



PRESS RELEASE

NCW National Consultation Discusses Gig Workers, Digital Harassment and Institutional Reforms Under the POSH Act

New Delhi | 18 July, 2026: The National Commission for Women (NCW) concluded its two-day National Program on the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act) at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on 17–18 July 2026. The Program comprised a National Awareness Program on 17 July and a National Consultation on 18 July, bringing together policymakers, members of the judiciary, senior law officers, representatives of constitutional and statutory bodies, academia, law enforcement agencies, industry, financial institutions, Internal Committees (ICs), Local Committees (LCs), HR professionals and civil society to deliberate on strengthening the implementation of the POSH Act and building safer, more inclusive workplaces for women across the country.

The inaugural session of the National Awareness Program was graced by Hon'ble Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt. Annapurna Devi, and Hon'ble Chairperson, National Commission for Women, Smt. Vijaya Rahatkar. During the Program, the Commission released a comprehensive handbook titled “Inquiry Procedures for Internal Committees (ICs) and Local Committees (LCs) under the POSH Act,” developed to provide practical guidance for conducting fair,

timely, transparent and legally compliant inquiries into complaints of workplace sexual harassment. The handbook seeks to strengthen institutional capacity by bringing greater clarity, consistency and transparency to inquiry proceedings.

Building upon the Awareness Program, the Commission convened the National Consultation on 18 July, marking the culmination of an extensive consultative process undertaken across the country. The Consultation was informed by the findings of three Regional Consultations conducted earlier in Visakhapatnam, Ranchi and New Delhi. It brought together retired judges of the Delhi High Court, Additional Solicitors General of India, senior advocates, representatives of national statutory commissions, law universities, industry, financial institutions, HR leaders, POSH practitioners and policymakers to deliberate on strengthening the implementation of the POSH Act and its Rules.

In her address, Hon'ble Chairperson, NCW, Smt. Vijaya Rahatkar, said that the POSH Act is not merely a legal framework but an instrument of trust that assures every working woman that her dignity, rights and aspirations will be protected. She emphasised that the identity of a progressive society is reflected in the safety and respect it accords to its women, and observed that as workplaces evolve through hybrid work models, digital communication, remote work and artificial intelligence, institutional mechanisms, workplace policies and legal responses must evolve accordingly. She further stressed that awareness, prevention and institutional sensitivity remain the strongest pillars of workplace safety.

The National Consultation deliberated extensively on several emerging issues requiring policy attention. These included extending workplace protections to gig workers, platform workers, home-based workers and contract workers; addressing sexual harassment in digital workplaces, including through emails, professional

messaging platforms, virtual meetings, social media and AI-generated content; strengthening the effectiveness and independence of Internal Committees, including issues relating to the financial support and functioning of External Members; addressing implementation challenges in co-working and co-sharing office spaces, sports academies and athletic institutions, and housing societies; improving institutional accountability, monitoring mechanisms and procedural timelines; and ensuring that the law remains responsive to the changing nature of work and workplaces.

Participants emphasised that creating safe workplaces requires more than legal compliance. They underscored the need for continuous capacity building, stronger institutional accountability, greater awareness, robust grievance redressal mechanisms and collaborative efforts among employers, institutions and stakeholders to foster workplaces founded on dignity, equality and mutual respect.

The Commission informed that the deliberations and recommendations emerging from the National Consultation, together with the inputs received during the Regional Consultations and nationwide stakeholder engagements, will be consolidated into a comprehensive Recommendation Report for submission to the Government of India to further strengthen the implementation framework of the POSH Act and its Rules.

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