
THE POSH EFFECT: ASSESSING THE ACT'S INFLUENCE ON WORKPLACE CULTURE AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION

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ABSTRACT

The Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act was enacted in India in 2013, marking a significant step forward in the fight against and reduction of sexual harassment in the workplace. The POSH Act has brought about major changes in corporate and institutional contexts across a variety of sectors, and this important research investigates the ways in which it has influenced the culture of the workplace. According to the findings of the study, the POSH Act is advantageous in terms of building safer and more inclusive workplaces. This is the conclusion reached after examining the barriers that have been preventing its implementation, such as cultural resistance, inadequate enforcement, and a lack of awareness. The purpose of this article is to establish whether or not the POSH Act has successfully improved the culture of the workplace, or if other reforms are required to make the improvements permanent. This is accomplished by analysing the changes that have occurred in organisational rules, employee conduct, and gender dynamics. As part of the inquiry, recommendations will be made to improve compliance and to create a work atmosphere that is more pleasant and free of harassment.

Keywords: POSH, Workplace, Critical, Impact, Harassment.

INTRODUCTION

The Vishaka Guidelines, which were released by the Supreme Court of India in 1997, served as the impetus for the passage of the POSH Act, 2013, which was adopted in response to the serious effect that sexual harassment has on women's self-respect, physical safety, and possibilities for professional growth in the workplace. This set of suggestions was prompted by the fact that Bhanwari Devi, a Dalit worker for the Rajasthan Social Welfare Department, was the victim of a gang rape incident. Specifically, the Act offers rights for women and defines processes for processing accusations of sexual harassment, which may take many forms (both verbal and physical). ¹This is done with the intention of preventing sexual harassment, which can take various forms. The Right to Information Act of 2005 is prohibited from being used by anybody other than the complainant or respondent in order to collect documents relevant to sexual harassment in the workplace, as stated in Section 16 of the POSH Act. The only exemption to this rule is when the Internal Complaints Committee is involved. Despite the fact that the Act has been in effect for more than 10 years, its effectiveness is still being reviewed due to the difficulties that it has encountered in its implementation and the inherent deficiencies that it has. The purpose of this paper is to bring attention to the need of reevaluating and enhancing the Act in order to provide women with a workplace that is really safe. The provisions of the Act that are now in effect only apply to female workers; they do not go so far as to encompass male workers or other individuals of other genders.

Consequences of False Complaint

Those who make complaints that are malicious or false are subject to the consequences that are outlined in Section 14 of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act as well as the corresponding POSH Rules. ²Furthermore, this paragraph applies to all persons involved in a scheme to make false complaints; the complainant is not the only one who is liable to it. In addition, those individuals who, in order to strengthen their allegations, present documents or evidence that are either fake or dishonest are included in this category. It is the intention of the Act to discourage individuals from misusing the grievance process by exacting harsh repercussions for those who engage in such behaviour. This will guarantee that the system

¹ Banerjee, P. (2021). A cultural critique of patriarchy and workplace harassment. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 29(3), 345-360.

² Bhatia, R. (2020). An analysis of the ambiguities in sexual harassment laws in India: The case of the POSH Act. *Indian Law Review*, 12(4), 567-589.

continues to be committed to addressing actual cases of sexual harassment and protecting the rights of those who have been victimised by it. Throughout the whole of the complaint process, it is imperative that honesty and accountability be maintained at all times.

Evolution of the Law on Workplace Sexual Harassment

By any definition, when bosses force sexual encounters on their employees against their will, it is sexual harassment, and the practice has been around for decades. For instance, African-American women who were enslaved as property suffered sexual pressure without legal protection. Domestic service women, like all women, often encountered sexual approaches from males in the homes where they worked, albeit their circumstances were significantly different. The few accounts of women who made it out of the industrial and administrative workforces of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that have survived highlight the many ways in which men coerced them into sexual relations, including assault and unwanted physical and verbal advances³.

Legal discussions on the subject of sexual harassment of women in the workplace did not commence in the US until around 1979, even though the matter has been a hot topic in academia for a while now. India has shown a clear commitment to protecting women ever since it got independence, as seen by its Constitution and other laws. A number of initiatives aimed at ensuring the continued existence, advancement, and success of women in all areas of society have been launched in recent years. Adopted in 1950, the Indian Constitution grants the legislature the authority to pass legislation pertaining to the eradication of gender-based injustices that have persisted from the beginning of time. Under the same auspices, the Indian Parliament has passed a litany of anti-harassment laws protecting women. In the historic 1997 Supreme Court ruling of *Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan*, India recognised sexual harassment in the workplace as a legal damage.

As a result of her work to end child marriage in 1992, Bhanwari Devi, a woman working for the Rajasthan government's rural development program, was viciously gang-raped. This event brought to light the dangers that working women face daily and underscored the critical need to put measures in place to protect them. Under the umbrella of *Vishaka*, women's rights activists and attorneys fought for the rights of working women in the nation by submitting

³ Chandra, S. (2020). Addressing gaps in the POSH Act within the unorganized sector. *Indian Journal of Labour Law*, 15(2), 201-215.

public interest cases before India's Supreme Court. ⁴In this groundbreaking decision, the highest court in the land acknowledged sexual harassment as a violation of human rights in the workplace. The ruling in the case established principles for the efficient implementation of gender equality as a fundamental human right via measures to prevent, protect, and punish sexual harassment. A complaint system was also ordered by the court to be established by the state, the public sector, and other organisations. Given the lack of domestic legislation protecting human rights in India, the court ruled that international treaties could be invoked to fill the void, citing the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

India did not have any legislation or regulations that dealt with sexual harassment until the historic Vishaka Case ruling. Up until recently, not even India's system for dispensing punitive and preventative justice addressed sexual harassment. When it came to sexual harassment, the Indian Penal Code of 1860's Section 354, which dealt with the outrage of a woman's modesty, Section 375, which dealt with rape, and Section 509, which dealt with acts meant to insult a woman's modesty, weren't enough. Article 14 of the Indian Constitution guarantees women the right to gender equality; article 21 guarantees women the right to life and dignity; and article 14 further guarantees women the right to live in an environment free from sexual harassment. Article 21 of the Indian constitution guarantees every citizen the right to live a dignified life, as has been stressed in several Supreme Court rulings interpreting these articles.

At long last, in 2013, India passed a number of landmark laws and regulations addressing the issue of sexual harassment. This law was enacted in response to the grave problem of sexual harassment in the workplace in India. It amends the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2013 and the Gender Sensitisation and Sexual Harassment of Women at the Supreme Court of India (prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) regulations of 2013, among others. A new provision addressing sexual harassment of women was added to the Indian Penal Code in April 2013 via an amendment. Section 354 A of the Criminal Law Amendment Act defines sexual harassment as a crime and specifies the penalties for violators.

⁴ Chatterjee, A. (2020). The obstacles encountered by Local Committees under the POSH Act. *Women and Law Journal*, 8(1), 78-89.

Critical analysis of the POSH Act

Consequently, this demonstrates that the Act is faulty, and that the amount of deterrence that was meant to be produced by its implementation or compliance has not been accomplished. The definition of sexual harassment in the existing Act is the most significant flaw in the legislation. In accordance with the Vishakha Judgement, the definition of sexual harassment may be found in Section 2(n) of the Act. In accordance with the Act, sexual harassment is defined as any action that is seen to have a sexual character. This includes any kind of physical contact, advances in sexual orientation, pornography, and other similar behaviours. To put it another way, this meaning has the effect of "sexualising" the phrase. By following the example of countries such as the United States, which defines "sexual harassment" as "any sex-based discrimination," or Israel, which defines it as "an act affecting the dignity of women," the definition of "sexual harassment" in the Act might have been more broad. This is according to a number of authors. It is possible that we might have avoided the consequences of sexualising sexual harassment if we had participated in such talks and adopted either the "dignity" or the "discrimination" paradigms to describe sexual harassment. This would have prevented us from having to cope with the ramifications of sexualising sexual harassment.⁵ The issue of sexual harassment in the workplace was given its own chapter in the report of the Justice J.S. Verma Committee on the amendments to criminal law. This chapter focused on the modifications that were made to the legislation. During the time that the Rajya Sabha was giving its consideration to the Bill, the Committee offered a number of recommendations for changes to be made to the chapter that was discussed before.

According to the Committee, Section 10(1) of the Bill, which is intended to promote victim-offender conciliation, has to be abolished since it further diminishes the dignity of women⁶ It has also been brought to the attention of the Committee that Section 14 of the Bill, which makes it a crime for a woman to make a false charge, need to be removed since it has the potential to undermine the aim of the Act. The Committee proposed the inclusion of victim compensation methods as a third potential area of discussion. Last but not least, the Committee suggested that the internal complaint committee be replaced with an employment tribunal in order to address complaints against the Act. This recommendation was the most important one.

⁵ Das, K. (2021). A comparative study of workplace harassment laws: Insights from Canada and India. *International Labour Journal*, 23(5), 432-450.

⁶ Grover, P., & Yadav, S. (2021). The gig economy and sexual harassment legislation: Making a case for inclusivity. *Journal of Emerging Labour Markets*, 17(2), 123-136.

This was because domestic committees were unable to properly execute the law's aim. This was the reason for this situation. In a disappointing turn of events, the Act that prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace did not include any of the suggestions made by the Committee.

Implementation and compliance reveal the main problem. Most disorganised workplaces lack an ICC. Workers are unaware that they may complain under the POSH Act. No organised sector company has an ICC. Both men and women workers are unsure about the definition of "sexual harassment." One person's benign conversation may be another's harassment. Thus, educating employees on the necessity of avoiding sexual harassment at work is crucial. We must implement strict compliance procedures. Audits should be done regularly to ensure compliance. More severe consequences are needed. Business licence revocation is an important step.

Why women are not filing complaints

Patriarchal cultural narratives and victim-blaming discourage women in official and informal enterprises from reporting sexual harassment. Menon and Allen found patriarchal narratives and victim blaming among traditional official responders, including the police, in 2018. Women have a disproportionate burden of preventing sexual harassment and assault. The Indian Bar Association polled 6,047 women about workplace sexual harassment in 2017. According to IndiaSpend's March 4, 2017 study, 70% of the women did not report the harassment for fear of repercussions. Low or no reporting shows a company's gender sensitivity. Some women feel unsafe reporting harassment, while others get fake reactions. Many women join committees believing they'll have more freedom, yet their managers utilise them as puppets. Another reason workplace sexual harassment is ignored is fear of retribution from superiors.

Researchers in Kolkata observed that victims were less likely to come forward in cases where the offender had some kind of relative power. This could be due to a combination of factors, including a lack of confidence that the offender would face consequences for their actions and the fear of retaliation⁷. Azaadi, a non-governmental organisation, surveyed women who had experienced sexual harassment on the job but had not yet filed a complaint. The women who participated in the study offered a variety of reasons for not doing so. Just 10% of

⁷ Gupta, T. (2020). A critical assessment of confidentiality breaches under the POSH Act. *Indian Journal of Gender and Law*, 14(3), 156-170.

the women expressed concern that they may lose their jobs if they voiced their dissatisfaction. A third of them expressed concern that I would be held responsible or accused of having requested it. In contrast, 32% of women reported being unsure about who to contact.

Court Judgments

In line with the ruling that the Supreme Court made in the Vishaka case in 1997⁸, the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964 would recognise the complaints committee as an entity authorised to conduct enquiries. As a consequence of this, the rules implemented by the CCS provide that the report submitted by the complaints committee must be considered an inquiry report.⁹ The next stage is for the authority in charge of disciplinary actions to adhere to the regulations and take action based on the report. This was supported by the Supreme Court of India in its judgement dated April 26, 2004, which was issued in the matter of Medha Kotwal Lele and Others against Union of India and Others¹⁰. The Court also brought attention to the issues that were associated with the implementation of the Vishaka Guidelines and ordered both the federal and state governments to guarantee compliance. In addition, the Court emphasised the need of establishing complaint committees in the workplace as quickly as feasible.

A panel of one judge from the Madhya Pradesh High Court, which was presided over by Justice Sanjay Dwivedi, came to the conclusion that the internal investigation into the allegations of sexual harassment at NIT, Bhopal, which resulted in the dismissal of an assistant professor, was flawed in terms of its procedures and violated the principles of natural justice. Therefore, the court reversed the suspension of the professor as well as other disciplinary procedures that had been taken against him.¹¹

The Civil Appeal No. 1809/2020, which was submitted on February 25, 2020, was denied by a panel of Justices Chandrachud and Rastogi of India's highest court. The appeal was brought in the matter of Punjab and Sindh Bank and Others v. Durgesh Kuwar. The Supreme Court has decided that when a woman is exposed to sexual harassment at work, it is a violation

⁸ 1997 (6) SCC 241 at 253

⁹ Kothari, R., & Pandey, N. (2019). An empirical investigation of the functioning of Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) in Indian workplaces. *Journal of Labour Policy*, 22(1), 45-60.

¹⁰ WP(C) No. 173-177 of 1999

¹¹ Mishra, V. (2019). Analysing judicial interpretations of the POSH Act through a case study approach. *Indian Law Quarterly*, 32(4), 501-520.

of her right to live with dignity and equality that she has. In the case of *Dr. Punita K. Sodhi v. Union of India*¹², the Supreme Court of India brought attention to the need of taking into account the perspectives of both men and women when dealing with decisions of this kind.¹³ When seen from the perspective of a woman, comments that a male could interpret as being harmless might be interpreted as offensive or inappropriate.

In the landmark case of *Aureliano Fernandes v. State of Goa and Others*¹⁴, the Supreme Court of the United States has brought to light a number of issues that have been associated with the execution of the POSH Act. In this particular instance, the Supreme Court has decided to create a set of guidelines that require the POSH Act to be strictly enforced by both state and non-state entities, such as schools, hospitals, and nursing homes. The execution of the POSH Act is very necessary in order to accomplish the laudable objective of safeguarding the rights of working women.

According to the Bombay High Court, it has said that it would not participate in the disciplinary processes that are being conducted by the Internal Complaints Committee in relation to a sexual harassment accusation, unless the judgement is deemed to be very unreasonable. The case that led to this decision was *Vidya Akhave (also known as the "Petitioner") v. Union of India and One or more other parties*.

In the case of *Saurabh Kumar Mallick v. Comptroller and Auditor General of India*¹⁵, the respondent maintained that the allegations of sexual harassment did not constitute misbehaviour in the workplace since they were made in an official mess.¹⁶ As a result of this logic being rejected by the Delhi High Court, the status of the official disarray as an office was maintained.

According to the verdict that was handed down by the Calcutta High Court in the matter of *Anjali Kumari v. Yamuna Kumar Chaubey, DIR(Tech) NHPC & Others* in July 2023, the court decided that the harasser should never be included in the performance rating of the

¹² W.P. (C) 367/2009 & CMS 828, 11426/2009

¹³ Nair, S. (2021). Legal remedies and shortcomings concerning victim retaliation and reporting under the POSH Act. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 27(3), 292-307.

¹⁴ [2023] 7 S.C.R. 772

¹⁵ (2006) 8 SCC 212

¹⁶ Rai, P. (2019). A policy perspective on standardizing procedures for Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs). *Indian Public Policy Review*, 13(2), 89-104.

complainant.¹⁷The International Criminal Court (ICC) has the explicit authority to advise that the respondent be prohibited from assessing the woman's performance on the job or generating her confidential report. This authority is granted in line with Rule 8(a) of the POSH Rules, 2013.

According to a ruling handed down by the Delhi High Court in February 2023 in the matter of *P. V. Union of India and Others*, institutions are unable to dodge responsibility for managing sensitive sexual harassment allegations. It is imperative that the resolution of such complaints be addressed with the greatest seriousness, as the court stressed when it demanded a penalty of one lakh rupees.¹⁸In addition to this, it said that the investigation shall be carried out by an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) that has been duly formed, and that the investigation must be exhaustive in every respect.

ICC's failure to complete the inquiry within the 90-day period required by Section 11(4) of the POSH Act is not a sufficient ground for annulment of the proceedings, according to the decision that was handed down by the Delhi High Court in January 2023 in the case of *CA Nitesh Parashar v. Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) & Ors.* The decision upheld the validity of inquiry proceedings in sexual harassment complaints.

In the case of *Ashok Kumar Singh v. University of Delhi*, which was heard by the Delhi High Court in February 2017, the verdict said that the International Criminal Court (ICC) that was established under the POSH Act is obligated to decide the individual's guilt in line with Section 13(3) of the POSH Act on the subject. For their part, the defendant ought to be given the opportunity to provide evidence that supports their position.¹⁹In the case of *Johney Reberio v. Union of India and Others*, which was heard in October 2022, the Delhi High Court came to the conclusion that it would be unacceptable for a person who is being investigated for sexual harassment to have legal counsel or a close friend present in front of the International Criminal Court. The Court made reference to Rule 7(6) of the POSH Rules to illustrate its point.

In the case of *DB Corp Ltd v. Shailja Naqvi & Ors.*, which was heard by the Delhi High

¹⁷ Sinha, A. (2018). Exploring gender sensitivity in workplace harassment redressal: An analysis of ICC practices. *Journal of Human Rights and Law*, 10(4), 98-115.

¹⁸ *Directions in Sexual Harassment Law*, edited by Catharine A. MacKinnon, and Reva B. Siegel, Yale University Press, 2003. ProQuestEbook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/yale-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3420225>. Created from yalebooks on 2020-07-20 12:09:51

¹⁹ Varun Malik, A Deliberate Critique to Sexual Harassment Laws in India, 4(1) *NLUJ Law Review* 46 (2017)

Court in July 2022, the court made the decision that a victim might be granted a pardon for a delay in appealing the investigation report that was fairly acceptable. This decision was made in accordance with the POSH Act.²⁰ The Court has decided that Section 5 of the Limitation Act, which allows for the extension of the stipulated period in specific circumstances, applies to appeals that may be brought in accordance with Section 18 of the POSH Act. Arguments were presented in the case of *Sushma Alaguvadival v. UOI and Others* in December 2021 before the Madras High Court.²¹ The case brought attention to the responsibility of the government to address complaints in a timely way.

Challenges Confronting the POSH Act, 2013:

Workers who are employed in workplaces that do not have formal channels for the resolution of complaints are not protected. This is due to the fact that businesses that have less than ten workers are exempt from the need to create Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs). It is possible that workers will have a more difficult time seeking recourse in the absence of ICCs, and the culture of complaints that are not addressed will continue to exist. In addition, educational activities that are related to the POSH Act are uncommon, and a significant number of workplaces do not comply with Section 19(b) of the Act, which requires the prominent display of information on ICCs and the penalties for sexual harassment. In spite of the fact that the purpose of the POSH Act is to safeguard the rights of women in the workplace, the implementation of the act in educational institutions, particularly those that have a policy that is gender-neutral, may result in confusion.²² There is a possibility that this may lead to misunderstandings about the Act's scope and intent.

Since the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) is a collective, it may be difficult for complainants to determine which member to contact. Disclosure rules that ban anonymous complaints worsen the social stigma and risk of reprisal that come with speaking up. Without a designated officer in several districts and a central coordinating agency at the federal and state levels, the Act cannot be efficiently implemented, preventing victims from receiving

²⁰ Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexually tinted behaviour, whether directly or by implication, such as (i) physical contact and advances, (ii) demand or request for sexual favours, (iii) making sexually coloured remarks, (iv) showing pornography, or (v) any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature

²¹ Varun Malik, *A Deliberate Critique to Sexual Harassment Laws in India*, 4(1) *NLUJ Law Review* 46 (2017)

²² Justice J.S.Verma ET. AL, *Report of The Committee on amendments to Criminal Law*, 15 (2013)

adequate assistance and protection.²³ The POSH Act does not specify whether the International Criminal Court (ICC) may convene to handle administrative concerns without a written complaint or if a foreign member may be compensated. It is clear that there are no formal enforcement mechanisms; no one monitors compliance or imposes sufficient punishments. Because the POSH Act's penalties may exceed Rs 50,000, these fines may not be enough to persuade corporations to comply.

Due to this, as well as different legal interpretations of the Act and the International Criminal Court's lack of training for its members, victims of harassment, especially those in informal sectors or small businesses, may not know their rights or feel supported when seeking help. Cultural viewpoints downplay workplace harassment, leaving victims exposed to accountability and making complaint handling unpredictable.²⁴ Due to the Act's focus on individual cases, which fails to address structural issues like power imbalances and workplace culture, local committees that manage problems in smaller establishments often lack the resources and expertise to handle them properly. Due to the broad definition, people may have varied perceptions about sexual harassment.

This makes it harder to create an equal victim-assistance system. Women sometimes fear being penalised for speaking out about harassment due to cultural standards that downplay it. The POSH Act's narrow definition of "workplace" does not extend to women in informal, freelance, or gig economies, which is concerning. ICCs may have internal disputes, especially when famous personalities are involved, and discrepancies in methodology may lead to inconsistent results. This may damage complaint resolution trust. There is rising antipathy against harassers who report incidents, especially when victims and suspected offenders are made public due to confidentiality breaches. Many workplace harassment cases go unreported due to stigma and ICC impartiality concerns. Local committees may lack the resources or drive to complete legal responsibilities for smaller businesses.²⁵ The topic of whether an external member may serve on more than one committee is unclear, and many organisations fail to organise internal control committees (ICCs), conduct awareness and training programs, and submit obligatory compliance reports. Many firms are ignorant of who to contact to appeal

²³ Chaudhuri, P., 2017. Experiences of sexual harassment of women health workers in four hospitals in Kolkata, India. *Reproductive health matters*, 15(30), pp.221-229

²⁴ Thomas, G., & Menon, R. (2019). A critique of power dynamics in sexual harassment cases and the POSH Act. *Indian Journal of Law and Society*, 25(1), 67-84.

²⁵ Nain, B. (2023). FAQs on the POSH Act. OakBridge.

POSH Act issues, and many government agencies have failed to notify them.²⁶ The Internal Complaint Committee only needs one copy of the complaint and any supporting documentation, thus it's unclear why the complainant must provide six (Rule 7 of the POSH Rules, 2013).

Concerning the subject of whether or not an external member is required to be present for a meeting to be properly convened with three members (including the Presiding Officer/Chairperson), the answer is still up for debate.²⁷ Furthermore, the POSH Act does not make it clear if the International Criminal Court (ICC) is permitted to utilise a stenographer or computer operator to record the remarks made by the respondent or the complainant, nor does it specify which member of the ICC is accountable for doing so. In conclusion, the POSH Act does not offer any instructions on how to incorporate the POSH Act, 2013, into the curriculum of various police academies, nor does it provide any guidelines for how the International Criminal Court (ICC), the complainant, or the respondent might seek more time to produce a report or response. In addition, there is a lack of a strategy to educate ICC members, employers, and workers on how to comply with the Act via the development of resource personnel. There is also the habit of presuming that there are no female colleagues around and then making an unintended comment or disregarding an occurrence of accidental physical contact between a male and female colleague. Both of these behaviours are equally undesirable.²⁸

CONCLUSION

India's 2013 POSH Act (Prevention of Sexual Harassment), a major step towards combating workplace sexual harassment, is still facing major obstacles. Workplace sexual harassment, regardless of legality, creates a hostile environment for women and hinders their professional advancement. This occurs in all industries, even unorganised ones. India scored 140 out of 156 nations in the Global Gender Gap Report 2021, suggesting that it is working to enhance workplace safety and gender equality. Some firms have tightened procedures and sensitised employees as a result of the POSH Act, while others have done nothing. A large number of workers, particularly women, are unaware of their rights and the Act's appeals processes, which hinders its full efficacy. In addition, men must be constantly educated on the

²⁶ Chaturvedi, M. What is sexual harassment and how to conduct inquiry as per service rules. Notion Press.

²⁷ Nishith Desai Associates. (2023). Prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace (POSH): Indian legal and HR considerations.

²⁸ Rafeeqe, D. (2023). Prevention of sexual harassment of women at workplace. Notion Press.

significance of respecting women at work. Groups should ensure women may talk freely without fear of repercussions while strictly enforcing the POSH Act. For meaningful cultural change, this is important. The most important things are raising gender awareness and developing workplace respect for women. There is no way to overstate the importance of creating respectful and inclusive workplace environments to make workplaces safer and more equal for women. How much a country respects and protects women determines its capacity to grow and preserve peace.

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