b>CONTENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Gender role perceptions / stereotypes</li> <li>• Gender discrimination</li> <li>• Harassment per se</li> <li>• Sexual Harassment</li> <li>• Quid Pro Quo and Hostile Environment</li> <li>• How Sexual Harassment at Workplace is a form of Gender discrimination</li> <li>• Two fold benefit of organizations in avoiding such discriminations</li> <li>• Watch an incident and tell whether it's a case of sexual harassment</li> <li>• Impact is more important than intent</li> </ul>
<b>DURATION</b>	75 minutes
<b>TRAINING METHOD &amp; MATERIAL</b>	Lecture cum discussion, Video clips "Aab Khamoshi Kyun?" Group exercise to decide whether there was an instance of Sexual harassment at work place in the incident depicted, if yes, what type was it. Each group has to present their views in plenary. Debriefing to establish that impact is more important than intent. Group discussion on why organizations should take steps to avoid sexual harassment at work place
<b>LEARNING OUT-COME</b>	<p>The trainees will be able to describe:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is SHWP?</li> <li>• What are types SHWP and identify them in a given situation and</li> <li>• How organizations are benefitted avoiding SHWP?</li> </ul>



## MATERIAL FOR DAY-1 SESSION-2

### Gender Concepts

**Sex:** The biological difference between men and women, boys and girls—the physical attributes with which we are born.

**Gender:** Culturally and socially constructed roles, responsibilities, privileges, relations and expectations of women, men, boys and girls. Gender is not another word for women. Gender is also not another word for sexual difference.

**Gender roles:** The different tasks and responsibilities and expectations that society defines and allocates to men, women, boys and girls. These are not necessarily determined by biological differences and therefore can change with time and in different situations.

**Gender bias:** An approach that treats boys and girls differently. For instance differential treatment seeking behaviour in case of illness.

**Gender equity:** An approach that results in just/ fair treatment of women and men, and recognition and appreciation of both women's and men's potential. For instance giving bicycles to girls to enable them to travel to a distant school and thereby reduce gender gaps in the drop-out rate.

**Gender mainstreaming:** The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.

**Gender neutral:** An approach to planning and policy making that assumes that the impact on women, men, girls and boys as if they were part of one homogeneous group. For instance, although men are usually taller than women, fixing the height of the podium in conference halls on the basis of the height of men.

**Practical gender needs:** Needs which are related to satisfying basic and material needs of women and men, girls and boys for their day-to-day survival, and which do not change gender patterns. For instance public provisioning of water inside the home or providing access to creche facilities at the workplace.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India

**Strategic gender needs:** Needs that are related to changing the situation of marginalised people especially women. Strategic needs may include training women to become Mates at MGNREGA work sites or giving registering land in the name of women and men as with joint *pattas* or addressing issues of domestic violence, legal rights, equal wages, and women's control over resources.

**Gender gap:** Differences between men and women in levels of achievement or access. This could for example be access to education or health care and treatment services or differentials in wages paid to women and men. These differentials may result from customary practices, religious biases, social assumption, myths or taboos, among others. **Gender discrimination:** Where one gender is favoured and the other becomes disadvantaged e.g. sex selective abortion. **Gender oppression:** Where one gender dominates the other unjustly or even cruelly. For instance, domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment.

**Gender stereotyping:** The assignment of roles, tasks and responsibilities to a particular gender on the basis of preconceived prejudices. For instance the assumption that masons can only be men or that nurses are necessarily women.

**A note on third gender:** Transgender (TG) is generally described as an umbrella term for persons whose gender identity, gender expression or behavior does not conform to their biological sex. TG may also take in persons who do not identify with their sex assigned at birth, which include Hijras/Eunuchs who describe themselves as "third gender" and they do not identify as either male or female. Hijras are not men by virtue of anatomy appearance and psychologically, they are also not women, though they are like women with no female reproduction organ and no menstruation. Since Hijras do not have reproduction capacities as either men or women, they are neither men nor women and claim to be an institutional "third gender". Among Hijras, there are emasculated (castrated, nirvana) men, non-emasculated men (not castrated akva/akka) and inter-sexed persons (hermaphrodites). TG also includes persons who intend to undergo Sex Re-Assignment Surgery (SRS) or have undergone SRS to align their biological sex with their gender identity in order to become male or female. They are generally called transsexual persons. Further, there are persons who like to cross-dress in clothing of opposite gender, i.e. transvestites. Resultantly, the term "transgender", in contemporary usage, has become an umbrella term that is used to describe a wide range of identities and experiences, including but not limited to pre-operative, post-operative and non-operative transsexual people, who strongly identify with the gender opposite to their biological sex; male and female<sup>2</sup>.

**A working definition of Gender:** People are born female or male or transgender, but are forced to learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. They are taught appropriate behaviour and attitudes according to defined gender roles and activities. This learned behaviour is what makes up gender identity, and determines gender roles.

<sup>1</sup>Source of the above definitions. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India

<sup>2</sup>Source: National Legal Service Authority vs Union of India & Ors WP(C) No.604 of 2013



**Gender Role Perception:** Gender is a dynamic concept. Gender roles for women and men vary greatly from one culture to another; and from one social group to another within the same culture. Race, class, economic circumstances, age — all of these influence what is considered appropriate for women and men. Furthermore, as culture is dynamic and socio-economic conditions change over time, so gender patterns change with them. Different roles and characteristics are assigned to people not only on the basis of their gender, but of their race, caste, class, ethnic background and age. Our social analysis becomes finer, our social interventions more finely tuned, when we are aware of all the complex ways in which society slots people into different categories and roles, and of the ways these roles can be the basis of both cooperation and conflict. For neither women nor men form a homogeneous group in any society. Women may come into conflict with each other because of racial difference, or women of different nationalities or class groups may find solidarity in their gender identity.

**Gender Discrimination:** As the worst fall out of disparity and mind blocks in the area of role perception, comes the vice of gender discrimination. The three most prominent facets of sexual discrimination are a) Societal Perpetration; b) Domestic Violence and c) Sexual Harassment at Workplace. There are socially accepted expressions like “boys are boys” and norms supporting dowry, still prevalent in society. They highlight the unfortunate social approval towards sexual discrimination. So far as domestic violence is concerned, even after a decade since the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act was passed in 2005, there is no significant change in the crime rate against women. As per data published by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), dowry death was 0.3% of the total number of crimes, as defined under Indian Penal Code (IPC), in 2013. The figure remains the same in 2014. In fact, crime against women as percentage of total number of crimes committed in India has increased from 11.7% in 2013 to 11.9% in 2014. However, perhaps the most unreported amongst these crimes are the ones amounting to “sexual harassment at workplace”. For one, there was no clear law on the subject before 2013 and for the other, many women used to desist reporting. Even now, it is believed that a good number of them don’t report incidents of sexual harassment for reasons ranging from love to terror.



# SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE

## Forms of Sexual Harassment at Workplace

Sexual Harassment has traditionally been divided into two well-known forms: -

- Quid pro Quo.
  - Hostile work environment
- i) **'Quid Pro Quo'** literally means 'this for that'. Applying this to sexual harassment, it means seeking sexual favours or advances in exchange for work benefits such as promises of promotion, higher pay, academic advancements etc. This type of sexual harassment mostly holds a woman to ransom as her refusal to comply with a 'request' can be met with retaliatory action such as dismissal, demotion, memos, tarnished work record and difficult work conditions.
- ii) **'Hostile work environment'** is a less clear yet more pervasive form of sexual harassment. It commonly involves conditions of work or behaviour towards a female worker, which make it unbearable for her to be there. While the worker is never promised or denied anything in this context, unwelcome sexual harassment occurs simply because she is a woman.

### Understanding Instances of Sexual Harassment

A number of surveys revealed that a number of unwelcome actions by fellow colleagues are causing harassment among women workers. Prominent of them are:

- a) Derogatory comments of sexual nature or based on gender;
- b) Presence of sexual visual material or pornographic material such as posters, cartoons, drawings, calendars, pinups, pictures, computer programs of sexual nature;
- c) Written material that is sexual in nature, such as notes or e-mail containing sexual comments;
- d) Comments about clothing, personal behavior, or a person's body;
- e) Patting, stroking grabbing or pinching one's body;
- f) Obscene phone calls;
- g) Telling lies or spreading rumors about a person's personal or sex life;
- h) Rape or attempted rape and so on.

22/10

## Impact and Consequences

While it was being increasingly found difficult to find any legal remedy against such sexual overtures, nobody could deny the ill effects they cause on overall work atmosphere and productivity of any organization. The menace was causing innumerable incidents of harassment also in the unorganized sectors. Any workplace coming under the grip of this growing evil had cumulative effects on the whole organization; its impact on individual women was multiple and added up to losses for the organization as a whole.

Whenever sexual harassment had become so unpleasant and make a worker's life miserable, she would seek redressal under the extant law such as Section 354 (outraging of modesty) or Section 509 (insulting of modesty) of the Indian Penal Code, 1890. She would also seek alternative employment. The employer would on its part, incur significant costs in defending its image and in finding suitable replacements for both the errant and the harassed members of its workforce. Generally, therefore, it had been in the interest of employers that the working environment provides that the workers are treated with dignity.

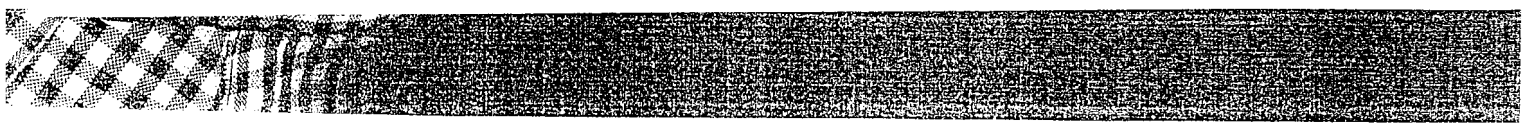
Looking from the angle of human resources, sexual harassment causes a range of ill effects like:

- a) Self-blame and guilt;
- b) Insomnia or other sleep disturbances;
- c) Depression;
- d) Anxiety, fear, decreased interest in work;
- e) Restlessness, uncertainty about future;
- f) Physical or emotional withdrawal from friends, family and co-workers and so on.

29/

## DAY 1 - SESSION 3

<b>SESSION 3</b>	<b>VISHAKA GUIDELINES AND OTHER IMPORTANT JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS</b>
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	To understand the genesis of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act and judicial interventions
<b>CONTENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promulgation of the Law</li><li>• "Sexual Harassment" first time recognized as a crime outcome of Rupan Deol Bajaj Vs. K P S Gill Case</li><li>• "Sexual Harassment at Workplace" defined -- outcome of Vishaka Vs. State of Rajasthan Case</li><li>• "Physical contact is not an essential ingredient" -- Sexual Harassment further defined - outcome of Apparel Export Promotion Council Case</li></ul>
<b>DURATION</b>	75 minutes
<b>TRAINING METHOD &amp; MATERIAL</b>	Lecture, Power Point Presentation, Flip Chart, Audio-Video Clips
<b>LEARNING OUTCOME</b>	Participants will understand: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gradual promulgation of law about "Sexual Harassment" through various judicial interventions;</li><li>• Definition of "Sexual Harassment at Workplace" given in the Vishaka case.</li></ul>



212

## MATERIAL<sup>ii</sup> FOR DAY-1 SESSION-3

### Promulgation of the Law

Until the mid 1990s the concept of sexual harassment at workplace was not recognized by Indian Courts as such. There were, however, some notable exceptions. In *Rupan Deol Bajaj vs. Kanwar Pal Singh Gill* (1995) the Court recognized sexual harassment as a crime falling squarely under Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code, by interpreting “outraging the modesty of a woman” to include outraging the dignity of a woman. Later in 1997, in its landmark judgment in *Vishaka vs State of Rajasthan and Ors* case, Supreme Court for the first time defined sexual harassment at workplace. In yet another important case *Apparel Export Council Vs. A. K. Copra* case, Supreme Court clarified that physical contact is not an essential ingredient of sexual harassment. We shall understand the synopsis of these matters in the following paragraph:

#### Synopsis of Rupan Deol Bajaj Judgment [1996 AIR 309, 1995 SCC (6) 194]

On 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1988 a senior lady officer of the Indian Administrative Service belonging to the Punjab Cadre and working at the relevant time as the Special Secretary, Finance lodged a complaint with the Inspector General of Police, Chandigarh that the accused, who was the Director General of Police, Punjab had outraged her modesty at a dinner party. As per the FIR lodged by the complainant, she along with her husband who was also a senior IAS officer of the Punjab cadre went on 18 July, 1988 in the evening to the residence of one K, a colleague of theirs, in response to an invitation for dinner. Reaching there about 9 p.m. they found 20-25 couples present, including the accused, who had come without his wife, and some other senior government officers. The party was arranged in the lawn at the back of the house. As per tradition in Indian homes, the ladies were sitting segregated in a large semi-circle, and men in another large semi-circle with the groups facing each other. The complainant further alleged:

*“Around 10.00 p.m. Dr. (C) and (the accused) walked across to the circle of the ladies and joined them occupying the only two vacant chairs available, almost on opposite sides of the semi-circle. (The accused) took a vacant chair about 5 to 6 chairs to the left of him, got up, and started leaving and going into the house. I was talking to Mrs*

<sup>ii</sup>Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India



**Some relevant provisions**

Sections 354 and 509 IPC read as follows:

354. *Assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty:* - *Whoever assaults or uses criminal force to any woman, intending to outrage or knowing it to be likely that he will thereby outrage her modesty, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than one year but which may extend to five years, and shall also be liable to fine.'*

509. *Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman:* - *Whoever, intending to insult the modesty of any woman, utters any word, makes any sound or gesture, or exhibits any object, intending that such word or sound shall be heard, or that such gesture or object shall be seen, but such woman, or intrudes upon the privacy of such woman, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, and also with fine.*

**Punjab and Haryana High Court holds that allegations made in the FIR do not disclose any cognizable offences**

The accused moved the Punjab and Haryana High Court by filing a petition under Section 482 CrPC for quashing the FIR and the complaint. The High Court allowed the petition filed by the accused under Section 482 CrPC and quashed both the FIR and the complaint. The main reasons held by the High Court for this action were that the allegations made therein had not disclosed any cognizable offence; the allegations were unnatural and improbable; and the nature of harm allegedly caused to the complainant did not entitle her to complain about the same in view of Section 95 IPC.

**“A gross error of law”, said the Supreme Court**

The complainant challenged the High Court’s order before the Supreme Court where the main point was whether the above allegations would constitute any or all of the offences for which the case was registered.

In the absence of any definition of the word “modesty” in the IPC, the Supreme Court “*profitably look(ed) into its dictionary meaning*”. According to Dictionary, modesty is the quality of being modest and in relation to woman “decorous in manner and conduct; not...lewd; shame fast”; “freedom from coarseness, indelicacy or indecency; a regard for propriety in dress, speech or conduct” etc.

The Supreme Court also relied on its decision in State of Punjab v. Major Singh (Major Singh) in which Mudholkar J. who along with Bachawat J spoke for the majority, held that when any act done to or in the presence of a woman is clearly suggestive of sex according to the common notions of

marital, that must fall within the mischief of Section 354 IPC. Bachawat J said that the essence of woman's modesty is her sex and from her very birth she possesses the modesty, which is the attribute of her sex.

Finally, the Supreme Court held that "[I]t cannot but be held that the alleged act of Mr... in slapping Mrs... on her posterior amounted to 'outraging of her modesty' for it was not only an affront to the normal sense of feminine decency but also an affront to the dignity of the lady- 'sexual overtones' or not notwithstanding".

*State of Madhya Pradesh vs. Hanuman Prasad* [(1987) 1 SCC 241, AIR 1987 SC 1011.]

In 1992, Bhanwari Devi a woman employed as a Saathin in Government of Rajasthan, was working within the community to spread awareness about ending child marriage. Her brutal gang-rape was a revenge, a form of punishment for organizing the community to oppose child marriage.

"Vishaka" – conglomerate of women's organizations working in Rajasthan, along with three other women's organizations active in the campaign to bring the perpetrators to justice, filed a Writ Petition in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court used the opportunity to address the one long pending issue – the glaring lacunae in the law which left the women workers in the country without any remedy, when sexually harassed at work.

In response to the increasing outrage regarding sexual harassment of working women and noting the dearth of legislative responses to such acts, the Supreme Court relied upon the UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which was ratified by India and created a binding and enforceable set of guidelines designed to eradicate sexual harassment of women at workplace.

In the matter of *Vishaka & Others vs State of Rajasthan*, Supreme Court defined sexual harassment at workplace, for the first time in 1997 and promulgated measures to curb it by strongly advocating a code of conduct in every workplace. Though often referred to as a set of guidelines, this was no less than a law. Because, the Supreme Court pronounced:

*"...in the absence of enacted law to provide for the effective enforcement of the basic human right of gender equality and guarantee against sexual harassment and abuse, more particularly against sexual harassment at work places, we lay down the guidelines and norms specified hereinafter for due observance at all work places or other institutions, until a legislation is enacted for the purpose. This is done in exercise of the power available under Article 32 of the Constitution for enforcement of the fundamental rights and it is further emphasized that this would be treated as the law declared by the Court under Article 143 of the Constitution."*

In this epic judgment, the Supreme Court also recognized it as a Human Rights issue and pointed out the legal vacuum to address the concern of the sexually harassed women, when it pronounced:

*“HAVING REGARD to the definition of ‘human rights’ in Section 2(d) of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, TAKING NOTE of the fact that the present civil and penal laws in India do not adequately provide for specific protection of women from sexual harassment in work places and that enactment of such legislation will take considerable time, It is necessary and expedient for employers in work places as well as other responsible persons or institutions to observe certain guidelines to ensure the prevention of sexual harassment of women.”*

So far undefined term “Sexual Harassment” was unambiguously defined for the first time. As the Supreme Court defines:

*“..For this purpose, sexual harassment includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour (whether directly or by implication) as:*

- a) physical contact and advances;
- b) a demand or request for sexual favours;
- c) sexually coloured remarks;
- d) showing pornography;
- e) any other unwelcome physical verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

*“Where any of these acts is committed in circumstances where under the victim of such conduct has a reasonable apprehension that in relation to the victim’s employment or work whether she is drawing salary, or honorarium or voluntary, whether in government, public or private enterprise such conduct can be humiliating and may constitute a health and safety problem. It is discriminatory for instance when the woman has reasonable grounds to believe that her objection would disadvantage her in connection with her employment or work including recruiting or promotion or when it creates a hostile work environment. Adverse consequences might be visited if the victim does not consent to the conduct in question or raises any objection thereto.”*

The complaint handling mechanism, complaints committee formation, awareness generation is the other aspects mentioned in this judgment as well. In an effect, a whole window of possibilities opened up for all sectors to consolidate their action in a unified effort to uproot sexual harassment from its origin and provide healthy work atmosphere for women.

Post *Vishaka* judgment, Supreme Court noticed two important gaps in attitude of the employers in their



dealings with the complaints of sexual harassment cases. First, the definition of sexual harassment was being taken merely literally, without going into its spirit and there had been hardly any compliance to the international commitment made by India and its ratification of "The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)" – adopted by United Nations General Assembly in 1979".

Synopsis of Appellate Export Promotion Council V. A. K. Chopra Judgment (AIR 1997 SC 625)

In its *Appellate Export Promotion Council V. A. K. Chopra* Judgment, Supreme Court clarified that Sexual harassment is not confined to unwelcome physical contact alone on the part of the perpetrator and that physical contact of the perpetrator with the victim is not an essential ingredient of "sexual harassment".

*"The perpetrator worked as a Private Secretary to the Chairman of the Apparel Export Promotion Council, the appellant. The victim, a lady, was employed with the appellant as a clerk-cum-typist. She was not competent or trained to take dictation. The perpetrator, however, insisted that she go with him to the business centre of a hotel for taking dictation from the Chairman and type out the matter. Under the perpetrator's pressure she went to take dictation from the Chairman. While the victim was waiting for the Director, the perpetrator tried to sit too close to her and despite her objection, did not give up his objectionable behavior. The victim later on took dictation from the Director. The perpetrator told her to type it at the business centre of the hotel, which was located in the basement of the hotel. He offered to help her so that the Director did not find fault with her typing. He volunteered to show her the business centre for getting the matter typed and, taking advantage of the isolated place, again tried to sit close to her and touch her despite her objection. After the Director corrected the draft-typed matter and asked the victim to retype it, the perpetrator again went with her to the business centre and repeated his overtures. The victim told the perpetrator that she would leave the place if he continued to behave like that. However, the perpetrator did not stop. Though he went out from the business centre for a while, he again came back and resumed his objectionable acts."*

The appellant Council dismissed the perpetrator for causing "sexual harassment" to the victim. In the departmental enquiry that preceded the perpetrator's dismissal, the enquiry officer concluded that the perpetrator had "molested" the victim and tried to touch her person with ulterior motives despite reprimands by her. A Single Judge of the Delhi High Court, on the reason that the perpetrator had only tried to molest the victim, but did not in fact molest her, allowed the perpetrator's writ petition

[Source: Ministry of Woman & Child Development, Government of India



against his dismissal. On appeal, a Division Bench of the Delhi High Court upheld the Single Judge's order. The Division Bench even reasoned that the perpetrator had "not managed to make the slightest physical contact with the lady" and thus had not actually molested her. In fact, based on the evidence, the Division Bench even expressed its inability to agree that the perpetrator had even attempted to molest the victim as there had been no physical contact.

Setting aside the High Court's Judgment, the Supreme Court said that the perpetrator "acted in a manner which demonstrated unwelcome sexual advances, both directly and by implication", and his actions "created an intimidating and hostile working environment" for the victim. Dr. A.S. Anand C.J held that the victim had used the expression "molestation" in her complaint in a general sense, which she had duly explained and elaborated in her evidence in the enquiry. "Assuming for the sake of argument", said the Judge, "that the (perpetrator) did not manage to establish any 'physical contact' with (the victim)", (even though one witness had deposed having seen the perpetrator put his hand on the hand of the victim), it did not mean that the perpetrator had not made any objectionable overtures with sexual overtones".

The Supreme Court held the dictionary meaning of the word "molestation" or "physical assault" as irrelevant. The court said, "The entire episode reveal(s) that the (perpetrator) had harassed, pestered and subjected (the victim) by a conduct which (was) against moral sanctions and which projected unwelcome sexual advances". The court held that the material on the record clearly established "an unwelcome sexually-determined behavior" on the part of the perpetrator against the victim, which was also an attempt to outrage her modesty. Such an action on the part of the perpetrator was "squarely covered" by the term "sexual harassment".

The Supreme Court said, "Any action or gesture, whether directly or by implication, (sic) aims at or has the tendency to outrage the modesty of a female employee, must fall under the general record clearly established that the perpetrator caused sexual harassment to the victim, taking advantage of his superior position in the Council. Glossing over the observations of the High Court to the effect that the perpetrator did not "actually molest" the victim but only "tried to molest" her and, therefore, his removal from service was not warranted, the Supreme Court said:

*"..... The High Court's observations] rebel against realism and lose their sanctity and credibility. In the instant case, the behavior of the (perpetrator) did not cease to be outrageous for want of an actual assault or touch by ignored the superior officer.... The High Court overlooked the ground realities and ignored the fact that the conduct of the (perpetrator) against his junior female employee... was wholly against moral sanctions, decency and was offensive to her modesty.... The act of the (perpetrator) was unbecoming of good conduct and behavior expected from a superior officer and undoubtedly amounted to sexual harassment (of the victim)...."*

DAY 1 - SESSION 4 & 5

SESSION 4 & 5	<b>SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE (PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL) ACT, 2013</b>
OBJECTIVE	To generate awareness about the provisions of the Act
CONTENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept of Civil Law and Criminal Law</li> <li>• Definition of “aggrieved Woman”, “employee”, “employer” and “workplace”</li> <li>• Civil remedies available under the Act</li> <li>• Complaint Mechanism</li> <li>• Internal Complaints Committee</li> <li>• Local Complaints Committee</li> <li>• Disqualification</li> <li>• Filing of Complaint</li> <li>• Interim Orders</li> <li>• Monetary Compensation</li> <li>• Conciliation</li> <li>• Confidentiality</li> <li>• Prosecution for False Complaints</li> <li>• Appeal</li> <li>• Duties of the Employer</li> <li>• Duties of the State and its functionaries</li> </ul>
DURATION	120 minutes
TRAINING METHOD & MATERIAL	Lecture, Power Point Presentation, Flip Chart, Audio-Video Clips
LEARNING OUTCOME	Participants will become fully conversant about the Act and procedures laid down in it.

7/3/20

## MATERIAL<sup>iii</sup> FOR DAY-1 SESSIONS 4 & 5

### Concept of Civil Law and Criminal law

Civil law broadly falls into two categories: statutory and common law. Common law is judge-made law. In India, the common law from England is generally used as precedent. Tort and contract law fall into this category. Statutory laws, on the other hand are the result of statutes enacted by the Parliament. Such statutes override any common law in existence to the extent that they cover the same legal terrain.

In India, prior to the enactment of the 2013 Act, the only civil statute which could be used to address sexual harassment at workplace to a limited extent, was the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1987 (IRWA). The IRWA works to hold companies liable for the harassment of women through the use of books, photographs, painting, films, pamphlets, packages etc. containing indecent representation of women. Thus far, IRWA has not been used to penalize behaviour constituting sexual harassment whereby the women are involuntarily forced to view such materials at the workplace. The enactment of the 2013 Act is, therefore, a long overdue intervention by Parliament in the area of Civil law.

#### Criminal Remedy available under Criminal Amendment Act, 2013

Following the brutal gang-rape of a young woman physiotherapist in Delhi, resulting in her death in December 2012, and overwhelming protests across the country thereafter, Parliament amended the criminal law relating to sexual offences. In April 2013, the suggestions put forth by some writ petitions, more than a decade earlier, were finally implemented in a series of amendments to the criminal laws relating to sexual offences against women, with the enactment of the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2013. These amendments have broadened the definition of rape; increased quantum of punishment for several sex related offences, and created new offences such as the offence of 'sexual harassment' under section 354A IPC. Important amendments have also been made which streamline the criminal procedures as well as strengthen the laws of evidence.

The IPC provisions which may be used in the case of sexual harassment at the workplace are given in the following table. In order to invoke the operation of penal provisions, it is required that the charges must be proved beyond reasonable doubts and must have all ingredients of the offence.

<sup>iii</sup>JAINING Indira "Sexual harassment at Work Place" Universal Law Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, India (2014)



grievances cells or likes which were in existence prior to enactment of the SHWWP Act cannot substitute the ICC, unless they fulfill all the statutory requirements mentioned in the Act.

These Complaints Committees serve double purposes, namely, to enquire into complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace, and also to generate awareness and take preventive steps in order to ensure that the work environment is conducive to the participation of women employees.

**Section 4** of the 2013 Act prescribes composition of the ICC as under:

- i) The Presiding Officer, who shall be a woman employed at a senior level at workplace from amongst the employees;
- ii) It Should have not less than two members from amongst employees who are committed to the cause of women;
- iii) It should have one external NGO member committed to the cause of women, or familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment.

The phrase ‘person familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment’ has been explained in the 2013 Rules with the following deeming provisions:

- a) a social worker with at least five years’ experience in the field of social work in the area of empowerment of women, and in particular sexual harassment at the workplace, or
- b) a person familiar with labour, service, civil or criminal law;
- iv) At least one half of the members of the ICC must be women. The members are nominated by the employer for a period upto three years from the date of their nomination as may be specified by the employer.

The term ‘Employer’ is defined in Section 2 of the 2013 Act, as “in relation to any department, organization, undertaking, establishment, enterprise, institution, office, branch or unit of the appropriate Government or a local authority, the head of that department, organization, undertaking, establishment, enterprise, institution, office etc. and also under appropriate situations person responsible for management, supervision and control of the workplace and in case of a dwelling place or house, a person or a household who employs or benefits from the employment of domestic worker, irrespective of the number, time period or type of such worker(s) employed and the nature of the employment etc.

**Section 6** of the 2013 Act further provides for the establishment of ‘Local Complaints Committee’ (LCC) at the District level to receive complaints of sexual harassment from establishments where ICC has not been constituted due to having less than ten workers or if the complaint is against the employer himself.

Section 9 of the 2013 Act read with Rule 6 and 7 of the 2013 Rules, talks about complaint mechanism. Broadly speaking according to these provisions, complaints may be lodged by the aggrieved woman or any of her relatives, friends, co-workers or any officer of the National Commission for Women or State Commission for Women, any qualified psychologist or psychiatrist or any person who has knowledge of the incident, with her relative or friend or a special educator etc. or with her written consent and even when the aggrieved woman is dead, a complaint may be filed by any person who has knowledge of the incident with written consent of her legal heir. Even if the complaint is not possible to be given in writing, ICC or LCC as the case may be is mandated to render all possible assistance to make it in writing. Thus, tremendous flexibility is provided in the law, so far as filing of the complaint is concerned.

The complainant has to submit six copies of the complaint along with all supporting documents within a period of three months from the date of incident – last date of the series of incidents happened on different dates as the case may be. The ICC has the authority to extend the time limit by another three months on reasonable ground to be recorded in writing.

**Sections 11 to 13** of the 2013 Act deal with inquiry into complaint where it provides a mechanism for redressal of complaints of sexual harassment at workplace. Reflecting the Vishaka guidelines in this respect, the procedure of the enquiry is easy to understand, and at the same time adheres to the rules of natural justice, so that the respondent is given adequate opportunity to defend himself.

For government sectors where Service Rules are already in existence, the relevant Service Rules are to be followed. In all other organizations where there are no service rules, the procedure provided in the 2013 Act and the 2013 Rules are to be followed, with emphasis on the principles of natural justice.

Upon receipt of the complaint, or at any stage of the at the request of the aggrieved woman, the ICC/LCC is to consider whether an interim protective order is necessary to be passed:

After receiving the complaint, one copy of the same should be sent to the respondent within seven working days. The respondent has the right to file his reply in writing along with the list of documents he seeks to rely upon and a list of the witness he wishes to examine (within ten working days). Thereafter, the complainant as well as the respondent will be given an opportunity to lead evidence, both documentary as well as through witnesses, and also to cross examine the witnesses presented by the other party. At any given time during the conduct of the enquiry, a minimum of three members of the ICC or LCC must be present, which must include the Presiding Officer or Chairperson;

The ICC/LCC may also permit the parties to address arguments: if either the complainant or the respondent fail to appear without sufficient cause, for three consecutive hearings, the committee has the power to terminate the proceedings or give an ex-parte decision on the complaint. Before passing such an order, however, the ICC/LCC is required to give fifteen days notice in writing to the concerned.

Thereafter, the ICC/LCC shall provide, within ten days of completion of examination of evidence, a report of its findings regarding whether sexual harassment has been proved or not, to the employer or the District Officer as the case may be, along with its reasons for the same;

Importantly, the report of the ICC/LCC is in the nature of recommendations to the employer/ District Officer. It is the employer/ District Officer which takes "action" (in the nature of punishment) on the said recommendations. When the ICC/LCC arrives at a conclusion that misconduct in the nature of sexual harassment at the workplace has been proved, it shall recommend to the employer/ District Officer that action be taken against the respondent. The action against the respondent has been listed in the 2013 Rules as follows:

- a written apology;
- a warning;
- reprimand or censure;
- withholding of pay rise or increments;
- withholding of pay rise or increments;
- termination from service;
- counseling;
- community service.

A copy of the report of the ICC/LCC must be provided to the concerned parties, that is, to the complainant and the respondent.

In order to provide interim protection to the aggrieved woman from the interference of the respondent the law empowers the ICC/LCC to issue certain interim orders during the pendency of the inquiry on the written request of the complainant. These orders could be of the following nature:

- transfer of the aggrieved woman or of the respondent to another workplace;
- grant of leave to the aggrieved woman for a period up to three months;
- restraint on the respondent from reporting on the work performance of the aggrieved woman, or from writing her confidential report, and assigning the said task to another officer;
- restraint on the respondent from supervising the academic activity of the aggrieved woman, in case of an educational institution;
- such other relief as may be prescribed in the applicable law, such as service rules or standing orders or any other law.



305

These recommendations if passed by the ICC/LCC are to be necessarily followed by the employer and a compliance report is to be submitted to the ICC/LCC. They are in direct contradiction with the existing service law.

**Section 13** of the 2013 Act enables the ICC/LCC to recommend monetary compensation to the aggrieved woman (or her heirs) in case it arrives at a decision that sexual harassment has taken place. This is in addition to disciplinary action recommended. The 2013 Act enables the employer/District Officer to deduct the sum from the salary or wages of the respondent, or where this is not possible because of cessation of employment, be recovered as arrears of land revenue, stating that this provision shall apply "notwithstanding anything in the service rules applicable to the respondent". Thus, the recommendation becomes binding on the employer.

**Section 15** of the 2013 Act gives basic guidelines for the purpose of calculating the sum of money to be awarded to the complainant as compensation, as follows:

- a) mental trauma, pain, suffering and emotional distress;
- b) loss in career opportunity;
- c) medical expenses (physical and psychiatric);
- d) the income and financial status of the respondent;
- e) the compensation amount can be paid in lump sum or installments.

**Section 10** of the 2013 Act provides that before initiating an enquiry under Section 11, the ICC/LCC has the option to take steps to settle the matter through a conciliation process. It may be noted that the law specifically provides that this step is initiated only "at the request of the aggrieved woman". It is for the employer to be cautious that such provision in the law, purporting to protect the rights of women is not used to pressurize women to "settle" the matter.

**Section 16 & 17** of the 2013 Act, together provide an important confidentiality obligation upon all persons who are involved in the proceedings to protect the identity and addresses of the aggrieved woman, the respondent and the witnesses. There is also a complete embargo on publication, communication or making known of all information relating to the conciliation proceedings and the enquiry proceedings, including the action taken, to the public, the press or the media in any manner. Violation of this provision invites penalty in accordance with the applicable service rules, or in the manner prescribed. The 2013 Rules while prescribing the penalty for the violation of this provision, fixes the amount at Rupees five thousand.

**Section 14** of the 2013 Act read with **Rule 10** of the 2013 Rules provides for punishment of the complainant or any other person concerned in the event of false or malicious complaints, or the production of false or misleading document or evidence. The proviso to section 14 clarifies that mere inability to substantiate a complaint or provide adequate proof will not attract action against the complainant under this provision. There is an important distinction in law between a false/ malicious allegation and an allegation which is “not proved”. The 2013 Act also makes it a criminal offence on the part of the employer if it fails to take action against such aggrieved woman or witness who takes recourse of falsehood.

Employers are to remain extra-cautious remembering that ICC is a non-judicial body whereas sexual harassment, whether quid pro quo or creating hostile work environment in nature, is a form of violence which is often perpetrated in circumstances of power imbalance and aimed at vulnerable women in private and hence this provision should in no way curtail the fundamental rights of women to equality (Article 14), freedom from discrimination on the ground of their sex (Article 15), right to life with dignity (Article 21) and the right to freedom of employment and thereby becomes a “red tag” provision.

In so far as provision for appeal is concerned, both the 2013 Act in **Section 18** and the 2013 Rules in **Rule 11** make it clear that where there are existing appellate mechanism in the concerned Service Rules, those have to be followed. In all other situations, the appellate authority under the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946, is designated to entertain appeals under this law. The appellate authority would differ in different States depending on the State notification. Insofar as adjudication of disputes in the Central sphere is concerned, the Central government has notified and established the Central Government Industrial Tribunal-cum-Labour Courts (CGIT-cum-LCs). There are 22 such CGIT-cum-LCs set up in various States, which are headed by Presiding Officers who are selected from amongst serving or retired High Court Judges and District/ Additional District Judges. The 2013 Act and the 2013 Rules expand the jurisdiction of such CGIT-cum-LCs, to the extent that they are enabled to entertain appeals under the 2013 Act which would ordinarily have remained outside their jurisdiction under employment law. The appeal is to be filed within 90 days from the date of the action/recommendation appealed against.

Appeal can be filed in the following situations where the :

- i) Committee arrives at a finding that the allegation of sexual harassment at the workplace has not been proved, and therefore recommends in its report to the employer/ District Officer that no action is required against the respondent;
- ii) Committee arrives at a conclusion that the allegation of sexual harassment at the workplace has been proved, and recommends to the employer to take action against the respondent for sexual harassment as misconduct.

- iii) Committee arrives at a conclusion that the allegation of sexual harassment at workplace has been proved and recommends to the employer to deduct appropriate sums from the salary or wages of the respondent to be paid to the aggrieved woman.
- iv) Committee arrives at a conclusion that the allegation of sexual harassment at the workplace is malicious or false or based upon a forged or misleading document;
- v) Committee arrives at a conclusion that a witness has given false evidence or produced a forged or misleading document;
- vi) Penalty is imposed on any person entrusted with the duty to handle or deal with the complaint, who has violated the confidentiality provisions of the law;
- vii) Employer fails to implement any of the recommendations of the Committee aforesaid within the prescribed time-limit.

**Section 19** of the 2013 Act enumerates very important "*Duties of Employer*". Those are:

- a) provide a safe working environment at the workplace, which shall include safety from the persons coming into contact at the workplace;
- b) display at any conspicuous place in the workplace, the penal consequences of sexual harassment; and the order constituting the ICC under sub-section (1) of section 4;
- c) organise workshops and awareness programmes at regular intervals for sensitising the employees with the provisions of the Act and orientation programmes for the members of the ICC in manner as may be prescribed;
- d) provide necessary facilities to the ICC or the LCC, as the case may be, for dealing with the complaint and conducting an inquiry;
- e) assist in securing the attendance of the respondent and witness before the ICC or the LCC, as the case may be;
- f) make available such information to the ICC or the LCC, as the case may be, as it may require having regard to the complaint made under sub-section (1) of section 9;
- g) provide assistance to the woman if she so chooses to file a complaint in relation to the offences under the Indian Penal Code, 1860 or any other law for the time being in force;
- h) cause to initiate action, under the IPC or any other law for the time being in force, against the perpetrator, or if the aggrieved woman so desires, where the perpetrator is not an employee, in the workplace at which the incident of sexual harassment took place;

208/27

- i) treat sexual harassment as a misconduct under the services rules and initiate action for such misconduct;
- j) monitor the timely submission of reports by the Internal Committee.

Under **Section 21** it is the duty of the ICC to submit an annual report, which includes the number of cases filed/disposed of every calendar year to the employer. The employer has a statutory obligation to ensure this report is included in the annual report of the organization under **Section 22** of the Act.

The 2013 Act also specifies obligations of the State governments. The most important of these obligations is the appointment of the District Officer. The responsibilities of the District administration commence only with the notification of a District Officer by the appropriate government, who will thereafter exercise the powers and discharge functions under the 2013 Act. This District Officer could be a District Magistrate or Additional District Magistrate or Collector or Deputy Collector. Therefore, until such a notification is issued, it would be quite difficult for any such officer to take any initiative in the matter. Other functions of the appropriate government include:

- monitoring of the implementation of the 2013 Act and maintaining data on the institution and disposal of complaints;
- development of relevant information, education, communication and training materials, and organizing of awareness programmes, subject to availability of funds;
- formulation and conduct of training programmes for members of the LCC, subject to availability of funds;
- calling upon any employer or District Officer to furnish any information regarding sexual harassment at the workplace it may request;
- inspection of records and of a workplace with regard to sexual harassment at the workplace, through an authorized officer, and to give a report;
- auditing by the Accountant General of the State of the accounts of the agencies receiving and utilizing the grants made to it by the Central Government or otherwise.

The District Officer also has statutory obligations under the 2013 Act, including:

- constitution of the LCC at the District level and nominating the Chairperson and members of the said committee along with their terms of office.
- designation of nodal officers in every Block, Taluka and Tehsil in rural areas, and ward or municipality in urban areas, to receive complaints and forward them to the LCC.

- 309
- ensuring that the recommendations of the LCC with regard to interim protection to the complainant are complied with, and a compliance report is sent to the LCC;
  - receiving the report of findings and recommendations of the LCC, taking a decision on the action to be taken upon the said reports, and taking such action within the statutory time frame;
  - monitoring the timely submission of annual reports by the LCC;
  - preparation and forwarding of report consolidating all the annual reports received to the State government;
  - taking such measures as may be necessary to engage NGOs for creation of awareness on sexual harassment at the workplace and the rights of women.

At the end of these sessions, case of **Rupesh Hari Vs. Kusumlata** (WP 6549 of 2016) may be discussed briefly. Mr. Rupesh Hari was held guilty of an act of sexual harassment, in the form of sending objectionable SMSs to Ms. Kusumlata - his colleague. In the beginning, he denied the charge. Later he submitted that the aggrieved woman made this false complaint to get herself transferred from Delhi. But, when as an interim measure under Section 12 of the 2013 Act, he was transferred to Jabalpur from Delhi - he challenged the order in the Tribunal. When the challenge was rejected by the Tribunal, he filed a petition seeking quashing of the transfer order on the ground of its causing acute hardship and his having very old parents to whom he was duty bound.

**The excerpts from the judgment of the Court are given below:**

“We have heard learned counsel for the parties. In this case, a complaint was made by the lady regarding sexual harassment by the petitioner. The Committee has made the following observation:

*“The Committee, after going through the oral and written evidence, has arrived at the conclusion that, the behavior of Mr. Rupesh Hari, JE(OA) in incessantly messaging Ms. Kusumlata, AE (QA) on her phone with inappropriate contents, against her wish is an unwelcome gesture and hence can be termed as Sexual Harassment within the meaning of The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. While arriving at this conclusion, the Committee takes into cognizance the impact which the behaviour of Mr. Rupesh Hari, has caused on the mental frame of Ms. Kusumlata having the potential to interfere with her work environment creating an intimidating/offensive/hostile work environment as she was repeatedly humiliated by receiving messages from Mr. Rupesh Hari, that too late in the night.”*

370 (48)

After the observations of the Committee, the petitioner herein stands transferred from New Delhi to Jabalpur.

1. It would be useful to reproduce Section 12 of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013:

*“12. (1) During the pendency of an inquiry on a written request made by the aggrieved woman, the Internal Committee or the Local Committee, as the case may be, may recommend to the employer to-*

- (a) *Transfer the aggrieved woman or the respondent to any other workplace, or*
- (b) *Grant leave to the aggrieved woman up to a period of three months, or (c) Grant such other relief to the aggrieved woman as may be prescribed.*

2. ....

3. On the recommendation of the Internal Committee or the Local Committee, as the case may be, under sub-section (1), the employer shall implement the recommendations made under subsection (1) and send the report of such implementation to the Internal Committee or the Local Committee, as the case may be. “

In view of the finding of the Committee and taking into consideration Rule 12 of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, we find that the Tribunal has correctly applied the law to the facts of the present case. Consequently, we find no infirmity in the orders dated 25.04.2016 and 23.05.2016 passed by the learned Tribunal.

At this stage, learned counsel for the petitioner submits that he may be permitted to make one last representation to the respondents setting out the ground of acute hardship, more particularly with regard to the old age of his parents, who are solely dependent on him.

*“The writ petition is accordingly dismissed as not pressed. Leave is granted to the petitioner to make a representation, as aforesaid. It is, however, made clear that rejection of the representation of the petitioner will not give any fresh cause of action to him.”*

## EXERCISE

### Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

#### QUESTIONS

1. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 came into force from ..... 2013.
  - a) 9 December
  - b) 16 December
  - c) 2 October
  - d) 10 October
2. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 did not supersede the Vishaka Guidelines for prevention of sexual harassment introduced by the Supreme Court of India.
  - a) TRUE
  - b) FALSE
3. According to SH Act, sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexually determined behavior.
  - a) TRUE
  - b) FALSE
4. Sexual Harassment takes place if a person subjects another person to an unwelcome act of physical intimacy, like grabbing, brushing, touching, pinching etc.
  - a) TRUE
  - b) FALSE
5. Sexual Harassment takes place if a person makes an unwelcome remark with sexual connotations like sexually explicit compliments/cracking loud jokes and making sexist remarks etc.
  - a) TRUE
  - b) FALSE
6. Sexual Harassment takes place if supervisor requests sexual favours from a junior in return for promotion or other benefits or threatens to sack for non-cooperation.
  - a) TRUE
  - b) FALSE

7. Any workplace with more than ..... employees needs to form Internal Complaints Committee under SH Act, 2013.
- a) 10
  - b) 20
  - c) 15
  - d) 5
8. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 covers any female who is .....
- a) Student
  - b) Visiting a workplace
  - c) Working woman
  - d) All of these
9. Employers who fail to comply with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 will be punished with a fine of up to .....
- a) Rs. 50,000
  - b) Rs. 5,00,000
  - c) Rs. 20,000
  - d) Rs. 2,00,000
10. The major issue with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 is that it still does not include domestic workers.
- a) TRUE
  - b) FALSE
11. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 also provides safeguards against false or malicious charges.
- a) TRUE
  - b) FALSE
12. As per the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 the Committee is required to complete the inquiry within a time period of ..... days.
- a) 90
  - b) 60
  - c) 45
  - d) 30



9/15/17

13. As per the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 on completion of the inquiry, the report will be sent to the employer or the District Officer, as the case may be, they are mandated to take action on the report within ..... days.

- a) 90
- b) 60
- c) 45
- d) 30

14. What are the penalties provided under Sexual Harassment Act?

- a) Reprimand warning censure written apology
- b) Withholding promotion increment pay raise
- c) Termination from service
- d) All of the above

15. The complaint of sexual harassment has to be filed within... days of the incident.

- a) 15 days
- b) 45 days
- c) 45 days
- d) 90 days

916314

# DAY 2

97  
315

## DAY 2 – SESSION 1

<b>SESSION 1</b>	<b>PROVISIONS IN CCS (CCA) RULES &amp; CCS(CONDUCT) RULES AND FAIRNESS IN PROCEDURE</b>
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	To understand the SHWWP Act, 2013 in the light of Service Rules and Conduct Rules provision
<b>CONTENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rule 3(C) of CCS(Conduct) Rules</li><li>• Rule 14 and 16 of CCS(CCA) Rules</li><li>• Definition of Employer</li><li>• Conciliation Report of ICC</li><li>• Inquiry Report of ICC</li></ul>
<b>DURATION</b>	75 minutes
<b>TRAINING METHOD &amp; MATERIAL</b>	Two small case studies – one when service law is existing and the other when not. Each to be discussed in two groups for 35 minutes (about 15 minutes, each). Presentation in plenary 25 minutes. Debrief for 10 minutes.
<b>LEARNING OUTCOME</b>	At the end of this session the participants will be able to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe Rule 3(C) of the Conduct Rules</li><li>• List out the inbuilt mechanism of fairness in procedure under CCS(CCA) Rules</li><li>• Describe check points to ensure Principle of Natural Justice when its employees are not covered under any specific service rule</li></ul>

## "SHE DID IT ON PURPOSE"

### (A CASE STUDY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT)

A newly recruited IPS officer Ms. K was under training in Police Academy. She was married. During her training she met Mr. P. He was unmarried. P started showing special interest in K, but K was tactful enough to duck his innocuous advances.

One day, shortly after they finished their theory input sessions, arms training started in the open. It was found that P had been already an expert marksman, who knew every part of a gun very well. P started giving K extra training side by side. As a result K could take up shooting very quickly. At the end of the day, their instructor permitted them to go away from rest of their groups to practice.

When away from the group, P tried to pull K close to his body and kiss her. In the resulting commotion, K fell on the ground but somehow was able to free herself from P. She felt very bad. It was in fact her marriage anniversary day. She visited the office of the Head of the training institute to complain. The head called P, rebuked him and asked K to lodge a written complaint immediately with the Internal Committee.

In the evening, before she could settle down and write her complaint, K's husband paid her a surprise visit. She felt elated and relieved. She narrated the whole incident to her husband who got very angry but didn't lose his apparent cool. Instead, he sought permission from the authority to have dinner in the mess as a guest of his wife. The permission was granted.

After finishing his dinner, the husband found P sitting in the mess hall and thrashed him badly. Police came but no FIR was lodged at the behest of the head of the institute. The husband left the campus.

Next morning, when K reached the Internal Committee with her written complaint, she came to know that P had already made a complaint against her, before the highest authority, alleging that she sought sexual favour from him and when denied, got him rebuked by the head and thrashed by her husband, before a hall full of people. In his complaint, P further alleged that "she did it on purpose". K lodged her complaint any way.

**Task:** You are a member of the ICC. The Chairperson asks for your opinion.

# “I OWE YOU SOME PEACE OF MIND”

## A CASE STUDY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

B works in a message parlor. Other than her, three girls and two boys work there. The owner of the parlor doubles up as the front office manager cum accountant. He has her family living nearby.

Everybody knows that B looks the best in the lot. She is short but fair. During last four months of her career, after a short training, B could bring solace to her hard working mother. The mother works as a cook in four households. When B got the job, the salary was fixed at a rate which was more than half of what her mother earns from all the four places. That was a big relief. The father would have been pleased, had he been alive. The road accident changed their lives. Now, it seems to be coming back to track. Her younger brother is happy too.

The owner is a distant relative of her mother. He spares no chance to remind her of the favour though. But everybody admits he is a good jolly fellow. A bit too good to B? Could be. Otherwise, why should he pay B the highest? Talk to her sweetly? And often play father to her, holding her shoulder arms rather softly? Or, for that matter, why do his hands move too close to her breasts? Well, one shouldn't allow dirty thoughts. It's surely all because of his relation to their family. After all, he is more than three times as old as she is – in fact older than her own grandpa, who seems heavily loathing the very idea of her working. He wants her to be married fast and just like that.

So, when one day the owner asks B to give him a head message, she is not surprised. Everybody else is gone. No customer is waiting. The owner is complaining of headache. But why is he pulling her hand to his chest? Then to his belly? And Oh No! He is now touching her inappropriately. In fact, he is groping her. One part of her mind feels funny. The other part feels ashamed. Fear grows in the remaining part and grows too big to allow this anymore.

So, B reacts. With a red face, she jerks the owners lewd hands off her. When she runs out, she can hear the owner murmurs

*“Can't you give me some piece of mind? Dear B, after all I owe you some....”*

The mother supports her act and tells her to cheer up. She has heard that law is there to protect her. She plans to bring it to you, as she knows that you work for the Government and has solutions to problems like this.

**Task: Please prepare your piece of advice for B and her mother.**

## DAY 2 - SESSION 2 & 3

<b>SESSION 2 &amp; 3</b>	Medha Kotwal Lele Case – Implications Steps to Conduct Inquiry
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe implications of Medha Kotwal Lele Judgment of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India to understand the importance of the Internal Complaints Committee Report</li> <li>• Understand steps to conduct inquiry as prescribed by the Department of Personnel &amp; Training, Government of India</li> </ul>
<b>CONTENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case law – Medha Kotwal Lele</li> <li>• Steps to conduct inquiry DoPT OM No. 11013/2/2014 Foll (A III) dated 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2015</li> </ul>
<b>DURATION</b>	150 Minutes
<b>TRAINING METHOD</b>	Lecture Group discussion Guided reading Case studies
<b>LEARNING OUTCOME/ TAKE AWAY</b>	Mechanism to implement the statute in the organization.

## MATERIAL<sup>iv</sup> FOR DAY-2 SESSION-1, 2 & 3

Questions are often asked about how binding are the recommendations of the ICC upon the employers when there are well defined Service Rules. Undoubtedly, the Vishaka guidelines were long been the only substantial piece of law and the Supreme Court made it clear in Medha Kotwal case that they are binding on the employers. It would be proper here to look at the guidelines given by the apex court in this matter:

### Directions of the Supreme Court in Medha Kotwal Lele Case [(2013) 1 SCC 297]

*"In what we have discussed above, we are of the considered view that guidelines in Vishaka should not remain symbolic and the following further directions are necessary until legislative enactment on the subject is in place.*

*The States and Union Territories which have not yet carried out adequate and appropriate amendments in their respective Civil Services Conduct Rules (By whatever name these Rules are called) shall do so within two months from today by providing that the report of the Complaints Committee shall be deemed to be an inquiry report in a disciplinary action under such Civil Services Conduct Rules. In other words, the disciplinary authority shall treat the report/ findings etc. of the Complaints Committee as the findings in a disciplinary inquiry against the delinquent employee and shall act on such report accordingly. The findings and the report of the Complaints Committee shall not be treated as a mere preliminary investigation or inquiry leading to a disciplinary action but shall be treated as a finding/ report in an inquiry into the misconduct of the delinquent.*

*The States and Union Territories which have not carried out amendments in the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Rules shall now carry out amendments on the same lines, as noted above in clause (i) within two months.*

*The States and Union Territories shall form adequate number of Complaints Committees so as to ensure that they function at taluka level, district level and state level. Those States and/or Union Territories which have formed only one Committee for the entire State shall now form adequate number of Complaints Committees within two months from today. Each of such Complaints Committees shall be headed by a woman and as far as possible in such Committees an independent member shall be associated.*

*The State functionaries and private and public sector undertakings/ organisations/ bodies/ institutions etc., shall put in place sufficient mechanism to ensure full implementation of the Vishaka guidelines and further provide that if the alleged harasser is found guilty, the*

<sup>iv</sup>JAISINGI Indira "Sexual harassment at Work Place" Universal Law Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, India (2014)

32

...the State Government has taken the steps necessary for implementing the guidelines and norms laid down by this Court in Vishaka case and the directions given in Medha Kotwal case. Therefore, the appeal is disposed of with the following directions:

1. The State Government shall give comprehensive publicity to the notifications and orders issued by it in compliance with the guidelines framed by this Court in Vishaka case and the directions given in Medha Kotwal case by getting the same published in the newspapers having maximum circulation in the State after every two months.

2. Wide publicity be given every month in Doodardshan Station, Sikkim about various steps taken by the State Government for implementation of the guidelines framed in Vishaka case and the directions given in Medha Kotwal case.

3. Social Welfare Department and the Legal Services Authority of the State of Sikkim shall also give wide publicity to the notifications and orders issued by the State Government not only for the government departments of the State and its agencies instrumentalities, but also for the private companies.

It may also be relevant here to look at the outcome of **Seema Lepcha Vs. State of Sikkim** case [(2013) 11 SCC 647]:

*In An the Lepcha case, the court would also direct the government to ensure that the State Government shall give wide publicity to the notifications and orders issued by it in compliance with the guidelines framed by this Court in Vishaka case and the directions given in Medha Kotwal case by getting the same published in the newspapers having maximum circulation in the State after every two months. The court also directed that the report of the Complaints Committees will be deemed to be the inquiry report under the Rules.*

Having gone through the affidavits filed by the Chief Secretary of the State and Shri J.K. Rai, we are satisfied that the State Government has taken the steps necessary for implementing the guidelines and norms laid down by this Court in Vishaka case and the directions given in Medha Kotwal case. Therefore, the appeal is disposed of with the following directions:

1. The State Government shall give comprehensive publicity to the notifications and orders issued by it in compliance with the guidelines framed by this Court in Vishaka case and the directions given in Medha Kotwal case by getting the same published in the newspapers having maximum circulation in the State after every two months.
2. Wide publicity be given every month in Doodardshan Station, Sikkim about various steps taken by the State Government for implementation of the guidelines framed in Vishaka case and the directions given in Medha Kotwal case.
3. Social Welfare Department and the Legal Services Authority of the State of Sikkim shall also give wide publicity to the notifications and orders issued by the State Government not only for the government departments of the State and its agencies instrumentalities, but also for the private companies.



123  
20320

## STEPS TO CONDUCT INQUIRY

After the enactment of the 2013 Act and the 2013 Rules, it is now made very clear that the concerned Disciplinary Authority has to follow the Service Rule provisions to reach the finality of a proceedings initiated against a proven act of sexual harassment. We may, therefore, look at various aspects of two of the most prominent service rules in operations in the government sector, in the light of the provisions made in the 2013 Act and the 2013 Rules and try to make out the procedural steps as prescribed by the Department of Personnel & Training, Government of India.

The implementation of the law by employers, in letter and spirit, begins with the constitution of the complaints committee, and encouraging women to report sexual harassment in the workplace. The law imposes a duty on the complaints committee, to conduct an inquiry on receiving a complaint, and this write up expounds upon how to conduct an inquiry, what are the principles to be followed in conducting an inquiry; and the different stages in conducting the inquiry following principles of natural justice, in which both parties are given an opportunity to be heard.

The Act in Section 11 provides two different procedures to be followed for conducting an inquiry- if the respondent is an employee then the inquiry shall be conducted in accordance with the service rules; and where no service rules exist then the inquiry shall be held as per manner prescribed in the Rules; or in the case of a domestic worker, the LCC shall forward the complaint to the police, within seven days for registering the case under section 509 of the IPC, and any other relevant provisions of the said Code. This write up focus on inquiry into complaint when Respondent is Government employee.

### **INQUIRY INTO COMPLAINT WHEN RESPONDENT IS GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE**

The Government is a model employer and is the source of most of the employment opportunities in the country. The rules that are followed in the government sector percolate to the private sector. Part XIV of the Constitution relates to the terms of employment in respect of persons appointed in connection with the affairs of the State. Any action against the employees of the Union Government and the State Governments should conform to these constitutional provisions, which confer certain protections on government servants. These provisions are applicable only to the employees of the various ministries, departments and attached and subordinate offices. Further, the employees, being citizens of the country also enjoy fundamental rights guaranteed under Part III of the Constitution, and can enforce them through the writ jurisdiction of the Courts. In addition to the constitutional provisions, there are certain rules which are applicable to the conduct of the proceedings for taking action against erring employees.

Provisions of Part XIV of the Constitution do not apply to the employees of semi-government organizations or Public Sector Undertakings and Autonomous Bodies and Societies controlled by the Government. However, as these organisations can be brought within the definition of the term 'State' as contained in Article 12 of the constitution, the employees of these organisations are protected against the violation of their fundamental rights by the orders of their employer. The action of the employer can be challenged by the employees of these organisations on the grounds of arbitrariness, etc. Hence these organisations also have their own sets of rules for processing cases for conducting the disciplinary proceedings against their employees.

#### A) SERVICE RULES

There are two sets of Service Rules, viz., Central Civil Service (Conduct) Rules 1964 (herein after referred to as) and CCS (Conduct) Rules Central Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules 1965 (hereinafter referred to as the CCS CCA Rules) which cover a majority of the Central Government employees, besides, several other Rules which are applicable to various sections of employees in a number of services. The CCS (Conduct) Rules 1964 defines and regulate the conduct of Government Employees to be observed and delineates what ought to be the conduct/behaviors of the Government employee and what are the conduct/behaviors that are prohibited. Rule 3-C of the CCS (Conduct) Rules 1964 expressly prohibits sexual harassment with Rule 3C 2(a) defining what constitute sexual harassment, 3C 2(s) defining circumstances connected with an act of sexual harassment and 3C 2(c) defining what constitutes workplace.

In case an employee violates these CCS (Conduct) Rules, action is prescribed under CCS (CCA) Rules.

##### (i) Amendment in the CCS (Conduct) Rules

Pursuant to the guidelines in Vishaka, the CCS (Conduct) Rules, 1964 were amended in 1998 to incorporate Rule 3-C which prohibits sexual harassment of working women. In 2014, the present government felt it necessary to send the message of zero tolerance towards sexual harassment in the workplace, and made further amendment in the CCS (Conduct) Rules by introducing stricter rules for checking sexual harassment in government workplaces.

The government has amended the CCS (Conduct) Rules, 1964 to expand the circumstances which may be construed as sexual harassment, the government has made it plain that any implied or explicit promise of preferential employment or any such threat of detrimental employment or her present employment status may amount to sexual harassment of a woman government employee; including indulging in any humiliating treatment likely to affect a woman employee's

health or safety. "Interference with her work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment for her," is now listed as amounting to sexual harassment as per the new provisions.

(ii) **Conduct of inquiry as per RULE 14 of the Central Civil Services (Classification, Control & Appeal) (CCS CCA) Rules 1965**

(a) **Definition of sexual harassment:** The amended Rule 3C of the CCS (Conduct) Rules, 1964 prohibits sexual harassment of women at the workplace by any Government servant, and makes every Government servant who is incharge of a work place duty bound to take appropriate steps to prevent sexual harassment to any woman at such work place. For the purpose of this rule, sexual harassment is defined as-

*"sexual harassment" includes physical contact and advances; demand or request for sexual favours; or sexually coloured remarks; showing any pornography; or any other welcome physical, verbal, non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.*

The definition is expanded to include certain circumstances that may amount to sexual harassment- promise of preferential treatment or threat of detrimental treatment in employment; threat about her present or future employment status; interference with her work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment for her; or humiliating treatment likely to affect her health or safety.

(b) **Inquiring Authority:** The proviso to Rule 14(2) of the CCS CCA Rules 1965 provides that the complaints committee established in each Ministry or Department or office enquiring into such complaints shall be deemed to be the inquiring authority appointed by the disciplinary authority, and the committee shall hold the inquiry so far as practicable in accordance with the procedure laid down in those rules. The Committee constituted in each Ministry/ Department/ office under the CCS (Conduct) Rules, 1964 shall be deemed to be the inquiring authority appointed by the disciplinary authority for the purpose of these rules and the Complaints Committee shall hold, if separate procedure has not been prescribed for the complaints committee for holding the inquiry into the complaints of sexual harassments, the inquiry as far as practicable in accordance with the procedure laid down in these rules.

**Note:** The Sexual Harassment Act of 2013 in Section 11 states that in case of respondent being an employee, then the inquiry into the complaint should be made in accordance with the provisions of the service rules applicable: but in the Act procedure of the inquiry is not delineated, hence Rule 14 CCS (CCA) Rules, 1965 is followed.

- 323
- (c) **Powers of committee-** The Committee has the powers to recommend to the employer transfer of the aggrieved woman or the charged officer; grant leave to the aggrieved woman up to a period of three months, which is in addition to the leave she would be otherwise entitled to; deduct from the salary or wages of the charged officer such sum as it may consider appropriate to be paid to the aggrieved woman or to her legal heirs.
  - (d) **Relief to aggrieved woman during pendency of inquiry-** During the pendency of the inquiry, the aggrieved woman being vulnerable may need to be protected from the respondent in view of the same the Section 12 of the Sexual Harassment Act of 2013 makes provision for the committee to exercise its powers on the written request of the woman for her transfer or that of the respondent to any other workplace. Thus in consonance with Section 12, in a fresh set of instructions, the Centre has stated that the Complaint Committee examining a sexual harassment complaint will have the power to recommend- as initial relief- a three-month paid leave for the aggrieved woman, which will not be deducted from her leave account. The Committee will also have the authority to recommend the transfer of the complainant or the accused to another workplace.
  - (e) **Minutes-** It is important to prepare minutes of the proceedings of every meeting of the complaints committee. The minutes should contain the date of meeting and serial number so that it is possible to gauge the number of meetings held during the inquiry. The minutes should also contain names of members present along with their signature. The Complaints Committee has the power to issue interim directions, at any stage if the need arises.
  - (f) **Confidentiality-** As per Section 16 of the Sexual Harassment Act of 2013 the identity and addresses of the aggrieved woman, respondent and the witness, information relating to conciliation and inquiry proceedings, recommendations of the committee, and action taken by the employer are confidential and not to be published.

All information received in the course of the examination and inquiry into a complaint of sexual harassment shall be held in trust by the committee and the same are not available pursuant to an application under the Right to Information Act, 2005. Such information shall constitute an exception under Section 8 (e) of the Right to Information Act, 2005, as the same is held by the committee in a fiduciary relationship and the non-disclosure of the same will not be against public interest. To the contrary disclosure of such information may endanger the life or physical safety of the complainant or any of the witnesses. An exception to this rule can be in the circumstances when the complainant herself applies for information under the Right to Information Act, 2005.

(1/27/24)

### 3 THE PROCEDURE

#### i) *Step 1- Statement of Woman*

In a regular disciplinary inquiry, there is only one party against whom the disciplinary authority or inquiry authority, as case may be, draws up the substance of the imputations of misconduct, into definite and distinct articles of charge, as per procedure given in Rule 14(3) CCS CCA Rules, 1965. However, in case of sexual harassment at workplace there are two parties, the aggrieved and respondent, hence the woman's complaint itself may form the statement of the imputation of misconduct or misbehavior.

#### ii) *Step 2- Article of Charges*

The CCS CCA Rules provide that complaint itself may be treated as the Article of Charges or Charge Sheet, however there is no prohibition for specific charge sheet to be made on the basis of complaints.

The purpose of framing a charge sheet is to give intimation to the respondent of clear, unambiguous and precise notice of what was alleged against him, subsequent to which he gets an opportunity of defending himself against the allegations. Hence formulating the charges not only helps the committee in deciding the matter, but in cases of appeal makes it easier for the Court to remain focused on the questions of law and facts, which it is called upon to decide.

#### iii) *Step 3- Written Statement of Respondent*

Often, members of the complaint committee not being well versed with legal procedures are apprehensive of communicating with the respondent, and informing him of the charges against him or not. Rule of natural justice provides that no man can be condemned unheard and that justice should not only be done but manifestly appear to have been done. Accordingly the respondent is to be provided a copy of the complaint, articles of charge, the statement of the imputations of misconduct or misbehavior and a list of documents and witnesses.

**Note:** Do not forget that the respondent also has rights and is innocent till proven guilty. He has a right to due process, fair treatment and access to process consistent with the principle of natural justice. These rights cannot be forfeited, however severe the alleged misconduct may be.

Hence, the respondent should be given a specified time to respond and submit a written statement of his defence, and to state whether he desires to be heard in person. Implicit in the process is the respondent's right to-

- (a) Know the charge

- 357
- (d) Impart documents
  - (e) Know the evidence
  - (f) Cross examine the witness
  - (g) Lead evidence

iv) **Step 4- Plead guilty or innocent**

On receipt of the written statement of defence, there are two options-

1. Either the respondent admits to the charges against him or
2. The respondent does not admit to the charges

In the first case, wherein the respondent has admitted to the charges against him in his written statement of defence, in such circumstances according to Rule 14(5) (a) of CCS (CCA) Rule the complaints committee shall record its findings on each charge after taking such evidence shall act in the manner laid down in rule 14 (5)(a).

If no written statement of defence is submitted by the government employee, then the complaints committee may itself inquire into the articles of charge.

A situation can also arise where the respondent, who despite having not admitted to the charges in his written statement, or not having submitted any written statement on appearing before the inquiry committee pleads guilty to the charge. In that condition the inquiring authority shall record the plea, sign the record and obtain the signature of the respondent.

If the charge is not admitted to by the respondent then an inquiry is mandatory. Proceedings initiated under Rule 14 CCS CCA Rules, 1965 cannot be closed by imposing one of the minor penalties after due consideration of the defence submitted by the accused officer. It is obligatory to hold a formal inquiry before coming to a decision about the quantum of penalty.

v) **STEP 5- Non- Cooperation of Respondent**

If respondent fails to appear before the complaints committee within the specified time, omits to plead or produce the evidence, the case shall be adjourned to a later date not exceeding thirty days {Rule 14 (1)(i)(ii)(iii)}. And in case the respondent fails to appear, or give a written defence or cooperate with the complaints committee, then the complaints committee may come to a decision with the available records {Rule 14(20)}.

10/10  
336

The Guidelines also state that the disciplinary authority may also take action without the inquiry if it concludes that it is not reasonably practicable to hold an inquiry. Circumstances where the accused threatens or intimidates witnesses will be considered reasons enough to take action without an inquiry.

Rules provide that for the purpose of proceeding ex-parte, the respondent has to be given three times.

vi) **STEP 6- Examining of witnesses and documents**

Once the written submissions of both the parties i.e. aggrieved woman and respondent are complete, then on the date fixed for the inquiry, the oral and documentary evidence of the parties will be taken and witnesses examined and may be cross-examined. The complaints committee may also put such questions to the witnesses as it thinks fit. The guidelines also state that the charged officer has to be given an opportunity to cross-examine all witnesses that appear on behalf of the prosecution. Failure to do so may result in vitiation of the inquiry. If the complaint appears as a witness, she would also be examined and cross-examined. The inquiry officer may, however, disallow questions which are offensive, indecent or annoying to the witnesses, including the complainant.

The committee must be conscious to the covert, private and insidious nature of sexual harassment; and take into account the fact that often the aggrieved woman may not be able to lead direct or corroborative evidence. The committee should-

- Not permit any evidence or examination based on the aggrieved woman's character, personal life, and conduct, personal and sexual history.
- Take note of the respective socio-economic positions of the parties, their hierarchy in the organization, the employer-employee equations and other power differences while appreciating the evidence.
- May disallow any questions which it feels are derogatory irrelevant or slanderous to the aggrieved woman.

In order to prove the charges the aggrieved woman and witnesses supporting her case are to be examined first. Although credible evidence given by the aggrieved woman alone may be sufficient to hold the respondent guilty of the offence, yet still it is may be preferable to have corroboration. There is no such rule which says that corroboration is necessary to find the respondent guilty. Given the personal nature of the offence of sexual harassment witness are rarely available to give evidence on behalf of victim.

*Note:* Member of the complaints committee while putting questions should ask not specific

Details of incident- Who, what, when, where and how. Use open-ended questions asking the aggrieved woman to start at the beginning and tell everything that happened. Let her speak before asking specific questions.

- Find out if the complainant let the respondent know that behavior was unacceptable. When and how was that done?
- Determine if there were any witnesses and who they were.
- Find out if there is any documentary evidence against the respondent in the form of letters, text messages, email or other documentary proof. While oral evidence of the witnesses is noticed with reference to the number of the witnesses such as CW-1 (Complaint Witness) or RW-1 (Respondent Witness); the documentary evidence likewise is mentioned with reference to the number of documents as they are exhibited such as Ex. C-1 (Exhibit) or Ex-1 or simply as Annexure 1 or 2 and so on.
- To get both sides of the story put the same questions to the respondent.
- Then try to verify the statement of the complainant and respondent by asking their witness questions like- What did you see or hear? When did this occur? Describe the alleged harasser's behavior toward the complainant and toward others in the workplace. When and what did the complainant tell you?
- When the case for the aggrieved woman is close, the respondent shall be required to state his defence, and the witnesses produced by the respondent shall then be examined and shall be liable to cross-examination, re-examination by the aggrieved woman. (Rules 14 (17)).
- Witness statements recorded are required to be signed by them on each page and on last page after putting ROAC (Read over and found correct). The statement also to be signed by Presiding Officer of the ICJ. The general practice is to give copies of statements recorded to both the parties.

**vii) OPTIONAL STEP- Final written briefs**

The inquiring Authority may, after the completion of the production of evidence permit the aggrieved woman and respondent to file written briefs of their respective case, if they so desire. (Rule 14 (19))



## **OPTIONAL STEP- Interim directions, where ever necessary.**

The committee has the power to issue interim orders as provided in the 2013 Act on the demand of either the aggrieved woman or any witness giving evidence in her support, to implement such measures as transfer, changing shifts etc. of either the complainant, witness or respondent; granting of leave to the complainant so as to protect the complainant and witnesses against victimization and discrimination and mental or physical distress; or any other such interim orders as may be deemed necessary to ensure the safety of the complainant or witness. According to the recent guidelines, issued by the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), a government servant accused of sexual harassment:

- May also be placed under suspension before or after issue of a charge sheet where his continuance in office will prejudice the investigation, or
- If there is an apprehension that he may temper with witnesses or documents.
- Suspension may also be resorted to where continuance of the government servant in office will be against wider public interest, like if there is a public scandal and it is necessary to place the government servant under suspension to demonstrate the policy of the government to deal strictly with officers involved in such scandals. It may be desirable to resort to suspension in case of misdemeanor involving acts of moral turpitude.

## **C) THE INQUIRY REPORT**

After the conclusion of the inquiry, the next step is preparation of the inquiry report. The complaints committee shall prepare an inquiry report containing the articles of charge and the statement of the imputations of misconduct or misbehavior; the defence of Respondent, assessment of the evidence and the finding on each article of charge, supported by reasons. The purpose of this Inquiry Report is to assist the disciplinary authority, by providing an impartial and professional assessment of the nature of sexual harassment, and the impact of the respondent's offending behavior on the workplace, the risk of re-offending, and the interventions necessary to reduce that risk; and most importantly, it forms the basis for taking disciplinary/punitive action against the respondent.

In simple words the inquiry report brings out correct facts of the case. after conducting an impartial and fair hearing inquiry, in accordance with the prescribed procedure. The report should clearly and in unambiguous language state the reasons for deciding in favour of the complainant or for refusing

325

1. An Inquiry Officer should appear in the Court to perform the following functions before recording the conclusions in the form of a Report:

1. To bring on record all documents in support of the charges and those permitted for the defence.
2. To record oral testimony of the complainant and the respondent/defence witnesses after subjecting them to cross-examination.
3. To examine the respondent after the evidence has been recorded, the purpose being to not elicit defences from the respondent on the evidence against him.
4. To analyse the evidence recorded by him and make correct and proper assessment of the effect of total evidence on record.
5. To write a reasoned report of inquiry giving pointed findings whether the charges are proved or not proved.

#### (i) Status of Inquiry Report

As clarified by the Supreme Court in the case of Medha Kotwal Lele, the Committee constituted as a redressal mechanism for complaints of sexual harassment, will be deemed to be an inquiry authority for the purposes of CCS (CCA) Rules and the Report of the Committee shall be deemed to be an inquiry report under the CCS (CCA) Rules. The disciplinary authority will act on the report of the Committee against Sexual Harassment in accordance with the Rules.

#### (ii) Findings

The Inquiry Report may come up with following three types of findings:-

- Charges are proved. In which case the Inquiry Report should contain action to be taken as per service rules of the respondent and/or deduct an amount from the salary as the ICC may deem appropriate to be given to the aggrieved woman.
- Allegations not proved. In which case the matter may be closed concluding no further action required. If the allegations have not been proved, it does not mean that the sexual harassment did not occur, but that there was not sufficient proof on record to prove a case of sexual harassment and ICC may recommend steps to be taken by employer to create a gender friendly environment at the workplace and take corrective actions.
- Complaint is malicious. In which case the matter may be referred for taking action in accordance with the service rules. Act provides that the in case the complaint is found to be malicious the action may be taken against the aggrieved woman as per the service Rules.

## (i) Format

An Inquiry Report is an expression of the ultimate opinion of the committee, which is rendered after due consideration of evidence and arguments, advanced before the Committee. The inquiry report puts a final end to the controversy involved in the matter, so that the dispute brought before the Committee by the aggrieved woman is set at rest.

The recommended essentials are as under:-

- a) *Title page*- The title page should at the outset identify the names of the parties, and the case which is being decided should be serial numbered. The date of the complaint should be mentioned at the top of the report, along with the relevant reference number, if any. This should be followed by the names of the Internal Complaints Committee members, their title, and designation.

The title page is important for it indicates as to which matter the inquiry report pertains to, and by whom it has been decided by/ which committee. The date of delivery of the Inquiry report to the parties should also be mentioned.

- b) *Nature of allegation*- The report should begin with nature of allegation followed by a background information, and statements of both the aggrieved woman and respondent. In doing so, efforts of the Presiding Officer should be to note every relevant fact, but at the same time, there should be no repetition and unnecessary facts should be omitted.
- c) *Respondent's defence*- The Respondent's defence may be noted in detail as made before the ICC. No editing or modification should be made therein.
- d) *Charges and points for determination*- The Presiding Officer may thereafter proceed to decide the charges, in the order they are framed. Findings should be recorded charge-wise. Arguments of each party should be discussed with reference to their evidence relevant to the charge in the question. The Presiding Officer should record his finding on each of the charges by supplying his own reasons and giving logic for his doing so and not just by accepting the case of one party or rejecting that of the other. Findings on each of the points should be recorded in such a manner that they remain cohesive and linked to each other.
- e) *Reasons*- Findings recorded by the Presiding Officer on the charges, for or against any party should always be supported by clearly explained reasons. Every party has the right to know how, and for what reasons has the matter been decided, in favour of or against, either of the parties. Reasons are also necessary for the reason that during an appeal, the appellate court will be in position to appreciate the view point taken by the Committee in deciding the matter, the way it has done.

Government is considered integral part of the principles of natural justice. In fact, right to know the reasons of a decision is inherent in the right of appeal. A Presiding Officer ought not to merely decide a case just by saying "dismissed" or "allowed" without giving the reasons how as to how "she" (the ICC is headed by a woman) came to that conclusion.

The Inquiry Report is the most important document which the Committee hands out to the seeker of justice; therefore, the reasons that it contains assume significance.

f) *Conclusion and recommendations for corrective action*- The operative part of the Inquiry Report comprises the conclusion and recommendations for corrective action as to whether sexual harassment occurred; along with the supporting rationale for disciplinary action. Where disciplinary action or termination is warranted the Presiding Officer should ensure that the recommendation is appropriate, and reflects the seriousness of the offense, and is not reactionary.

g) *Disciplinary action recommended*- Once the inquiry is completed, the Committee has to determine what disciplinary action is recommended to be taken against the respondent. A balance has to be found to ensure that the aggrieved woman should not suffer any adverse consequences, and conversely, it should not be assumed that a finding of misconduct will always be sufficient to establish "cause" for termination. Each incident should be reviewed based on the following factors-

- The severity of the misconduct
- The employee's prior work history (progressive discipline)
- Are there mitigating circumstances (ask the employee)
- Are human rights defences raised
- Is there a contravention of a separate policy or collective agreement.
- Assess the impact of the termination vis-à-vis the impact of retaining the employee
- The cost of termination

The complaints committee in the Inquiry report can recommend penalties ranging from 'censure' to dismissal' as per Rule 11 of the CCS (CCA) Rules, 1965 'for good and sufficient reasons'. Penalties classified as major and minor penalties that can be recommended to be imposed on a Government servant, are as under:-

Handwritten initials and number 332 in a circle.

### Minor Penalties

- i) Censure;
- ii) Withholding of promotion;
- iii) Recovery from his pay any pecuniary loss caused to the Government by negligence or breach of orders;
- iv) Reduction to a lower stage in the time-scale of pay by one stage for a period not exceeding three years, but without cumulative effect and not adversely affecting his pension.
- v) Withholding of increments of pay;

### Major Penalties-

- vi) Reduction to a lower stage in the time-scale of pay for a specified period, with further directions as to whether or not the Government servant will earn increments of pay during the period of such reduction and whether on the expiry of such period, the reduction will or will not have the effect of postponing the future increments of his pay;
- vii) Reduction to lower time-scale of pay, grade, post or Service for a specified period, which shall be a bar to the promotion of the Government servant during such specified period
- viii) Compulsory retirement;
- ix) Removal from service;
- x) Dismissal from service.
  - 1. Reversion of a Government servant, appointed on probation to any other Service, grade or post;
  - 2. Replacement of the services of a Government servant, whose services had been borrowed from a State Government or any authority;
- h) *Signature*- The end of the Inquiry Report should have the signatures of the Presiding Officer and all the members of the Committee. Each person's typed written name should be in brackets along with designation and date of signing.

333

The Sexual Harassment Act of 2013 has a strict time frame of 90 days for completion of inquiry as provided in Section 11 (4) being well aware that undue delays and faulty disposal are not an option in government.

#### D) REPORTING OF RESULTS OF AN INQUIRY - TIME FRAME

As per Section 13 of the 2013 Act, on the completion of an inquiry under the Act, the Internal Committee is required to provide a report of its findings to the employer within a period of ten days from the date of completion of the inquiry. It is also mandatory to provide the Inquiry Report to both the aggrieved woman and respondent.

In case the committee finds that the allegations have been proved, it shall recommend to the employer to take action for sexual harassment as a misconduct in accordance with the provisions of the service rules applicable to the respondent or to deduct, from the salary or wages of the respondent such sum as it may consider appropriate to be paid to the aggrieved woman.

In the event of the aggrieved woman expiring during the Inquiry, her legal heirs are entitled to the compensation amount recommended by the committee.

#### E) PENALTY

In most situations, the powers for imposing major penalties are generally entrusted to the Appointing Authorities, in view of Article 311 clause (1) which provides that no one can be dismissed or removed from service by an authority subordinate to the Authority which appointed him. Thus the Appointing authorities who are also disciplinary authorities in the government, shall on receiving the inquiry report impose the recommended penalty on the respondent, within the prescribed time period.

#### F) COMPENSATION

The purpose of compensation is to, as far as possible, put the woman in the place she would have been if the sexual harassment had not existed. Sexual harassment has been recognized as a form of discrimination and the law provides entitlement to the aggrieved woman for the consequences of the discriminatory action. As per Section 15 of the Act, the Committee for the purpose of determining the sum to be paid to the aggrieved woman, it shall take into regard the following-

- a) the mental and suffering;
- b) the loss in the career opportunity;

H/334

- c) medical expenses incurred by the victim;
- d) the income and financial status of the respondent;
- e) feasibility of such payment in lump sum or in installments.

**G) WHERE SEXUAL HARASSMENT AMOUNTS TO CRIMINAL OFFENCE**

Where the conduct of sexual harassment amounts to a specific offence under the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860) or under any other law; it shall be the duty of the ICC to immediately inform the complainant of her right to initiate action in accordance with law with the appropriate authority, and to give advice and guidance regarding the same.

She should be informed of her rights and the fact that any such action or proceedings initiated shall be in addition to proceedings initiated and /or any action taken under the Act by the ICC.

It can be concluded that the Act imposes a solemn responsibility on the ICC to conduct an inquiry into a complaint of sexual harassment. Taking into consideration the amended CCS CCA Rules 1965 which provide the procedure for conducting an inquiry in government offices, including recording of statement, articles of charges, written statement of respondent, examination of witnesses and documents, hence it can be concluded that conducting an effective inquiry plays a vital role in providing women a safe and enabling environment to work, and members of the ICC share the responsibility for not only providing relief to the aggrieved woman, but also in prevention and elimination of sexual harassment in the workplace.

## DAY 2 - SESSIONS 4 & 5

<b>SESSION 4 &amp; 5</b>	MOCK SESSION TO UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF PRESIDING OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE (ICC)
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	To understand the technique of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliciting facts of the case from the aggrieved woman, the delinquent official and other colleagues by putting forth right kind of questions;</li> <li>• Prepare a report to be submitted to the Head of the Department.</li> </ul>
<b>CONTENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questioning Technique</li> <li>• Technique to understand communication loss</li> <li>• Avoidance of bias</li> <li>• Unbiased approach</li> </ul>
<b>DURATION</b>	120 minutes
<b>TRAINING METHOD &amp; MATERIAL</b>	Mock Inquiry where the role of aggrieved woman is played by one faculty and the roles of the Presiding Officer and Members of the ICC played by the participants in turn. Debriefing is done by the main faculty - - a practicing lawyer.
<b>LEARNING OUTCOME</b>	The trainees will be able to describe:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to make meaningful, short questions;</li> <li>• How to avoid verbosity;</li> <li>• How to tackle over reactions;</li> <li>• How to break silences by both moderate and coercive ways;</li> <li>• How to steer clear of bias emanated from personal ideas;</li> <li>• How to compile an inquiry report; and</li> <li>• How to communicate the report to the Head of the Department.</li> </ul>



## CASE STUDIES<sup>v</sup>

### CASE-1

- A young researcher is working under a very senior Scientist of very good repute. It has been her dream to work under him. She has sent him at least 3 mails expressing her excitement and pleasure to work under him. She is always ready to take up any assignment/ work given by him, even unrelated to her research. She has even gone to his residence a couple of times. He is middle aged and has family and children. Once when she went to his home, his family was not there and he asked her to stay over and even told her she could sleep in his bedroom. She was taken aback, did not say much but quietly left. Next few days she remained aloof.
- After a week or so, when she met him, he told her she is like his daughter and would never misbehave with her. However, after that incident though he was showing a lot of concern about her when they were by themselves, he has started publicly reprimanding and overtly criticizing her work. She is very disturbed.
- What should she do now? What would you do if this was brought as a complaint before you?

### CASE-2

- A young employee who is 1 year in the Organization speaks to an HR person she is comfortable with and raises issues that she has with her senior who has been her mentor. She says that he has been micro managing her work and also constantly enquires about her through messaging over phone. She also says she does not want to raise a formal complaint.
- The HR person speaks to you, an ICC Member. How would you go about it?

### CASE-3

- You receive a complaint from an employee who is 4 years in the Organization against a very senior employee (Respondent). She says in her complaint that she has been in a relationship with the Respondent, which is an extra marital relationship for him. However, she says it is all over for her and she has made it clear to him, however he has been pursuing and pressurizing her to continue in relationship with him.

---

These cases have been developed by Sowmya Lakshmi Bhat, Advocate & Law Advisor, Joint Convenor - Support Against Sexual Harassment at Workplace (SASHA)

- It is also an internal and popular gossip in the Organization that the Respondent is a flirt. Women generally are not entirely comfortable with him. However, he is very senior in the Organization, and has been a very important, influential person.
- What would you do as ICC?

### 3. Case 4

- There is a contract employee who has been working in the Organization for the past one year. She is young and very friendly with everyone. She is known to dress very well and usually in sleeveless dresses. Also she is known to be partying very often. An employee of the Organization gets friendly with her, and by now everyone knows that the two are very good friends.
- After 2 months she complained to the Committee that he has sexually assaulted and raped her.
- What should the Committee do?