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Government Constitutes Panel on Sexual Harassment

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Recently in India, many women came forward on social media speaking up about the sexual harassment which they have faced at the workplace.

- The government took cognizance of the issue and has constituted a Group of Ministers (GoM) to examine the existing legal and institutional frameworks for dealing with matters of sexual harassment of women at the workplace.
- The GoM will recommend action required for effective implementation as well as for strengthening the existing legal and institutional frameworks for addressing issues related to sexual harassment at workplace.
- The Group of Ministers will examine the existing provisions for the safety of women and give its recommendation within 3 months of its constitution.
- The Group of Ministers will be chaired by the Union Home Minister and will have 4 other members.

SHe-Box

- The Ministry of Women & Child Development has launched Sexual Harassment electronic Box (SHe-Box) as an effort to provide a single window access to every woman, irrespective of her work status, whether working in organised or unorganised, private or public sector, to facilitate the registration of complaint related to sexual harassment.
- Any woman facing sexual harassment at the workplace can register their complaint through this portal. Once a complaint is submitted to the 'SHe-Box', it will be directly sent to the concerned authority having jurisdiction to take action into the matter.

The Protection of Women Against Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act, 2013

- The Act defines sexual harassment at the workplace and creates a mechanism for redressal of complaints. It also provides safeguards against false or malicious charges.

- Every employer is required to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee at each office or branch with 10 or more employees.
- The Complaints Committees have the powers of civil courts for gathering evidence.
- The Complaints Committees are required to provide for conciliation before initiating an inquiry if requested by the complainant.
- Penalties have been prescribed for employers. Non-compliance with the provisions of the Act shall be punishable with a fine.
- Repeated violations may lead to higher penalties and cancellation of license or registration to conduct business.
- The State Government will notify the District Officer in every district, who will constitute a Local Complaints Committee (LCC) so as to enable women in the unorganised sector or small establishments to work in an environment free of sexual harassment.

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