



## **POLICY RESOLUTION 7 – SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE**

**Proposed by: The Indian Federation of University Women**

**Seconded by: Graduate Women International Netherlands (GWI-NL)**

**The 33d GWI Assembly resolves:**

1. to work to end sexual harassment in the workplace and create a safe environment for women by urging governments to implement national laws effectively and spreading awareness;
2. to widen the dialogue process and make efforts to reach out to women and men starting from the grassroots level through educative seminars, workshops and other forms of mass communication, including social media.

**Suggested Plan of action:**

Although laws are in place to prevent sexual harassment of women in the workplace, studies have shown that in government and private organisations, employers do not have the requisite redress mechanisms in place, as stipulated by such laws.

NFAs should:

1. Lobby with corporate and public sector units to impress upon them that under the law, they have to set up an Internal Complaints Committee and encourage women to bring to the establishment's notice instances of sexual harassment, if any. Adequate publicity should be given to the establishment's policy of zero tolerance of such harassment.
2. Sensitise employers to be sympathetic to women who make such complaints. Care should be taken to prevent shaming of the victim.
3. Conduct awareness programmes in offices and among women to educate them on their rights under the law and to make them understand what constitutes sexual harassment.
4. Reach out to women in the unorganised sector by conducting awareness programmes through formal and informal means of communication like street theatres and puppetry.

**Supporting document:**

The Vishakha Guidelines were a set of procedural guidelines laid down by the Indian Supreme Court in 1997. These became the basis for the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

The Government of India passed the Sexual Harassment at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act in 2013. This law makes it illegal for any kind of sexual harassment defined in the Act as 'the violation of the fundamental rights of a woman to equality under articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution of India and her right to life and to live with dignity under article 21 of the Constitution and the right to practise any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business which includes a right to a safe environment free from sexual harassment' to occur against a woman at her place of work. Despite the existence of the law, not many cases are reported, and it is often found that it is difficult to prove harassment.