



# Gender Sensitisation and Internal Complaints Committee



**Annual Report  
2023**





# **Gender Sensitisation and Internal Complaints Committee**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2023**





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MESSAGE BY HON'BLE CHAIRPERSON

**Ms. Justice Hima Kohli**



As we wrap up this year, it fills me with immense pride to reflect on the journey that we have undertaken together as part of the Gender Sensitization and Internal Complaints Committee (GSICC) at the Supreme Court. Our mission to sensitise the staff regarding gender issues and address instances of sexual harassment within the precincts of the Supreme Court has been both significant and deeply rewarding.

Gender sensitization is the cornerstone of a fair and just society. It serves as a vital tool in dismantling inherent biases and fostering an environment where everyone, regardless of gender, can live and work with dignity and respect. Through the numerous interactive trainings and workshops conducted by the Committee throughout the year, we have strived to instil a culture of awareness and inclusivity in the legal community.

One of the highlights of this year was the workshop attended by members of the Supreme Court Bar Association and Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association. The workshop provided a platform that facilitated meaningful dialogue and collaboration, reinforcing our shared dedication to advancing gender equality within the legal profession and beyond.

Our commitment to gender sensitization aligns with the broader goals of justice, fairness, and human rights. It's about recognizing that gender-based discrimination is not just a women's issue, it is a societal issue that affects all of us. By championing the cause of gender equality, we only uphold the principles of dignity, respect and equality enshrined in the Constitution of India.

The emphasis on the active engagement of men in making gender sensitization initiatives effective, is noteworthy. It underscores the universal nature of this cause and the necessity for all members of society to play a pro-active role in its advancement. Insights and learnings from the Handbook on Combating Gender Stereotypes further underscore the judiciary's commitment to combating harmful narratives and promoting gender equality.

As we look towards the future, these initiatives, availability of well-equipped resource persons and positive response from the participants instill hope and determination. Our vision of a legal profession characterised by inclusivity and support for women lawyers serves as a guiding light for our continued efforts. Together, with unwavering dedication and collective action, we can aspire to build a society where gender equality is not just a goal, but a lived reality.

Let us carry forward the spirit of inclusivity and culture of awareness with renewed vigour and commitment. The journey towards gender equality may be arduous, but with perseverance and solidarity, we can overcome any obstacle. Let us continue to champion the cause of gender sensitization and ensure that the Halls of justice are truly accessible to all, regardless of gender.

New Delhi  
20 February 2024



**Justice Hima Kohli**  
Chairperson GSICC

MESSAGE BY HON'BLE  
**Mrs. Justice B V Nagarathna**



The founders of our constitutional republic envisioned Indian women as equal and independent citizens with liberty to chart their course of life. Gender justice is the cornerstone of the constitutional mission of social transformation. A bare glance at the preamble as well as the chapters on Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy shows that our Constitution sought to break the shackles of gender-based discrimination and disadvantage. In accentuating the crying need for a just social order and enshrining the right to equal protection and the right against non-discrimination, our Constitution was framed with the noble intent to outlaw all forms of prejudice, stigma, stereotypes and exploitation against women. Article 15(3), read with Articles 39(a), (d), (e) and 42 (maternal health) reflects a strong commitment towards special measures to ensure equality within both the public and private spheres.

The abiding values of our Constitution have been fortified through jurisprudence emanating from the Supreme Court and the High Courts which are initiating a transformative social dialogue as a part of transformative constitutionalism. Sexual harassment is the antithesis of the ideal of equality that ought to inform every dimension of our public and private lives. In the landmark case of *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan*, (1997) 6 SCC 241, the Supreme Court facilitated the evolution of a grievance redressal mechanism for victims of sexual harassment at the workplace by invoking Article 142 of the Constitution. The Supreme Court emphasized the fundamental right to carry on any occupation, trade or profession depends on the availability of a “safe” working environment. *Vishakha* was successful in securing wide-ranging protections for women at workplaces against sexual harassment, a hitherto unprotected area, with the enactment of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace [‘PoSH’] Act, 2013.

The implementation of the Gender Sensitization and Internal Complaints Committee Regulations by the Supreme Court of India is an essential guardrail for the purity and integrity of the process of law and a critical element of access to justice. Publication of the Annual Report of the Gender Sensitization and Internal Complaints Committee is an essential stock-taking exercise for all those who are equal stakeholders in the quest for gender justice. I hope that the activities and endeavours of the Gender Sensitization and Internal Complaints Committee have created an inclusive and informed grievance redressal mechanism against all forms of sexual harassment of women.

As we step into the 75th year of the establishment of the Supreme Court, it is even more crucial to reinforce the equal protection of the law by ensuring that everybody who works in the Supreme Court of India can lead a dignified and safe professional life. It is also a matter of the credibility and legitimacy of Courts because women Advocates and employees must be treated with dignity as they discharge their services in furtherance of making justice accessible and more meaningful.



**Justice B V Nagarathna**

New Delhi  
20 February 2024

# INTRODUCTION

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The “GSICC: Annual Report 2023-24,” is a comprehensive document highlighting the Committee’s achievements and endeavours in the pursuit of justice. Organized into eight chapters, this report provides a clear overview of the Committee’s functioning and impact.

Chapter 1 offers a concise introduction to the Committee, setting the stage for a detailed exploration. Chapter 2, delves into the composition of the Committee. Chapter 3, titled “Business of the Committee,” details the meetings conducted throughout the year, providing insight into the key decisions and discussions that shaped the Committee’s initiatives. Chapter 4 focuses on the training and awareness programs undertaken in 2023, showcasing the commitment to knowledge dissemination. Chapter 5 contains a brief on the strength and duties of our volunteers. Chapter 6, “Budgetary Allocations,” mentions the sanctioned annual budget, offering transparency into the financial backbone supporting the Committee’s operations and the overall expenses incurred. Chapter 7 is dedicated to highlighting the achievements of the Committee, showcasing the impactful milestones reached. Finally, the report concludes with a profound exploration of the significant judgments and orders pronounced by the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India, underscoring the Committee’s influence in the legal landscape.





# ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

The Gender Sensitisation and Internal Complaints Committee (hereinafter 'GSICC' or 'Committee') of the Supreme Court of India has been constituted by the powers conferred on Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India under Regulation 4 of the Gender Sensitisation & Sexual Harassment of Women at the Supreme Court of India (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), Regulations, 2013 (hereinafter 'GSICC Regulations'). The Regulation reads as follows:

*4. Constitution of the Gender Sensitisation & Internal Complaints Committee - (1) The Supreme Court GSICC is constituted herein to fulfill a very important public function of sensitizing the public to gender issues and to address any complaints made with regard to sexual harassment at the Supreme Court precincts.*

*(2) The Chief Justice of India shall, by an order in writing, constitute a Committee to be known as the "Supreme Court Gender Sensitisation and Internal Complaints Committee" (GSICC) which shall consist of not less than 7 members and not more than 13 members and shall include as far as practicable: –*

*(a) one or two Judges of the Supreme Court in terms of the judgment in the case of Vishaka (supra), one of whom shall be the Chairperson of the Committee, to be nominated by the Chief Justice of India;*

*(b) one or two senior members of the Supreme Court Bar, with at least 20 years of membership of the Supreme Court Bar Association or the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association to be nominated by Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India, one of whom being a woman;*

*(c) one or two members to be elected by General Ballot of the Supreme Court Bar Association who shall be registered member of the Supreme Court Bar Association for at least 10 years out of whom at least one shall be a woman;*

*(d) one woman member being a member of the Advocates-on-Record Association elected by General Ballot of the Advocates-on-Record Association;*

*(e) one woman member being a member of the Supreme Court Clerks Association elected by General Ballot of the Supreme Court Clerks Association;*

*(f) at least one and at the most two outside members to be nominated by the Chief Justice of India, persons who are associated with the Social Welfare Department or non-government organization having experience in the field of social justice, women empowerment, and/or gender justice, out of whom at least one member shall be a woman;*

*(g) one woman officer in the service of the Supreme Court of India not below the rank of a Deputy Registrar to be nominated by Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India, who shall function as the Member Secretary of the GSICC; and*

*(h) any other member that the Chief Justice of India may deem fit to nominate.*

*Provided that it shall be ensured that the majority of the members of GSICC shall be woman members.*

*(4) The outside Member appointed under Clause 4(2)(f) shall be paid such fees or allowances from the allocated funds for holding the proceedings of the GSICC as may be prescribed.*

*(5) Where the Chairperson or any Member of the GSICC—*

*(a) has been convicted for an offence or an inquiry into an offence under any law for the time being in force is pending against him/her;*

*(b) fails to constitute an Internal Sub-Committee to inquire into a particular Complaint;*

*(c) fails to take action under Regulation 11;*

*(d) contravenes or attempts to contravene or abets contravention of other provisions of these Regulations or any notifications/orders issued thereunder; or*

*(e) in the opinion of the Chief Justice of India has so abused his/her position as to render his/her continuance in office prejudicial to the exercise of functions of the GSICC; such Chairperson or Member, as the case may be, shall stand removed forthwith from the GSICC by a written order of the Chief Justice of India and the vacancy so created shall be filled by fresh nomination/ election in accordance with the provisions of these Regulations.*

# COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

The GSICC was constituted by the then Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India vide Office Order No. 277 of 2013 dated 26.11.2013 and was reconstituted from time to time.

Vide Order dated **28.02.2023** of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India, the Committee was reconstituted with the following composition:

S. No.	Name	Nominated As
1	<b>Hon'ble Ms Justice Hima Kohli</b> Judge Supreme Court of India	Chairperson
2	<b>Hon'ble Ms Justice B V Nagarathna</b> Judge Supreme Court of India	Member
3	<b>Ms Madhu Arora</b> Additional Registrar Officer in Service of the Supreme Court of India	Member Secretary
4	<b>Ms Meenakshi Arora</b> Senior Advocate Senior Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association under Clause 4(2)(b)	Member
5	<b>Ms Mahalakshmi Pavani</b> Senior Advocate Senior Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association under Clause 4(2)(b)	Member
6	<b>Ms Nina Gupta</b> Advocate Representative of the Supreme Court Bar Association under Clause 4(2)(c)	Member
7	<b>Mr Somvir Singh Deswal</b> Advocate Representative of the Supreme Court Bar Association under Clause 4(2)(c)]	Member

8	<b>Ms Anindita Pujari</b> Advocate-on-Record Representative of the Supreme Court Advocate-on-Record Association under Clause 4(2)(d)	Member
9	<b>Ms Madhu Chauhan</b> Representative of the Supreme Court Bar Clerks' Association under Clause 4(2)(e)	Member
10	<b>Ms Shruti Pandey</b> Professor of Legal Practice, Jindal Global Law School, O P Jindal Global University Nominee of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India under Clause 4(2)(f)	Member
11	<b>Mr Jaideep Gupta</b> Senior Advocate Senior Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association Nominee of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India under Clause 4(2)(h)	Member
12	<b>Dr Leni Chaudhuri</b> Executive Director, University of Chicago Centre in India Pvt Ltd. Nominee of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India under Clause 4 (2)(h)	Member

Further vide Order dated **12.04.2023** of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India the Committee was again reconstituted with the following composition:

S. No.	Name	Nominated As
1	<b>Hon'ble Ms Justice Hima Kohli</b> [Judge, Supreme Court of India]	Chairperson
2	<b>Hon'ble Ms Justice B V Nagarathna</b> [Judge, Supreme Court of India]	Member
3	<b>Ms Madhu Arora</b> Additional Registrar [Officer in service of the Supreme Court of India]	Member Secretary
4	<b>Ms Meenakshi Arora</b> Senior Advocate [Senior Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association under Clause 4(2)(b)]	Member
5	<b>Ms Mahalakshmi Pavani</b> Senior Advocate [Senior Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association under Clause 4(2)(b)]	Member

6	<b>Ms Nina Gupta</b> Advocate [Representative of the Supreme Court Bar Association under Clause 4(2)(c)]	Member
7	<b>Mr Somvir Singh Deswal</b> Advocate [Representative of the Supreme Court Bar Association under Clause 4(2)(c)]	Member
8	<b>Ms Anindita Pujari</b> Advocate-on-Record [Representative of the Supreme Court Advocate-on-Record Association under Clause 4(2)(d)]	Member
9	<b>Ms Madhu Chauhan</b> [Representative of the Supreme Court Bar Clerks' Association under Clause 4(2)(e)]	Member
10	<b>Ms Shruti Pandey</b> (Professor of Legal Practice, Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University) [Nominee of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India under Clause 4(2)(f)]	Member
11	<b>Mr Jaideep Gupta</b> Senior Advocate (Senior Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association) [Nominee of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India under Clause 4(2)(h)]	Member
12	<b>Dr Leni Chaudhuri</b> (Executive Director, University of Chicago Centre in India Pvt. Ltd.) [Nominee of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India under Clause 4 (2)(h)]	Member
13	<b>Dr Menaka Guruswamy</b> Senior Advocate [Nominee of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India under Clause 4 (2)(h)]	Member

Further vide Order dated **14.07.2023** of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India the Committee was again reconstituted with the following composition:

S. No.	Name	Nominated As
1	<b>Hon'ble Ms Justice Hima Kohli</b> [Judge, Supreme Court of India]	Chairperson

2	<b>Hon'ble Ms Justice B V Nagarathna</b> [Judge, Supreme Court of India]	Member
3	<b>Dr Sukhda Pritam</b> Additional Registrar [Officer in service of the Supreme Court of India]	Member Secretary
4	<b>Ms Meenakshi Arora</b> Senior Advocate [Senior Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association under Clause 4(2)(b)]	Member
5	<b>Ms Mahalakshmi Pavani</b> Senior Advocate [Senior Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association under Clause 4(2)(b)]	Member
6	<b>Ms Nina Gupta</b> Advocate [Representative of the Supreme Court Bar Association under Clause 4(2)(c)]	Member
7	<b>Mr Somvir Singh Deswal</b> Advocate [Representative of the Supreme Court Bar Association under Clause 4(2)(c)]	Member
8	<b>Ms Anindita Pujari</b> Advocate-on-Record [Representative of the Supreme Court Advocate-on-Record Association under Clause 4(2)(d)]	Member
9	<b>Ms Madhu Chauhan</b> [Representative of the Supreme Court Bar Clerks' Association under Clause 4(2)(e)]	Member
10	<b>Ms Shruti Pandey</b> (Professor of Legal Practice, Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University) [Nominee of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India under Clause 4(2)(f)]	Member
11	<b>Mr Jaideep Gupta</b> Senior Advocate (Senior Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association) [Nominee of Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India under Clause 4(2)(h)]	Member

# BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

Gender Sensitisation and Internal Complaints Committee have been formulated to address issues related to gender discrimination, harassment, and inequality. Regular committee meetings provide a structured platform for open dialogue among committee members. This facilitates the exchange of ideas, experiences, and insights related to gender justice. It encourages a collaborative approach to addressing challenges and promoting inclusivity. The committee meetings serve as a forum to review existing gender-related policies. This includes assessing their effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement. Regular updates to policies ensure that they remain relevant and aligned with the evolving needs of the workforce. A significant aspect of gender sensitisation is addressing concerns and complaints promptly. Regular meetings also allow committee members to discuss ongoing cases, share updates, and collectively strategise on resolutions. That further ensures a fair and transparent process for addressing gender-related issues.

## MINUTES OF THE GSICC MEETINGS CONDUCTED IN THE YEAR 2023

### 1. Meeting dated 25.01.2023

On 25.01.2023 GSICC members met in the meeting room at 04.00 PM for a discussion on the celebrations of Women's day 2023. The meeting was convened under the presence and guidance of the Hon'ble Ms Justice Hima Kohli-Chairperson and Hon'ble Ms Justice B V Nagarathna, esteemed Member. In the said meeting, it was resolved that a security audit of the Supreme Court premises must be carried out by the GSICC members accompanied by the DCP (Security), Supreme Court, and the concerned officer(s) of the Security Cell of the Registry.

### 2. Meeting dated 27.02.2023

A meeting of members of the Gender Sensitisation and Internal Complaints Committee (except Hon'ble Judges) was held on 27.02.2023, at 03:15 PM in Room No. 604, B Block, Additional Building Complex, New Delhi. The meeting was attended by Member Secretary- Ms Madhu Arora, Members, Ms Mahalakshmi Pavani, and Ms Anindita Pujari. Volunteers Ms Farhat Rehmani, Ms Mayuri Raghuvanshi, Ms Nisha Bagchi, Mr Rakesh Kumar Yadav, Mr Raj Kumar Pandey also attended the meeting.

### **3. Meeting dated 02.03.2023**

A meeting of members of the Gender Sensitisation and Internal Complaints Committee (except Hon'ble Judges) was held on 02.03.2023, at 04:00 PM in Room No. 604, B Block, Additional Building Complex Building, New Delhi. Members present included Ms Nina Gupta, Mr Somvir Singh Dewal, and Member Secretary Ms Madhu Arora. Volunteers Dr Ritu Bhardwaj, Ms Farhat Rehmani, Ms Prabha Swami, Ms Nisha Bagchi, Mr Varinder Kumar Sharma, Ms Shilpi Satyapriya Satyam, Ms Reena Rao and Mr Raj Kumar Pandey, were also present.

### **4. Meeting dated 16.08.2023**

The Meeting of the Gender Sensitisation and Internal Complaints Committee (GSICC) was held on 16.8.2023 (Wednesday) at the meeting room, 2nd floor, Supreme Court premises, at 04:15 PM. The meeting was convened under the supervision and guidance of Hon'ble Ms Justice Hima Kohli, Chairperson of the GSICC, and Hon'ble Mrs Justice B V Nagarathna, an esteemed member of the GSICC. The meeting was attended by the members of the committee including Member Secretary, Dr Sukhda Pritam, Members, Mr Jaideep Gupta, Dr Menaka Guruswami, Dr Anindita Pujari, Ms Nina Gupta, and Mr Somvir Singh. The meeting was also attended by the former Member Secretary, Ms Madhu Arora, one court master and candidates from the Centre for Research and Planning for the volunteership of the GSICC.



# TRAINING AND AWARENESS PROGRAMMES 2023

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Workplaces need to prioritize prevention of sexual harassment by conducting **Training Sessions**, which are regularly updated to maintain a cordial and safe working environment. Keeping these things in mind, the GSICC makes a yearlong training calendar and ensures wider awareness programmes. The training sessions are refreshed every year with new updates to keep the relevant stakeholders engaged and informed. Additionally, the incorporation of diverse and innovative learning approaches such as e-learning modules, skit-based storytelling, simplification of GSICC and POSH regulations, and case studies is making the training more interactive and effective.

## **1. Awareness programme conducted for Delhi Police Security Staff posted in Supreme Court on 20.01.2023 at 03:00 PM in the Bar lounge.**

Awareness programme was conducted for Delhi Police Security Staff posted in the Supreme Court at 03:00 PM in the Bar lounge. The participants were apprised of the POSH Act as well as thoroughly informed regarding the GSICC rules and regulations.

## **2. GSICC celebrated International women's Day by conducting an awareness programme**

*International Women's Day* was celebrated on 20.03.2023 at 04:10 PM in the Bar Lounge, Ground floor, Supreme Court of India. The Chief Justice of India, Dr D Y Chandrachud graced the occasion with his presence and addressed the guests and participants. The programme started with the lighting of the lamp by the Chief Justice, which was followed by the performance of a song by the Supreme Court registry officials. The Hon'ble Chief Justice addressed the gathering and talked about the importance of women empowerment and appreciated the hard work of the female advocates in fighting the patriarchal mindsets prevalent in the legal profession. Hon'ble Justice B V Nagarathna, esteemed member of the GSICC also addressed the gathering and emphasized on the need of more female advocates in the legal profession. The advocates also performed an important awareness skit on gender sensitisation and prevention of sexual harassment at the workplace. The programme was concluded by a special vote of thanks to the Hon'ble Judges, and the esteemed guests.



### **3. Workshop on Gender Sensitisation for the Registry staff in coordination with the Training Cell of the Supreme Court and GSICC on 12.08.2023.**

The Training Cell, in collaboration with the GSICC of the Supreme Court conducted a training programme for the Class III Employees/Court Attendants on 12.08.2023 at Multipurpose Hall, Additional Building Complex. The training was conducted under the guidance of Hon'ble Ms Justice Hima Kohli, who also presides over the committee as Chairperson, along with Hon'ble Mrs Justice B V Nagarathna as one of the esteemed members. To ensure the highest quality of training, accomplished experts from the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) were engaged. The event saw the participation of 150 attendees from various cadres.



Esteemed guests included GSICC members and volunteers, who actively engaged in diverse activities. A key highlight of the workshop was a Nukkad Natak (street play) on gender sensitisation performed by the Legal Aid Clinic of Jamia Hamdard University.

IIPA resource persons conducted several interactive activities, engaging participants in self-reflection, challenging unconscious biases, and understanding the impact of gender-based discrimination. The workshop concluded with thought-provoking questions for participants to consider, encouraging them to explore societal norms and media influences. The event proved to be a significant step towards promoting a more inclusive and respectful environment within the Supreme Court, aligned with the institution's commitment.



*GSICC Training held on 12.08.2023,*



#### 4. Gender Sensitisation and Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace training for the Law clerks-cum-Research Associates, Research Assistants, Law Researchers, and Law students of the Supreme Court on 20.10.2023.

Gender Sensitisation and Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace training was held on Saturday, the 20.10.2023 from 02:00 PM to 04:00 PM at the Multi-Purpose Hall, Additional Building Complex, Supreme Court of India harassment for 150 Law clerks-cum-Research Associates, Research Assistants, Law Researchers and Law students (from Jamia Millia Islamia, National Law School, Delhi, Jamia Hamdard, and Indian Law Institute). The external resource persons invited for the training included, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women, Ms Kanta Singh, Country Program Manager, UN Women, Ms Sanya Seth and Secretary Central DLSA-II, Ms Jyoti Maheshwari. In this training a slogan writing competition was also organized in which everyone actively participated and around 50 slogans were received.



Group photo taken during the gender sensitisation workshop on 20.10.2023 in the presence of Mr Atul M Kurhekar, Ld. Secretary General, Supreme Court of India, dignitaries from the United Nations, the District Legal and Services Authority and members of the GSICC



From left to right: Deputy Country Representative, UN Women, Ms Kanta Singh, Mr Atul M Kurhekar, Ld. Secretary General, Supreme Court of India, Secretary Central DLSA-II, Ms Jyoti Maheshwari

## 5. Gender Sensitisation Training for employees of the Supreme Court Registry held on 08.12.2023

Gender Sensitisation Training was held on Friday, 08.12.2023 from 02:30 PM to 05:00 PM at the Multi-Purpose Hall, Additional Building Complex, Supreme Court of India for the Supreme Court Staff. The programme was graced by the presence of the Learned Secretary General, Supreme Court of India. The Hon'ble members and volunteers of GSICC also attended the training session. Around 120 employees from the registry participated in the training, including junior court assistants, court attendants, along with 29 final-year law students and 3 Professors from Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati SVU College of Arts. To ensure the highest quality of training, accomplished experts from the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) were engaged.

On this occasion, the Member Secretary, GSICC, gave the opening address, followed by a keynote address given by the Learned Secretary General, Supreme Court of India, emphasizing the need for gender equality and gender sensitisation in the work environment. Following that, Senior Advocate Ms Mahalaxmi Pavani, Member GSICC, embarked upon the training program with a focus on fostering equal opportunity for women to eliminate gender-based discrimination.

Among other speakers was Advocate Ritu Bhardwaj, a volunteer GSICC who explained the complaint format prescribed by the GSICC for dealing with sexual harassment of women at workplace.

Finally, the training was concluded with engaging activities conducted by Dr Surabhi Pandey, Assistant Professor, IIPA, leaving the participants with thought-provoking questions about gender stereotypes. The final training of the annual calendar concluded with a vote of gratitude, marking the Committee's yearlong effort to empower and sensitize the judges, lawyers, and court staff.



*Group photo, taken during the Gender Sensitisation workshop held on 08.12.2023*





## CHAPTER 5

# VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers play a crucial role in promoting gender sensitisation and advancing the objectives of a gender sensitisation committee. A gender sensitisation committee is typically established to create awareness about gender-related issues, challenge stereotypes, and work towards building a more inclusive and equitable environment. As per Section 2(m) of GSICC Regulations, 2013 the term volunteer is defined as “lawyers or other persons enlisted by the GSICC without any remuneration basis for carrying out the objects and purpose of these Regulations”.

Regulation 7 clause V of The Gender Sensitisation & Sexual Harassment of Women at the Supreme Court of India (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), Regulations, 2013 states:

“... GSICC will enlist and activate an adequately representative team of volunteers and shall ensure the widespread publicity of the contact details (both official and personal) of all its members and volunteers. The services of such volunteers shall be available at all times to any aggrieved woman or any person in need of consultation or guidance. Volunteers will also assist in the gender sensitisation, crisis mediation and crises management duties of GSICC, but shall not participate in the task of formal redressal of complaints under these Regulations and Procedures ...”

Her Ladyship Ms Hima Kohli while referring to the Agenda no. 6 of the meeting dated 16.08.2023 initiated the discussion on the induction of more volunteers. Pursuant thereof the strength of the volunteers is as follows:

S. No.	Name	Mobile No.	SCBA No.	Email Id
1.	Mr Mukesh Kumar Singh	9873856650	S-00376	mukeshkumarsinghadvsc@gmail.com
2.	Dr. Ritu Bhardwaj	9891375537	B/00357	drritubhardwaj15@gmail.com
3.	Ms Farhat Jahan Rehmani	9868179046	R-635	farhat2advocate@gmail.com
4.	Mr Chandra Pal Singh	9899242219	S/1117	advocate.cpsingh@gmail.com
5.	Ms Prabha Swami	9810589733	S-647	office@swamiassociates.org
6.	Ms Mayuri Raghuvanshi	9717344186	R-463	raghuvanshi.mayuri@gmail.com



S. No.	Name	Mobile No.	SCBA No.	Email Id
7.	Ms Nisha Bagchi	9810037772	B-11	bagchiassociates@gmail.com
8.	Mr Varinder Kumar Sharma	9810101807	S-00316	vksharmaaor@gmail.com
9.	Ms Archana Pathak Dave	9971 222 581	D/00420	archana.p.dave@gmail.com
10.	Ms Shilpi Satyapriya Satyam	9810445088	S-2491	satyapriyashilpi@gmail.com
11.	Ms Reena Rao	9212345786	R/191	legal.india@gmail.com
12.	Mr Rakesh Kumar Yadav	9958366906	Y-00186	adv.rakeshy@gmail.com
13.	Ms Kumud Lata Das	9311090852	D-00022	aorsckumudldas@gmail.com
14.	Ms K. V. Bharathi Upadhyaya	9818081199	B-00993	kvbu66@yahoo.com
15.	Mr Raj Kumar Pandey	9312004143	P/265	advocaterajpandey@gmail.com
16.	Iram Jan	9596420938	D/7734	erammir91@gmail.com
17.	Priyanshu Agarwal	7906787108	D/3023	ag.priyanshu588@gmail.com
18.	Pragya	9711016092	D/5119	pragyasamal1996@gmail.com
19.	Rajesh Ranjan	8340399090	NA	rajeshranjannluj@gmail.com



*Member Secretary (center) along with GSICC member, Mahalakshmi Pavani and volunteers of the GSICC*



## 1. GSICC Volunteer Meeting dated 06.01.2023

In the Volunteers meeting dated 06.01.2023 it was decided that the next Gender Sensitisation training session would be for lawyers in the Bar Lounge on 20.01.2023 at 03:30 PM. It was further decided that the Member Secretary would request Ld. Chairperson Hon'ble Justice Ms Hima Kohli, Hon'ble Justice Ms B V Nagarathna, esteemed member GSICC, and Hon'ble Justice Ms Bela Trivedi to address the programme. However, after deliberations it was decided to conduct the Gender sensitisation training session for Delhi Police security staff deputed in the Supreme Court of India premises.

## 2. GSICC Volunteer Meeting dated 23.11.2023

The GSICC meeting for volunteers was successfully conducted on 23.11.2023 in the GSICC Committee Room No. 604, 6th Floor of the Additional Building Complex, Supreme Court at 04:15 PM. It was attended by 13 Volunteers out of 19 volunteers. The meeting was also attended by the Member of GSICC, Ms Mahalakshmi Pavani, Senior Advocate. In the meeting, the Member Secretary introduced and welcomed the four new volunteers: Ms Iram Jan, Mr Priyanshu Agarwal, Ms Pragya and Mr Rajesh Ranjan. After this, the agenda of the meeting was laid out. The Member Secretary apprised the volunteers of the previous meetings and training that were undertaken.

As a part of the training held on 20.10.2023, a voluntary slogan writing competition was conducted. Around 50 slogans were received and the top 10 slogans were placed before the volunteers in the meeting. These slogans were rated in order of one to ten by the Volunteers. One being the best. After the voting, three slogans were selected as top three best slogans on parameters of creativity, originality, and relation to the subject matter of gender sensitisation. The slogans included:

1. Breaking Stereotypes, Building Bridges: Embracing Gender Sensitivity!
2. Silence Breakers, Hope Makers: Say NO to Sexual Assault
3. In the Shadows, the voices rise; In the Light, unite to end the silent cries.



*Member Secretary (centre) along with the member GSICC Ms Mahalakshmi Pavani and other volunteers of the committee in a meeting held on 23.11.2023*





# BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS

Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India sanctioned a budget of ₹1,50,000/- (Rupees One Lakh and Fifty Thousand only) for effective implementation of the GSICC Regulations for the year 2023. The following expenses from the said budgetary allocation were incurred by the GSICC for organizing various meetings in the year 2023:

S. No.	MEETINGS	AMOUNT
1	GSICC members (excluding Hon'ble Judges) and Volunteers meeting dated 06.01.2023	₹ 970.00
2	Awareness programme for Delhi Police Staff	₹ 3530.00
3	GSICC members (excluding Hon'ble Judges) and Volunteers meeting dated 27.02.2023	₹ 745.00
4	GSICC members (excluding Hon'ble Judges) and Volunteers meeting dated 02.03.2023	₹ 640.00
5	GSICC members (excluding Hon'ble Judges) and Volunteers meeting dated 02.03.2023 [Dry run of Women's Day 2023]	₹ 578.00
6	Celebration of Women's Day 2023	₹ 38506.00
7	GSICC members (excluding Hon'ble Judges) and Volunteers meeting dated 22.09.2023 [Meeting of Sub-Committee to discuss the amendments in Regulation]	₹ 379.00
8	GSICC Training of 150 participants on Gender Sensitisation dated 21.10.2023	₹ 39269.00
9	GSICC members (excluding Hon'ble Judges) and Volunteers meeting dated 23.11.2023	₹ 1593.00
10	GSICC Training of 200 participants on Gender Sensitisation dated 08.12.2023	₹ 24229.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>₹ 110439.00</b>

Regulation 7(2)(ii) of the GSICC obligates that the GSICC will organize programmes for the Gender Sensitisation of the Supreme Court community through workshops, seminars, posters, film shows, debates, displays etc. The GSICC proposes to conduct seminars and workshops to further the aim and object of the “The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013” with “The Gender Sensitisation and Sexual Harassment of Women at the Supreme Court of India (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), Regulations, 2013”.

Therefore, a budgetary provision of ₹5,00,000/- (Rupees Five Lakh only) has been requested to be made for the calendar year 2024.



### 1. Security Audit

As per the meeting of GSICC held on 25.01.2023 at 04:10 PM which was attended by Hon'ble Ms Justice Hima Kohli Chairperson and Hon'ble Ms Justice B V Nagarathna, Esteemed Member, a crucial resolution was passed to conduct a comprehensive security audit of the Supreme Court premises. The responsibility for overseeing the audit was entrusted to GSICC members, in collaboration with the DCP (Security) of the Supreme Court and the relevant officials from the Security Cell of the Registry. In consequence thereof, a meeting was held in front of Plaza, High-Security Zone, Supreme Court of India on 28.03.2023 at 04:00 PM which was attended by members of GSICC, Additional Registrar (Security), DCP/SCS & ACP/SCS. Thereafter, an Action taken report was shared by Admin. General Section.

A follow-up site visit to review the progress of the action taken report (ATR) presented to the Honorable Chairperson and the members of GSICC in the month of August, 2023 was successfully conducted on 16.12.2023. Present at the visit were Dr Sukhda Pritam, Member Secretary; Members, Ms Nina Gupta, Ms Anandita Pujari; Volunteer, Ms Iram Jan; and Mr Ashish, JCA admin G (referred to as Inspectors).



## 2. Poster

Point No.	Description	Action taken	Status as per follow up visit dated 16.12.2023
1.	Security Personnel may be deployed for patrolling in front of Lawyers' Chamber Block i.e. M C Setalvad and C K Daphtary Blocks	As intimated by DCP, Supreme Court Security, vide letter dated 13.06.2023 the security personnel are being deployed for patrolling in front of Lawyers' Chambers	Compliance Undertaken
2.	Proper signage in Hindi and English should be displayed on the door of ladies' toilets as it has been observed that gents go inside the ladies toilets.	CPWD has been requested to expedite the work.	During the follow-up site visit on 16.12.2023, it was noted that the signage present in the ladies' toilets, was solely in English and it was recommended that signage be in both Hindi and English for broader understanding.
3.	All the Lawyers' Chambers Block i.e. M C Setalvad & C K Daphtary Block at Bhagwan Dass Road should be covered by CCTV cameras.	CPWD is carrying out the work.	
4.	To enhance security measures, CCTV cameras should be installed in the entry corridor of all the ladies' toilets to identify the miscreants.	The said corridors are covered.	During the follow-up site visit on 16.12.2023, it was confirmed that CCTV cameras have been installed in the entry corridors of the ladies' toilets to monitor any misconduct.
5.	Patrolling parties may be deployed at connecting roads at Bhagwan Dass Road and Mathura Road.	As intimated by DCP, Supreme Court Security, vide letter dated 13.06.2023 Patrolling vehicles are being deployed.	Compliance Undertaken
6.	Women Security personnel may be deployed at least up to 08:00 PM at Chambers Block.	As intimated by DCP, Supreme Court Security, vide letter dated 13.06.2023 Women Security personnel are being deployed up to 08:00 PM.	Compliance Undertaken

Point No.	Description	Action taken	Status as per follow up visit dated 16.12.2023
7.	Panic alarm buttons should be installed in the chambers to meet any emergency situations and they should be connected to control Rooms/SCS and Local Police Station.	The matter is under process.	
8.	There is no mobile network connectivity in the basement and tunnel of the Additional Building Complex. The signal booster should be installed for better mobile network connectivity to meet any emergent situations.	Agency has been engaged for setting up in Building Solution for signal boosting and the work is nearing completion.	During the inspection dated 16.12.2023, it was observed that booster boxes were installed to improve mobile network connectivity in the tunnel and ground floors, expected to be operational within a month. However, GSICC inspectors recommended extending this provision to the basements and parking spaces of all chambers and the additional building. Notably, Jio network connectivity in the basement was confirmed, prompting a focus on ensuring similar connectivity for other networks.
9.	Ladies' toilet on 1st floor of C K Daphtary block has an open roof, it should be covered.	The CPWD has been requested to carry out the renovation of washrooms in M C Setalvad and C K Daphtary Blocks.	In addressing infrastructure, the ladies' toilet on the first floor of the C K Daphtary block, previously with an open roof opening to the adjacent store room, has been covered 90%. Yet, for complete coverage, it's advised to close the remaining 10% gap between the storeroom and the washroom.

Point No.	Description	Action taken	Status as per follow up visit dated 16.12.2023
10.	All the curtains installed at various searching/frisking points are dirty. They should be washed and replaced with new ones.	The Caretaking Branch has been requested to provide an update on the issue.	Despite previous documentation in the initial site visit minutes, the curtains installed at various frisking points remain unclean, requiring prompt attention.
11.	Separate entry points for ladies may be functional at all access points.	Wherever feasible, separate entry points are already provided for entry for ladies.	Concerning accessibility, it was observed that there are multiple entry points that exist at Gate E. However, only one is made functional, causing inconvenience, particularly for female advocates.
12.	The Signage Boards of "You are under surveillance" should be displayed at various locations of premises.	Work already in Progress	It was found that Signage indicating "You are under surveillance" has been strategically placed across different areas of the premises to ensure awareness.
13.	Proper lighting should be ensured at all the Galleries, staircases and escalators of Lawyers' Chamber Block.	The CPWD and Caretaking Branch have been instructed to ensure proper lighting in all areas of Lawyers' Chambers Blocks.	While floodlights and lamp posts have been installed in the Lawyer's Chamber Block, hindrance caused by branches and leaves from large trees obstructs the lighting, prompting the recommendation for tree pruning.
14.	Briefing of security staff on gender sensitisation should be conducted by senior Delhi Police officers.	As intimated by DCP, Supreme Court Security, vide letter dated 13.06.2023 the training has been imparted and all security personnel are being briefed on the subject.	Compliance Undertaken



Point No.	Description	Action taken	Status as per follow up visit dated 16.12.2023
15.	A High Mast/Flood Light should be installed at the outer periphery of the premises.	Instructions issued to CPWD for carrying out the work	Additionally, the visibility near gates opening towards Pragati Maidan and the Additional Building Complex during evenings requires enhancement for the safety of female advocates. Therefore, it was suggested that NDMC should be apprised of the issue so that small lamp posts atop the cemented barriers.
16.	Curtains of Entry Gates of Court Rooms are very heavy causing topple down sometimes, that needs to be replaced with some transparent articles or two door system.	Caretaking Branch has been requested for providing their views and comments on the issue.	To address safety concerns within courtrooms, suggestions were made to either remove or adjust the length of curtains while fixing them with the door to avoid hindrance, falls, or jostling by the clerks or other male advocates while entering or exiting.
17.	Stray dogs should be removed from Supreme Court premises, concerned agencies may be directed in this regard.	Vide letters dated 26.05.2023 were issued to the respective Municipal Corporations for necessary action.	

Earlier a proposal was raised for the placement of informative posters within the main Supreme Court Building and its annexes. The posters are intended to display the names and photographs of advocates who are esteemed members of GSICC (General Supreme Court Internal Committee), along with their contact details, including phone numbers. The strategic locations for these posters encompass the security entrance points, the main Supreme Court Building, the New Building, Bar rooms, Library, Advocates' canteens/cafeterias, litigants' canteen, Chamber Block offices, staircases, notice boards, toilets, and elevators, among others. The purpose of this initiative is to facilitate easy access to essential advocate information for the convenience of court personnel, visitors, and litigants alike.

### 3. Website

The Member Secretary through circular dated 04.05.2023 made the following sub headings/links of the heading “Gender Sensitisation and Internal Complaints Committee” on the Supreme Court Website :

1. GSICC Regulations, 2013
2. Gender Sensitisation and Sexual Harassment of Women at Supreme Court (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Guidelines, 2015
3. The Handbook on “The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013”
4. Contact details
5. Complaint format
6. Notice/Circulars/Updates
7. Annual reports
8. Under the subheading “whom to contact – two posters are to be reflected.
9. Under the subheading “Form for complaint” - Form is to be reflected.

The screenshot shows the Supreme Court of India website interface. At the top, there is the logo of the Supreme Court and the text "SUPREME COURT OF INDIA" with the motto "॥ वाचं धेनुमुपासीत ॥". Below this is a navigation bar with links like HOME, COLLEGIUM RESOLUTIONS, CAUSE LIST, CASE STATUS, DAILY ORDERS, JUDGMENTS, OFFICE REPORT, CAVEAT, CERTIFIED COPY, E FILING, etc. A sidebar on the left lists various categories, with "Gender Sensitization and Internal Complaints Committee" highlighted in red. The main content area displays a table with the following data:

S. No.	Case No.	Cause Title	Date of Judgment
1	W.P.(C) No. 792/2014	Additional District Session Vs. Registrar General Madhya Pradesh HC	18-12-2014
2	C.A. Nos. 226-227/1999	Apparel Export Promotion Council Vs. A.K. Chopra	20-01-1999
3	C.A. No. 7365/2008	DS Grewal Vs. Vemis Joshi	17-12-2008
4	W.P.(Cr.) Nos. 173-177/1999	Medha Katar Lal and Others Vs. Union of India and Others	19-10-2012
5	W.P.(Cr.) Nos. 666-670/1992	Vishaka Vs. Rajasthan	13-08-1997
6	C.A. No. 2482/2014	Aureliano Fernandes Vs. State Of Goa and Others	12-05-2023
7	RCA/DJ No. 3/22	X - Appellant Vs Internal Committee, Through Neeta Raje (Presiding Officer) Through Standard Chartered Bank with its Regional Office and Others - Respondents.	27-10-2023
8	Cr.O.P. No. 23403 of 2021 and Cr.M.P. No. 13845 of 2021	State Rep. by the Inspector of Police Vs Commandant, Air Force Administrative College	27-10-2023
9	W.P.(C) 1103/2020 & CM APPLN. 3968-69/2020, 7645-50/2020, 9969-70/2020, 18690/2020, 23465/2020, 6416/2021, 13630/2021 & 17420/2021	MS SNEHA CHOUDHURY Vs SAHITYAKADEMI AND ORS	27-10-2023

## CHAPTER 8

# JUDGMENTS/ORDERS

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### 1. *Union of India & Ors v Dilip Paul, 2023 INSC 975*

On 6 November 2023, a bench comprising of the Chief Justice of India, Dr D Y Chandrachud, Justice J B Pardiwala, and Justice Manoj Misra, emphasised the gravity of addressing sexual harassment at the workplace and preventing leniency towards the accused. Authored by Justice Pardiwala, the judgment discusses the scope of judicial review in disciplinary proceedings, cautions against dismissing allegations based on minor technicalities and urges a comprehensive evaluation of each case.

Following points of law were involved in the matter.

- The first issue pertained to the extent and scope of power of judicial review. With respect to this issue, the apex court observed and held that it is well settled that when it comes to disciplinary proceedings, it is the inquiry authority and the disciplinary authority who could be said to be the fact-finding authority and the courts in exercise of their powers of judicial review should not sit in appeal and reappreciate the evidence or substitute its own findings. The scope of judicial review is limited only to the propriety of the decision-making process. The manner in which the court ought to exercise its power of judicial review in matters of disciplinary proceedings, particularly one pertaining to sexual harassment, the Supreme Court reiterated the observation in its earlier decision in *Apparel Export Promotion Council v. A K Chopra*, that the court should not get swayed by insignificant discrepancies or hyper-technicalities. The allegations must be appreciated in the background of the entire case, and the courts must be very cautious before any sympathy or leniency is shown towards the delinquent.
- The next issue was whether the Complaints Committee could put questions to the witnesses in a departmental inquiry. The Supreme Court observed and held that the power and discretion of the complaints committee to put questions to the witnesses is reflected in Clause 10 (viii) of the 2006 Standing Order which provides that, the delinquent officer shall not cross-examine the complainant directly and instead should hand over the questions to the chairperson of the committee who in turn would then put them to the complainant, to ensure no fear or embarrassment is caused to the complainant. Furthermore, Section 165 Indian Evidence Act permits a judge to put

questions to the parties or to the witnesses in order to discover or obtain proper proof of relevant facts. The Complaints Committee after being equated with a judge in a judicial proceeding cannot be denied that privilege. However, it would be a different situation if a specific case of personal bias is made out against the members of the committee. After all, the very purpose of the disciplinary proceedings is to reach to the bottom of the facts while affording adequate opportunities to the affected party.

- With respect to the issue of whether the Complaints Committee could have based its finding on the 'second complaint', the Supreme Court, relying on an earlier decision in *State of Haryana and Another v. Ratan Singh*, reiterated the well settled position that all material that are logically probative to a prudent mind ought to be permissible in disciplinary proceedings keeping in mind the principles of fair play. Since strict and technical rule of evidence and procedure does not apply to departmental enquiry the connotation "evidence" cannot be understood in a narrow technical sense. It is open to the adjudicating authority to accept, rely and evaluate any evidence having probative value and come to its own conclusion, keeping in mind judicial approach and objectivity, exclusion of extraneous material and observance of the rule of natural justice and fair play. In short, a fair opportunity should be afforded to the delinquent at the enquiry and he should not be hit below the belt.
- With respect to the issue of not taking the plea of guilt of the delinquent for the second complaint, the Supreme Court observed and held that *"The obligation on the part of the Authority to ask the delinquent whether he pleaded guilty or had any defence to make is only in the circumstances, if the delinquent had not admitted any of the articles of charge in his written statement of defence or had not submitted any written statement of defence."* In a situation where a respondent had filed his written statement of defence dealing with all the allegations on the points framed for determination that were enquired into by the Committee and also cross-examined all the witnesses on the same, no prejudice was caused to him. Held that *"mere violation of Rule 14(9) of the 1965 CCS Rules would not vitiate the entire inquiry. Rule 14(9) is only procedural."*

In conclusion, the Supreme Court upheld the position of law that inquiries in respect of sexual harassment must be examined on broader probabilities keeping in mind the entire background of the case and, in a disciplinary inquiry, the standard of proof is preponderance of probabilities and not beyond reasonable doubts and the courts must only interfere where the findings are either perverse or based on no evidence at all.

## **2. Initiatives for Inclusion Foundation and Anr. v. Union of India, 2023 INSC 927**

A division bench comprising Justices S Ravindra Bhat and Dipankar Datta on 19 October 2023 has issued directions to the Union government, and all State/UT governments

to ensure the effective implementation of the provisions of the Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act) read with its Rules. The key directions issued by the court were as follows:

1. Coordination between Union Government and State/UT Governments: The Women and Child Development Ministry of every State/UT, through its Principal Secretary, should identify a 'nodal person' to oversee coordination with the Union Government.
2. Appointment of public authorities: The concerned Principal Secretary of the State/UT Ministry of Women and Child, should ensure appointment of a district officer in each district within their territorial jurisdiction, and thereafter, each appointed district officer should appoint nodal officers and constitute LCs within their jurisdiction. Contact details of nodal officers and LCs should be forwarded to the nodal person within the State Government Ministry of Women and Child Development and information about these officers should be made available on the department's website.
3. Training and capacity building: District officers and LC members should receive mandatory training regarding their responsibilities, with a focus on understanding sexual harassment issues and gendered interactions.
4. Larger efforts towards awareness: Allocate financial resources for developing educational and training material for public awareness. Identify and collaborate with non-governmental organizations for awareness initiatives. Make LCs approachable for the unorganized sector.
5. Annual Compliance Reports: District officers must ensure compliance with Sections 21(1) and (2) and Section 22, including creating a Standard Operating Procedure for this process.
6. Monitoring of ICs and compliance by employers: Reiterate and extend directions regarding the constitution of ICs in various establishments. Instruct hospitals, nursing homes, sports institutes, and other venues to establish ICs. District officers should be supplied with a list of establishments to ensure compliance and collection of annual reports.

### **3. *Aureliano Fernandes v. State of Goa and Others, (Civil Appeal No. 2482 of 2014)***

On 12.05.2023, a division bench comprising of Hon'ble Justice A S Bopanna and Hon'ble Justice Hima Kohli passed the following directions to fulfill the promise that the PoSH Act holds out to working women all over the country

- (i) The Union of India, all State Governments and Union Territories are directed to undertake a time-bound exercise to verify as to whether all the concerned Ministries,

Departments, Government organizations, authorities, Public Sector Undertakings, institutions, bodies, etc. have constituted ICCs/LCs/ICs, as the case may be and that the composition of the said Committees are strictly in terms of the provisions of the PoSH Act.

- (ii) It shall be ensured that necessary information regarding the constitution and composition of the ICCs/LCs/ICs, details of the e-mail IDs and contact numbers of the designated person(s), the procedure prescribed for submitting an online complaint, as also the relevant rules, regulations and internal policies are made readily available on the website of the concerned Authority/Functionary/ Organisation/Institution/ Body, as the case may be. The information furnished shall also be updated from time to time.
- (iii) A similar exercise shall be undertaken by all the Statutory bodies of professionals at the Apex level and the State level (including those regulating doctors, lawyers, architects, chartered accountants, cost accountants, engineers, bankers and other professionals), by Universities, colleges, Training Centres and educational institutions and by government and private hospitals/nursing homes.
- (iv) Immediate and effective steps shall be taken by the authorities/ managements/ employers to familiarize members of the ICCs/LCs/ICs with their duties and the manner in which an inquiry ought to be conducted on receiving a complaint of sexual harassment at the workplace, from the point when the complaint is received, till the inquiry is finally concluded and the Report submitted.
- (v) The authorities/management/employers shall regularly conduct orientation programmes, workshops, seminars and awareness programmes to upskill members of the ICCs/LCs/ICs and to educate women employees and women's groups about the provisions of the Act, the Rules and relevant regulations.
- (vi) The National Legal Services Authority(NALSA) and the State Legal Services Authorities(SLSAs) shall develop modules to conduct workshops and organize awareness programmes to sensitize authorities/managements/employers, employees and adolescent groups with the provisions of the Act, which shall be included in their annual calendar.
- (vii) The National Judicial Academy and the State Judicial Academies shall include in their annual calendars, orientation programmes, seminars and workshops for capacity building of members of the ICCs/LCs/ICs established in the High Courts and District Courts and for drafting Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to conduct an inquiry under the Act and Rules.



- (viii) A copy of this judgment shall be transmitted to the Secretaries of all the Ministries, Government of India who shall ensure implementation of the directions by all the concerned Departments, Statutory Authorities, Institutions, Organisations etc. under the control of the respective Ministries. A copy of the judgment shall also be transmitted to the Chief Secretaries of all the States and Union Territories who shall ensure strict compliance of these directions by all the concerned Departments. It shall be the responsibility of the Secretaries of the Ministries, Government of India and the Chief Secretaries of every State/Union Territory to ensure implementation of the directions issued.
- (ix) The Registry of the Supreme Court of India shall transmit a copy of this judgment to the Director, National Judicial Academy, Member Secretary, NALSA, Chairperson, Bar Council of India and the Registrar Generals of all the High Courts. The Registry shall also transmit a copy of this judgment to the Medical Council of India, Council of Architecture, Institute of Chartered Accountants, Institute of Company Secretaries and the Engineering Council of India for implementing the directions issued.
- (x) Member-Secretary, NALSA is requested to transmit a copy of this judgment to the Member Secretaries of all the State Legal Services Authorities. Similarly, the Registrar Generals of the State High Courts shall transmit a copy of this judgment to the Directors of the State Judicial Academies and the Principal District Judges/ District Judges of their respective States.
- (xi) The Chairperson, Bar Council of India and the Apex Bodies mentioned in sub-para (ix) above, shall in turn, transmit a copy of this judgment to all the State Bar Councils and the State Level Councils, as the case may be.

#### 4. *Binu Tampta & Anr. v. High Court of Delhi & Ors. in W.P.(C) No. 162/2013*

On 07.11.2023, a division bench comprising of Hon'ble Mrs Justice B V Nagarathna and Hon'ble Mr Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, dismissed an application seeking enlargement of the scope of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Regulation, 2013 to cover LGBTQIA+ persons. This Hon'ble Court held that the definition of "aggrieved women" as it exists **would not cover a person who is belonging to the LGBTQIA+ umbrella**. The Court opined that a direction to amend the 2013 Regulations would be inappropriate as it would dilute and defeat the purpose of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Regulation, 2013. The relevant para is produced as:

*"...The object and purpose of the regulations of 2013 Act are in order to protect 'aggrieved women in the workplace i.e. the Supreme Court of India. If a person other than an 'aggrieved woman' is subjected to sexual harassment and there is no body of Regulations to extend protection to such a person and a question arises regarding the manner in which such a protection could be extended, in our view, the answer does not lie by amending the existing Regulations."*



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