

Two day National Awareness Programme on POSH Act begins at Vigyan Bhawan

Strengthening workplace safety is fundamental to increasing women's participation in the workforce and achieving inclusive national development: Smt. Annpurna Devi

Booklet on Inquiry Procedures for Internal and Local Committees released

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The two day National Commission for Women's (NCW) National Awareness Programme on *The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013* began today at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt. Annpurna Devi, was the Chief Guest on the occasion. Organised by the National Commission for Women, the programme brought together senior government officials, legal experts, representatives of Internal and Local Committees, civil society organisations and other stakeholders to strengthen awareness and implementation of the POSH Act.



Addressing the gathering, Smt. Annpurna Devi said that ensuring safe, dignified and inclusive workplaces is essential for realising the vision of Women-led Development. She emphasised that every woman has the right to work with dignity and without fear, and that creating a safe work environment is a shared responsibility of governments, employers and institutions. She noted that strengthening workplace safety is fundamental to increasing women's participation in the workforce and achieving inclusive national development.

The Minister highlighted several initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to strengthen implementation of the POSH Act. She said these initiatives are helping organisations better understand their legal responsibilities and establish effective institutional mechanisms for prevention and redressal of workplace sexual harassment.



She highlighted that the evolving nature of workplaces has introduced new challenges requiring continuous strengthening of institutional responses. She stressed the importance of fair inquiry procedures, protection of privacy and adherence to the principles of natural justice while ensuring timely disposal of complaints.

The Minister also underlined the growing role of the SHe-Box portal in promoting transparency and timely grievance redressal. She noted that the Portal has emerged as an important digital platform for facilitating time-bound resolution of complaints, reflecting the Government's commitment to creating a robust institutional ecosystem for women's safety.

Calling upon employers and institutional leadership to demonstrate greater accountability, the Minister emphasised that every organisation must foster a workplace culture based on dignity, sensitivity and zero tolerance towards sexual harassment. She urged members of Internal and Local Committees to conduct inquiries with fairness, confidentiality and empathy while adhering to the statutory timelines prescribed under the Act.



On the occasion, the Union Minister released the Booklet on Inquiry Procedures for Internal Committees (ICs) and Local Committees (LCs) under POSH Act prepared by the National Commission for Women. The booklet aims to serve as a practical guide for conducting fair, transparent and time-bound inquiries under the POSH Act. The Minister appreciated NCW's efforts in strengthening institutional mechanisms for implementation of the Act and promoting greater awareness among stakeholders.

Earlier, the programme commenced with a welcome address by Shri Sudeep Jain, Member Secretary, NCW, followed by the inaugural address of Smt. Vijaya Rahatkar, Chairperson, National Commission for Women. The event also featured technical sessions covering key provisions of the POSH Act including rights of complainants and respondents as well as on handling complaints and inquiry procedures for Internal and Local Committees.

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