



## **INSTITUTE OF FOREST BIODIVERSITY (IFB), HYDERABAD**

### **A report on the awareness program on “Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace” at ICFRE-IFB, Hyderabad.**

The ICFRE-Institute of Forest Biodiversity, Hyderabad organized an awareness program on “The Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place” on 14.11.2024 (Thursday) at 11:30 AM. A total of 30 employees have participated in the program. The main objective of this program was to create awareness among all the women employees of ICFRE-IFB, Hyderabad for the prevention and redressal of complaints on sexual harassment.

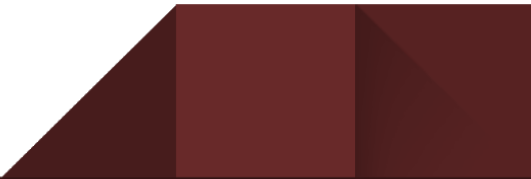
Ms. Aryama Mishra, Scientist-B welcomed the gathering and briefed us about Smt. Geetha Priyadarsani, Assistant Professor, ICFAI Law School, Hyderabad and her professional experience in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. After the introduction, Smt. Geetha Priyadarsani, Assistant Professor, ICFAI Law School, Hyderabad delivered a presentation on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women in the Workplace particularly attention given to rules and regulations.

The speaker provided a comprehensive explanation of sexual harassment in the workplace, covering key legal frameworks and processes aimed at addressing and preventing such issues. Vishakha Guidelines & POSH Act (2013) established the vishakha guidelines by the Supreme Court of India in 1997, creating a framework for preventing sexual harassment in the workplace. These guidelines were later incorporated into the POSH Act (Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act, 2013), a comprehensive law that mandates all workplaces to create mechanisms for addressing sexual harassment complaints.

The POSH Act covers a wide range of issues related to sexual harassment and applies to both the private and public sectors, ensuring a safe working environment for women. She discussed the new offenses introduced under the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (Indian Penal Code) 2023, which include additional provisions addressing sexual harassment and related offenses. This update aims to strengthen the legal framework and better protect individuals from workplace harassment and abuse. The difference between harassment and flirting was explained in terms of feelings, communication (verbal and non-verbal), and behavior. While flirting might be seen as light-hearted or playful, harassment is characterized by unwanted, inappropriate, and repetitive behavior that creates a hostile environment. Verbal and non-verbal cues play a crucial role in determining the intent and impact of actions, with sexual harassment being defined by its unwanted nature and its ability to disturb the victim's sense of security.

The Internal Committee (IC) is a mandatory body in organizations with more than 10 employees, tasked with handling complaints of sexual harassment. The Local Committee (LC) handles complaints in cases where the workplace doesn't have an Internal Committee, typically in smaller or rural settings. Both committees are responsible for investigating complaints, ensuring fair procedures, and recommending actions to address harassment. The complaint process was outlined, where an individual who experiences harassment must report the issue to either the Internal or Local Committee.

The process includes registering the complaint, conducting an investigation, and taking appropriate action. The stages of the complaint process typically involve initial reporting, inquiry or investigation, and a final report with recommendations for action or disciplinary measures. Various types of sexual harassment in the workplace were discussed, such as physical, verbal, and non-verbal harassment. These can range from inappropriate comments and gestures to more severe forms of harassment such as physical assault. The speaker also highlighted real-life scenarios to illustrate different forms of harassment, helping the audience identify what constitutes inappropriate behavior in a workplace. Timelines under the POSH Act were discussed, including the



time frame for filing a complaint (usually within 3 months from the date of the incident) and the timeline for investigation (which must typically be completed within 90 days). In summary, the speaker provided an in-depth explanation of the legal and procedural aspects related to sexual harassment at the workplace, emphasizing the importance of awareness, proper mechanisms for reporting, and swift action to ensure a safe and respectful working environment for all.

Dr. Deepa M, Chairman of Internal Committee on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace of ICFRE-IFB, Hyderabad presented Smt. Geetha Priyadarsani with a gift of art and thanked all the participants.

The Overall program of coordinated by Dr. Deepa M, Chairman of IC, Ms. Aryama Mishra, Scientist -B & Mr. K. Anil Kumar, Stenographer Gr-II.

## **Glimpses of the Program**







