

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2519
ANSWERED ON 03.08.2026

HARASSMENT OF WOMEN RESEARCH SCHOLARS IN UNIVERSITIES

2519 Sh. Giridhari Yadav:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the increasing incidents of mental, physical and sexual exploitation/harassment of research scholars, particularly women research scholars, by their guides/supervisors and others in Government and Private Universities;
- (b) if so, the impact of these incidents on women research scholars and the major reasons behind them;
- (c) the status of Internal Complaints Committees (ICC) under the UGC (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2015 and the POSH Act, 2013, including the number of complaints received and disposed off;
- (d) whether the Government proposes any additional measures to prevent exploitation of research scholars, such as mentoring guidelines, digital complaint portals, stricter penalties and special safeguards for women, if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the time by which these measures are likely to be implemented?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR)

(a) to (c) The Government is committed to ensuring a safe, secure and gender-sensitive environment in all Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs). In compliance with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, UGC has notified UGC (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2015, which, being statutory in nature, are binding on Universities and Colleges. The said Regulations apply to all Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) across the country. The UGC Regulations decisively oppose all forms of sexual harassment against women employees and students of all sexes in HEIs, and provide the mechanism of prevention, prohibition, and redressal of sexual harassment of women employees and students, including research scholars. "Student" means a person duly admitted and pursuing a programme of study either

through regular mode or distance mode. Consequently, research scholars are already covered under the existing regulatory framework.

According to the UGC Regulations, 2015, every HEI is mandated to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) for receiving and inquiring into complaints of sexual harassment and prescribes detailed procedures for filing, inquiry and disposal of complaints in a time-bound manner. According to this framework, the respective HEIs conduct the awareness and gender sensitisation programmes, submit their Annual Returns on complaints of sexual harassment in compliance with UGC Regulation, 2015. As per the available information, all the UGC-funded Central Universities have constituted Internal Complaints Committee in accordance with UGC Regulations.

(d) & (e) UGC has also undertaken various initiatives to ensure strict compliance with the mandates related to the constitution and functioning of Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) in all Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs). The key initiatives are as follows: -

(i) SAKSHAM Portal: Developed to empower women by providing support and information on redressal mechanisms, and promoting gender justice and equality.

(ii) Issue of periodical advisory to all HEIs regarding:

- Constitution of ICCs and Special Women's Cells
- Display of banners and posters
- Display of names and contact details of ICC members
- Installation of billboards highlighting penal consequences and women helpline numbers

Additionally, institutions are requested to submit an annual return on cases of sexual harassment and complete the online Gender Audit compliance through the SAKSHAM Portal.

(iii) Toll-Free Number: A toll-free number (1800-111-656) provided by UGC for registering grievances related to women and sexual harassment.

(iv) Guidelines for Basic Facilities and Amenities: Issued in light of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the guidelines titled “Basic Facilities and Amenities for a Safe, Secure Environment for Women and Women Cells (for sensitization, policy implementation, monitoring, and grievance redressal) in HEIs” emphasize that providing a safe, secure, and violence-free environment—particularly for women students—is the utmost responsibility of institutions.
