

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UN-STARRED QUESTION NO: 1170
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.02.2026

IMPLEMENTATION OF POSH ACT IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

1170: SHRI S JAGATHRATCHAKAN:

Will the Minister of Women and Child Development be pleased to state:

- (a) whether, in light of the Supreme Court's directions issued in December 2024 mandating all Government Departments, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)/institutions to constitute Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) and establish SheBox portals, protection under the POSH Act has been explicitly extended to interns, trainees, apprentices and outsourced personnel working under these entities;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether all such Ministries/Departments/PSUs have ensured the inclusion of these categories of personnel within the jurisdiction of their ICCs across headquarters, regional offices, project sites and field units, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the details of the mechanism in place to verify compliance/track complaints specifically from interns, trainees and outsourced women workers along with action taken by the Government?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a) to (d): The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (SH Act) aims to prevent sexual harassment at the workplace and ensure a safe, secure and inclusive environment for women across all sectors. It covers all women, regardless of age or employment status and extends to organized and unorganized sectors in both public and private workplaces and also includes domestic workers.

As per the Act, the Central Government is Appropriate Government in respect of the workplaces established, owned, controlled or wholly or substantially financed by funds provided directly or indirectly by the Central Government. Similarly, the State Government is the Appropriate Government in respect of the workplaces established, owned, controlled or wholly or substantially financed by funds provided directly or indirectly by them. Further, the State Government is the Appropriate Government for all other workplaces falling/ working within their jurisdiction (other than those which are under the domain of Central Government).

The following definitions enshrined in the SH Act, 2013 provides that the Act is unequivocally applicable to all women, irrespective of sector, employment status or nature of work.

Section 2(a) of the Act defines "aggrieved woman" as any woman, of any age, whether employed or not, who alleges she has been subjected to sexual harassment at the workplace. This broad definition ensures that any woman present at a workplace regardless of her role is covered under the ambit of the Act.

Also, Section 2(f) defines term "employee" as persons employed on regular, temporary, ad hoc, or daily wage basis, either directly or through an agent, including volunteers or trainees. This includes contractual workers, apprentices, trainees, consultants and even unpaid interns. The definition ensures that economic dependency on the employer/ in-charge/ owner of a workplace is not a precondition for protection.

The Supreme Court in the matter of Aureliano Fernandes v/s State of Goa and Ors. (M.A Dy. No. 22553 of 2023 in Civil Appeal No. 2482 of 2014) has emphasized the importance of implementing the SH Act in letter and spirit and issued a series of directives in the matter for effective implementation of the Act. The Court directed constitution of Internal Committees in all workplaces with more than 10 employees and Local Committees at district level.

Supreme Court vide Order dated 03rd December, 2024, directed that the Chief Secretaries of each State shall direct the Deputy Commissioners, District Magistrates or Additional District Magistrates, Collector or Deputy Collector of each district to survey the number of organisations, both public sector as well as private, within the district, with respect to constitution of IC. The District Officers were directed to upload the requisite details for the effective implementation of Sections 4 and 6 of the Act in the matter of constitution of the Internal Complaints Committee in a work place by every employer as well as the Local Committee which has been constituted and upload the details to the She-Box which has been instituted by the Union of India.

Hon'ble Supreme Court vide subsequent orders dated 12th August, 2025 and 06th January, 2026, further directed the District Officers to conduct the survey with the assistance of the Labour Commissioners in the District and the Chief Labour Commissioner of the State and the States to ensure that the data that has already been collected is on-boarded on the SHe-Box portal, created by the Ministry of WCD.

With a view to securing robust and transparent implementation of the SH Act, 2013, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) launched **the Sexual Harassment electronic Box (SHe-Box) Portal** (<https://shebox.wcd.gov.in/>) on 29th August 2024 as a transformative digital governance initiative. To ensure compliance across all sectors including all Government Departments, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)/institutions, Ministry WCD has issued letters and advisories to all Central Ministries/ Departments and States/ UTs in this regard to ensure onboarding and updation of IC details on portal.

So far, over 91250 Government Departments/ offices at Central, State, district and sub-district level have onboarded the portal and out of which, 36775 have updated their IC details. To expedite the updation, the Ministry follows up with all stakeholders at Central, State and district level.

The Ministry has also taken systematic measures to expedite the updation of necessary details on Portal, including -

(a) Automated Notifications: Regular reminder messages, SMS alerts, and emails are sent to designated Nodal Officers to accelerate the updation process;

(b) Freeze Messages: Escalation notifications are issued on Dashboards of Nodal Officers to ensure priority attention to pending tasks;

(c) Technical Assistance: Dedicated technical support teams are stationed to address technical challenges faced by various Central Ministries, Departments and Private entities during the onboarding process.
