

Report on the National Commission for Women (NCW) Awareness Programme on the POSH Act held on 17th July 2026 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi

The National Commission for Women (NCW) organized a one-day Awareness Programme on "The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013" on 17th July 2026 at the Plenary Hall, Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The programme aimed to strengthen awareness and understanding of the provisions of the POSH Act and to enhance the capacity of Internal Committees (ICs) and Local Committees (LCs) in ensuring safe, dignified, and inclusive workplaces for women.

The programme was attended on behalf of Keshav Mahavidyalaya, University of Delhi, by Prof. Kanupriya Goswami, Presiding Officer, Internal Committee, and Prof. Roli Bansal, Member, Internal Committee.

The Chief Guest of the event was Hon'ble Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt. Annapurna Devi Ji, who reaffirmed the Government's commitment to promoting safe, inclusive, and harassment-free workplaces for women. The inaugural session also featured the Opening Address by Smt. Vijaya Rahatkar, Hon'ble Chairperson, National Commission for Women (NCW). In her address, she underscored the importance of the POSH Act as a vital legal safeguard for women at the workplace and remarked that no woman should ever be compelled to choose between her livelihood and her safety. The inaugural session also witnessed the release of a Booklet on Inquiry Procedures for Internal Committees (ICs) and Local Committees (LCs) under the POSH Act.

Session I: Overview of the POSH Act including Rights of Complainants and Respondents

The first technical session was delivered by Ms. Sanya Talwar, Founding Editor of Lawbeat, a legal journalism platform. She presented a comprehensive overview of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, covering its objectives, scope, and key provisions. Ms. Talwar elaborated on the rights and responsibilities of both complainants and respondents, emphasizing that the message, "Respect Each Other's Boundaries," highlighting that the foundation of a safe workplace lies in respecting personal and professional boundaries. Using practical examples she explained important aspects of the Act, including the definition of sexual harassment, the constitution and responsibilities of the Internal Committee, timelines for inquiry, confidentiality and the rights available to both parties during the inquiry process. Photographs of selected presentation slides from the session are enclosed for reference.

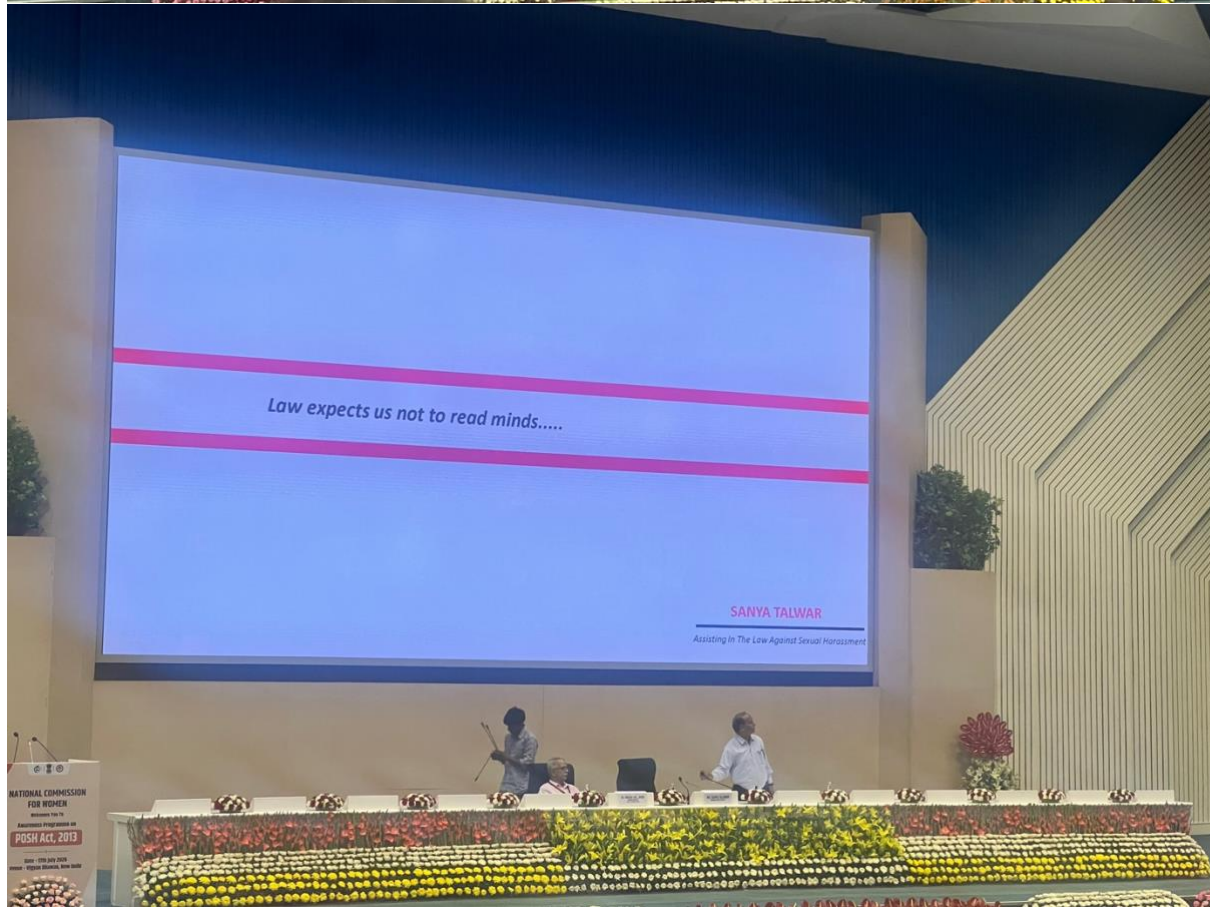
Session II: Handling of Complaints and Inquiry Procedure by ICs and LCs

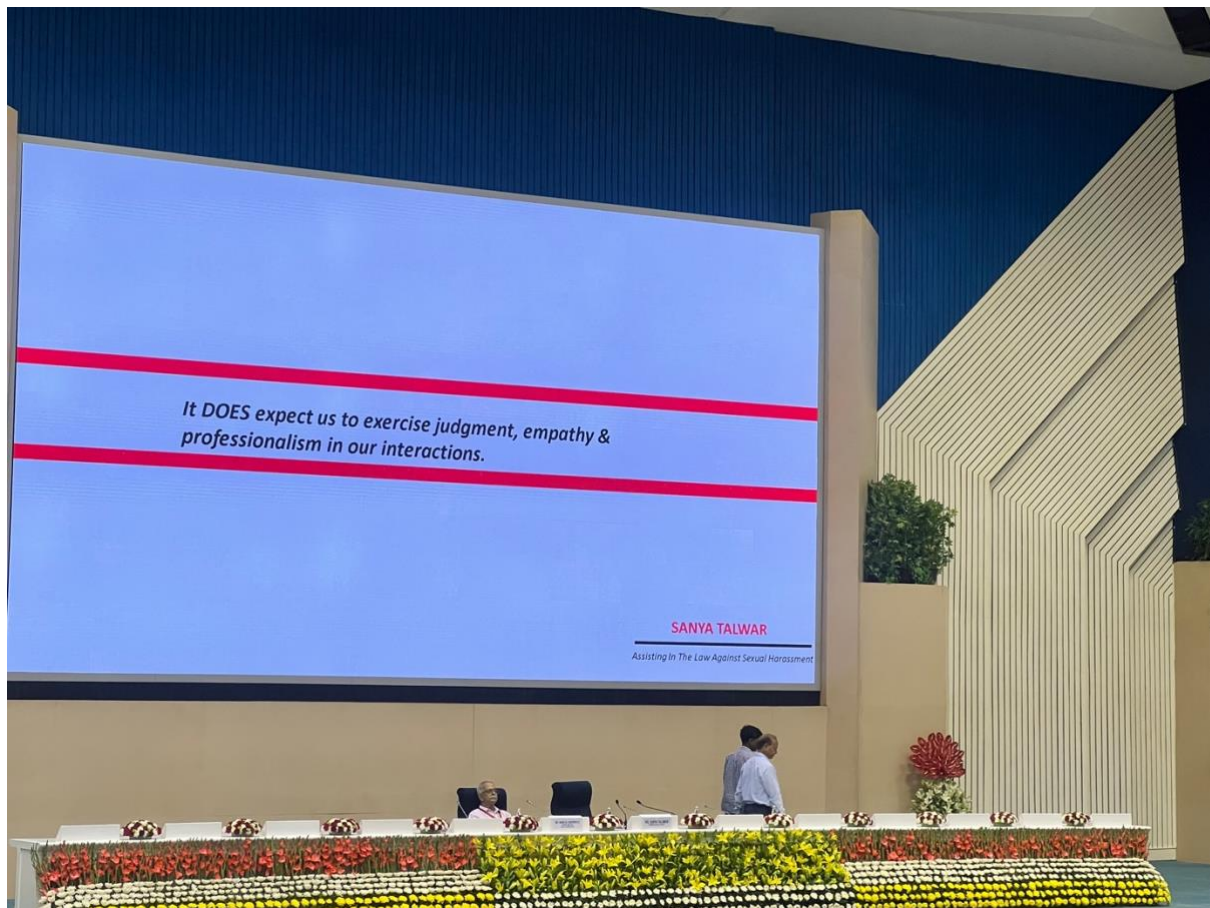
The second technical session was conducted by Dr. Mukesh Chaturvedi, former Director, Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), Government of India. The session focused on the procedures for handling complaints and conducting inquiries by Internal Committees (ICs) and Local Committees (LCs). Dr. Chaturvedi elaborated on the procedural requirements to be followed by Internal Committees, from the receipt of a complaint through the completion of the inquiry and submission of the final report. Dr. Chaturvedi also shared practical guidance on addressing procedural challenges commonly encountered by Internal Committees. Photographs of selected presentation slides from the session are enclosed for reference.

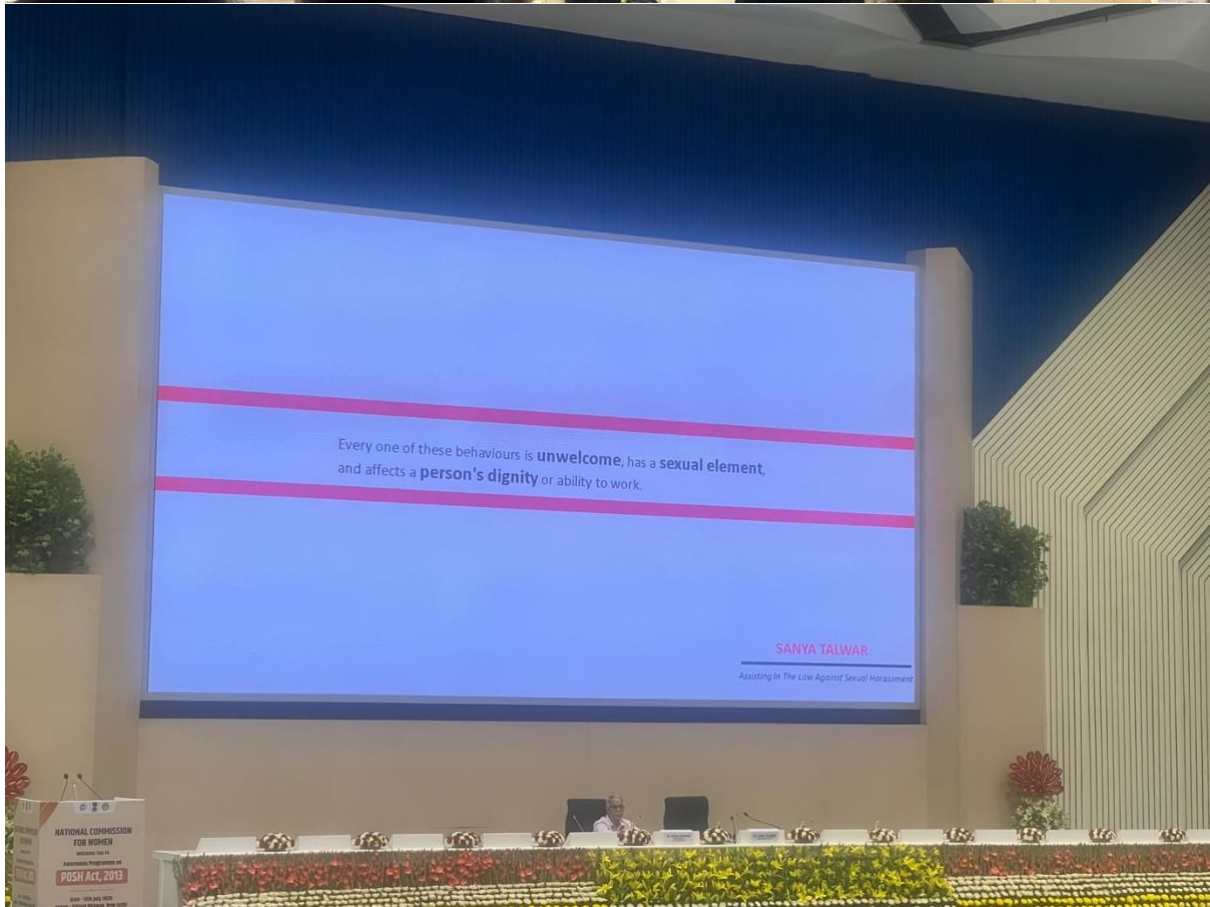
Conclusion

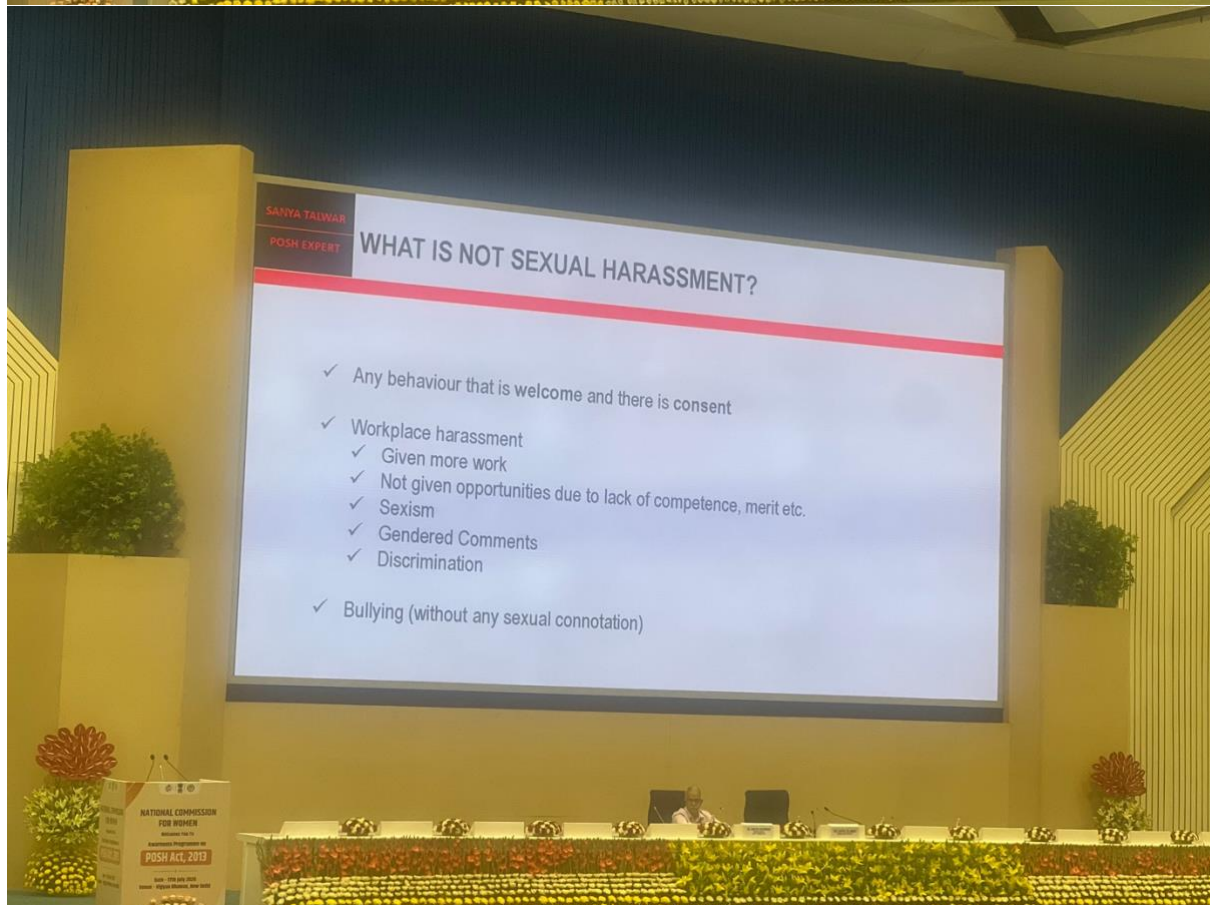
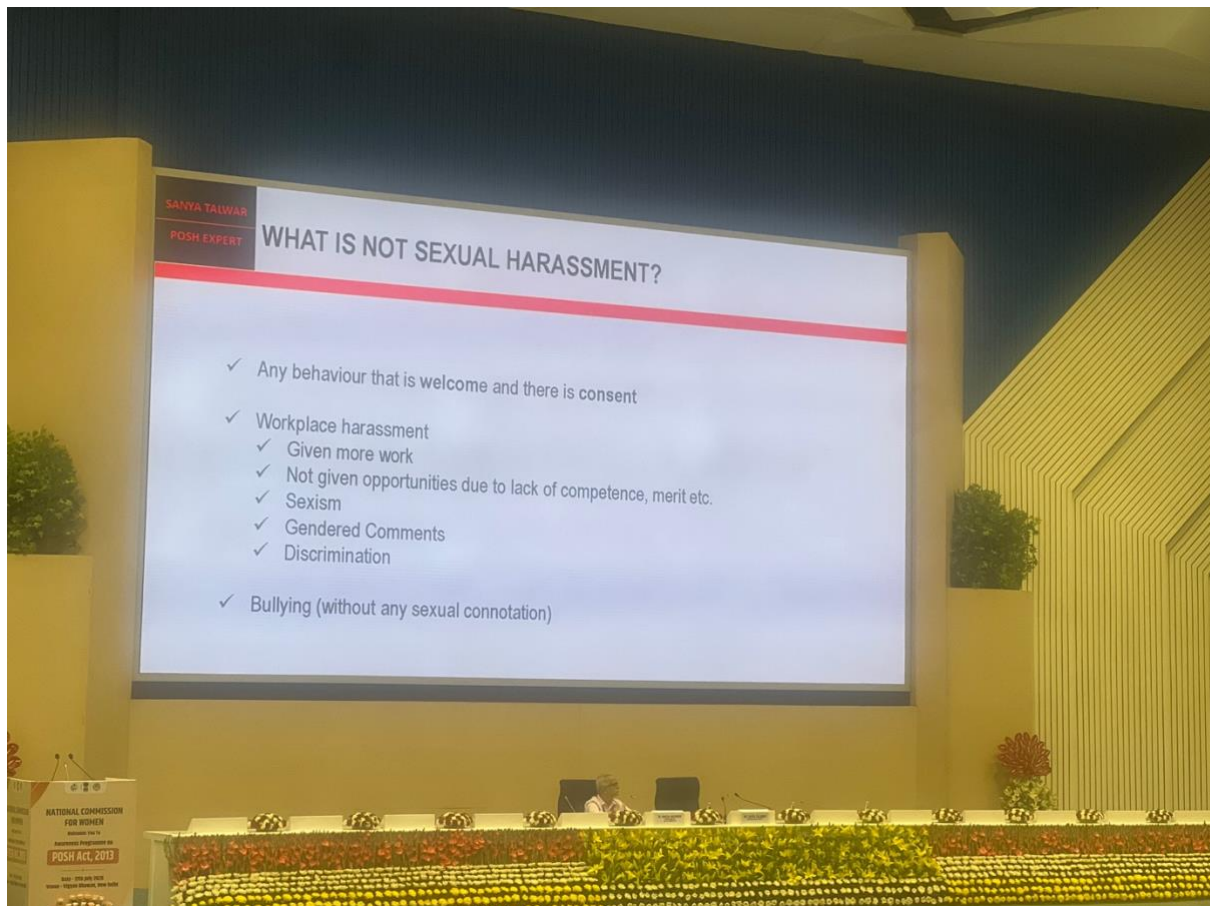
The awareness programme proved to be highly informative and enriching, providing participants with a deeper understanding of the legal and procedural aspects of the POSH Act. The programme significantly enhanced the participants' understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Internal Committees in ensuring effective implementation of the POSH Act within their respective institutions.









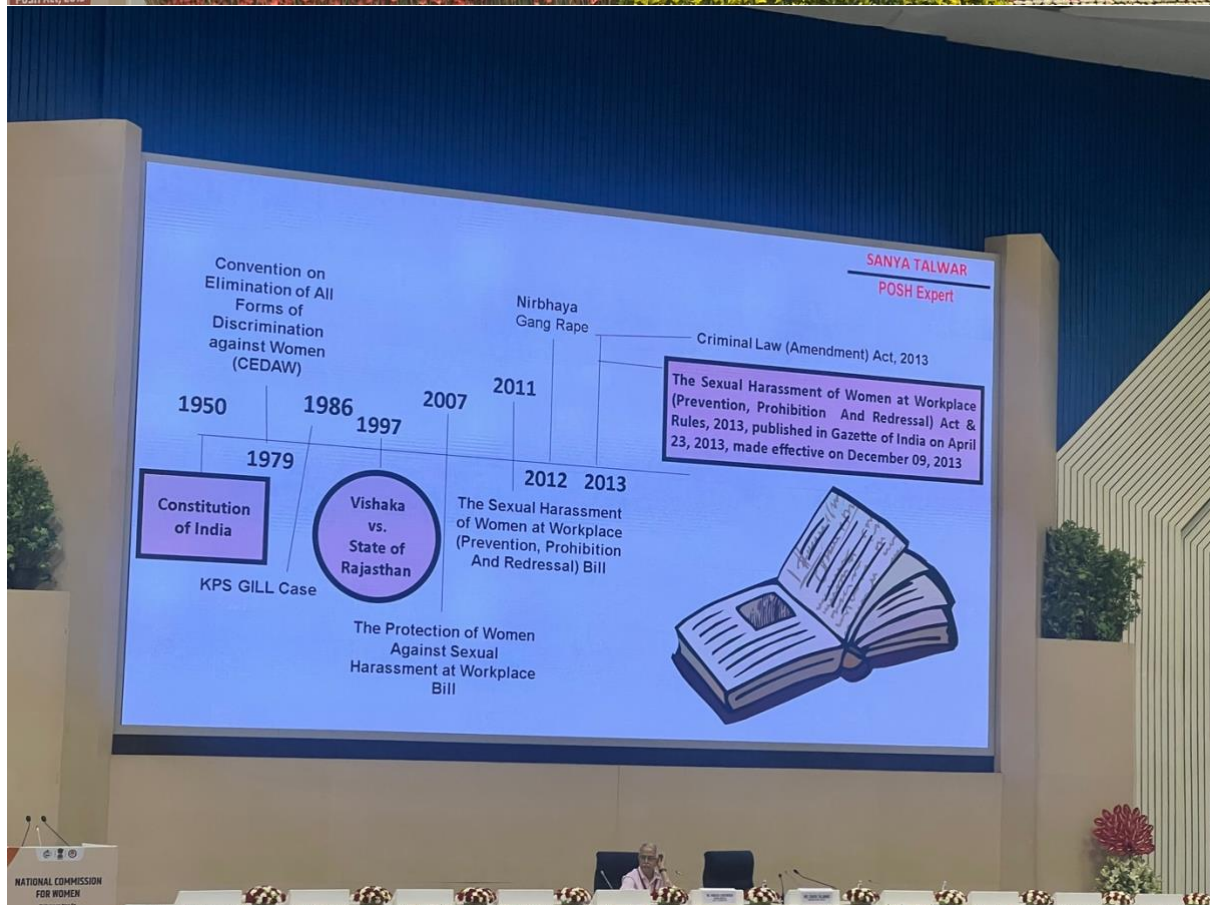


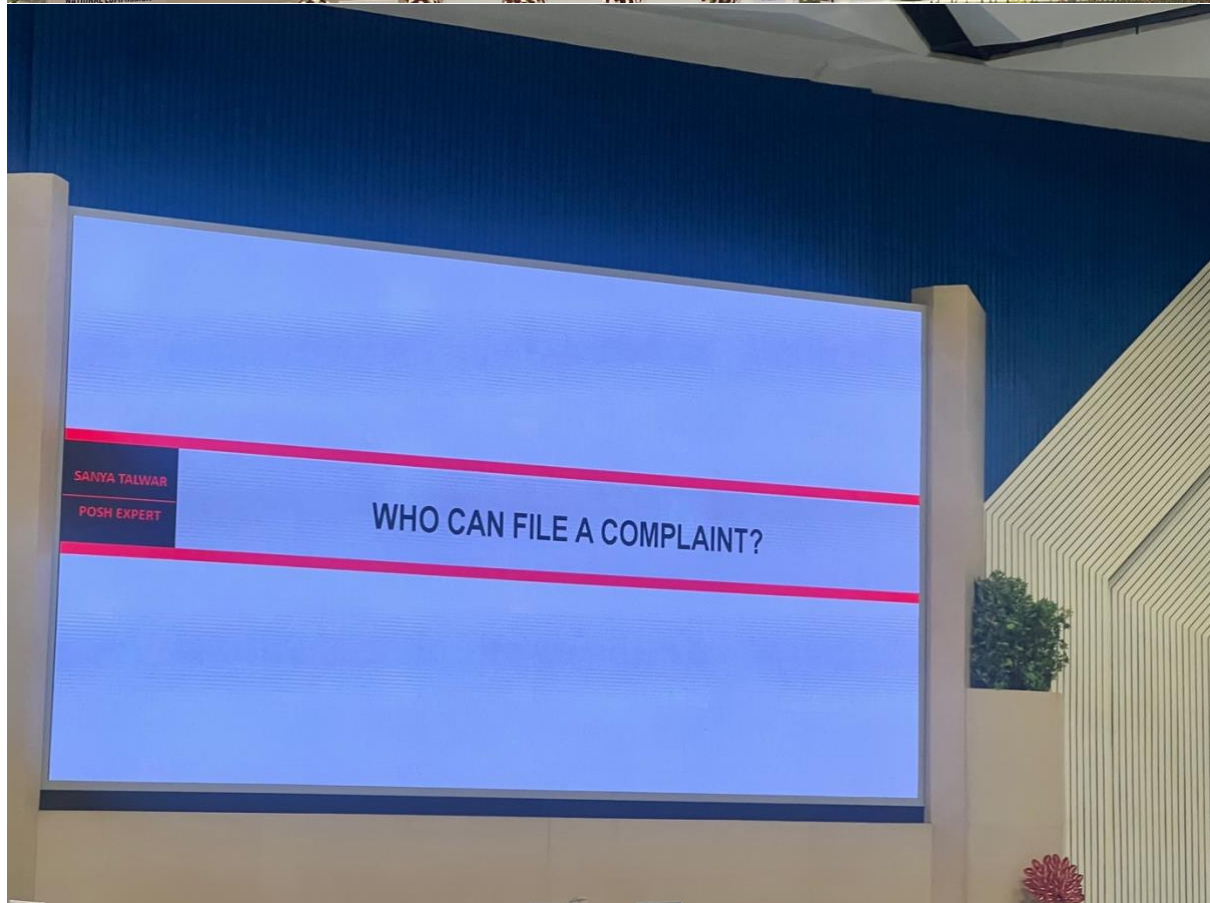
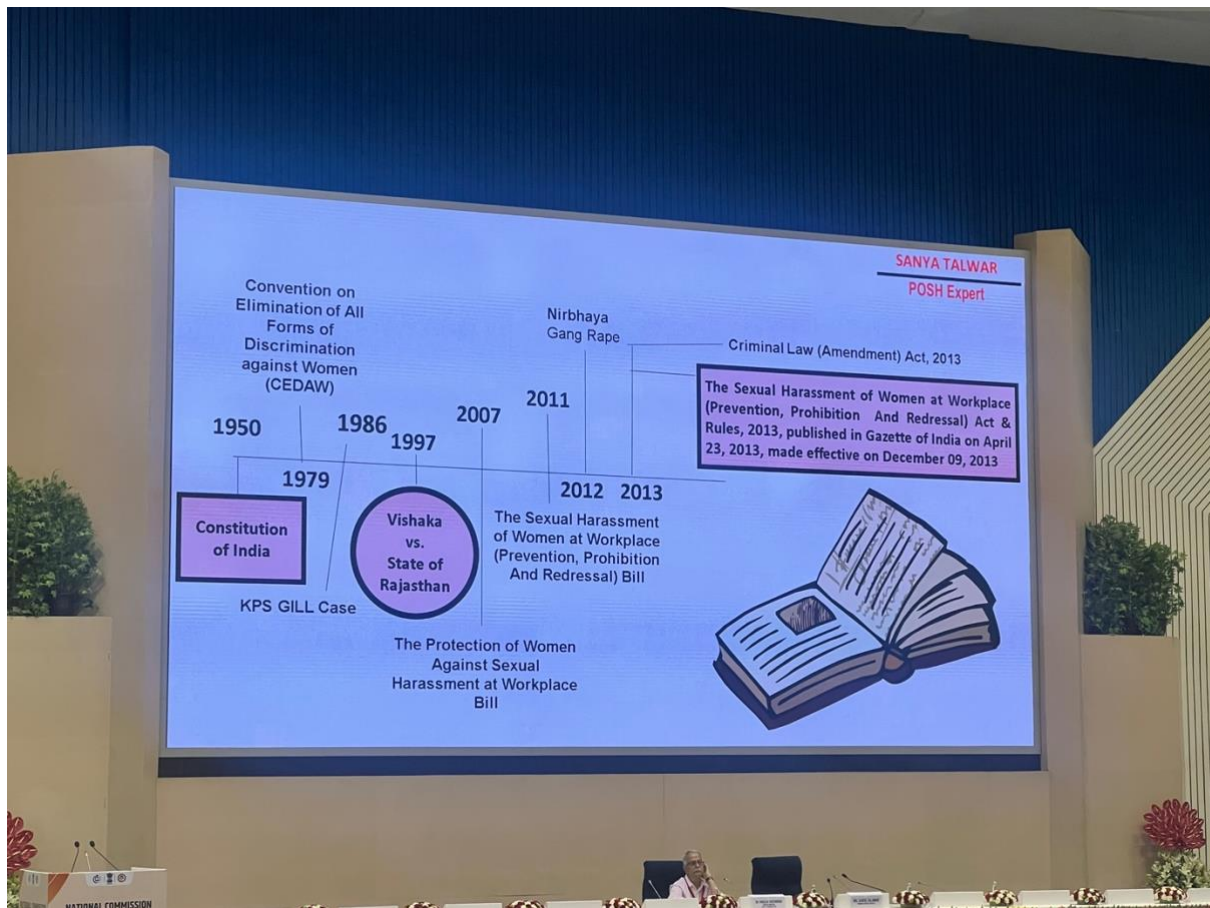
"Every office has to maintain a certain decorum...The administrative head or the chief **has every right to extract work** and he/she has his/her own discretion and prerogatives. If a woman employee is discriminated against **due to her inefficiency** or for any other official reasons, the **recourse for her is not the one taken by this complainant**"

Madras High Court in Union of India v. Reema Srinivasan Iyengar, WP Nos. 10689, 24290 and 4339 of 2019, decided on 17-02-2020

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AGGRIEVED WOMAN

SANYA TALWAR
POSH Expert

Of any Age

Who alleges to have been subjected to any act of sexual harassment By the respondent

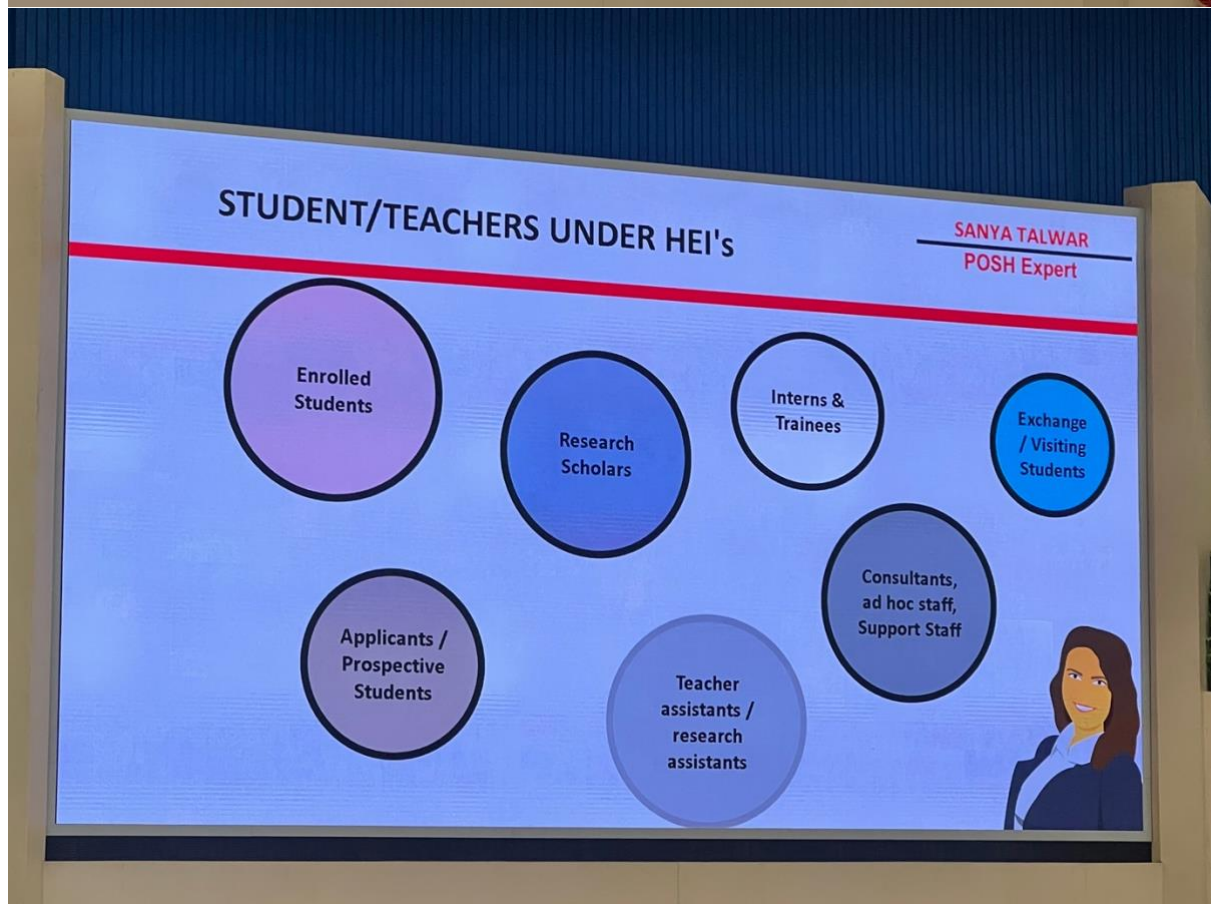
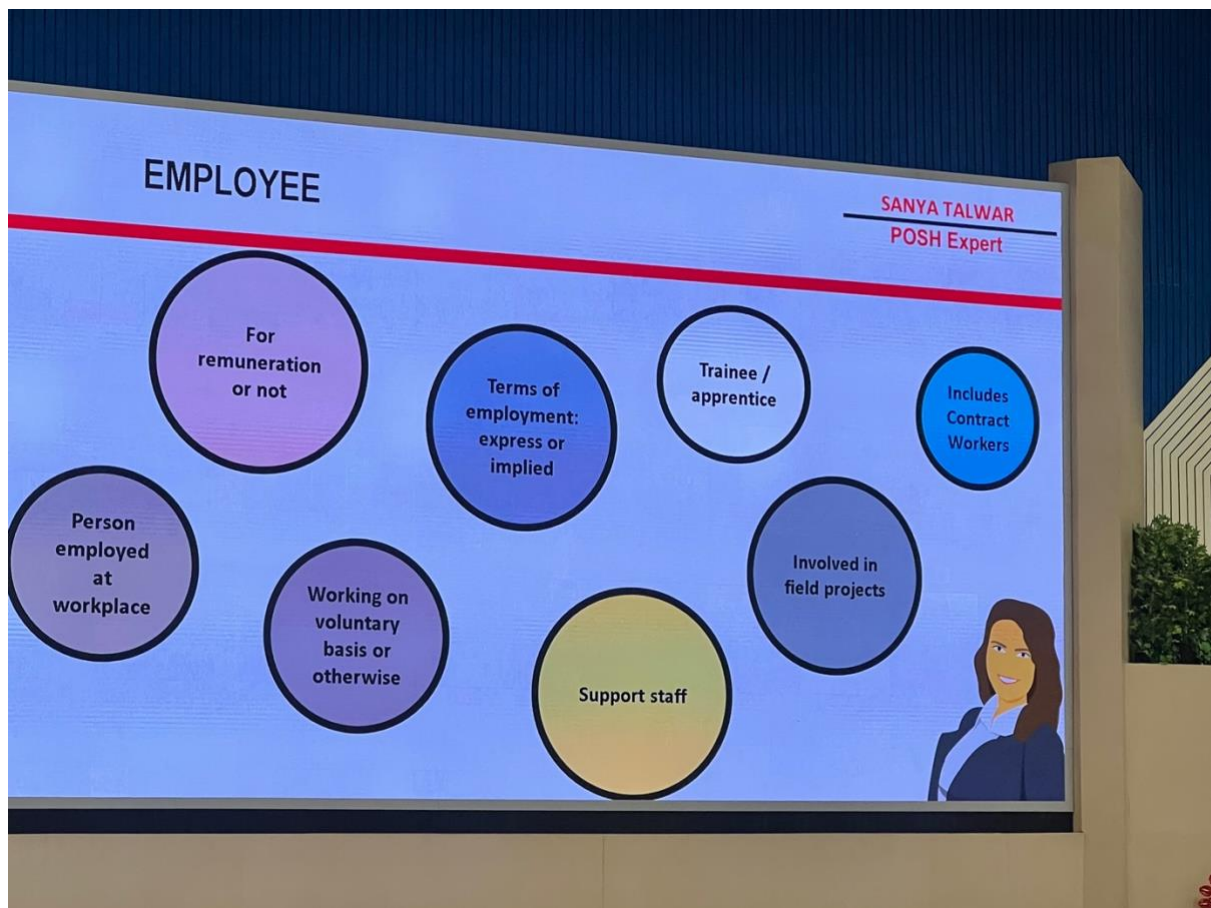
Whether employed or not

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POSH EXPERT

PERSON AGAINST WHOM COMPLAINT IS FILED CAN BE OF ANY GENDER

*In Jaya Kodate Vs. Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj Nagpur University
[Bombay High Court]*



WORKPLACE

SANYA TALWAR
POSH Expert

Office Space,
Campus,
Hostel
(Workstation,
Canteen etc.)

Parking
Area



Office
Meetups,
Off sites.
Cafeteria

Office
conferences,
seminars,
parties, get-
togethers

Office provided
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Any place
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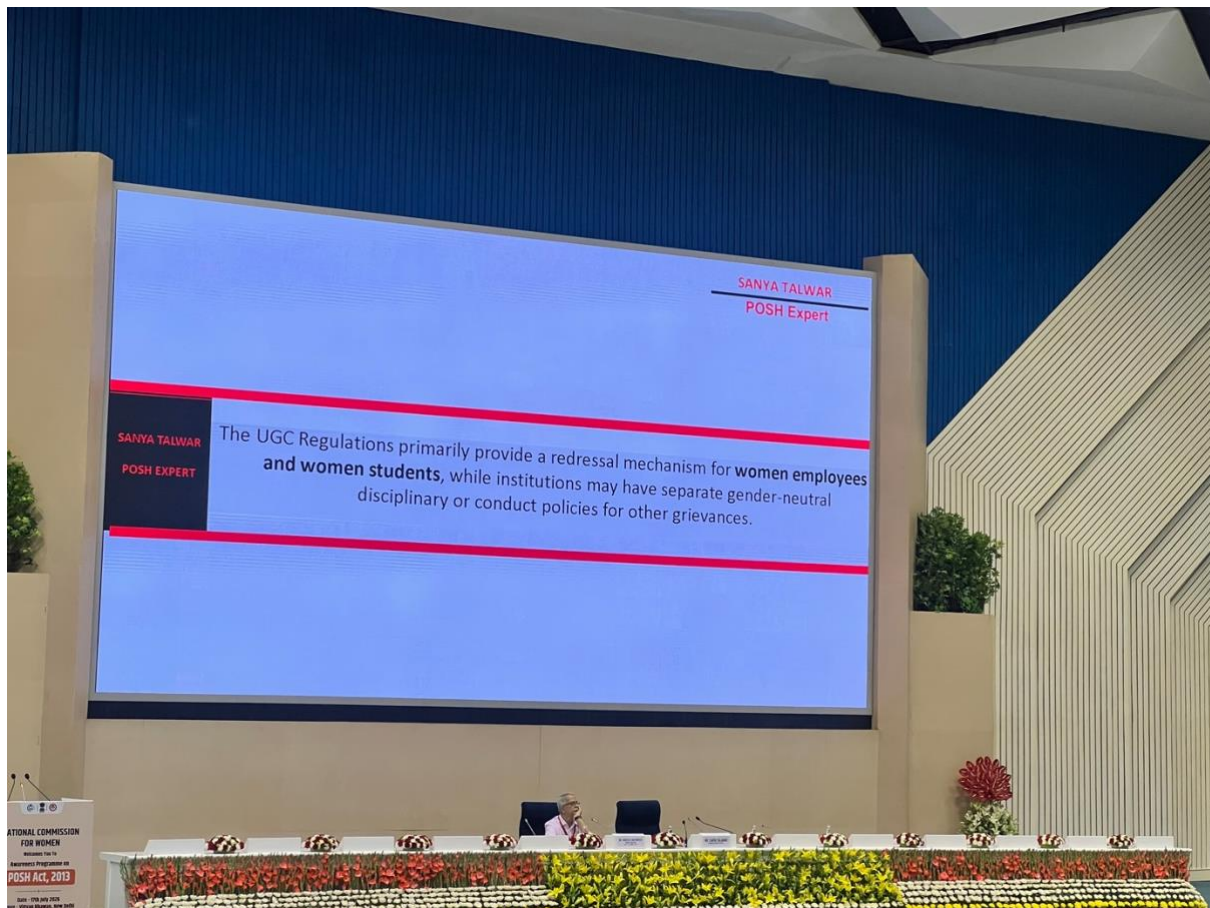
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INTERNAL COMMITTEE

SANYA TALWAR
POSH Expert

- Term: 3 years – Shuffling/ re-appointment of one or more members
- IC members can be removed
- 4 members as per law mandatory
- Preferable to have odd number: **Democracy vs Majority**

IC has to have at least 4 members

Has to be headed by a senior woman employee

1 member has to be external and independent

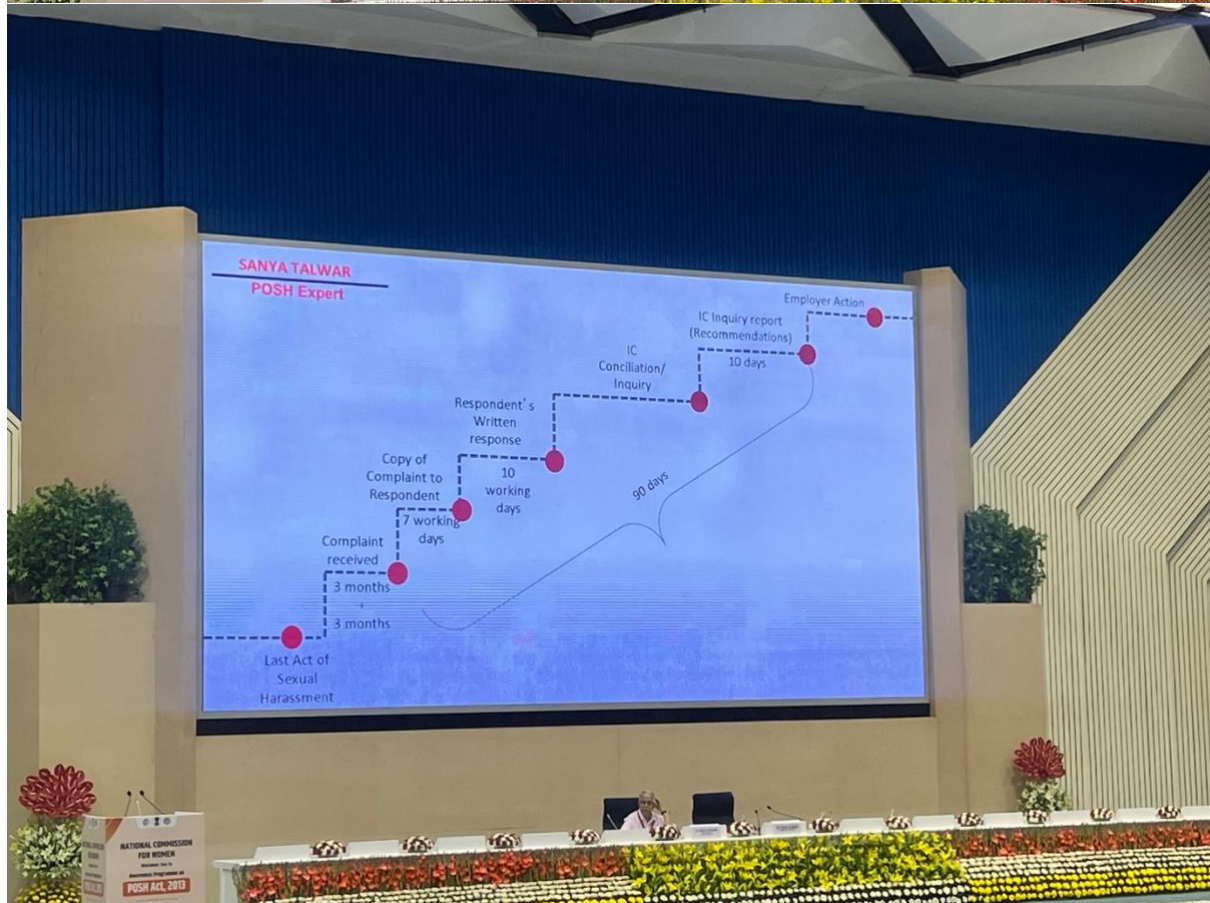
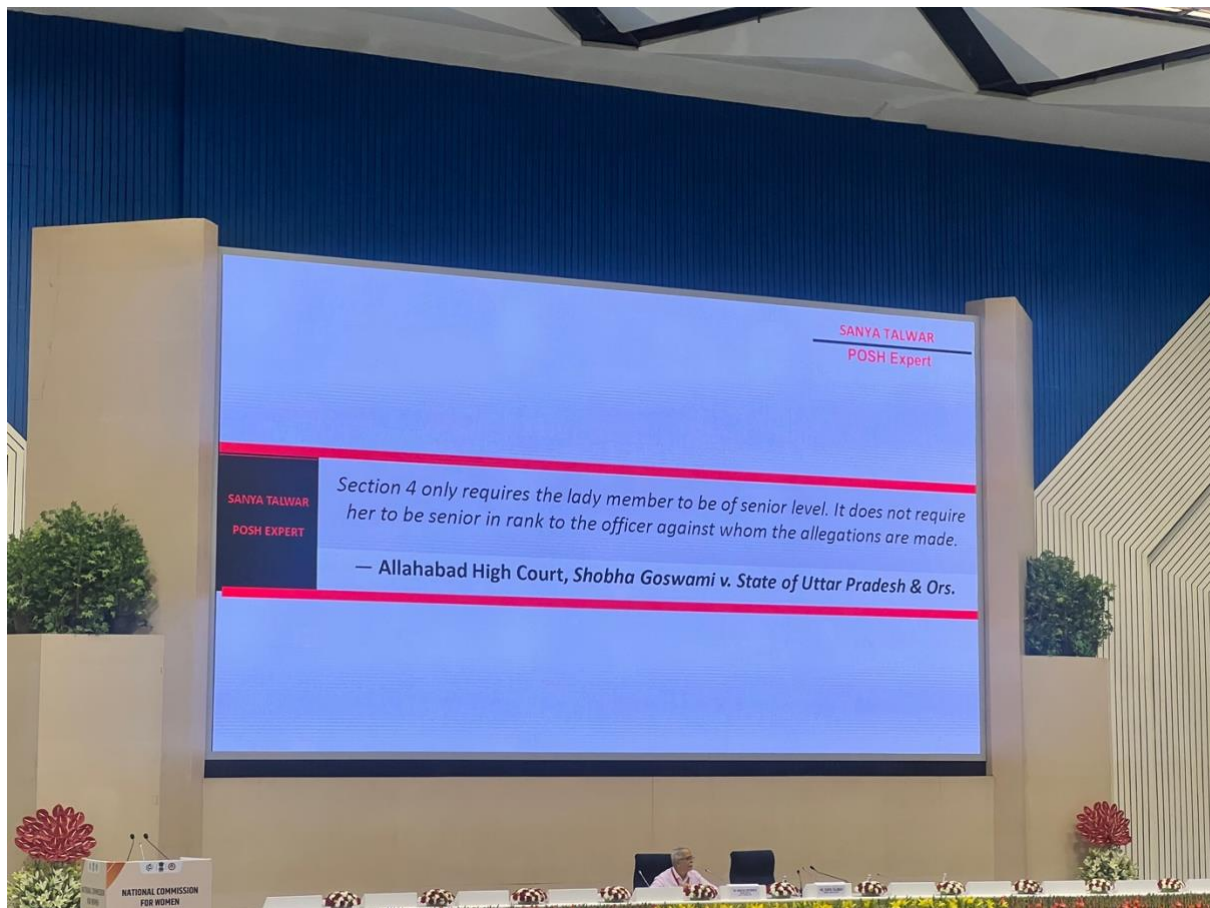
50% of IC has to be women

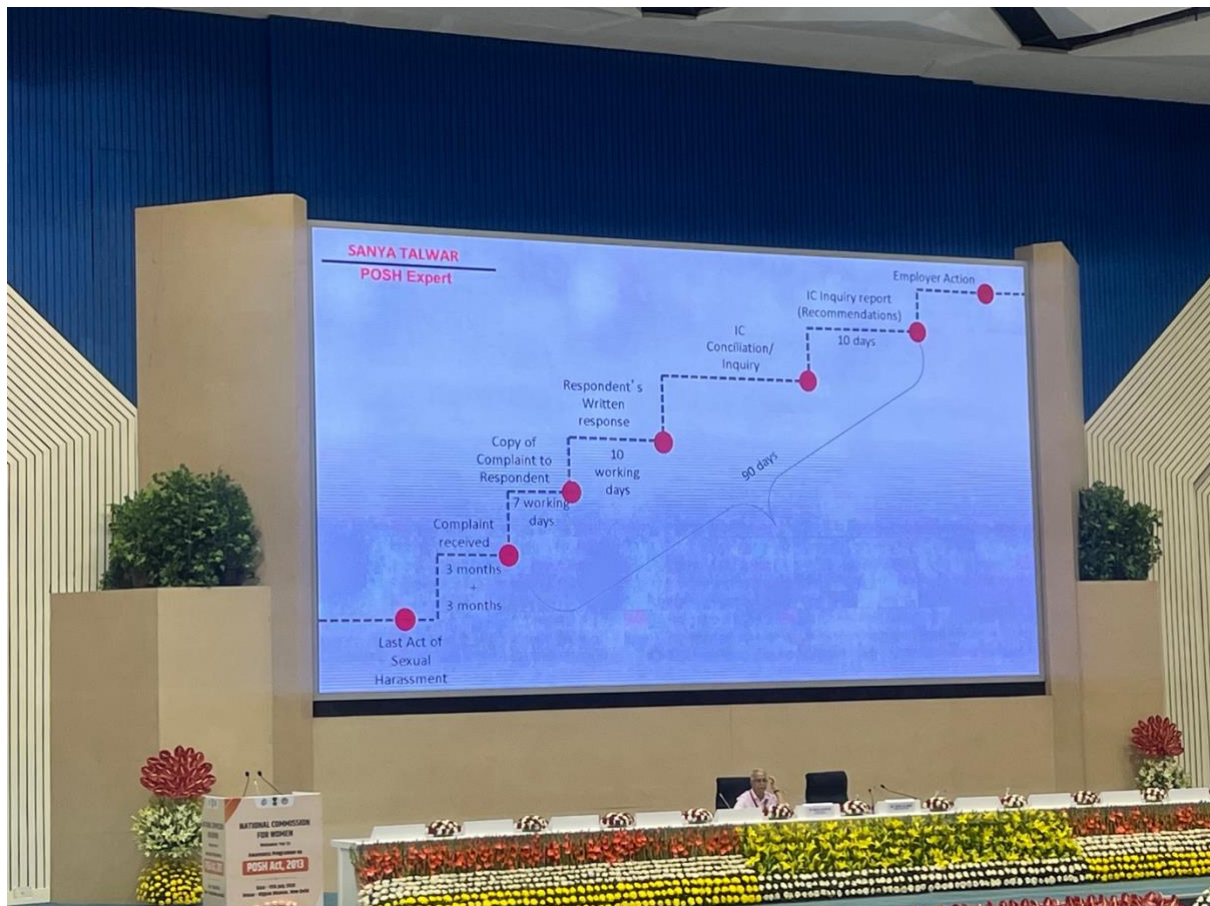
Term: 3 years

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POSH EXPERT

Section 4 only requires the lady member to be of senior level. It does not require her to be senior in rank to the officer against whom the allegations are made.

— Allahabad High Court, *Shobha Goswami v. State of Uttar Pradesh & Ors.*



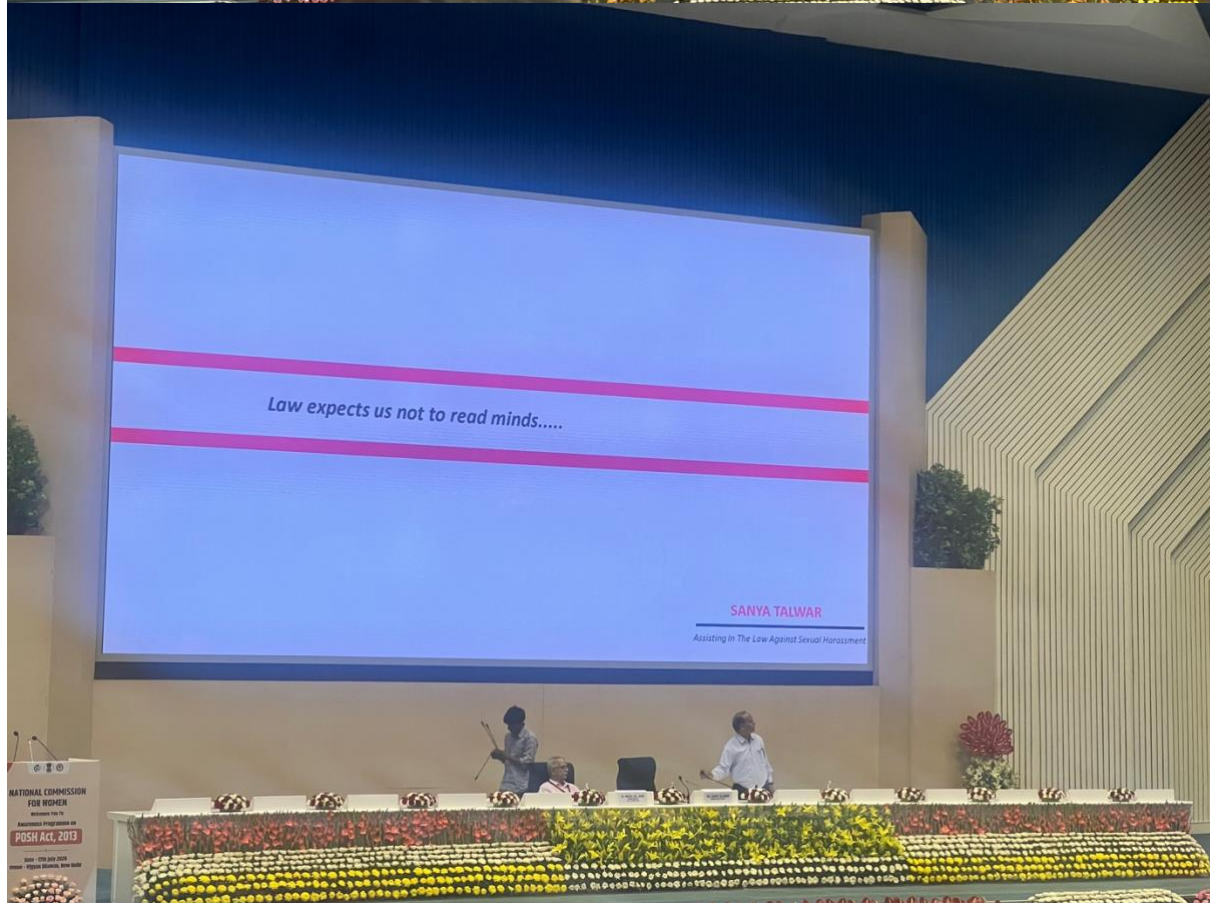
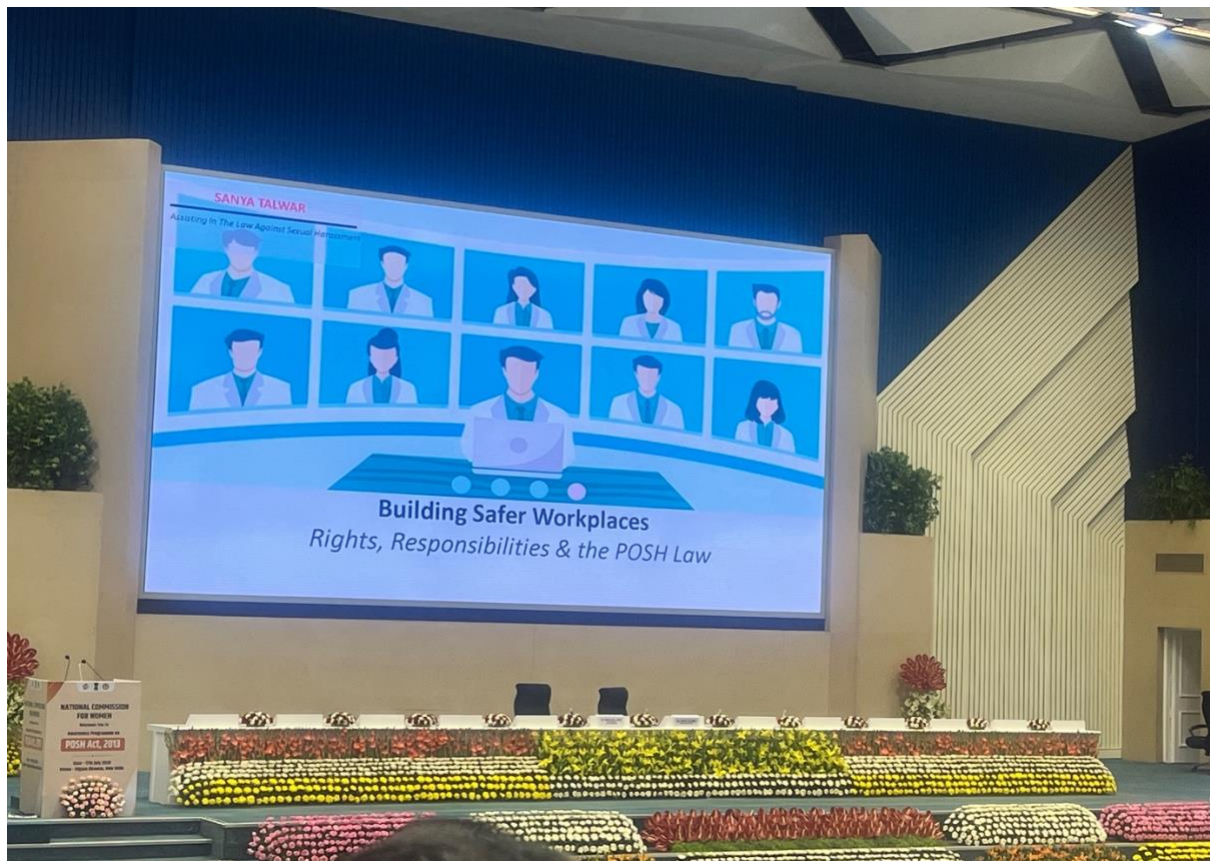


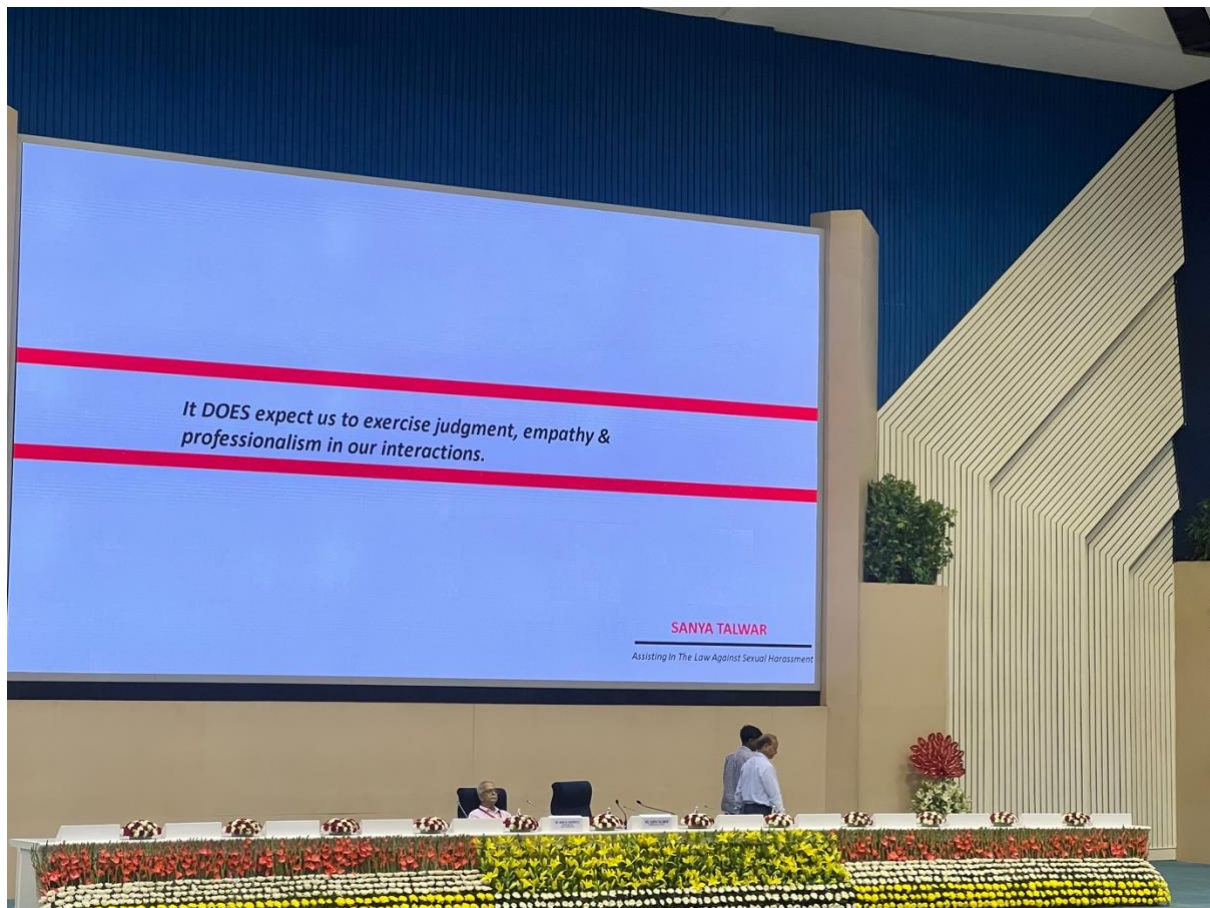
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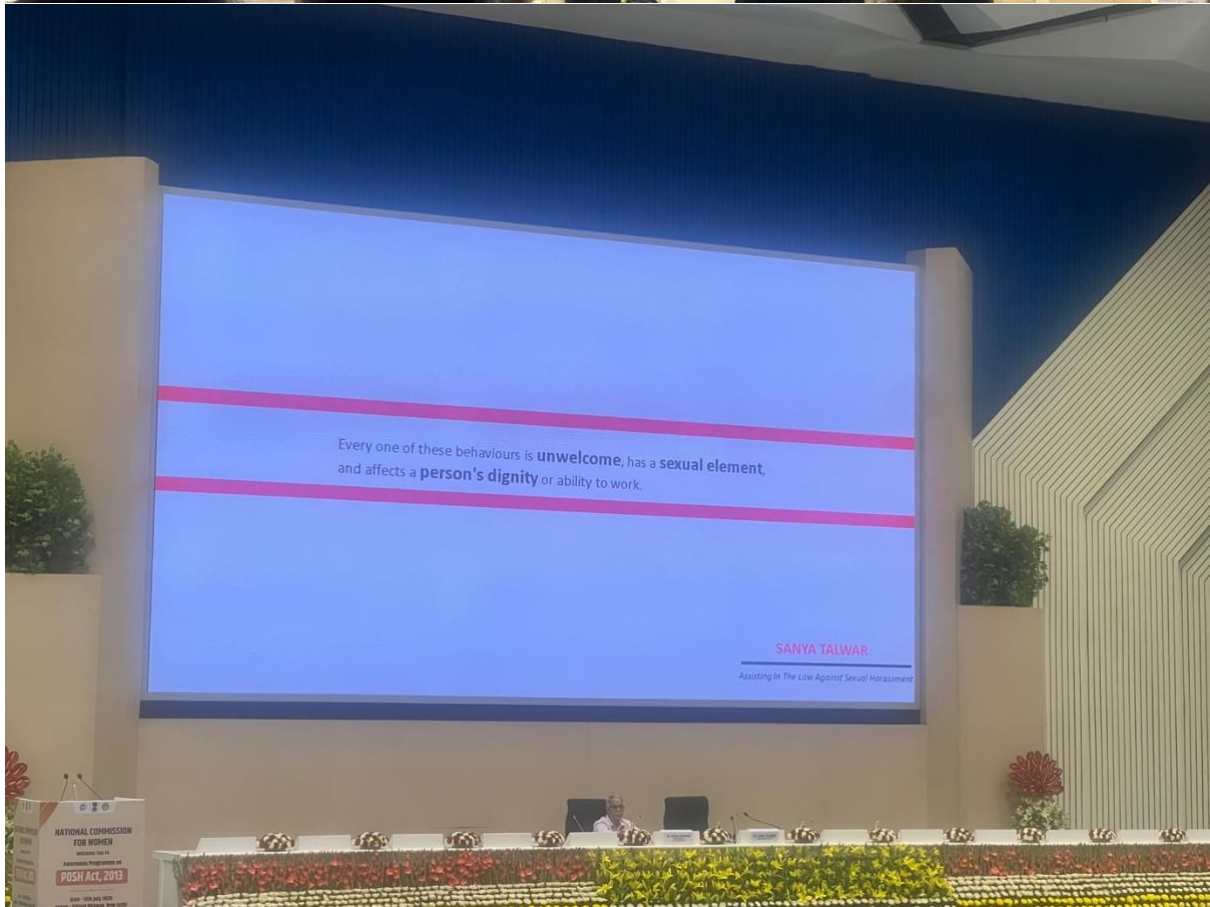
"Recommendations made by the Internal Committee under Section 13 are **binding** on the employer and must be acted upon within 60 days, unless they are stayed or set aside in appeal under Section 18 of the POSH Act

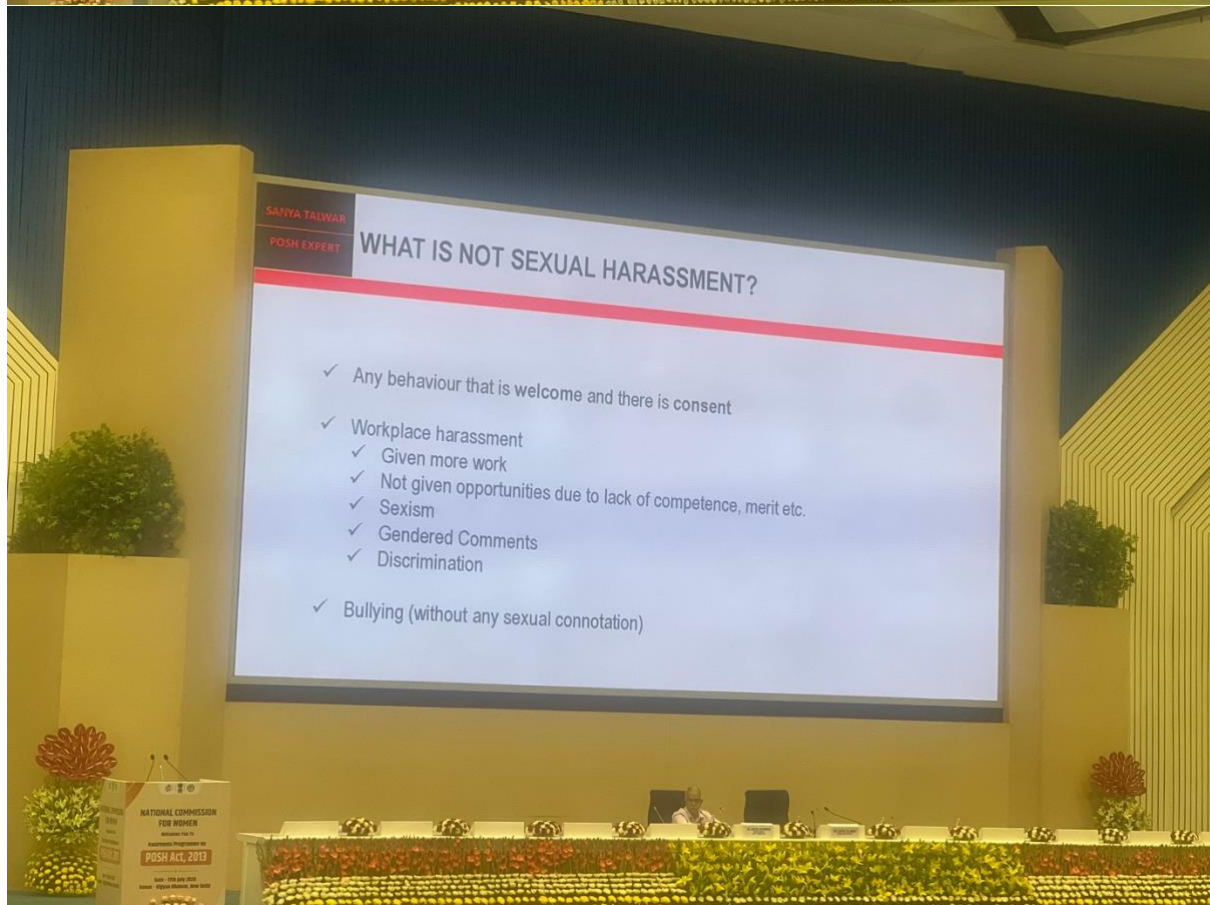
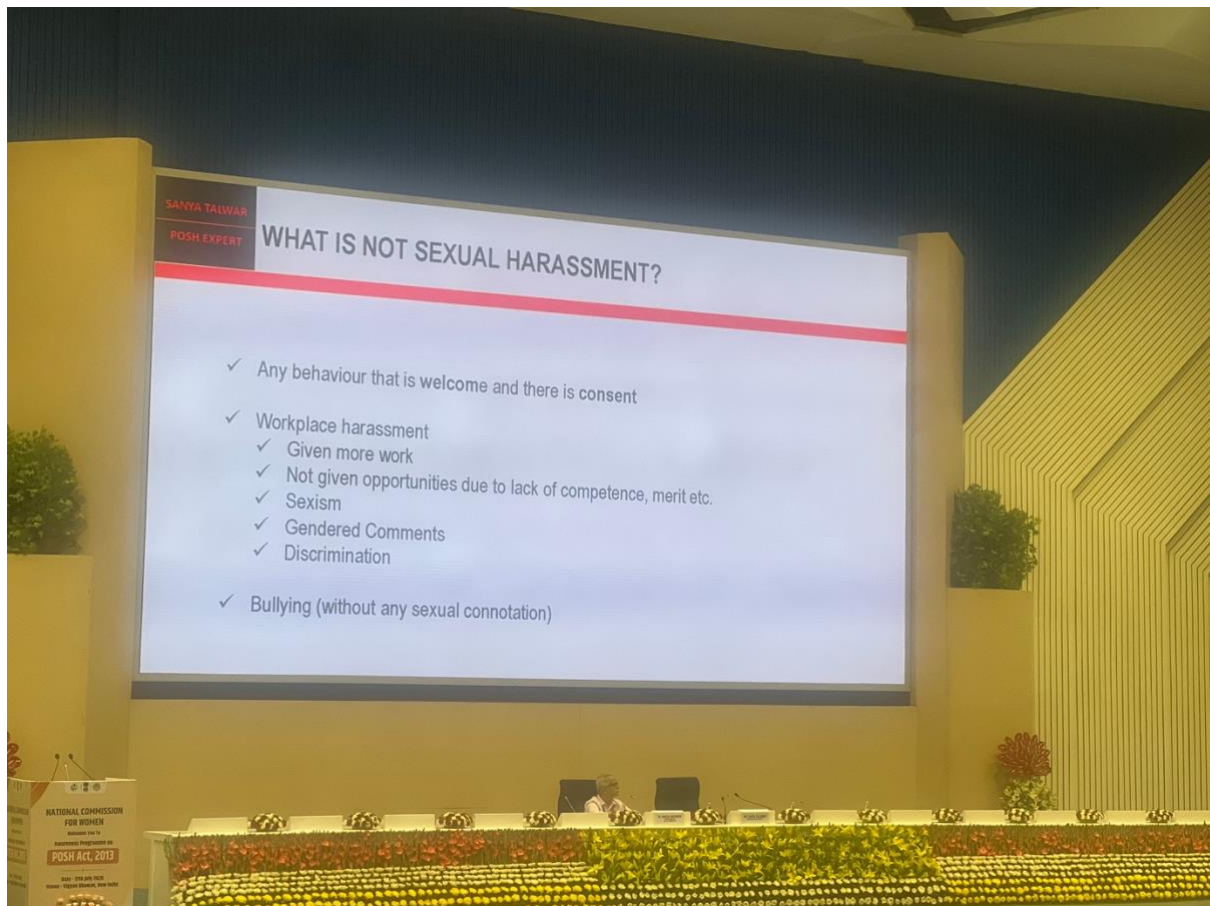
Pradip Mandal v. Union of India & Ors. (Calcutta High Court)











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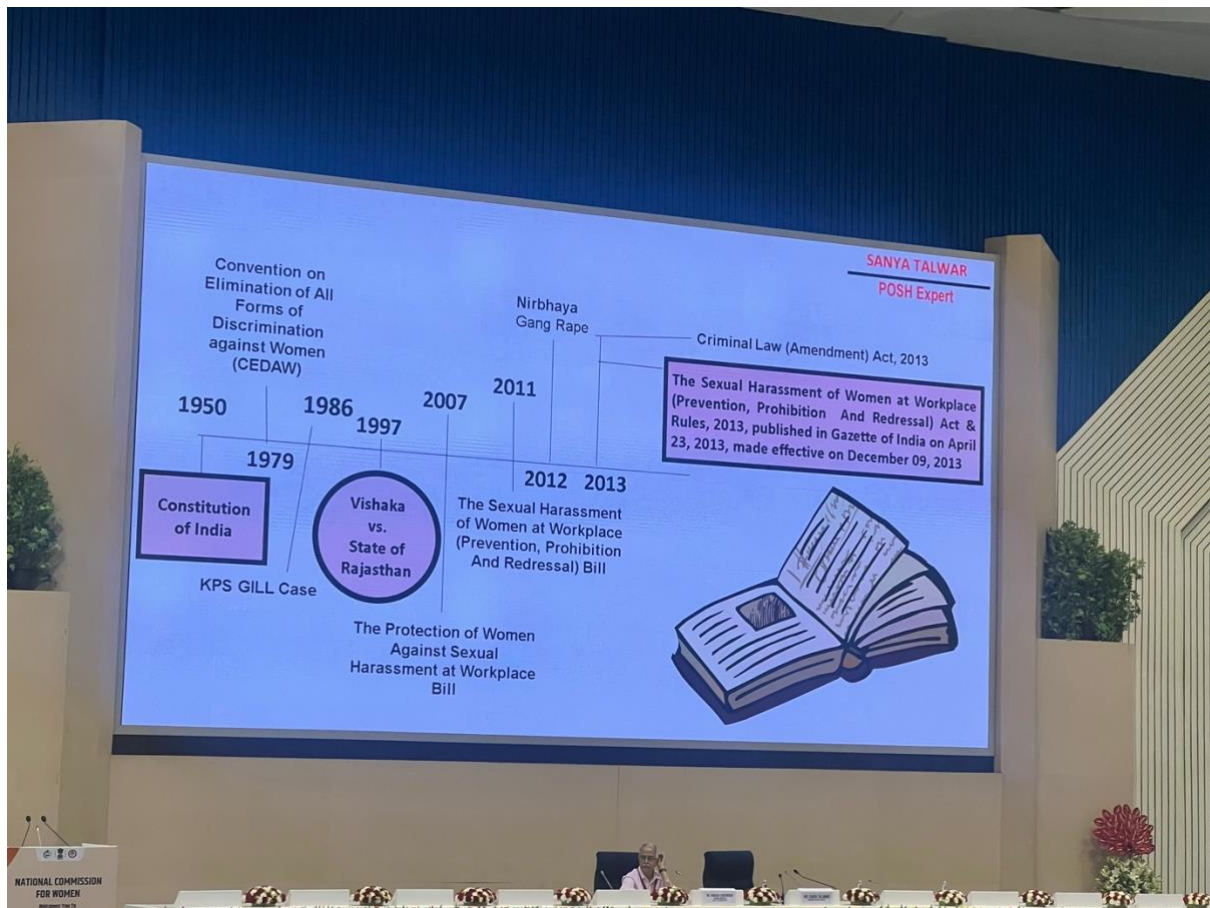
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SANYA TALWAR

POSH EXPERT

SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE
(PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND REDRESSAL) ACT, 2013

NATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR WOMEN
Initiated by the
Ministry of Women and Child Development
POSH ACT, 2013



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WHO CAN FILE A COMPLAINT?

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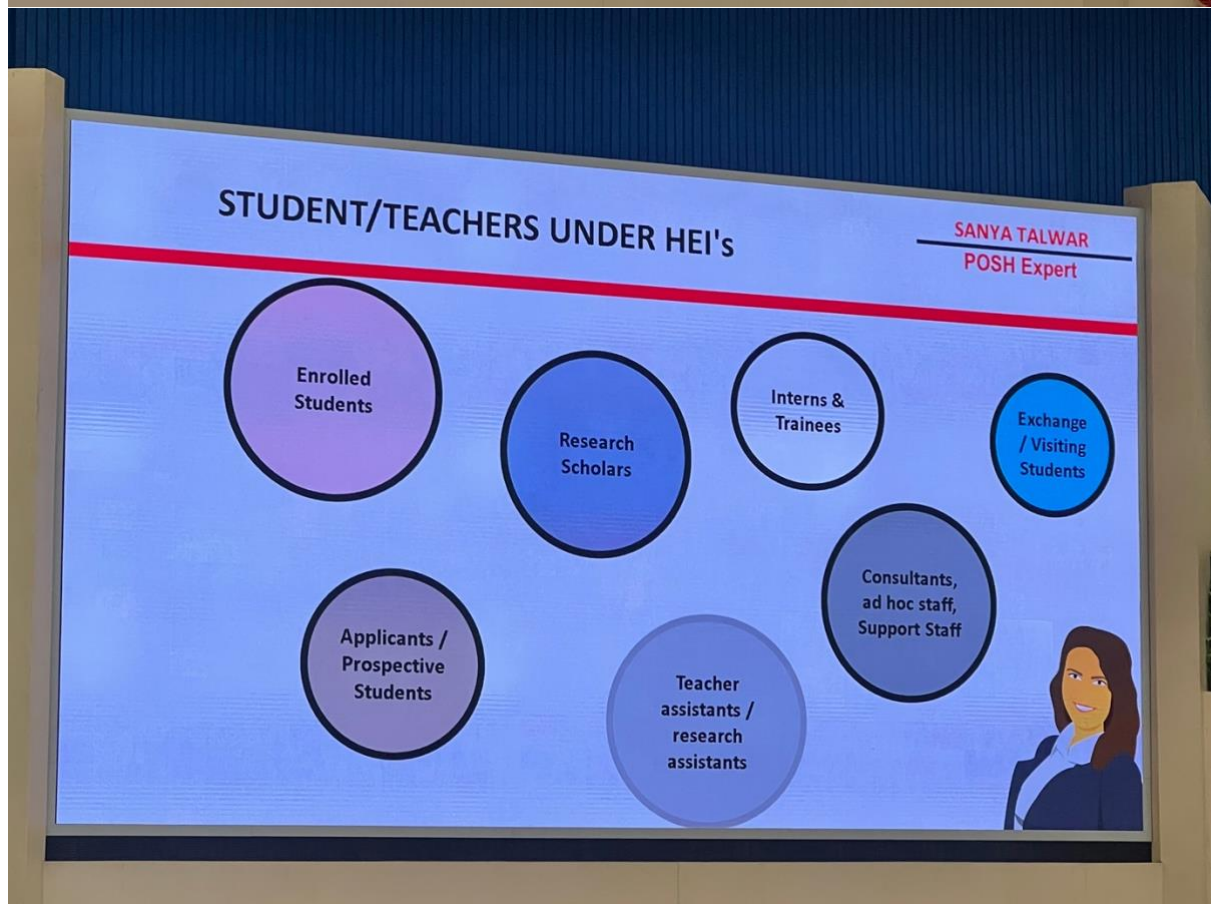
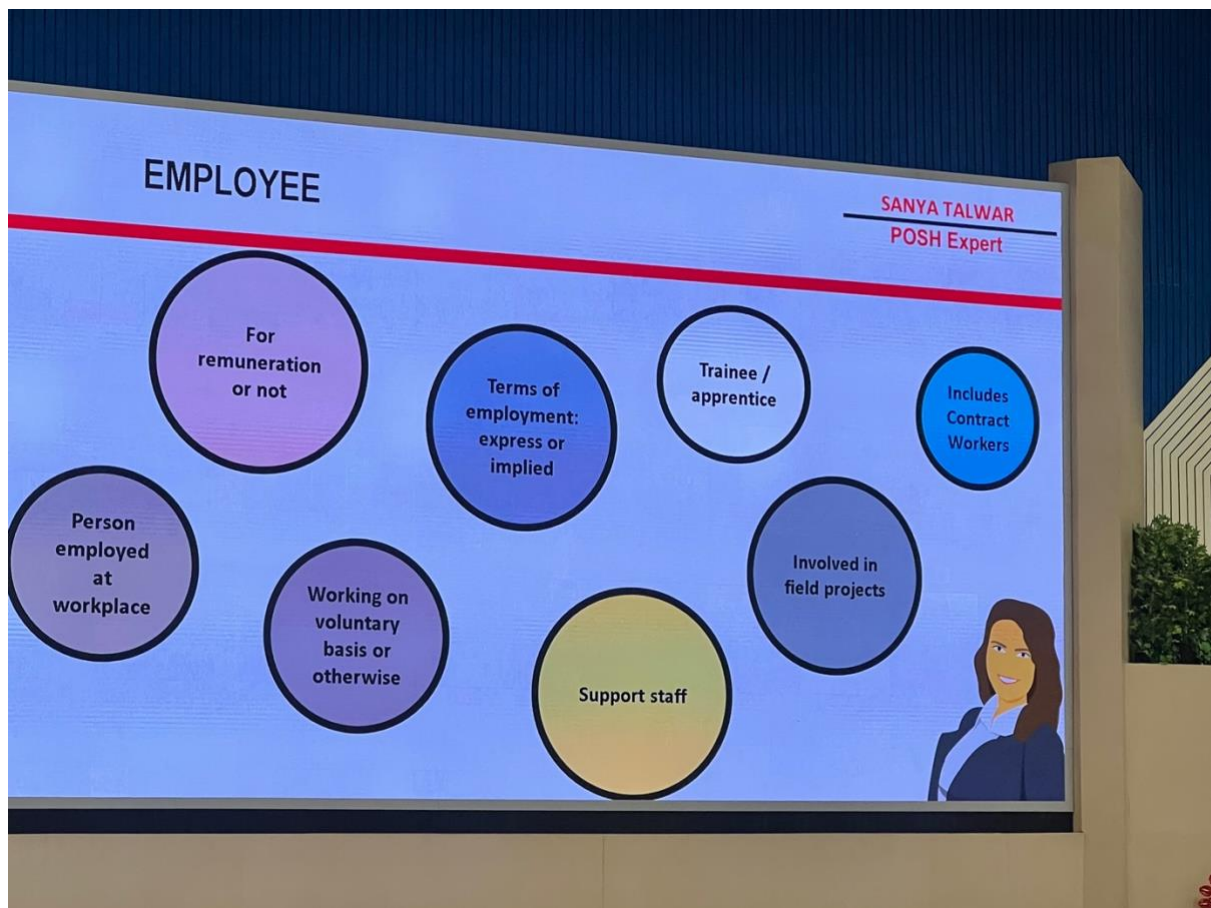
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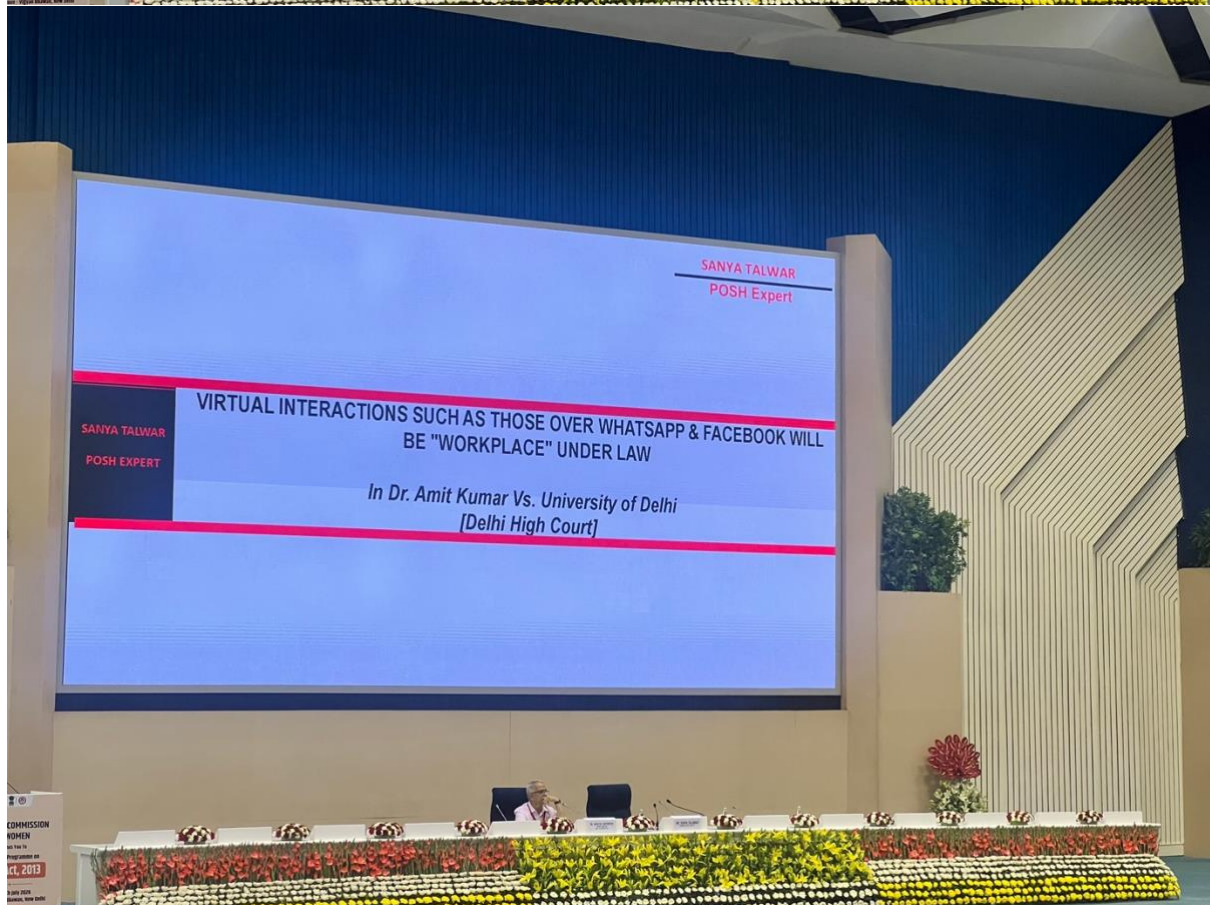
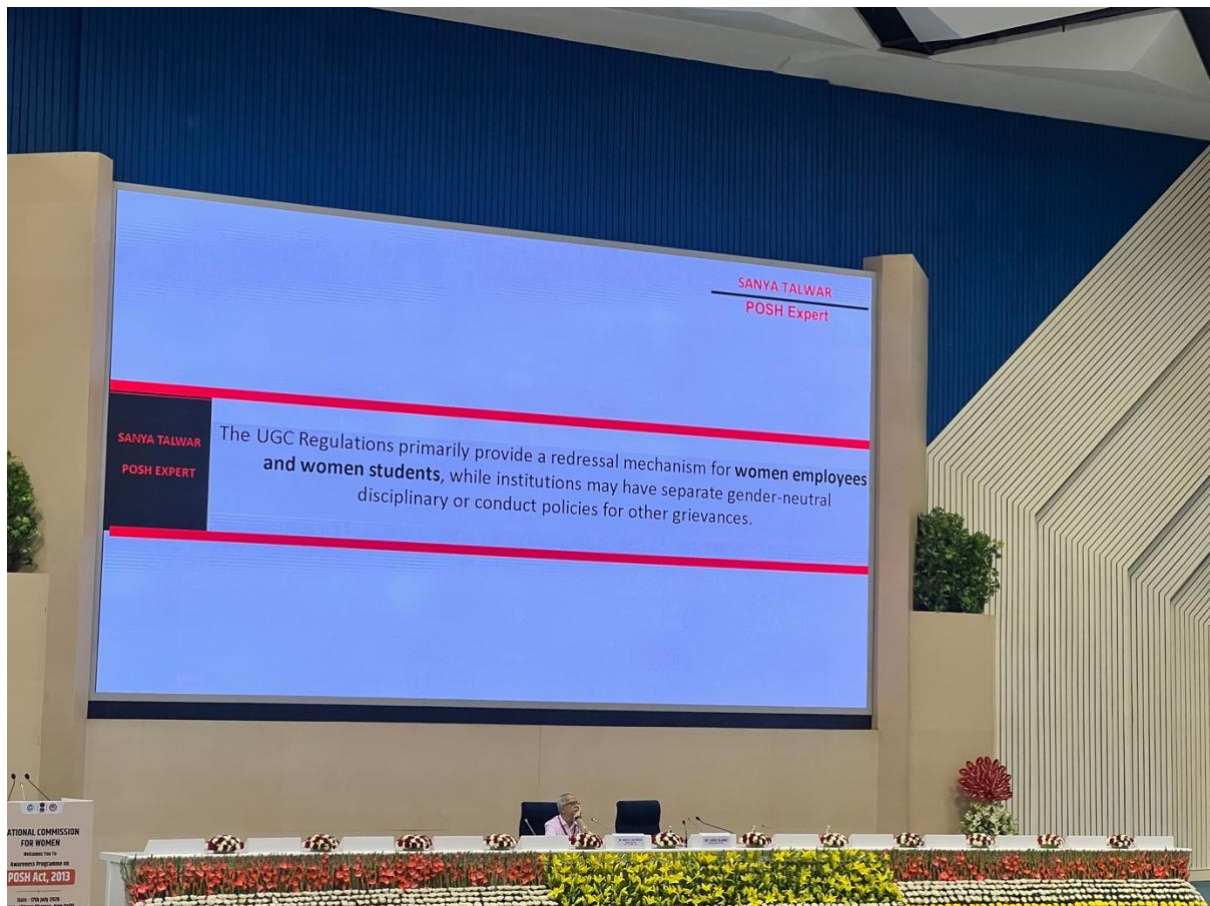
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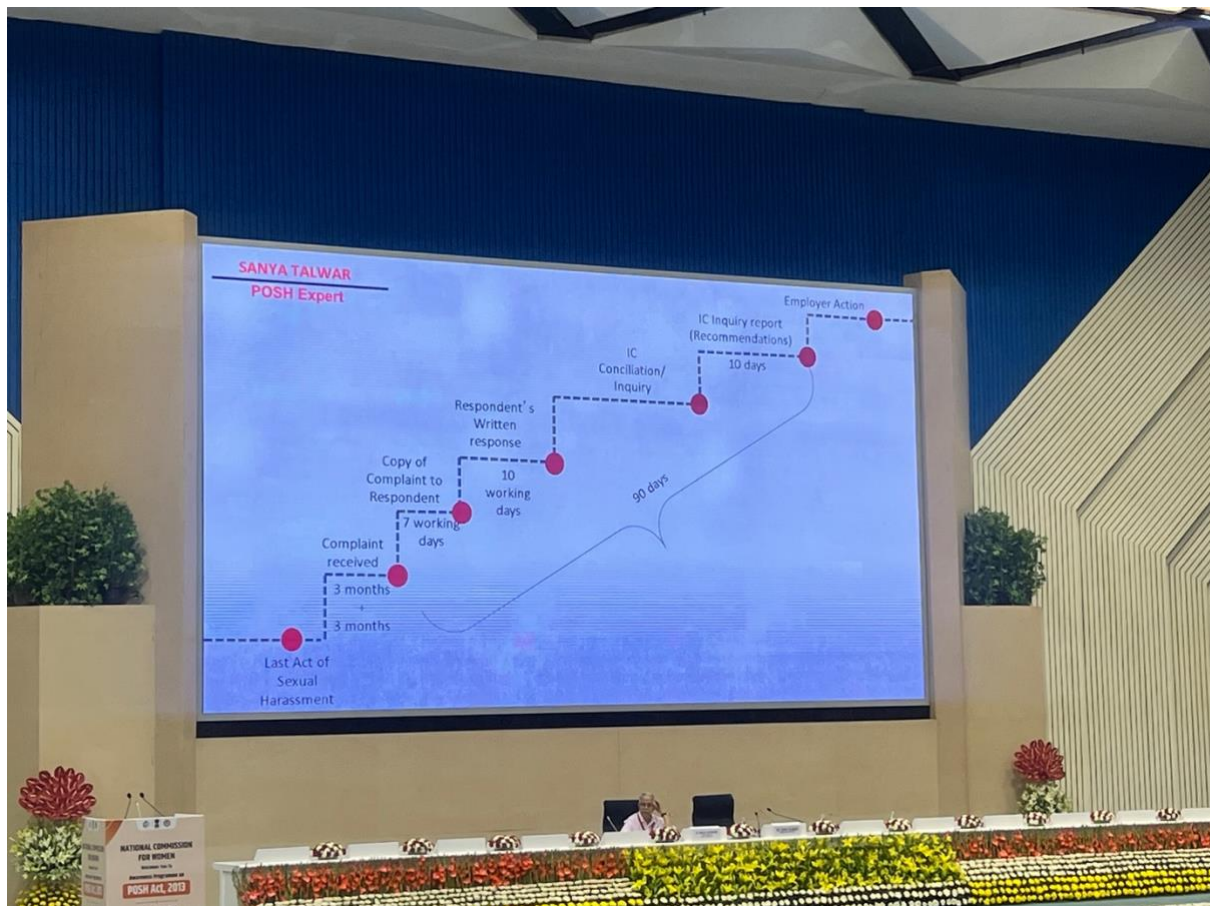
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NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

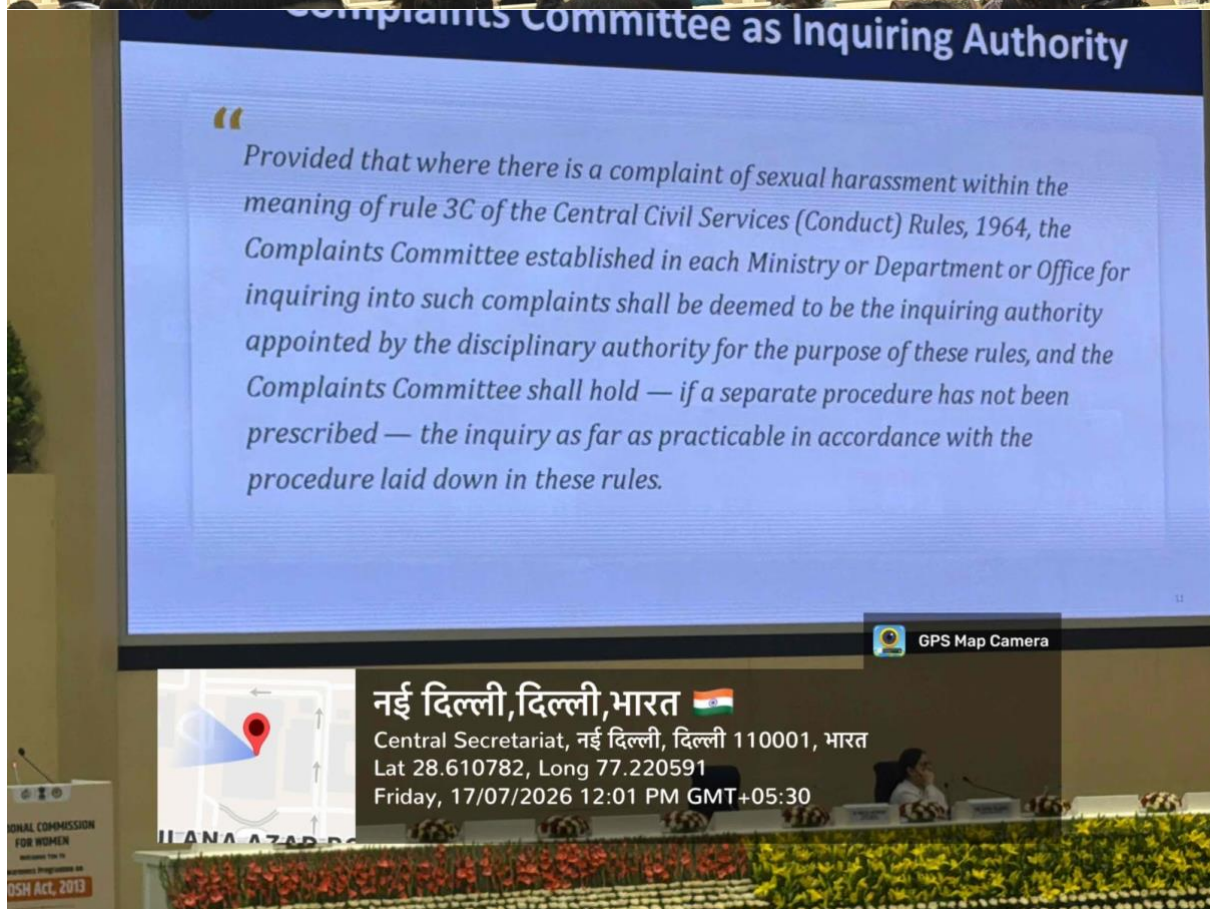
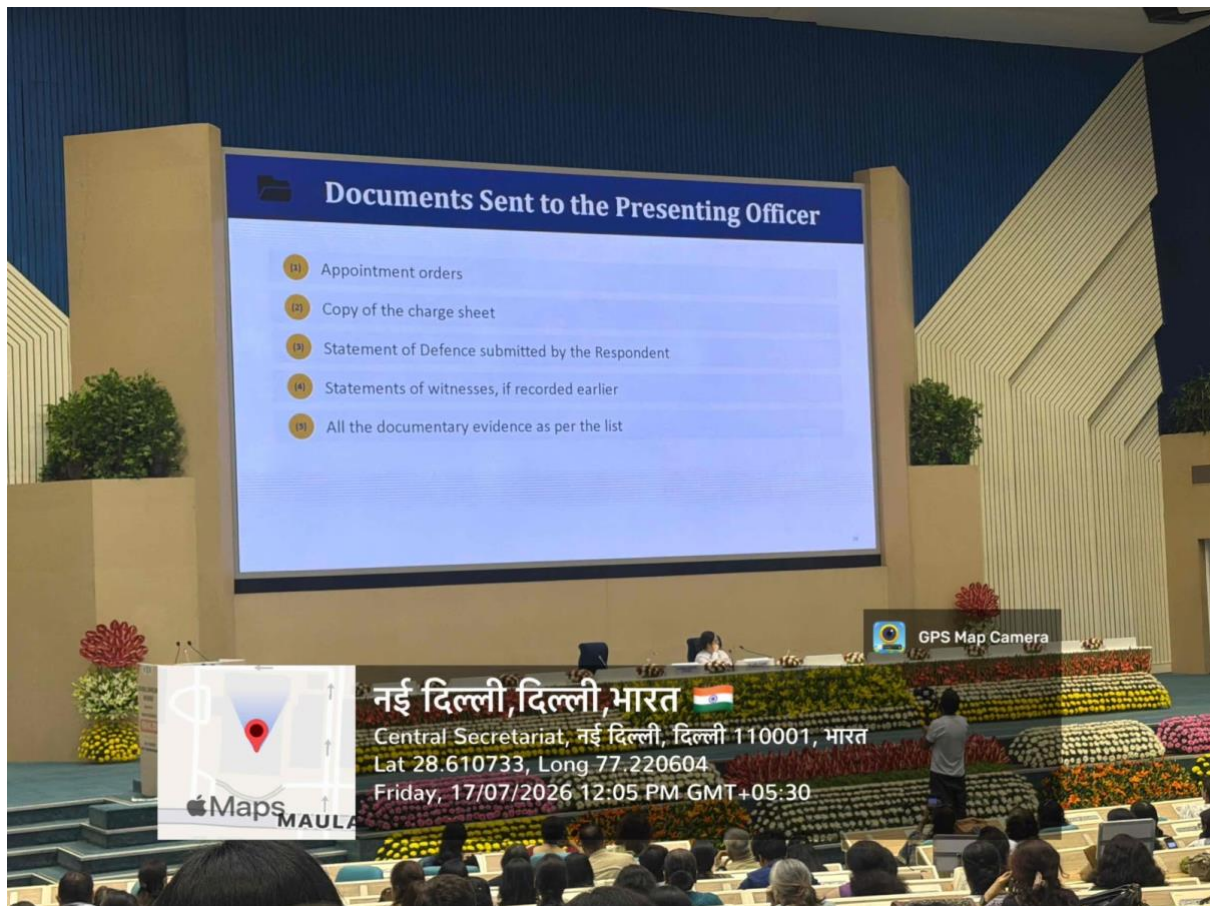


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Pradip Mandal v. Union of India & Ors. (Calcutta High Court)



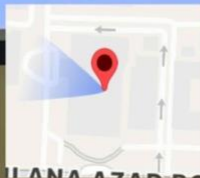
Documents Supplied to the Complaints Committee (Inquiring Authority)

- (1) Order conveying direction to proceed with the inquiry
- (2) Appointment order of the Presenting Officer
- (3) Copy of the charge sheet
- (4) Proof of delivery of the charge sheet
- (5) Statement of Defence submitted by the Respondent
- (6) Statements of witnesses, if recorded earlier



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15



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Central Secretariat, नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली 110001, भारत

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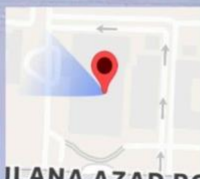
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Documentary Evidence on Behalf of Prosecution

- 1 Presenting Officer will present the documents
- 2 Documents admitted by the Respondent will be taken on record
- 3 Presenting Officer will be required to prove the disputed documents



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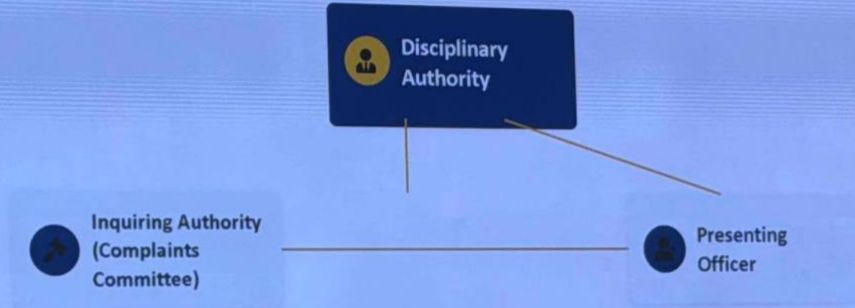
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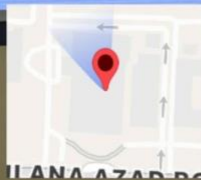
Document Flow Among Key Parties

Certain core documents — the charge sheet, statement of defence, and witness statements — are common to the sets supplied to both the Inquiring Authority and the Presenting Officer, as detailed on the following two slides.



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14

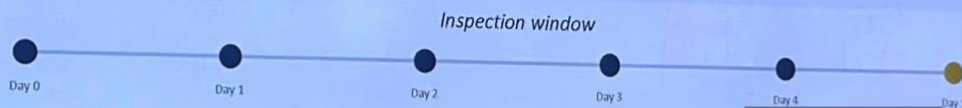


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Inspection of Original Documents

- 1 Direct the Presenting Officer and the Respondent to complete the inspection of the original documents within five days
- 2 Direct the Respondent to submit a list of additional documents required by him for his defence
- 3 Require him to similarly submit a list of witnesses to be examined on his behalf



GPS Map Camera

19

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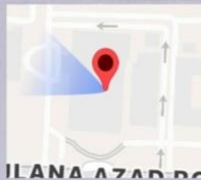
Central Secretariat, नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली 110001, भारत
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Examination of Witnesses

- 1 In order that the Presenting Officer chooses
- 2 Examination-in-Chief conducted by the Presenting Officer
- 3 Cross-examination by the defence
- 4 Re-examination by the Presenting Officer



GPS Map Camera



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Central Secretariat, नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली 110001, भारत

Lat 28.610807, Long 77.220617

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⇌ Dual Role of the Complaints Committee

9. In the light of the Proviso to Rule 14(2) mentioned above, the Complaints Committee would normally be involved at two stages. It is necessary that the two roles are clearly understood and the inquiry is conducted as far as practicable as per Rule 14 of CCS (CCA) Rules, 1965. Failure to observe the procedure may result in the inquiry getting vitiated.



Stage One

Investigation

Preliminary collection of facts regarding the conduct and work of the Government servant, prior to any decision on framing charges.



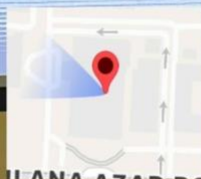
Stage Two

Inquiring Authority

Formal inquiry conducted as far as practicable in accordance with Rule 14 of the CCS (CCA) Rules, 1965.



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Central Secretariat, नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली 110001, भारत

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The List Should Include

- 1 Details / reference of the document
- 2 Custodian
- 3 Relevance



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Central Secretariat, नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली 110001, भारत

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Complaints Committee as Inquiring Authority

“

Provided that where there is a complaint of sexual harassment within the meaning of rule 3C of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964, the Complaints Committee established in each Ministry or Department or Office for inquiring into such complaints shall be deemed to be the inquiring authority appointed by the disciplinary authority for the purpose of these rules, and the Complaints Committee shall hold — if a separate procedure has not been prescribed — the inquiry as far as practicable in accordance with the procedure laid down in these rules.



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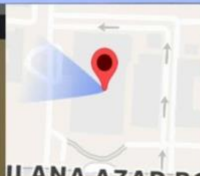
11

नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली, भारत 🇮🇳

Central Secretariat, नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली 110001, भारत

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Inquiry in Cases of Sexual Harassment

Procedure, Authority, and Documentation in Departmental Inquiries

Procedure under the CCS (CCA) Rules, 1965 and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

NATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR WOMEN
Ministry of Women & Child Development
Government of India



The Foundational Directive

“Where such conduct amounts to misconduct in employment as defined by the relevant service rules, appropriate disciplinary action should be initiated by the employer in accordance with those rules.”

Vishaka & Ors. v. State of Rajasthan & Ors.
(1997) 6 SCC 241; AIR 1997 SC 3011 — Decided 13 August 1997

Provision in the CCS (CCA) Rules, 1965

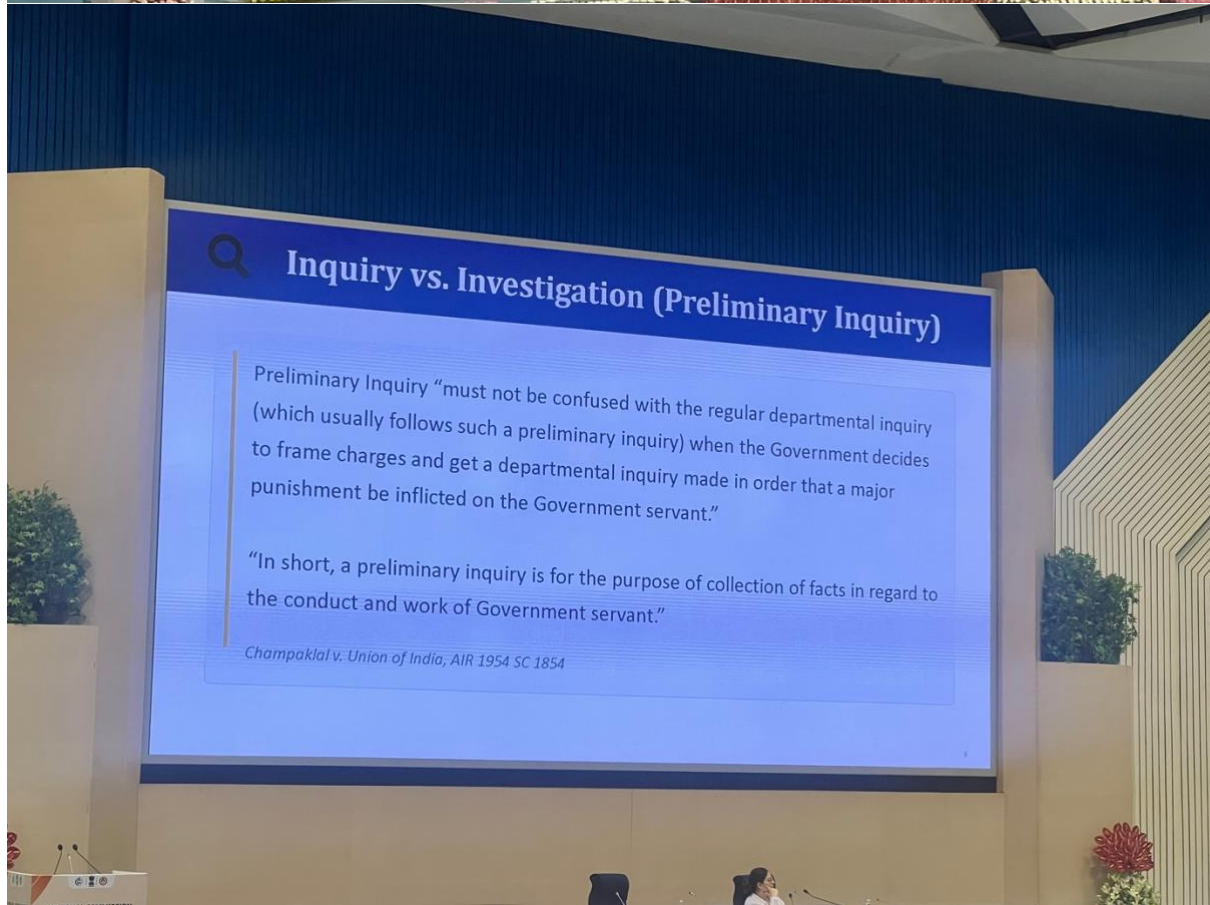
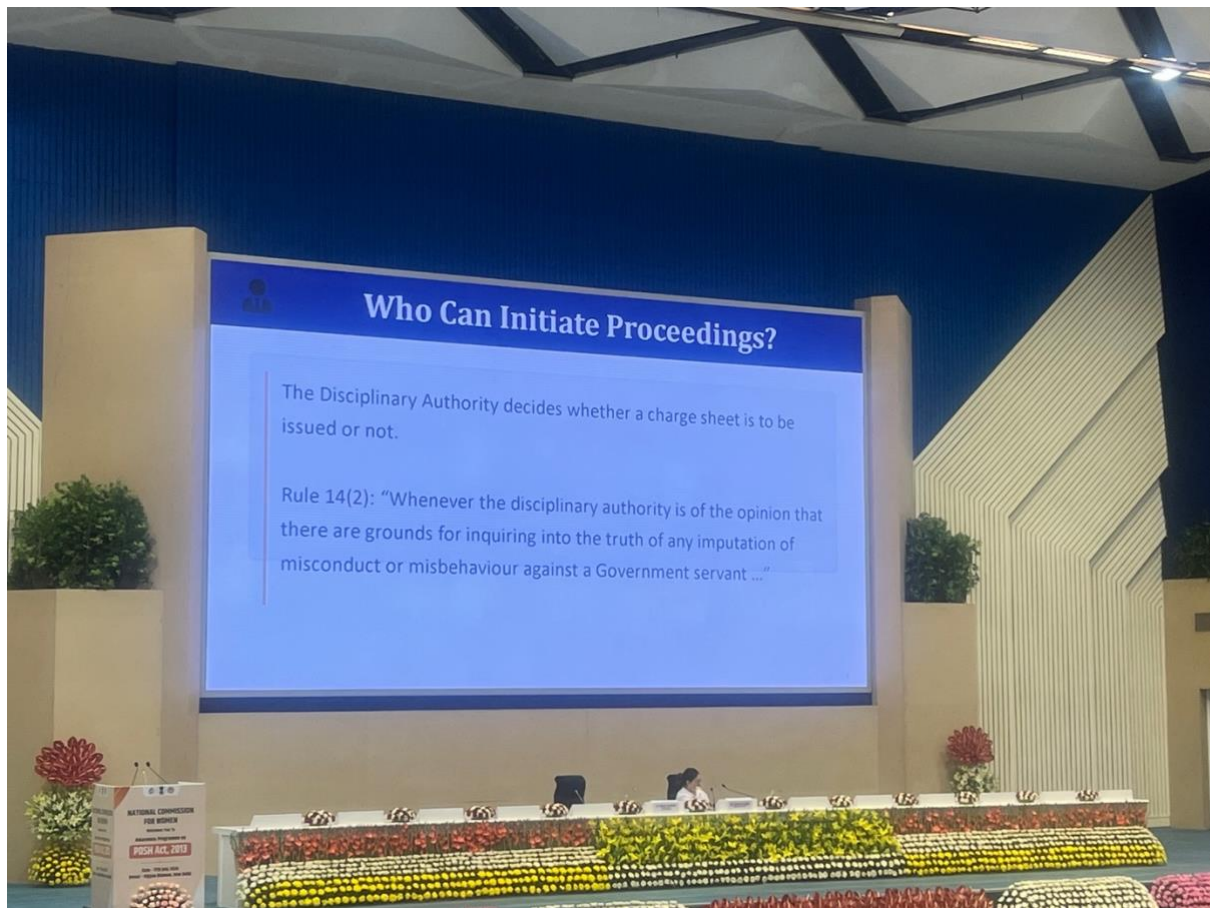
“(1) No order imposing any of the penalties specified in clauses (v) to (ix) of Rule 11 shall be made except after an inquiry held, as far as may be, in the manner provided in this rule and rule 15, or in the manner provided by the Public Servants (Inquiries) Act, 1850 (37 of 1850), where such inquiry is held under that Act.”

Rule 14 — Procedure for Imposing Major Penalties
Central Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1965

The Role of Principles of Natural Justice

“The aim of the rules of natural justice is to secure justice or to put it negatively to prevent miscarriage of justice. These rules can operate only in areas not covered by any law validly made. In other words they do not supplant the law of the land but supplement it.”

A. K. Kraipak & Ors. Etc. v. Union of India & Ors.
AIR 1970 SC 150; (1970) 1 SCR 457



When an Inquiry Officer Need Not Be Appointed

The Disciplinary Authority is not bound to appoint an inquiry officer for conducting an inquiry which is not admitted by the accused official, about which the Disciplinary Authority is satisfied — on the basis of the written statement of defence — that there is no cause to proceed further.

MHA OM No. 11012/2/79-Estt (A) dated 12th March 1981, read with OM No. 11012/8/82-Estt (A) dated 8th December 1982

Dual Role of the Complaints Committee

9. In the light of the Proviso to Rule 14(2) mentioned above, the Complaints Committee would normally be involved at two stages. It is necessary that the two roles are clearly understood and the inquiry is conducted as far as practicable as per Rule 14 of CCS (CCA) Rules, 1965. Failure to observe the procedure may result in the inquiry getting vitiated.



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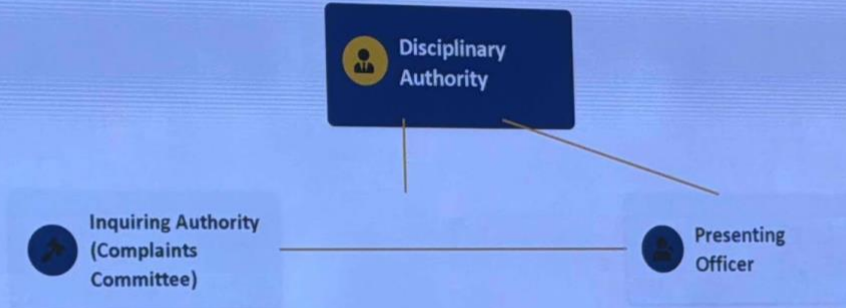


Stage Two *Inquiring Authority*

Formal inquiry conducted as far as practicable in accordance with Rule 14 of the CCS (CCA) Rules, 1965.

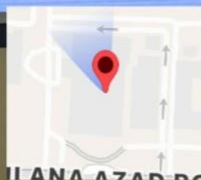
Document Flow Among Key Parties

Certain core documents — the charge sheet, statement of defence, and witness statements — are common to the sets supplied to both the Inquiring Authority and the Presenting Officer, as detailed on the following two slides.



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14



नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली, भारत

Central Secretariat, नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली 110001, भारत

Lat 28.610817, Long 77.220613

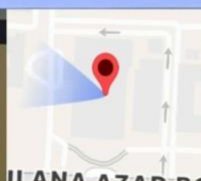
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Complaints Committee as Inquiring Authority

“ Provided that where there is a complaint of sexual harassment within the meaning of rule 3C of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964, the Complaints Committee established in each Ministry or Department or Office for inquiring into such complaints shall be deemed to be the inquiring authority appointed by the disciplinary authority for the purpose of these rules, and the Complaints Committee shall hold — if a separate procedure has not been prescribed — the inquiry as far as practicable in accordance with the procedure laid down in these rules.

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Central Secretariat, नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली 110001, भारत

Lat 28.610820, Long 77.220593

Friday, 17/07/2026 12:01 PM GMT+05:30

Complaints Committee as Inquiring Authority

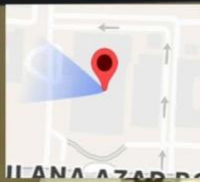
“

Provided that where there is a complaint of sexual harassment within the meaning of rule 3C of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964, the Complaints Committee established in each Ministry or Department or Office for inquiring into such complaints shall be deemed to be the inquiring authority appointed by the disciplinary authority for the purpose of these rules, and the Complaints Committee shall hold — if a separate procedure has not been prescribed — the inquiry as far as practicable in accordance with the procedure laid down in these rules.

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Central Secretariat, नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली 110001, भारत

Lat 28.610782, Long 77.220591

Friday, 17/07/2026 12:01 PM GMT+05:30

NATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR WOMEN
Sexual Harassment
Prevention Act, 2013

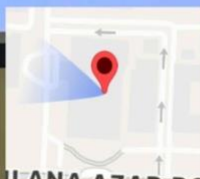
Documents Supplied to the Complaints Committee (Inquiring Authority)

- (1) Order conveying direction to proceed with the inquiry
- (2) Appointment order of the Presenting Officer
- (3) Copy of the charge sheet
- (4) Proof of delivery of the charge sheet
- (5) Statement of Defence submitted by the Respondent
- (6) Statements of witnesses, if recorded earlier



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Central Secretariat, नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली 110001, भारत

Lat 28.610837, Long 77.220623

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NATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR WOMEN

The List Should Include

- 1 Details / reference of the document
- 2 Custodian
- 3 Relevance



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Lat 28.610796, Long 77.220605

Friday, 17/07/2026 12:11 PM GMT+05:30

Documents Sent to the Presenting Officer

- (1) Appointment orders
- (2) Copy of the charge sheet
- (3) Statement of Defence submitted by the Respondent
- (4) Statements of witnesses, if recorded earlier
- (5) All the documentary evidence as per the list



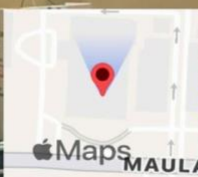
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Central Secretariat, नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली 110001, भारत

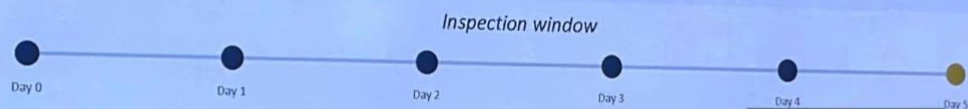
Lat 28.610733, Long 77.220604

Friday, 17/07/2026 12:05 PM GMT+05:30



Inspection of Original Documents

- 1 Direct the Presenting Officer and the Respondent to complete the inspection of the original documents within five days
- 2 Direct the Respondent to submit a list of additional documents required by him for his defence
- 3 Require him to similarly submit a list of witnesses to be examined on his behalf



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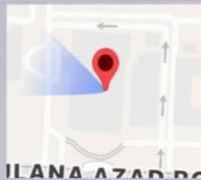
Central Secretariat, नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली 110001, भारत

Lat 28.610803, Long 77.220604

Friday, 17/07/2026 12:10 PM GMT+05:30

Examination of Witnesses

- 1 In order that the Presenting Officer chooses
- 2 Examination-in-Chief conducted by the Presenting Officer
- 3 Cross-examination by the defence
- 4 Re-examination by the Presenting Officer



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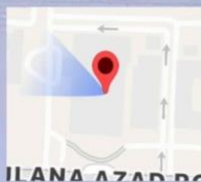
Lat 28.610807, Long 77.220617

Friday, 17/07/2026 12:12 PM GMT+05:30



Documentary Evidence on Behalf of Prosecution

- 1 Presenting Officer will present the documents
- 2 Documents admitted by the Respondent will be taken on record
- 3 Presenting Officer will be required to prove the disputed documents

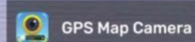


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Central Secretariat, नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली 110001, भारत

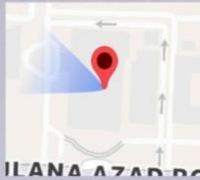
Lat 28.610808, Long 77.220609

Friday, 17/07/2026 12:12 PM GMT+05:30



Examination of Witnesses

- 1 In order that the Presenting Officer chooses
- 2 Examination-in-Chief conducted by the Presenting Officer
- 3 Cross-examination by the defence
- 4 Re-examination by the Presenting Officer



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Central Secretariat, नई दिल्ली, दिल्ली 110001, भारत

Lat 28.610807, Long 77.220617

Friday, 17/07/2026 12:12 PM GMT+05:30



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