

Sexual Harassment: From Psychological and adoption of Best practices Perspectives

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Sexual harassment has become one of the alarming symptoms of unhealthy work culture in recent times. Irrespective of gender, unsolicited sexual favours represent, among several others, aberration in the individual thought process. Instances of corruption, bribery and other forms of abuse indicate how an individual or a group is prone to exploit others to fulfill one's selfish interest. The underlying thread in all of these exploitations appears to be a distorted conceptualization of self as well as others, within which an individual functions; a world where the person can violate the ethical boundary with ease, since his/her own interest is supreme and all other things become immaterial. Integral to this belief system, is an intrinsic disregard to the right of others to live with dignity. This paper focuses on the adoption and implementation of organisational best practices at workplace for the safety and prevention of sexual harassment. A mass sensitization regarding basic conceptualization of self and others is what is emphasized in this paper. The stimulation of individual mind is the first step in this regard. An opportunity to reflect about self as well others can help an individual to start looking within and restructure his/her own belief system. It can lead to an enhanced perspective-taking ability, through which the appreciation of self as well as others develops, leading to the formation of a healthy belief system. Therefore, people can be helped to become increasingly conscious of the basic fact that each individual is an independent free spirit having equal right to enjoy life with dignity. The growth of a belief system, that has an aroused sense of mutual right and duty to uphold the spirit of freedom, can be an asset to any work culture that aspires to become secure and productive.

Key words: Sexual harassment, workplace, belief system, sensitization, best practices

Citation:

Patnaik, B and Gunjal, B (2016). *Sexual Harassment: Psychological Perspectives and Best Practices*; National Seminar on "Sexual harassment of Women at Educational Institutes (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), Organised by Committee Against Sexual Harassment, Hemachandracharya North Gujarat University, Patan and Sponsored by National Commission for Women, New Delhi; 7-8 January, 2016, Patan, Gujarat.

Sexual Harassment: Psychological Perspectives and Best Practices

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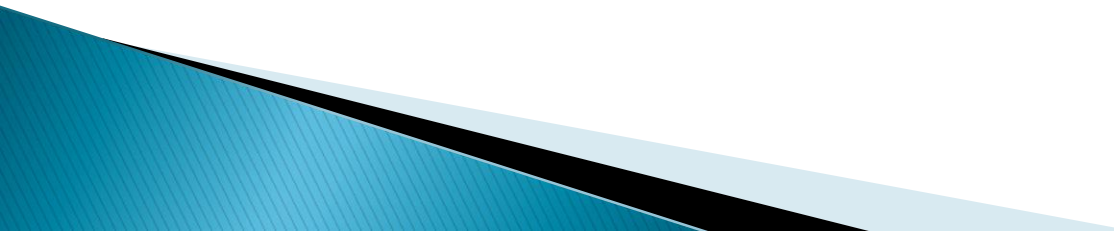
National Seminar on “Sexual harassment of Women at Educational Institutes (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), 7–8 January, 2016, Patan, Gujarat

Organised by

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Introduction

- ▶ Sexual harassment has become one of the alarming symptoms of unhealthy work culture in recent times.
 - ▶ Instances of corruption, bribery and other forms of abuse indicate how an individual or a group is prone to exploit others to fulfil one's selfish interest.
- 

Aberration of thought

- ▶ The underlying thread in all of these exploitations appears to be a distorted conceptualization of self as well as of others, within which an individual functions
- ▶ Irrespective of gender, unsolicited sexual favours represent, among several others– an aberration in the individual thought process.

Individual belief system

- ▶ Integral to this belief system, is an intrinsic disregard to the right of others to live with dignity.
- ▶ Lack of perspective-taking

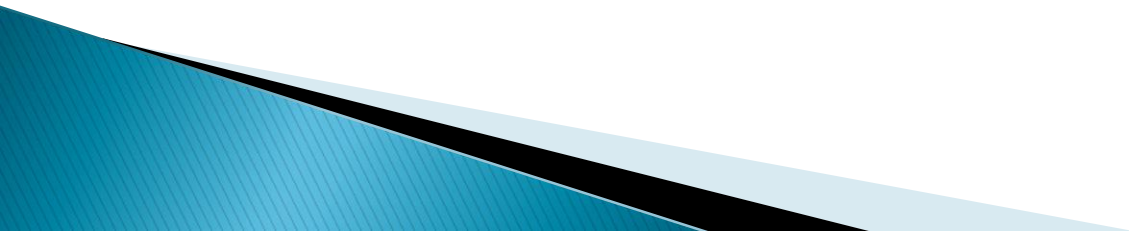
Reflection about self

- ▶ Skilled Incompetence:
 - ▶ "skilled" because they act without thinking
 - ▶ "incompetent" because their skill produces unintended results.
- ▶ the first step of reflection is recognizing and correcting what's wrong.

Mass Sensitization Programs

- ▶ Prevention of sexual harassment presupposes Mass sensitisation programs to be carried out for people to create awareness.

An opportunity to reflect about self as well others can help an individual to start looking within and restructure his/her own belief system

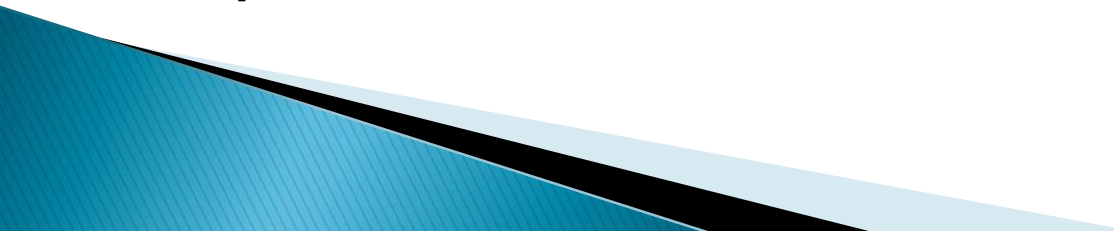


Mass Sensitization Contd.

- ▶ People can be helped to become increasingly conscious of the basic fact that each individual is an independent free spirit having equal right to enjoy life with dignity.
- ▶ The growth of a belief system, that has an aroused sense of mutual right and duty to uphold the spirit of freedom, can be an asset to any work culture that aspires to become secure and productive.



Training on Perspective-taking

- ▶ An opportunity to reflect about self as well others can help an individual to start looking within and restructure his/her own belief system.
 - ▶ It can lead to an enhanced perspective-taking ability, through which the appreciation of self as well as others develops.
 - ▶ It can lead to the formation of a healthy belief system within an individual
- 

Permanent change

- ▶ Awareness can create a temporary change.
- ▶ However, training to develop a reflective orientation is likely to bring a lasting change by reorganization of individual's belief system

Best Practices

Some of the best practices may be adopted to create awareness to act as preventive measures are:

- ▶ Creating a website by adding content related to ICC such as
 - Slogans, Latest news & announcements, events, FAQs, Useful links, etc.
 - Complaint Form
- ▶ Sign/Display boards across the campus
- ▶ Awareness programs
- ▶ Conducting Seminars/Workshops
- ▶ A note on ICC can be covered in Prospectus and Brochures
- ▶ Many more

Screenshots from Pilot website are shown below which is under review and yet to be released.



ICC Homepage



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Welcome to the site of 'Internal Complaint Committee'...

This website is designed to receive the Internal Complaints from the students and faculty of National Institute of Technology Rourkela who have anytime faced the misconduct with them by anyone. The complaint received through this website will be evaluated by a group of people which constitutes the Internal Complaint Committee for honest judgment.

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Committee Members: Internal Complaint Committee (ICC):

The following committee is constituted as the Internal Complaints Committee of the Institute under section 4 (2) of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Work place (Prevention, prohibition and redressal) Act, 2013.

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Associate Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Science (HS), NIT Rourkela

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3. Prof. R.K. Patel, Member, Internal Complaint Committee (ICC)

Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry (CY), NIT Rourkela

Phone: 0661-2462652

4. Dr. Bhojaraju Gunjal, Member Secretary, Internal Complaint Committee (ICC)

Deputy Librarian, Biju Patnaik Central Library, NIT Rourkela

Phone: 0661-2462101

5. Mrs. Rashmibala Routray, Ex- D.I. of Schools, Member, Internal Complaint Committee (ICC)

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Frequently Asked Questions:

1. When was the Sexual harassment of women at workplace (prevention, prohibition & redressal) Act 2013 passed?

2. What are the objectives of the said Act?

3. What is sexual harassment?

The Act in its Section 2n, defines sexual harassment. Sexual harassment includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviour (whether directly or by implication), namely

- Physical contact and advances, or
- A demand or request for sexual favours, or
- Making sexually coloured remarks, or
- Showing pornography, or
- Any other unwelcome physical, verbal, non verbal conduct of sexual nature

Section 3 (2) of the Act further elaborates that if any of the following circumstances occurs or is present in relation to or connected with any act or behavior of sexual harassment among other circumstances, it may amount to sexual harassment-

- Implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in her employment, or
- Implied or explicit threat of detrimental treatment in her employment, or
- Implied or explicit threat about her present or future employment status, or
- 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

4. Who is an aggrieved woman according to the Act?

5. What is the meaning of a respondent?

6. What is workplace according to the Act?

7. Who is an employee?

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INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE

COMPLAINT FORM

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2. Roll No. / Employee Code:
3. Department:
4. Description of the Complaint:
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