

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



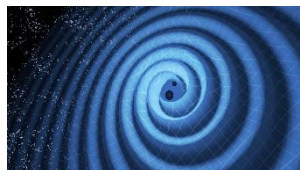
- It was enacted to prevent and **address incidents of sexual harassment of women at their place of work** and provide a mechanism for **redressal of complaints** related to such harassment.
- It was an **initiative after** the landmark **judgment of 1997 by the Supreme Court on the Vishaka ruling** that outlined guidelines regarding sexual harassment in the workplace.
- **Key Provisions:**
 - **Definition of Sexual Harassment:** The Act provides a clear definition of sexual harassment, encompassing **unwelcome acts or behaviour** that are **sexually colored**, creating a hostile or intimidating work environment.
 - **Applicability:** The Act applies to **all workplaces**, including **government, private, and non-governmental organizations**, as well as any **organization, institution, undertaking, or establishment**.
 - **Internal Committee (IC):** The Act **mandates every workplace employing more than ten persons** to constitute an **Internal Complaints Committee**. This committee is responsible for addressing complaints of sexual harassment and ensuring a safe working environment.
 - **Local Committee (LC):**
 - The **appropriate Government may notify** a District Magistrate or Additional District Magistrate or the Collector or Deputy Collector as a **District Officer for every District to exercise powers or discharge functions under this Act**.
 - In cases where the workplace does not have an IC, the **district officer shall constitute a Local Committee** to receive and redress complaints.

- **Complaint Procedure:** The Act lays down a **specific procedure** for making complaints, conducting inquiries, and resolving cases of sexual harassment. It ensures **confidentiality and timely resolution** of complaints.
- **Protection against Retaliation:** The Act **prohibits retaliation or adverse actions against the complainant** for filing a complaint in good faith.
- **Penalties:** If found guilty, the Act provides for penalties, which may include a **monetary fine or termination of employment**, depending on the severity of the offense.

The complaint procedure:

- **Filing the Complaint:**
 - The **aggrieved woman or any person authorized on her behalf** can file a written complaint of sexual harassment.
 - The complaint should be **filed with the Internal Committee (IC)** if the organization has more than ten employees.
 - **If the organization has less than ten employees** or for any other valid reason, the complaint can be **filed with the Local Committee (LC)** constituted by the district officer.
- **Timeframe for Filing:** The complaint should be filed **within three months from the date of the incident** of sexual harassment **or within three months of the last incident, in case of a series of incidents.**
- **Confidentiality:** The Act mandates that the **proceedings** of the inquiry **and the identity** of the parties involved **should be kept confidential.**
- **Appeal:** **If either party is dissatisfied** with the decision of the IC/LC or the action taken by the employer, they may **appeal to the Appellate Authority, as notified by the State Government** within a period of **60 days** from the date of recommendations.

KEY FACTS ABOUT GRAVITATIONAL WAVES



- Gravitational waves are 'ripples' in space-time caused by some of the most **violent and energetic processes in the Universe**.
- **Albert Einstein** predicted the existence of gravitational waves in 1916 in his general theory of relativity.
- Einstein's mathematics showed that **massive accelerating objects** (things like neutron stars or black holes orbiting each other) would **disrupt space-time** in such a way that 'waves' of undulating space-time would propagate in all directions.
- These cosmic ripples would travel at the **speed of light**, carrying with them **information about their origins**, as well as **clues to the nature of gravity**
- These **waves squeeze and stretch anything** in their path as they pass by.
- The **frequency** of the wave will **depend on the masses** of the objects, and the **strength** will **depend on how far away** the event occurs.
- The **strongest gravitational waves** are produced by **cataclysmic events** such as **colliding black holes**, **supernovae** (massive stars exploding at the end of their lifetimes), and **colliding neutron stars**.
- **Other** gravitational waves are predicted to be **caused by the rotation of neutron stars** that are not perfect spheres, and possibly even the **remnants of gravitational radiation created by the Big Bang**.
- How do we know that gravitational waves exist?
 - **In 2015, scientists detected** gravitational waves for the very first time.
 - They **used** a very sensitive instrument called **LIGO (Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory)**.
 - These first gravitational waves happened when **two black holes crashed into one another**.
 - The **collision happened 1.3 billion years ago**. But the ripples didn't make it to Earth until 2015.

EXERCISE SIMBEX



- The **Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX)** is **conducted annually** by the Indian Navy and the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN).
- **Background:** SIMBEX, which **began as 'Exercise Lion King' in 1994**, has since evolved into one of the most significant bilateral maritime collaborations between the Indian Navy and the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN).
- It holds the distinction of being the longest continuous naval exercise that the Indian Navy has with any other country.
- The exercise supports India's Vision **SAGAR and Act East policy**, focused on regional cooperation and maritime security.
- The entire Indian Navy contingent comprising **INS Delhi, Satpura, Shakti and Kiltan** will participate in the exercise. These are indigenously built warships, equipped for modern naval operations.
- The need for joint efforts is **maritime safety**, especially with rising threats like piracy and non-state actors.
- Other Exercises with Singapore: **Exercise AGNI WARRIOR** (Military Exercise), **Air Force Exercise Joint Military Training (JMT)**.

INDIAN INEQUALITY AND THE WORLD BANK'S CLAIMS

- The World Bank report bases its conclusions on the official **Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) for 2022-23**, which employs the modern **Modified Mixed Reference Period (MMRP)** methodology, aligned with international best practices.
- According to the report, **India has witnessed a significant decline in consumption inequality** over the last decade.

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- The consumption-based **Gini coefficient**, a widely used measure of inequality, fell from 28.8 in 2011-12 to 25.5 in 2022-23.
- **These findings place India among the world's four least unequal countries** in terms of consumption inequality, a striking contrast to the narrative of extreme inequality prevalent in the media.
- **Critics, however, argue that the HCES data underestimates inequality** as it fails to adequately capture the consumption patterns of the wealthy.
- **The Debate on Income Inequality**
 - While consumption inequality has clearly declined, the question of **income inequality** is more complex due to the absence of reliable income survey data.
 - Most discussions rely on estimates from the **World Inequality Lab (WIL)**, which uses income tax records combined with outdated consumption data.
 - Critics argue that **these estimates rest on questionable assumptions, such as the notion that 70%-80% of households consistently spend more than they earn**, a claim that defies economic logic.
 - As a result, **the income of the bottom 80% is often underestimated**, while that of the top income groups is exaggerated.
 - Even accepting the WIL data at face value, **there is no evidence of a rising trend in income inequality**.
 - In fact, between 2017 and 2022, the **national income share of the bottom 50% increased from 13.9% to 15%**, while the top 10% saw a slight decline from 58.8% to 57.7%.
 - Although the high-income share of the top 1% remains a concern, **part of this is attributed to better income reporting following anti-tax evasion measures introduced since 2016-17**.



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Challenges and Future Directions

- While India has made substantial progress in reducing poverty and consumption inequality, **significant challenges remain.**
- **Inequality in access to quality education and healthcare** persists, particularly in rural areas. Moreover, as India transitions to a knowledge-driven economy, disparities in skills and opportunities **could widen unless addressed through targeted policies.**
- Nevertheless, the overarching narrative of India is no longer defined solely by poverty and inequality.
- It is equally about **aspiration, progress, and structural transformation.**
- **Improvements in infrastructure, welfare programs, and living standards have elevated millions out of poverty and provided them with the means to pursue better lives.**

Conclusion

- The World Bank's findings, while controversial, highlight a reality that deserves recognition: **India has made remarkable strides in reducing extreme poverty and narrowing consumption inequality over the last decade.**
- While **debates on income inequality** remain valid and necessary, they **must be grounded in robust data and realistic assumptions.**
- A **balanced perspective demands acknowledging both the challenges and the achievements** and India's story today is not just about disparities but also about resilience, growth, and the aspirations of a billion people.

INS NISTAR AND INS NIPUN - STRENGTHENING INDIA'S DEEP SEA RESCUE AND MARITIME CAPABILITIES

- India has commissioned two state-of-the-art Diving Support Vessels (DSVs), INS Nistar and INS Nipun, developed indigenously by **Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL)**, marking a significant milestone in India's self-reliance journey in maritime defence.

- These DSVs will serve as vital assets for the Indian Navy's underwater rescue and salvage operations, enabling deep-sea interventions, including submarine rescue missions and Search and Rescue (SAR) operations.

Key Features and Capabilities of INS Nistar and INS Nipun

- **Indigenous Design and Construction**
 - INS Nistar and INS Nipun are the first of their kind to be designed and constructed indigenously in India, demonstrating technological maturity in naval engineering.
 - Developed by HSL, Visakhapatnam, under the **Ministry of Defence's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative**, these ships represent India's growing capability in shipbuilding and maritime technology.
- **Diving and Rescue Capabilities**
 - **Integrated Saturation Diving System (ISDS):** Enables diver deployment at depths up to 300 meters, supporting underwater repairs, salvage, and rescue operations.
 - **Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs):** These can be deployed for underwater surveillance and recovery missions in deep waters.
 - **Side Scan Sonar and Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS):** Aid in locating submerged vessels or wreckage and managing onboard systems, respectively.
 - **Submarine Rescue System:** Especially crucial for **submarine emergencies**, allowing the timely and safe recovery of personnel from disabled submarines.

Significance of INS Nistar and INS Nipun for the Indian Navy

- **Enhancing Submarine Rescue Capabilities**
 - With the increase in submarine deployments, having dedicated rescue vessels is critical.
 - Previously, India relied on international collaboration for submarine rescue.

- These DSVs allow independent and rapid deployment of rescue missions, reducing response time in emergencies.
- **Strategic Deployment for Coastal and Deep-Sea Operations**
 - The ships can be deployed in both shallow and deep-sea theatres, allowing flexibility and extended reach of operations.
 - Their presence strengthens India's deterrence and operational preparedness in the Indian Ocean Region.
- **Boost to Indigenous Defence Manufacturing**
 - The construction of INS Nistar and INS Nipun underlines India's shift toward indigenous capability in defence infrastructure.
 - It also bolsters local shipbuilding industries and reduces dependence on foreign technology for specialised maritime vessels.

STRAY DOG FEEDING: BALANCING COMPASSION AND PUBLIC SAFETY

- The case arose after a Noida woman alleged harassment by the president of her Residents' Welfare Association (RWA) for feeding stray dogs.
- She claimed the RWA president broke pots placed for stray animals' water, harassed her, and killed 10 sterilised dogs.
- Despite her complaints, local authorities failed to act and instead instructed her not to place the pots again.
- When she approached the Allahabad High Court, her petition was dismissed, citing the concerns of the "common man."
- The court acknowledged that while the **Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023** protect street dogs through sterilisation and vaccination, authorities must also ensure that public movement is not disrupted or endangered by stray dog activity.
 - ABC Rules was framed under the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960**.
 - The rules aim to strike a balance between animal welfare and public safety.

Legal Recognition of Community Dogs and Citizens' Duties

- The Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023, replaced the earlier 2001 rules and introduced the term “community animals” instead of “stray dogs,” acknowledging that these dogs are territorial beings who belong to their local environment.
- The Supreme Court has **expanded the scope of Article 21 of the Constitution** (Animal Welfare Board of India vs A. Nagaraja)—right to life and liberty—to include animal life, as seen in the 2014 Jallikattu case.
- Additionally, Article 51A(g) of the Constitution places a duty on citizens to show compassion towards living creatures.
- Consequently, the mere presence of dogs in residential areas is not unlawful, nor is feeding them a punishable act—unless it violates specific legal norms related to behaviour or space.

Feeding Community Dogs: Legal Guidelines and Responsibilities

- **Rule 20 of the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023** outlines the legal framework for feeding community animals.
- It places the responsibility on Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), Apartment Owner Associations, or local body representatives to facilitate feeding if a resident voluntarily cares for stray animals.
- The rule mandates that feeding areas be set up away from crowded spots like staircases, building entrances, and children’s play zones.
 - The rules aim to balance compassion with public safety by requiring that feeding areas be away from high-footfall zones and kept clean.
- These spaces must be kept clean, and feeding should occur at fixed times.
- To handle disputes, a resolution panel involving veterinary officers, police, local animal welfare bodies, and the RWA is prescribed.
- Overall, the rule affirms the right of community dogs to be fed while ensuring public safety and order in shared residential spaces.