Smt. P.D. Hinduja Trust's
K.P.B. HINDUJA COLLEGE OF COMMERCE
Sindhi Linguistic Minority Institution: (Autonomous)
(Affiliated to University of Mumbai) : NAAC Re-Accredited With "A+" Grade: CGPA: 3.59
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Prin. Dr. Navin M. Punjabi **Ref. No. :**

REPORT ON POSH AWARENESS AND SENSITIZATION SESSION

Organised by: IQAC and Internal Committee of **K. P. B. Hinduja College of Commerce (Autonomous)**
Date: 1st October 2026
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Venue: Room Nos. 21 and 22
Resource Person: Dr. Meeta Seta, Principal In-Charge, Patuck-Gala College of Commerce & Management, Mumbai

Introduction

The Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and the Internal Committee of K. P. B. Hinduja College of Commerce (Autonomous) organised a POSH Awareness and Sensitization Session for the teaching and non-teaching staff of both the Undergraduate (Aided and SFC) and Junior College on 1st October 2026. The session aimed to create awareness about the Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (PoSH) Act, 2013, and the University Grants Commission (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2015.

The session was conducted by Dr. Meeta Seta, an experienced academician and administrator with over two decades of experience in higher education. She holds a Ph.D. in Commerce and has expertise in Human Resource Management, Management and Organisational Behaviour. She is also an experienced POSH awareness trainer and an External Member of Internal Committees.

The session emphasised the importance of creating a safe, respectful, inclusive and gender-sensitive workplace and highlighted the role of awareness and sensitization in preventing sexual harassment in educational institutions.

Objectives of the Session

The major objectives of the session were:

1. To familiarise staff members with the key provisions of the POSH Act, 2013, and the UGC Regulations, 2015.
2. To explain the meaning, forms and implications of sexual harassment at the workplace.
3. To create awareness about the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers.
4. To clarify the role, composition and functions of the Internal Committee.

5. To explain complaint procedures and mechanisms for redressal.
6. To promote gender equality, mutual respect, dignity and professional conduct.
7. To encourage the development of a safe, inclusive and gender-sensitive institutional environment.

Key Points Discussed

1. Background and Evolution of the POSH Act, 2013

The resource person explained the brief background and evolution of the legal framework relating to workplace sexual harassment in India. The Bhanwari Devi case, which arose in 1992, and the subsequent landmark judgment of the Supreme Court in *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* (1997) played a significant role in establishing guidelines for the prevention of sexual harassment at the workplace.

The Nirbhaya case of 2012 also brought national attention to women's safety and contributed to broader legal reforms in 2013. The POSH Act, 2013, established a specific statutory framework for the prevention, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment of women at the workplace.

2. Importance of POSH Beyond Statutory Compliance

The resource person emphasised that the significance of POSH extends beyond fulfilling legal and institutional compliance requirements. Organisations must develop a culture of awareness, sensitivity, respect and accountability.

Regular sensitization programmes are essential to help employees recognise inappropriate behaviour, understand professional boundaries and contribute to a safe and supportive working environment.

3. Gender Equality in the Workplace

The session highlighted that gender should not determine the responsibilities assigned to employees. Professional duties, opportunities and work allocation should be based on competence, qualifications, skills and organisational requirements rather than gender stereotypes.

The importance of ensuring equal opportunities and fostering a workplace culture free from gender-based discrimination was emphasised.

4. Extended Workplace and Sexual Harassment

The resource person discussed the concept of the extended workplace and explained that workplace-related interactions and professional assignments may extend beyond the physical premises of an institution.

Situations involving deputation to another institution require careful consideration of the employment relationship, the circumstances of the incident and the applicable legal provisions. The appropriate Internal Committee or statutory mechanism must be identified based on the facts of the case and the relevant rules.

5. Forms of Sexual Harassment

The session examined the different forms of sexual harassment, with particular reference to *quid pro quo* harassment and the creation of a hostile work environment.

Quid pro quo harassment involves situations in which employment-related benefits, opportunities or decisions are linked to demands for sexual favours. A hostile work environment may arise from unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile working environment.

The resource person also discussed toxic workplace environments arising from gender-based conduct. Such concerns must be assessed carefully to determine whether the conduct falls within the scope of the POSH Act or requires action under other applicable institutional policies and laws.

6. Understanding Sexual Harassment: Intent and Impact

The resource person explained the importance of understanding sexual harassment in terms of the nature of the conduct, its impact and the surrounding circumstances. The absence of an intention to cause harm does not automatically mean that the conduct cannot constitute sexual harassment.

Employees were encouraged to be mindful of their words, actions, behaviour and professional interactions. The session highlighted the importance of respecting personal boundaries and maintaining dignity in the workplace.

At the same time, complaints must be examined objectively in accordance with the statutory definition of sexual harassment and the applicable inquiry procedures.

7. Gender-Neutral Workplace Policies

The discussion highlighted the importance of developing organisational policies that promote dignity, equality, safety and respect for everyone, irrespective of gender.

It was clarified that the POSH Act specifically addresses sexual harassment of women at the workplace. Organisations may supplement this framework with appropriate policies to address other forms of harassment and misconduct affecting employees and to ensure a safe working environment for all.

8. Examination and Scope of Complaints

The resource person stressed that complaints received by the Internal Committee must be examined carefully to determine whether the alleged conduct falls within the scope of the POSH Act and whether the Committee has jurisdiction to inquire into the matter.

Complaints must be dealt with fairly, confidentially and in accordance with the prescribed procedures. Where an issue falls outside the jurisdiction of the Internal Committee under the POSH Act, the appropriate institutional authority or mechanism may need to be approached.

9. Display and Communication of the Internal Committee Policy

The importance of widely displaying the institution's POSH policy and details of the Internal Committee was emphasised. The composition of the Committee, contact details of its members and relevant complaint procedures should be made accessible to employees and students in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Effective communication of the policy helps members of the institution understand their rights, responsibilities and the mechanisms available for reporting and addressing complaints.

10. Annual Reporting by the Internal Committee

The resource person explained the importance of maintaining proper records and preparing the Internal Committee's annual report in accordance with the POSH Act and applicable rules.

As prescribed by law, the annual report is to be submitted to the employer and the District Officer. The institution must follow the applicable reporting requirements and confirm the details of the designated District Officer and the relevant submission procedure.

11. Role and Functions of the Internal Committee

The Internal Committee plays a significant role in receiving complaints of sexual harassment, conducting inquiries in accordance with the prescribed procedure and recommending appropriate action as provided under the law.

The resource person explained that the Committee performs quasi-judicial functions during inquiries and must adhere to principles of natural justice, fairness, impartiality and confidentiality. The Committee must act within its statutory mandate and ensure that complaints are handled sensitively and objectively.

12. Creating a Safe, Respectful and Inclusive Campus

The session concluded its substantive discussion by reinforcing the shared responsibility of the management, the Internal Committee and all employees in building a safe and inclusive institutional environment.

Staff members were encouraged to promote respectful communication, challenge inappropriate behaviour, understand the importance of consent and professional boundaries, and contribute to a culture that upholds dignity, equality and safety.

Participants: Total 81 staff participated in the session.

Feedback and Participant Response

At the conclusion of the session, participants were requested to share their feedback through an online Google Form. The feedback mechanism was intended to obtain participants' views on the session and help identify areas for further awareness and sensitization initiatives.

Feedback Form: https://forms.gle/37SSP9weN77b8bC6A

Conclusion

The POSH Awareness and Sensitization Session provided an opportunity for the teaching and non-teaching staff of the Degree and Junior College to enhance their understanding of the POSH Act, 2013, and the UGC Regulations, 2015. The session highlighted that the prevention of sexual harassment requires more than statutory compliance; it calls for continuous awareness, sensitivity, accountability and collective commitment.

The programme reinforced the importance of the Internal Committee, transparent complaint mechanisms, gender equality and respectful professional relationships in maintaining a safe and inclusive workplace.

The initiative by IQAC and the Internal Committee reflects the institution's commitment to promoting dignity, respect, equality and safety for all members of the college community.

"Let us work together to uphold dignity, respect, equality and safety at our workplace."

Dr. Ambili Madhu Thampi

Chairperson

Internal Committee