

*(Article Covered – Grievance Redressal Mechanisms for Women)*

## **Grievance Redressal Mechanisms for Women (Part 2)**

### **Mechanism for redressing grievances of Women at Workplaces**

#### **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**

Some important feature of this act are as follows:

- This Act aimed to provide every woman, irrespective of her age or employment status, a safe and secure working environment free from all forms of harassment.
- This Act covered both the organized and unorganized sectors in India. The statute applied to all government bodies, private and public sector organizations, non-governmental organizations, organizations carrying out commercial, vocational, educational, entertainment, industrial, financial activities, hospitals etc.
- This Act defined 'sexual harassment' in line with the Supreme Court's definition in the Vishaka Judgment.
- The Act provided for the establishment of Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) at each office or branches of the organization employing 10 or more employees, in order to provide a forum for filing complaints to facilitate fast redressal of the grievances pertaining to sexual harassment.
- It also provided for the establishment of local complaints committee (LCC) at the district level by the Government to investigate and redress complaints of sexual harassment of the unorganized sector or from those establishments where the ICC has not been constituted for the reason being, it having less than 10 employees.

#### **She Box (Sexual Harassment e-Box)**

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) has launched an online platform to enable women employees working in both the public and private organisations to file complaints related to sexual harassment at the workplace. The complaint management system has been developed to ensure the effective implementation of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013.

Once a complaint is submitted to the 'SHe-Box', it will be directly sent to the internal complaints committee (ICC) of the ministry/department/PSU/autonomous body etc concerned, having jurisdiction to inquire into the matter.

The ICC will take action as prescribed under the Act and update the status of the complaint. The portal is also an effort to provide “speedier remedy” to women facing sexual harassment at the workplace, as envisaged under the sexual harassment Act.

### **Sakhi Scheme**

Women and Child Development Ministry is implementing the Sakhi OSC (One Stop centre) scheme since April 1, 2015. It aims to facilitate access to integrated range of services including medical aid, police assistance, legal aid and case management, psychosocial counselling and temporary support services to women affected by violence.

There is also provision for setting up Sakhi One Stop Centres to support battered women. Under the scheme, it has been envisaged that Sakhi OSCs will be set up across the country in a phased manner.

## **Other mechanisms to address women specific grievances**

### **RTI**

Though not explicitly directed at addressing women centric grievances, RTI has played an important role in addressing women centric grievances in the country. It has allowed people (/women) to raise enquiries related to actions and activities initiated by government for women in India.

### **Gram Sabhas**

Gram Sabhas are very democratic platforms used by all villagers to raise issues concerning them. These have been effectively utilized by women as well to raise issues specific to them.

### **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act**

The Act seeks to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children as ratified by India on December 11, 1992. It aims to prevent abuses and trafficking in children with a special focus on girl child.

The bill mandates setting up Juvenile Justice Boards and Child Welfare Committees in every district. Both must have at least one-woman member each.

### **Hostels Act**

The act provides for provision of safe and affordable accommodation to working women, women being trained for employment and girl students studying in professional courses. These hostels are equipped with basic necessities and safety provisions.