

INTERNAL COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

REPORT

ON

**PREVENTION, PROHIBITION, READRESSAL OF
SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE ACT, 2013**

POSH ORIENTATION



MADRAS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

(AUTONOMOUS)

NO. 32, CASA MAJOR ROAD, EGMORE

CHENNAI 600-008

DATE: 1st, 3rd, 8th and 10th September 2025

VENUE: TAG AUDITORIUM, MSSW

Day – 1

PROFILE OF DR.SAKTHIREKHA

Dr.Sakthi Rekha had been working as Librarian at MSSW from 2001 - 2023. She was the Chairperson of ICC from 2021-2023. During her tenure, a system was established to ensure an effective Internal Committee (IC) in alignment with the spirit of the POSH Act.

She is the co-founder of Voice of People, a grassroots organization committed to promoting participatory democracy. She is also actively involved in various citizens' and women's groups that work towards creating a just and equitable space for all. She is also serving as external member of Internal Committee of various institutions including the High Court of Madras.

PROCEEDINGS ON 1st September 2025

- Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) has organized “POSH Orientation 2025 (Awareness, Respect Safety)” for the students of MSSW.
- In the series, the first orientation held on 1st September 2025, Monday for the students of MSW Aided, MA Social Entrepreneurship, BSc Psychology and PhD Scholars. The resource person for the training programme was Dr. Sakthi Rekha, Co-Founder of Voice of People, a grassroot organization committed to promoting participatory democracy.
- The session begun with the welcome address and Chief Guest introduction by Mr. Ramkumar G, Faculty Member followed by Dr.P.Mohana, Presiding officer, ICC felicitated chief guest with a memento.
- Dr. Sakthi Rekha, oriented the students about the POSH. The presentation included history of POSH, key concepts such as Sexual Harassment, Workplace, Aggrieved Woman & Redressal Process, and various aspects of POSH.
- More importantly the presentation covered the details of ICC and the process. The session ended with the discussion of a case study. Students interacted with the resource person after the session. Finally, Mr. Ramkumar G, Assistant Professor of MSW-SF, proposed the vote of thanks.

Day - 2

DATE	3 rd September 2025
TIME	4:30 PM-6:30 PM
VENUE	TAG auditorium, MSSW
DESIGNATION	Advocate at Madras High Court
TOPIC	Orientation on POSH ACT

PROFILE:

Mrs.Jothilakshmi Sundaresan is an Advocate practicing in Madras High Court and other Subordinate Courts in Chennai since 2008. Her specialized area of practice is Property and Family Law. She also helped underprivileged people to have access to justice by being in Legal Aid Panel Advocate of Madras High Court, Justice & Hope and other NGOs. Her passion is Women's Rights.

Mrs.Jothilakshmi,

- Received 'Young Talent Award' for the year 2020 from Women Lawyers Association of Madras High Court.
- Co-founder of Simple Women Federation that aims to encourage and train women to manage their properties independently, and sets up home library to inculcate book reading habit for young women aged between 17-21 years from deprived communities.
- Regularly interviewed by magazines like Aval Vikatan, and Citizen Matters, on women issues
- Internal Complaints Committee member of many Institutions and manufacturing Companies, on prevention of Sexual harassment at workplace.
- Chennai Volunteer for Shakti, an organization that works as a citizen's pressure group for passing of Women Reservation Bill in India.
- Mentor and Core team member of Udayan Shalini Fellowship- Chennai Chapter that provides Scholarship and Mentoring for girl children of single mothers and of economically backward families. The motto is to ensure that the girls are continuing their education at least to the level of graduation.

- Member of Voice of People, a Chennai based Citizens' group that works for the implementation of Area Sabha and Ward Committees in Chennai and other Corporations, which is a forum for citizen participation in the governance, similar to the Grama Sabhas in Villages.
- Resource person and Volunteer for SBCC Women's Group, a support group of Cancer Conquerors in Chennai. Wrote in tamil magazine, Mangayar Malar as a series of six episodes on POCSO Act to create awareness among people on child sexual abuse.
- Conducts free Legal Awareness Sessions to the public on the Rights of Women and Children.
- Rotarian
- Member of Inner Wheel which is one of the largest women's service voluntary organisations in the world and are active in more than 103 countries.
- Have received 'Women Achiever Award' for the year 2020 from Chennai Citizen's Forum.
- Member of India united, that aims to promote India's Constitutional values among citizens.

PROCEEDINGS ON 3rd September 2025

- The session began at 4:30 PM, the resource and convenor of the Internals Complaints Committee (ICC), Dr.P.Mohana, Associate Professor – MAHRM Department and Ms.Seema Sunny, Assistant Professor – MSW (Mental Health) were the faculty members who pioneered the session.
- The resource person began the session by refreshing the student's knowledge on laws and their protection of life, property and dignity. The students also were briefed about the uses of laws such as maintaining law and order, handling conflicts, maintaining relationship with other nations and providing services for citizens.
- The pillars of law enforcement such as the United Declaration Of Human Rights (UDHR), Preamble of the constitution, Article 2 – freedom from discrimination were briefed upon.
- The resource person provided a historic background on the evolution of women's freedom and rights along with case studies of Rukhmabhai who refused to go through with child marriage and later became the 2nd practicing doctor in India and the case of Rupan Deol Bajaj vs. K.P.S. Gill. The students were also enlightened about organisations such as CEDAW.

- The case which was the birth of The Vishaka Guidelines, was the case of Bhanwari Devi, a social worker, after which, The Vishaka Guidelines were created by the Supreme Court of India in 1997 .The court acknowledged the absence of a specific law to address workplace sexual harassment and, through its power of judicial legislation, issued these guidelines to protect women's fundamental right to equality and dignity in the workplace.
- This led to the enactment of the Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women at workplace Act, 2013. Under UGC guidelines it is practiced as a gender neutral act in educational institutions under UGC.
- The resource person elaborated on the vast coverage of the Act, by taking the students through the definitions of harassment along with its types and workplace, method of filing complaint, indirect complaints, role of respondent, ICC committee, and complainant under the Act.

ACTIVITIES:

Two activities were conducted in order to make the students grasp the Act better

1. Letter writing activity: Each student had to write a complaint letter about any hypothetical incident which is covered by POSH.
2. Role play activity: Students were asked to volunteer to role play as the ICC committee chairpersons, complainant, respondent and witness.

KEY LEARNINGS:

Definitions:

1. Sexual harassment: Includes unwelcome acts such as physical contact, demands for sexual favours, sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography, or other unwelcome sexual conduct. The Act also considers certain related circumstances as sexual harassment, including implied or explicit threats of preferential or detrimental treatment in employment, threats to employment status, interference with work to create a hostile environment, or humiliating treatment affecting health or safety
2. Workplace: It Encompasses, government and private organizations, NGOs, hospitals, sports facilities, and any place visited during employment, including employer-provided transportation. This definition also includes

dwelling places or houses to protect domestic workers and has been interpreted to cover virtual workspaces

Timeline that is followed post complaint:

1. The aggrieved woman must submit a written complaint to the IC within three months of the last incident of sexual harassment.
 2. Extension: This timeline can be extended by a further three months by the IC, provided there were valid reasons for the delay.
 3. The IC must send a copy of the complaint to the accused (respondent) within seven working days of receiving it.
 4. The respondent must submit a written response to the complaint, including supporting documents and a list of witnesses, within 10 working days of receiving the notice.
 5. The IC must complete its inquiry within 90 days of receiving the complaint and submits its inquiry report, including its findings and recommendations, to the employer within 10 days of completing the investigation.
 6. The employer must act on the IC's recommendations within 60 days of receiving the report.
- By writing the letter the students were able to understand the key elements of what the letter should consist such as the date, time, place of incident and course of action that took place along with evidences if any
 - Through the role play activity the students were able to understand the timeline clearly.

Day – 3

PROCEEDINGS ON 8th September 2025

- An orientation session on the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) and the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act was held on 8th September 2025 at the TAG Auditorium from 4:45 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The session was presided over by Ms.Shilpa, Assistant Professor – M.Sc (Family Counselling).
- Students from the MSW (SF), MA (HROD), MSW (MH/CF), and M.Sc. FC programmes attended the orientation. The programme commenced with the College Song and the Tamil Thai Vazhthu.
- Following this, Ms. Shilpa Grace, Assistant Professor, M. Sc. Family counselling, introduced the resource person, Advocate Jothilakshmi of the Madras High Court.
- Adv. Jothilakshmi delivered the POSH orientation in an interactive and informative manner. She began by presenting the historical background that led to the formulation of the POSH Act and highlighted real-life cases from India which underscored the need for legal measures to safeguard women, particularly in workplaces
- A comprehensive explanation of the POSH Act was provided, covering its clauses, provisions, and applicability. The session also included practical activities to enhance student understanding.

ACTIVITIES:

- A role-play exercise simulating workplace scenarios.
- Students being asked to draft formal complaints of harassment as if they had occurred within the campus.
- Formation of a mock POSH Committee from among student volunteers, who deliberated on one of the complaints submitted

Day – 4:

PROCEEDINGS ON 10th September 2025

- The Madras School of Social Work organized a POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) Orientation session on September 10, 2025, at Tag Auditorium for MSW(D&E) and BSW students. The resource person for the session was Advocate Nallini Olivannan, a certified POSH trainer, who shared her expertise on the subject with the student community.
- The session began with a warm welcome to the resource person by Ms.Seema Sunny, Assistant Professor, MSSW. Advocate Nallini initiated the orientation by providing an overview of the women-centric legislations in India. She emphasized the significance of the POSH Act, 2013, as a milestone in safeguarding women at workplaces.
- A key highlight of the session was her explanation of red zone behaviours (unwelcoming conduct) and green zone behaviours (welcoming and appropriate conduct), which offered students clarity on professional boundaries and respectful workplace conduct. She mentioned on the constitution of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) and guided participants through the procedures for filing a complaint, the steps in inquiry proceedings, the valid time frame for lodging a complaint, and the stipulated period for action by the committee.
- The orientation proved highly informative and practical, equipping students with essential awareness about their rights, responsibilities, and redressal mechanisms under POSH. The session concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Ms. Sumaiya Sharmin (MSW – Disability & Empowerment), who expressed gratitude to the resource person and the participants.
- Around 50 students attended the session, actively engaging with the discussions and gaining valuable insights into creating safe and respectful academic and professional environments.