

## Sexual Harassment Cell

It is high time for workplaces across India to bring in concrete steps to safeguard their women employees against sexual harassment. Implementing a sexual harassment complaints cell at the workplace would possibly be a first and foremost step to recognize the issue of women safety. With the enforcement of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 from 9 December 2013 it is recommended for any small or medium sized business, which hires women employees to have its own set up of a sexual harassment complaints cell at the workplace. It is equally true for educational institutions. It includes appointment of a committee, which consists mostly of female members who have been well mentored for their roles and responsibilities. It would be good if a counselor could also be hired exclusively to help in devising company policies for women. The functioning of the committee is autonomous so that no bias, prejudice, or even favoritism could arise while dealing with issues of sexual harassment. The autonomy would also help the cell to make quicker decisions and to resolve issues. Separate physical premises to the cell's functions are dedicated. However, all the functioning of the committee is performed in the principal's chamber. Typically, the sexual harassment cell has its own separate presence in the office wherein the records of women employees, and students their emergency contact numbers, addresses, blood groups and other relevant information are maintained meticulously while also being easily available. The statement of purpose and vision of the sexual harassment cell are framed based on the governmental and social guidelines. Furthermore, it is clearly elucidated and communicated to all the employees. This introductory session seek to work on recognizing the problem of sexual harassment, what constitutes sexual harassment, how to deal with it while also talking about the measures the institution takes in taking care of people in such cases. There is a periodic discussion between the committee members and other women employees over the safety and security issues that they face and how best that they could be tackled. The women harassment cell also conduct sessions for women employees to be more confident and to counsel them to not have any stigma attached from reporting a case of sexual harassment. It would also be an innovative venture for the company to have periodic classes on self-defense for its women employees or some female centric events. The college ensures that all employees understand the policies & procedures for dealing with harassment. Actions are taken to eliminate discriminatory jokes, posters, graffiti, e-mails and photos at the work site. The college takes sufficient measures to identify the harasser immediately and warns that his/her action is of offensive nature. Any victim may complain in writing to the Principal or to 'Prevention against sexual harassment cell' which would be kept confidential. Contact number of the Coordinator members of the Cell is given below: 1. Prof. Prosenjit Mukherjee (9830158191) 2. Dr. Nilanjana Sengupta (9433111272)

Other members include Dr. Barnana Bhowmik, Dr. Debashri Das, Prof. Shnaoli Seal, Dr. Suparna Banerjee, Dr. Satyajit Halder, Dr. Md. Sabdar Rahaman, Prof. Prakash Palit., Sri Ujjal Banerjee (Secretary, NTS) and Sri Somnath Karmakar (G.S. Students' Union)

Eventually setting up a sexual harassment complaints cell and implementing it by a company would not only help keep its female employees safe and secure but it would also build their confidence while showing them in a genuine manner that their company truly values their presence in the company and their work.