

**Commemoration of 10th Anniversary of Prevention of Sexual harassment at Workplace
(PoSH) Act 2013 on 6-8 December 2023**

Organised by

Internal Complaints Committee

Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology Trivandrum

REPORT

The 10th anniversary of the enactment of the PoSH Act 2013 was commemorated in an abefitting way at Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST). This time to mark the important occasion we had a three day programme that reached out to senior staff and engaged them in a panel discussion, educated the new and junior staff by giving talks by external faculty both at BMT wing and Hospital wing with Achutha Menon Centre(AMC). The last day was a valedictory function with a talk by a woman leader that was intended to inspire the upcoming generation of women to fearlessly pursue their chosen path. This was presided over by the Director .



Pic 1 Banner and posters at AMC

Programmes in detail:

6th Dec 2023: Panel Discussion on “Preventing Sexual Harassment at the workplace- Role of the supervisor” at Auditorium 2, Hospital Wing, Time: 2pm

Chair; Dr.Jayasree RS, Scientist G and nodal officer for GATI, Member, ICC

Panel members:

Dr. Sandhya CG, Engineer F, Technology Business Division, BMT Wing

Dr. Maya Nandkumar A, Scientist G, Microbial Technology Division, BMT Wing

Ms SujaRaj L, Lecturer in Nursing, Hospital Wing

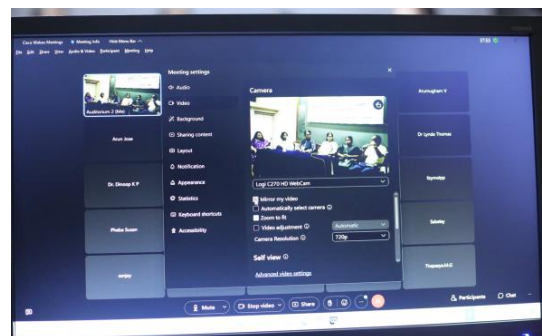
Dr.Sowmya Ramanan V, Additional Professor, CVTS, Hospital Wing

Dr.ManikandanS, Professor, Anaesthesiology

Dr Kavita Raja introduced the panel members and explained the importance of the PoSH Act. Dr.Jayasree gave a brief overview of the problem that supervisors face. Dr.Manikandan was then asked to give his experience . He elaborated on the issues faced by him as a senior anaesthetist having charge over both students and staff. He found that female residents and nurses find it difficult to speak on such a subject with him. Hence he has always asked a senior female colleague, either nurse or doctor to be vigilant and report any such problems to him. He also conducts a

monthly staff meeting where such problems are also freely discussed. Next Dr.Sowmya spoke her own experience as a lady surgeon and about the hurdles she had to overcome to keep up with the pressures of her job. However her experience with family and colleagues was good and they were all supportive. The main problem was that males generally did not expect much from their female colleagues and tried to do everything for them. Dr.Sandhya spoke next on her experience as one of four female students in the undergraduate Mechanical Engineering course with 150 boys. She had a rewarding career here with no problems. She emphasized the fact that both boys and girls have to be brought up in the same way in the family and that mothers have a great role in influencing the behaviour of their sons and bringing them up to be polite and respectful to all, without gender bias. Dr.Maya Nandkumar was of the opinion that no matter what the situation is, girls have to speak up and stop any harassment at their level. If it does not stop there, they have to be bold enough to give it in writing to their supervisors. Ms Sujaraj, Lecturer in Nursing said that nurses have to face many such issues in their career and generally they are not able to express their fears to their superiors who happen to be males. Hence having an ICC is very useful.

The session was opened to the audience and an interesting question put forward by Dr.Debasish Gupta, Professor and Head, Transfusion Medicine, was whether patients and bystanders come under the purview of the ICC. ICC chairperson answered that outsiders come under the purview as long as they are in the hospital, but no action can be taken against them by the management. Hence they can be called and counselled. In worse scenarios, the police can be asked to investigate.



In the online mode, Dr.Srinivasan K , Professor, AMCHSS asked about the situation of a witness. A witness could be hostile to the complainant or to the perpetrator. The ICC generally takes a statement from the witness and within a few minutes of talking it becomes known, where the preference of the witness lies. Corroboration can be done by repeating certain questions later in the interrogation, when they will give a different answer if the first was a falsehood. As a witness there is no need to be afraid and witness should realise the great role they play in setting a higher standard for the behaviour within the institute. CCTV cameras are needed to be installed in all lifts and in remote corners and corridors.

Dr. Jayasree ended the panel discussion on a positive note that our institution is generally gender neutral giving good opportunities to both genders. Women should stand up for themselves and face issues fearlessly. If they have knowledge and commitment, the world will accept them.

The programme was well attended with 73 offline and 42 online participants.

Pic-3. Talk by Adv. J. Sandhya at AMC



On 7th December, two classes on the PoSH Act 2013 were arranged, one in the Achutha Menon Centre Seminar Hall and other in the Natakashala at BMT Wing. The first was taken by Adv. J Sandhya, Lawyer and Secretary, Sakhi, and former chairperson of Local Committee of Trivandrum district at AMC. She went into the History of the Act showing the photo of Bhanwari Devi who in the 1990s was a Govt official in charge of stopping child marriages in Rajasthan. In the course of her work, she was brutally raped by a wealthy landlord's family because she tried to stop the marriage of a two year old child. This led to the question of women being harassed while doing their duty, came up as the Vishaka guidelines and ultimately led to the PoSH Act being enacted.

The second was by Dr.Bismi Gopalakrishnan , Faculty of Law, Kerala University, at the Biomedical Technology Wing(BMT) at Poojapura . The talk was inaugurated by the Head, BMT wing. Dr.Jayashree RS (member , ICC) gave a brief introduction to the speaker and the topic. It was well attended by scientists and students.

Pic 4- Talk by Dr.Bismi Gopalakrishnan at BMT Wing



On 8th December, the whole programme was concluded by a valedictory function, where the Dr.Sanjay Behari, the Director of the Institute, Dr.Rupa Shreedhar, Med Supdt and Head BMT Wing were present . The chief guest was Ms Annie George, a development and management professional who focuses on Disaster management with special emphasis on impact on and recovery of the most vulnerable population, namely women and children. She showed how women have to create their own opportunities, go forth boldly and freely do whatever they have a passion for. She shared her experiences as a disaster manger during the floods in Kashmir, Assam and Kerala, the earthquake in Nepal and the Tsunami of 2004.

On a concluding note, felicitations were offered by the Head BMT Wing and the MS on the conduct of the commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of PoSH Act. The Director gave away the prizes for posters and Logo competition.





Members of the ICC are grateful to all staff and students who supported the events.