

**AN ASSESSMENT OF POSH IMPLEMENTATION ON GENDER
INCLUSIVITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN
WORKPLACES**

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Contents

Introduction

Review of Literature

Research Gap

Research Questions

Research Objectives

Methodology

Data Analysis Plan

Ethical Considerations

Implications of the Study

Introduction

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act), was enacted to ensure women's safety and dignity at workplaces. Despite the establishment of legal safeguards, compliance with the Act in India remains uneven and often symbolic. Many institutions reduce POSH compliance to periodic trainings and poster displays, neglecting the deeper cultural and emotional needs of employees. Recent amendments in the POSH (Amendment) Act, 2024, extend the limitation period for complaints and eliminate conciliation as an option, thus reinforcing formal mechanisms for redressal [\[3\]](#).

Public health institutions, in particular, face unique structural and cultural challenges in effectively implementing the Act. This study explores how POSH has been operationalized within two leading public health institutions: NIHFW and NHSRC. It focuses on awareness, compliance, and cultural impact especially on gender inclusivity and organizational accountability.

Review of Literature

Author(s)	Study Location	Sample Size	Methodology	Salient Features
Pulkit Raj (2023)	India (various service sector firms)	80 employees	Descriptive survey	The Study found a strong positive correlation between awareness of the POSH Act and the perception of a safe, respectful work environment. Employees who were well informed about POSH provisions reported greater trust in redressal mechanisms and organizational support.
Vanita Odedara, Mr. Satish Makadiya, Mr. Bhavesh Jadav (2025)	Gujarat	15 female faculty staff	Descriptive research design; primary data via interviews and questionnaires with 15 female respondents;	While most employees were aware of the existence of the POSH Act, there was a significant gap in their understanding of its provisions and procedural aspects. Many organizations had not conducted regular training or awareness programs, resulting in only superficial knowledge of the Act among employees complaints. The

			purposive sampling	Study also found that employees were often uncertain about reporting incidents, indicating a lack of clarity in communication and procedural transparency within organizations. These findings point to a critical need for structured, organization wide sensitization efforts and more effective implementation of the POSH framework.
I Arun & Dr. C.R. Christi Anandan (2023)	Schneider Electric, Poonamallee, Tamil Nadu	68 women employees	A descriptive study with questionnaires	More than 50% of the participants had limited awareness of the provisions of the POSH Act, including the role and functioning of the Internal Committee (IC). This low awareness extended to the reporting procedures and the protections guaranteed under the Act. The Study emphasized a critical need for regular training sessions, awareness programs, and open communication channels to empower women employees and improve compliance with the POSH Act within corporate settings.
Lakshmi Jayapal & Manoj S. (2023)	Chennai, Tamil Nadu	58 Students	Survey among college students	There is a significant lack of knowledge and understanding among students regarding the existence and function of these mechanisms, even in institutions that are legally mandated to have them. The Study pointed to the

				urgent need for proactive awareness campaigns and gender sensitization programs within educational institutions to prepare students especially women for entering professional environments with the knowledge and confidence to seek redressal in cases of workplace harassment.
Ms. Basanti Negi , Dr Razia Chauhan 2025	<i>India</i>	Review	Empirical data, case studies & stakeholder perspectives	Introduction of the POSH Act contributed to a positive cultural shift in workplaces, fostering greater sensitivity and dialogue around sexual harassment. However, the Study also revealed significant compliance challenges, including inconsistent formation and functioning of Internal Committees (ICs) and irregular training programs. Employee awareness of their rights and the mechanisms for redressal varied widely, indicating that many organizations had yet to internalize the Act beyond surface level compliance. The authors recommended that companies invest in regular, structured sensitization and training initiatives to ensure the Act is understood and effectively implemented at all organizational levels.

Gupta, Fatima & Kandikuppa (2021)	India	6 Cases	Qualitative analysis	Marginalized women particularly those from lower castes or economically disadvantaged backgrounds often face additional barriers, such as social stigma, power imbalances, and limited institutional support when attempting to report harassment. The research highlighted systemic challenges within both organizational cultures and legal frameworks, arguing that merely having a law like POSH is insufficient without context sensitive enforcement and inclusive implementation practices.
Sindhu KK & Satheesh Kumar Rangasamy (2025)	Bengaluru, Karnataka	80 employees	Descriptive survey with correlation analysis	established a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.691$) between the effective enforcement of the POSH Act and the presence of a safe, supportive, and positive work environment. Employees in organizations with active Internal Committees (ICs), regular sensitization programs, and transparent reporting systems reported feeling more secure and respected at work. The researchers emphasized the importance of routine training, visible management support, and accessible complaint mechanisms to reinforce the preventive and protective intent of the POSH

				framework.
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Research Gap

Most studies have focused on legal compliance or women's experiences, overlooking men's perspectives, emotional safety, and mental health support in POSH implementation. There's limited research on how institutional culture, leadership behavior, and organizational dynamics influence the effectiveness of POSH, especially in public sector health organizations.

Primary Research Question:

- How is the POSH Act being implemented in public health institutions, and what is its impact on gender inclusivity and organizational culture in the workplace.

Secondary Research Questions:

1. What is the level of awareness among employees and management regarding POSH policies, and how do they perceive their roles in fostering a respectful workplace environment?
2. In what ways has the implementation of the POSH Act influenced organizational culture, particularly with respect to gender sensitivity, mutual respect, and inclusivity?
3. How do employees perceive safety, inclusivity, and support in their workplace?
4. To what extent do organizations comply with the key requirements of the POSH Act, such as establishing Internal Committees and conducting regular training, and what are the implications of this compliance?
5. How are POSH complaints handled by organizations, and what is the perceived impact of these redressal mechanisms on employees' mental health?

Primary Objective:

To assess the POSH implementation of gender inclusivity and organizational culture in workplaces

Secondary Objectives:

1. To examine the awareness level of employees and management of POSH policies and their roles in promoting a respectful workplace.
2. To analyse the influences of POSH implementation on organizational culture, particularly concerning gender sensitivity, respect, and inclusivity.
3. To assess employees' perceptions of safety, inclusivity, and support within the workplace.
4. To examine the level of compliance with POSH Act requirements and its implications for organizational practices (establishment of the Internal Committee (IC) and the conduct of training programs).
5. To document the handling of POSH complaints and organizational redressal mechanisms that influence employees' mental well-being.

5. HYPOTHESIS

As this is a qualitative exploratory study, no formal hypothesis is being tested. However, the underlying assumption is that increased male engagement and enhanced institutional accountability result in better implementation of POSH, thereby improving workplace safety for women.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Design: This research adopts a qualitative, exploratory study design, supported by a scoping review approach to examine the implementation and institutional accountability of the POSH Act in India. Given the sensitive and gendered nature of the topic, qualitative methods are appropriate for capturing nuanced experiences, perceptions, and social dynamics. The study is guided by the Arksey and O'Malley framework [\[1\]](#), with enhancements by Levac et al. [\[2\]](#), to systematically map existing literature and identify key concepts and gaps related to POSH implementation in public health institutions.

Study Population: The study population will include both male and female employees working in the selected public health institutions in India: the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW), the National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC). Participants will be selected randomly from various departments and hierarchical levels, including faculty, administrative staff, junior-level employees, and members of Internal Complaints Committees (IC).

Inclusion Criteria: This study includes works published from 2013 onwards, following the enactment of the POSH Act. It considers peer-reviewed journal articles, policy briefs, government and institutional reports, theses, and relevant grey literature. The focus is on workplace sexual harassment, gender, institutional accountability, and organizational

implementation of POSH within the Indian context. Only studies available in English are included.

Exclusion Criteria: This study excludes works that are unrelated to the Indian context or that do not address workplace sexual harassment or gendered accountability under the POSH framework. Publications prior to 2013 are excluded, as are non-English language materials and studies focusing solely on general gender discrimination without a workplace or institutional focus.

Study Tools: The study will utilize a combination of structured questionnaires, interview guides, and focus group discussion (FGD) checklists as its primary data collection tools. Structured questionnaires will help in gathering baseline information on awareness and attitudes toward POSH, while interview guides will facilitate in-depth exploration of individual experiences and organizational roles. FGDs will provide a platform for group dialogue, capturing collective perceptions and workplace dynamics, with separate sessions planned for male and female participants to ensure open expression

Duration of Study: April 2025 – May 2025 (2 months)

Sample Size: Approximately 15 participants (from each institution) based on purposive sampling.

Sampling Technique: Purposive sampling ensuring representation from different organizational roles and both genders.

Data Collection Procedure:

Data will be collected over a period of approximately 1 months. Individual in-depth interviews will be conducted with selected male and female employees, while FGDs will be organized separately for men and women to ensure open dialogue. Expert interviews with senior staff and IC members will also be conducted.

Operational Definitions:

- **POSH Compliance:** Adherence to the provisions outlined in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013[5].
- **Workplace Safety:** Defined as the absence of sexual harassment and the presence of institutional mechanisms that support and protect employees from such misconduct [7].
- **Organizational Accountability:** Refers to the institutional responsibility to implement, monitor, and ensure effective functioning of the POSH framework within the organization [7].

7. Data analysis plan

Thematic analysis will be used to analyse the qualitative data. Transcribed interviews and FGD content will be coded using manual coding techniques. Emerging themes and subthemes will be identified through an iterative process to capture key narratives related to gender, organizational accountability, and implementation of POSH

8. Ethical considerations

The study will adhere strictly to ethical research principles. Ethical clearance will be obtained from a recognized institutional ethics committee before data collection. Informed consent will be taken from all participants, and confidentiality will be ensured through anonymization and secure data handling. Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences. Sensitivity to the emotional well-being of respondents will be maintained throughout.

9. Implications of Research

The findings will offer insights into how gender roles and institutional structures impact the implementation of workplace safety laws like POSH. It will aid organizations in designing gender-sensitive and inclusive environments. The study could inform future policy revisions and workplace training programs, fostering equity and accountability in healthcare institutions.

10. REFERENCES

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