

E-mail : bciinfo21@gmail.com
Website : www.barcouncilofindia.org



Tel. : (91) 011-4922 5000
Fax : (91) 011-4922 5011

भारतीय विधिज्ञ परिषद् BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA

(Statutory Body Constituted under the Advocates Act, 1961)

21, Rouse Avenue Institutional Area, Near Bal Bhawan, New Delhi - 110002

BCI:D:2382/2024 (LE-Circular-14)

Date: 22.11.2024

To,

The Vice-Chancellors/Registrars of Universities/Centers of Legal Education
Issuing Law Degrees

The Deans, Faculty of Law, Principals/Heads of Departments of Law
Colleges and Centers of Legal Education

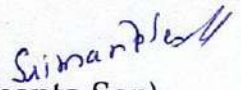
Sub.: Circular for Establishing Student Grievance Redressal Committees
(SGRC) for Centers of Legal Education.

Sir(s)/Ma'am(s),

The Bar Council of India, as the apex regulatory body for legal education in India, has issued the attached Circular for Establishing Student Grievance Redressal Committees (SGRCs) to ensure effective redressal of student grievances and promote transparency, fairness, and accountability in legal education institutions.

Non-compliance with this circular shall invite necessary action, including the possibility of revocation of approval/recognition by the Bar Council of India.

We trust you will take prompt action in implementing this circular to encourage a conducive environment for legal education and student welfare.


(Srimanto Sen)
Secretary
Bar Council of India

Encl.: Circular for Establishing Student Grievance Redressal Committees (SGRCs)



भारतीय विधिज्ञ परिषद् BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA

(Statutory Body Constituted under the Advocates Act, 1961)

21, Rouse Avenue Institutional Area, Near Bal Bhawan, New Delhi - 110002

Circular for Establishing Student Grievance Redressal Committees for Centers of Legal Education Issued by the Bar Council of India

In exercise of its statutory authority under the Advocates Act, 1961, the Bar Council of India (BCI), as the apex regulatory body for legal education in India, mandates the establishment of Student Grievance Redressal Committees (SGRCs) in all Centers of Legal Education (CLEs), including law universities and colleges, to address and resolve student grievances effectively. The following guidelines are designed to align with national and international standards for grievance redressal while adhering to principles established by the Supreme Court of India.

Objectives

The Student Grievance Redressal Committee aims to:

- Address grievances of students concerning academic, administrative, and infrastructure matters.
- Provide a transparent and accessible mechanism for grievance resolution.
- Ensure fairness and accountability in resolving student issues in compliance with the standards prescribed by the Bar Council of India.

Composition of the SGRC

The SGRC shall consist of the following members:

1. Chairperson

- The Vice-Chancellor, Director, Dean or Head of the institution, or a senior faculty member nominated by the Dean/Head, shall act as the Chairperson.

2. Faculty Members:

- Two senior faculty members nominated by the institution's academic council.

3. Student Representatives:

- Two student members, one male and one female, nominated by the student body or chosen through a transparent selection process.

4. External Member:

- A Member of the State Bar Council or retired judge nominated by the Bar Council of India.

5. Member Secretary

- An administrative officer of the institution designated to coordinate and document the proceedings of the committee.

Scope of the SGRC

The SGRC shall have jurisdiction to address grievances related to:

- Academic concerns, including examination issues, assessment irregularities, and curriculum queries.
- Administrative matters, such as admission processes, fee disputes, and service delivery.
- Campus facilities, including library, hostels, transport, and infrastructure.
- Any form of harassment or discrimination, including ragging, in compliance with BCI and statutory anti-ragging guidelines.

Procedure for Filing a Grievance

1. Students must submit their grievances in writing or through a designated online portal established by the institution.
2. The complaint must include relevant details, evidence (if any), and the complainant's contact information.
3. The SGRC must acknowledge receipt of the grievance within three working days.

Resolution Process

1. The SGRC shall convene within seven working days of receiving a grievance.

8

2. The complainant and concerned parties shall be given an opportunity to present their case.
3. The SGRC must ensure confidentiality, impartiality, and adherence to principles of natural justice during the proceedings.
4. A resolution must be communicated to the complainant in writing within fifteen working days of the hearing.

Appeal Mechanism

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the SGRC, they may appeal to the Bar Council of India

Reporting and Compliance

1. All CLEs must submit an annual report to the Bar Council of India detailing the grievances received, their resolution status, and steps taken to improve grievance redressal.
2. Non compliance with this circular shall invite disciplinary action, including revocation of BCI recognition/approval of Centers of Legal Education.

Implementation Timeline

All Centers of Legal Education are required to constitute their SGRCs and ensure compliance with these guidelines within one month of issuance.

General Provisions

1. The institution must display the details of the SGRC, including its composition and contact information, on its official website and notice boards.
2. Any amendments to these guidelines shall be communicated by the Bar Council of India from time to time.

These guidelines are issued to ensure that the rights and concerns of students in legal education are addressed with transparency, fairness, and efficiency, in alignment with the statutory objectives of the Bar Council of India.

Footnotes

Vishaka & Ors. v. State of Rajasthan & Ors. (AIR 1997 SC 3011)- Highlighted the necessity of grievance redressal mechanisms to promote harmony and public interest.

A



भारतीय विधिज्ञ परिषद् BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA

(Statutory Body Constituted under the Advocates Act, 1961)

21, Rouse Avenue Institutional Area, Near Bal Bhawan, New Delhi - 110002

BCI:D: 1452 / 2026

Date:11.03.2026

To,

The Vice-Chancellors of all Universities imparting Legal Education

The Registrars of all Universities imparting Legal Education

The Deans/Heads of Faculty/Departments/Schools of Law of all Universities imparting Legal Education

The Directors/Principals/Heads of all Centres of Legal Education approved by the Bar Council of India

The Secretaries of all State Bar Councils

Sub.: Compliance with the directions flowing from the Office Memorandum dated 05.02.2026 forwarding the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India order dated 15.01.2026 in *Amit Kumar & Ors. v. Union of India & Ors.*, 2026 INSC 62, and reiteration of mandatory obligations concerning student well-being, suicide prevention, anti-ragging, student grievance redressal, counselling, anti-discrimination, gender sensitisation, and institutional support systems in legal education institutions

Sir(s)/Madam(s),

1. The Bar Council of India has received the Office Memorandum dated 05.02.2026 issued by the Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education, forwarding the Hon'ble Supreme Court order dated 15.01.2026 in *Amit Kumar & Ors. v. Union of India & Ors.*, and requesting necessary action on the basis of the directions contained therein, along with monthly status/action reporting.
2. The Bar Council of India is the apex statutory body under Section 4 of the Advocates Act, 1961, and is entrusted, inter alia, with the duty to promote legal education and to lay down standards of such education under Sections 7(1)(h), 7(1)(i), and the rule-making power under Section 49 of the Advocates Act, 1961.
3. The Rules of Legal Education, 2008 remain binding on all Universities imparting legal education and all Centres of Legal Education. Rule 33 expressly provides that every University / Center of Legal Education shall take appropriate measures to prevent ragging in any form with a standing Committee appointed for the purpose from among faculty and student representation, and that any incident of ragging must be dealt with very seriously and appropriate stringent action be taken.

SS

4. It is further reiterated that the Bar Council of India has already issued **Circular No. BCI:D:2382/2024 (LE-Circular-14) dated 22.11.2024** for establishing Student Grievance Redressal Committees for Centres of Legal Education, and the same shall be read together with the present circular. The compliance regime already in force also records that CLEs must maintain a Student Grievance Redressal Cell in compliance with **BCI:D:2382/2024**, maintain records of complaints and actions taken, submit an annual report to the governing body, and make the same available to BCI during inspections.
5. The comprehensive compliance affidavit attached with provisional approval and Standing Committee approval communications already requires continuing compliance by Centres of Legal Education with BCI circulars, directives and guidelines, and further requires grievance-related record maintenance, anti-ragging compliance, and production of records during inspections. (<https://www.barcouncilofindia.org/info/notifications/all-noty>)
6. The present circular is, therefore, being issued to ensure immediate, visible, verifiable, and continuing compliance in the field of legal education. For purposes of **periodic monthly consolidation**, the affiliating University shall act as the nodal consolidating authority for affiliated Centres of Legal Education. However, for **serious incidents**, the concerned institution shall remain directly responsible for immediate reporting and action.
7. This circular is supplemental in nature. It shall be read in continuation of the Rules of Legal Education, 2008, the existing BCI circulars and guidelines, the conditions contained in approval letters, the comprehensive compliance affidavit, and all other applicable legal and regulatory obligations.
8. It is further clarified that the present circular is issued as part of the regulatory and supervisory framework governing legal education and institutional compliance and shall operate in addition to, and not in derogation of, any applicable statutory enactment, rule, regulation, governmental direction, judicial direction, or regulatory framework governing matters relating to student welfare, ragging prevention, grievance redressal, gender sensitisation, discrimination, institutional discipline, or related fields. Nothing contained in this circular shall be construed as limiting, diluting, superseding, or overriding the operation of any applicable statute, statutory rule, regulation, judicial direction, or governmental guideline in force in the relevant field. The absence of any specific reference in this circular to a particular statutory requirement or regulatory obligation shall not be interpreted as a ground to ignore, dilute, or avoid compliance with such statutory or regulatory obligations, all of which shall continue to apply with full force.

Accordingly, the following directions are hereby issued for strict compliance.

I. Dedicated BCI reporting channel

1. A dedicated reporting email ID is hereby notified for all direct submissions to the Bar Council of India under this circular: studentwellbeing@barcouncilofindia.org
2. All reports required to be submitted directly to the Bar Council of India under this circular shall be sent only to the aforesaid email ID.
3. The submission protocol, subject format, indexing requirements, mandatory supporting documents, and reporting formats shall form an integral part of this circular and shall stand annexed hereto as **Annexure I** and **Annexure II**.

II. Immediate reporting of suicide, attempted suicide, or unnatural death

1. Every University imparting legal education and every Centre of Legal Education shall ensure that any incident of suicide, attempted suicide, or unnatural death of a student, whether occurring on campus, in hostel facilities, in paying guest accommodation, or otherwise in connection with the course of study, is reported immediately to the jurisdictional police authorities, without suppression, delay, dilution, or internal substitution of the legal process.
2. In addition to reporting to the police authorities, every such incident shall be reported forthwith to the Bar Council of India at the aforesaid dedicated email ID.
3. In the case of an affiliated Centre of Legal Education, a copy of such immediate report shall simultaneously be sent to the affiliating University.
4. The obligation under this clause is direct, immediate, and institution-specific. It shall not be postponed on the ground that a later monthly consolidated report will be sent by the University.

III. Nodal Officer for Student Well-Being, Crisis Response, and Compliance

1. Every University and every Centre of Legal Education shall designate a senior responsible officer, not below the rank of Registrar, Principal, Director, Dean, or equivalent, as the **Nodal Officer for Student Well-Being, Crisis Response, and Compliance**.
2. The Nodal Officer shall be responsible for
 - (a) immediate crisis response,
 - (b) referral and medical coordination,
 - (c) compliance with police intimation obligations,
 - (d) preservation of records,
 - (e) communication with authorities,
 - (f) institutional follow-up, and
 - (g) preparation and transmission of compliance records.
3. The name, designation, mobile number, and email address of the Nodal Officer shall be displayed on the website and on student notice boards.

IV. Mandatory committees and institutional mechanisms

1. Every University and every Centre of Legal Education shall ensure the active constitution, formal notification, and effective functioning of the following:
 - (a) Anti-Ragging Committee,
 - (b) Anti-Ragging Squad,
 - (c) Student Grievance Redressal Committee / Student Grievance Redressal Cell,
 - (d) Internal Complaints Committee or other legally compliant complaint-handling mechanism for sexual harassment and gender-based grievances,
 - (e) Anti-Discrimination / Equal Opportunity mechanism, wherever applicable,
 - (f) Counselling and Wellness Centre or documented referral arrangement,
 - (g) Internal oversight mechanism for mental health and student-support review.

2. These bodies shall not remain merely formal or paper-based. They must be identifiable, accessible, publicly notified, and function in a fair, time-bound, confidential, and non-retaliatory manner.
3. Their composition, contact details, complaint channels, and basic procedure shall be published on the institution's website, notice boards, and student-facing materials.

V. Anti-ragging compliance

1. Anti-ragging compliance is a statutory obligation under Rule 33 of the Rules of Legal Education, 2008, binding on every University and Centre of Legal Education.
2. Every Centre of Legal Education shall ensure
 - (a) constitution and effective functioning of an Anti-Ragging Committee,
 - (b) constitution and effective functioning of an Anti-Ragging Squad,
 - (c) mandatory anti-ragging undertakings from every student, co-signed by the parent or guardian,
 - (d) availability of a 24×7 anti-ragging helpline and online complaint mechanism,
 - (e) awareness programmes and visible publication of anti-ragging policy, penalties, complaint channels, and such institution-level anti-ragging information and non-confidential statistics as may be legally permissible, and
 - (f) prompt reporting of any incident, if any, to the Bar Council of India, the affiliating University, and the law enforcement authorities.
3. The anti-ragging framework shall be implemented not only in compliance with Rule 33 of the Rules of Legal Education, 2008, but also in consonance with the principles flowing from the law declared by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India concerning prevention, prohibition, monitoring, reporting, and strict institutional response to ragging and allied forms of student abuse, intimidation, humiliation, or coercion.
4. Every University shall monitor anti-ragging compliance across all affiliated Centres of Legal Education and shall ensure immediate rectification of deficiencies.
5. Every institution shall ensure that anti-ragging measures are real, accessible, visible, and continuously enforced, and do not remain merely formal, episodic, or paper-based.

VI. Student Grievance Redressal mechanism

1. Every Centre of Legal Education shall constitute and maintain a functional Student Grievance Redressal Committee / Cell in accordance with BCI:D:2382/2024 (LE-Circular-14) dated 22.11.2024 and the present circular.
2. The compliance framework already in force requires that the SGRC be maintained in compliance with BCI guidelines, that it address academic, administrative, infrastructural, and connected student grievances, that it provide accessible complaint channels, and that it maintain detailed records of all complaints and actions taken.

3. The SGRC shall be constituted and shall function in accordance with the composition, representational requirements, procedural safeguards, and institutional responsibilities already prescribed by the Bar Council of India from time to time, and shall remain accessible, identifiable, fair, time-bound, confidential, and non-retaliatory in its operation.
4. Every Centre of Legal Education shall ensure the availability of both online and offline grievance submission channels, proper maintenance of grievance registers and digital records, timely consideration and disposal of complaints, and institutional safeguards against retaliation, victimisation, intimidation, academic prejudice, or administrative harassment for filing any grievance.
5. Every Centre of Legal Education shall continue to maintain the annual reporting discipline required under the SGRC framework and the compliance regime, independently of the monthly consolidated reporting arrangement under the present circular, and shall ensure that such records and reports remain available for scrutiny by the Bar Council of India during inspection, review, or follow-up.
6. Every University shall supervise compliance of affiliated Centres of Legal Education with the SGRC framework, note deficiencies, issue corrective directions, and reflect the same in the consolidated reports sent to the Bar Council of India.

VII. Counselling, empathy, mental health, and student-support systems

1. Every Centre of Legal Education shall promote a culture of empathy, psychological well-being, mutual respect, dignity, kindness, inclusion, and supportive institutional functioning.
2. The compliance framework already requires that grievance mechanisms be strengthened for psychological and emotional issues, that stakeholders adopt a non-discriminatory and non-judgmental approach, and that periodic independent audits of counselling and wellness services be undertaken through an internal mental health oversight mechanism.
3. Every institution shall ensure
 - (a) establishment and effective functioning of a Counselling and Wellness Centre, or a documented and reliable referral arrangement with qualified counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists, or other appropriately qualified mental health professionals, as applicable,
 - (b) periodic sensitisation on emotional well-being, kindness, empathy, inclusivity, and respectful campus conduct,
 - (c) responsive, accessible, and confidential support channels for psychological and emotional concerns,
 - (d) periodic review of the effectiveness of student-support systems, including through an internal oversight mechanism for mental health and wellness support,
 - (e) incorporation, wherever feasible, of student well-being, emotional resilience, empathy, help-seeking awareness, and support information in induction, orientation, or similar student-entry programmes, and
 - (f) periodic sensitisation of faculty members, wardens, mentors, administrative staff, and other institutional functionaries on mentoring responsibilities, early identification of student distress,

crisis referral, and supportive, non-stigmatising engagement with students.

4. Every institution shall ensure that its student-support framework operates in a non-discriminatory, non-judgmental, and student-sensitive manner, and that counselling, referral, and wellness support mechanisms are known, reachable, and capable of timely activation in situations of stress, vulnerability, crisis, or emotional difficulty.

VIII. Gender sensitisation and complaint-handling safeguards

1. Every institution shall ensure a safe, dignified, respectful, and gender-sensitive environment for students, interns, faculty members, staff, women students, and transgender persons.
2. Every institution shall maintain a legally compliant complaint-handling mechanism for sexual harassment and gender-based grievances, together with continuing sensitisation, confidentiality, fair inquiry, and protection against retaliation.
3. This circular shall be read along with the profession-specific BCI guidelines already issued in that regard.

IX. Initial Compliance Report

1. Every affiliated Centre of Legal Education shall submit its **Initial Compliance Report** to its affiliating University within the period prescribed by the University, and in any case within the time-frame notified under this circular.
2. The Initial Compliance Report shall include, at a minimum
 - (a) details of all committees and support mechanisms,
 - (b) copies of office orders constituting them,
 - (c) details of the Nodal Officer,
 - (d) counselling and referral arrangements,
 - (e) anti-ragging compliance details,
 - (f) SGRC compliance details,
 - (g) gender sensitisation and complaint-handling compliance details,and
 - (h) deficiencies identified and the time-bound rectification plan.
3. Every University shall scrutinise such reports and shall submit to the Bar Council of India a **consolidated Initial Compliance Report** covering
 - (a) the University's own law faculty/department/school/centre, wherever applicable, and
 - (b) all affiliated Centres of Legal Education under its jurisdiction.
4. National Law Universities, Deemed Universities, unitary law universities, and University Departments not functioning through an affiliation structure shall submit their Initial Compliance Report directly to the Bar Council of India.

X. Monthly Action Taken Report

1. Every affiliated Centre of Legal Education shall submit a **Monthly Action Taken Report** to its affiliating University within the time fixed by the University so as to enable timely consolidation and forwarding.

2. Every University shall examine the Monthly Action Taken Reports received from affiliated Centres of Legal Education, identify deficiencies, issue corrective directions where required, and prepare a consolidated Monthly Action Taken Report for submission to the Bar Council of India.
3. The consolidated Monthly Action Taken Report of the University shall cover
 - (a) the University's own law faculty/department/school/centre, wherever applicable,
 - (b) all affiliated Centres of Legal Education,
 - (c) institution-wise deficiencies noticed,
 - (d) corrective directions issued by the University, and
 - (e) action taken status.
4. The Monthly Action Taken Report shall include, in broad terms
 - (a) measures implemented during the month,
 - (b) awareness and sensitisation programmes conducted,
 - (c) complaints received and status of redressal,
 - (d) anti-ragging measures taken,
 - (e) student grievance redressal steps taken,
 - (f) counselling and mental health initiatives undertaken,
 - (g) deficiencies rectified or pending,
 - (h) serious incidents, if any, and immediate response taken in a legally permissible manner, and
 - (i) any clarification or assistance required.
5. Every University shall submit the consolidated Monthly Action Taken Report to the Bar Council of India by the **7th day of every succeeding month**.
6. The purpose of this arrangement is to place the administrative burden of monthly compilation, scrutiny, and forwarding upon the affiliating University, while preserving continuing institutional accountability at the level of each individual Centre of Legal Education.

XI. Continuing responsibility of each Centre of Legal Education

1. Notwithstanding the submission of consolidated reports by the University, each affiliated Centre of Legal Education shall remain independently responsible for
 - (a) correctness of the information furnished by it,
 - (b) completeness of disclosures,
 - (c) maintenance of records,
 - (d) timely submission to the affiliating University, and
 - (e) compliance with all BCI Rules, circulars, guidelines, approval conditions, and legal obligations.
2. Failure of the University to forward a consolidated report shall not, by itself, absolve a defaulting Centre of Legal Education of its own obligations under the Rules of Legal Education, 2008, approval conditions, and the present circular.

XII. Direct power of the Bar Council of India to call for information

1. Notwithstanding anything contained herein, the Bar Council of India may, at any time, call upon any University or any Centre of Legal Education to

- submit a direct report, explanation, affidavit, record, or compliance material.
2. Upon such requisition, the University or the Centre of Legal Education concerned shall comply directly and forthwith.
 3. This power may be exercised generally, selectively, institution-wise, incident-wise, during inspection, or during any scrutiny, review, or follow-up proceedings.

XIII. Record maintenance

1. Every Centre of Legal Education shall maintain proper grievance-wise, complaint-wise, and incident-wise records concerning anti-ragging, student grievances, serious incidents, counselling referrals, and institutional response.
2. Such records shall be preserved in a manner capable of verification and shall be produced whenever called for by the Bar Council of India or during inspection.
3. The compliance affidavit regime already requires such records to be maintained and made available to BCI during inspections.

XIV. Consequences of non-compliance

1. Non-compliance, incomplete compliance, false compliance, token compliance, non-functional committees, suppression of material facts, or failure to maintain and produce records shall be treated as serious regulatory concerns affecting the maintenance of standards of legal education.
2. The Bar Council of India shall be at liberty to consider such default while dealing with
 - (a) approval,
 - (b) continuation of approval,
 - (c) recognition,
 - (d) inspection,
 - (e) admission-related permissions,
 - (f) future applications, and
 - (g) any other regulatory action permissible in law.
3. The compliance framework already in force records that non-compliance with BCI circulars and mandated systems may attract strict action, including withdrawal or revocation of approval or affiliation and other legal consequences.
4. The affiliating University shall also be expected to take supervisory and corrective action in respect of defaulting affiliated Centres of Legal Education.

XV. Enclosures and Annexures

The following shall be attached with and read as part of this circular:

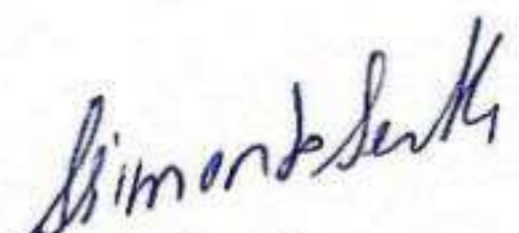
1. **Annexure I** - Submission Protocol, Email Format, Indexing Requirements, and Mandatory Document Checklist.

2. **Annexure II** - Prescribed Format of the Initial Compliance Report and Monthly Action Taken Report.
3. Letter dated 18.02.2025 issued by Ministry of Law & Justice forwarding the Office Memorandum dated 05.02.2026 issued by the Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education, forwarding the Hon'ble Supreme Court order dated 15.01.2026 in *Amit Kumar & Ors. v. Union of India & Ors.*, 2026 INSC 62.
4. Circular No. **BCI:D:2382/2024 (LE-Circular-14)** dated **22.11.2024** concerning Student Grievance Redressal Committees for Centres of Legal Education.
5. Guidelines regarding The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013) for Bar Associations, Law Offices, State Bar Councils and Bar Council of India

XVI. Publicity and Institutional Communication

Every University and every Centre of Legal Education shall ensure that the contents of the present circular, the institutional mechanisms referred to herein, and the available complaint and support channels are given wide publicity within the institution. The circular and the institutional details relating to anti-ragging mechanisms, grievance redressal mechanisms, counselling and wellness support, nodal officer details, and relevant complaint channels shall be prominently displayed on institutional notice boards, including notice boards located in hostels, libraries, common rooms, and other common student areas. The same shall also be published on the official website of the institution and shall be communicated to students, faculty members, wardens, mentors, and administrative staff through institutional email systems, student communication platforms, and other commonly used communication channels, including officially maintained messaging groups where such systems exist. Every institution shall ensure that newly admitted students are specifically informed of these mechanisms during orientation or induction programmes and that the information remains continuously accessible to the student community.

This circular shall come into force with immediate effect.


Srimanto Sen
Principal Secretary
Bar Council of India

Copy to:
All State Bar Councils

Annexure I
Submission Protocol, Reporting Channel, Subject Format, Timelines, Indexing
Requirements, and Mandatory Document Checklist
(Annexed to BCI Circular No. 1452/2026)

This Annexure shall form an integral part of the circular and shall govern the manner in which reports, returns, and compliance materials are to be furnished under the said circular.

I. Reporting channel

1. All reports required to be submitted **directly** to the Bar Council of India under the circular shall be sent only to the following dedicated email ID: studentwellbeing@barcouncilofindia.org
2. For affiliated Centres of Legal Education, the ordinary reporting channel for periodic compliance shall be as follows:
 - (a) the Centre of Legal Education shall first submit its report to the affiliating University, and
 - (b) the affiliating University shall thereafter scrutinise, consolidate, and forward the same to the Bar Council of India.
3. The above arrangement shall apply to the Initial Compliance Report and the Monthly Action Taken Report.
4. Notwithstanding the above, immediate serious incident reporting under Clause 2 of the circular shall be made directly to the Bar Council of India by the concerned institution, with a simultaneous copy to the affiliating University in the case of an affiliated Centre of Legal Education.

II. Subject line format

1. Every **Initial Compliance Report** sent by a University to the Bar Council of India shall carry the following subject line:
 - a. Initial Compliance Report: Name of University | State
 - b. Every Monthly Action Taken Report sent by a University to the Bar Council of India shall carry the following subject line:
 - c. Monthly Action Taken Report: Name of University | State | Month-Year
 - d. Every **immediate incident report** sent directly to the Bar Council of India shall carry the following subject line:
 - e. **Immediate Incident Report: Name of Institution | City | State | Date of Incident**

III. Timelines

1. Every affiliated Centre of Legal Education shall submit its Initial Compliance Report to the affiliating University within the period prescribed by the University, subject to the outer time-limit fixed in the circular.
2. Every affiliating University shall submit its consolidated Initial Compliance Report to the Bar Council of India within the period prescribed in the circular.

3. Every affiliated Centre of Legal Education shall submit its Monthly Action Taken Report to the affiliating University **by the 3rd day of every succeeding month.**
4. Every affiliating University shall submit its consolidated Monthly Action Taken Report to the Bar Council of India **by the 7th day of every succeeding month.**
5. Every immediate incident report required under Clause 2 of the circular shall be submitted **forthwith**, and shall not be deferred till the monthly reporting cycle.

IV. Mode of submission and authentication

1. Every report shall be submitted in PDF format, duly signed by the competent authority.
2. The Initial Compliance Report of a Centre of Legal Education shall be signed by the Director/Principal/Head of Institution and countersigned, wherever applicable, by the competent University authority.
3. The consolidated Initial Compliance Report and consolidated Monthly Action Taken Report of the University shall be signed by the Registrar or such other officer duly authorised for the purpose, with approval of the competent authority.
4. Where supporting documents are annexed, each annexure shall be clear, legible, and properly described in the annexure list.

V. Indexing requirements

1. Every submission shall contain:
 - (a) a covering page,
 - (b) a brief index,
 - (c) serial numbering of annexures,
 - (d) consecutive page numbering, and
 - (e) institutional authentication.
2. Where the report covers multiple affiliated Centres of Legal Education, the University shall arrange the material institution-wise.
3. Deficiencies and corrective directions, if any, shall also be reflected institution-wise for ease of scrutiny.

VI. Mandatory supporting documents for Initial Compliance Report

1. The Initial Compliance Report shall, at a minimum, be accompanied by the following:
 - (a) office order constituting the Anti-Ragging Committee,
 - (b) office order constituting the Anti-Ragging Squad,
 - (c) office order constituting the Student Grievance Redressal Committee / Cell,
 - (d) office order constituting the Internal Complaints Committee or equivalent complaint-handling mechanism,
 - (e) office order/designation order of the Nodal Officer for Student Well-Being, Crisis Response, and Compliance,
 - (f) proof of publication on the website and/or notice boards of committee details and complaint channels,

- (g) details of counselling and wellness arrangements, including referral arrangements, where applicable,
 - (h) details of anti-ragging undertaking format and helpline / complaint mechanism,
 - (i) details of online and offline grievance filing channels, and
 - (j) any other record specifically called for by the Bar Council of India.
2. The compliance regime already requires such institutional records and grievance-related material to be maintained and produced during BCI scrutiny or inspection.

VII. Mandatory contents for Monthly Action Taken Report

1. Every Monthly Action Taken Report shall, at a minimum, contain:
- (a) brief summary of measures implemented during the month,
 - (b) number and nature of anti-ragging complaints received and present status,
 - (c) number and nature of student grievances received and present status,
 - (d) number and nature of gender-based / harassment complaints received and present status,
 - (e) counselling / mental health interventions undertaken,
 - (f) awareness / sensitisation programmes conducted,
 - (g) institution-wise deficiencies noticed,
 - (h) corrective directions issued by the University,
 - (i) rectification status, and
 - (j) serious incidents, if any, stated in a legally permissible summary form.

VIII. Preservation of proof of submission

1. Every Centre of Legal Education shall preserve proof of submission made to the affiliating University.
2. Every University shall preserve proof of submission made to the Bar Council of India.
3. Such proof shall be produced whenever called for by the Bar Council of India.

M

Annexure II
Prescribed Format of Initial Compliance Report and Monthly Action Taken Report

(Annexed to BCI Circular No. ___/2026)

This Annexure shall form an integral part of the circular and shall be used for the purpose of standardised reporting.

Part A

Format of Initial Compliance Report

1. **Name of Institution**
2. **Nature of Institution**
 - (a) University / Department / School / Centre of Law
 - (b) Affiliated Centre of Legal Education
 - (c) National Law University / Deemed University / Any Other
3. **Full postal address**
4. **Name and designation of Head of Institution**
5. **Name, designation, mobile number, and email address of Nodal Officer for Student Well-Being, Crisis Response, and Compliance**
6. **Details of mandatory committees and mechanisms**
 - (a) **Anti-Ragging Committee**
 - Date of constitution
 - Name of Chairperson
 - Contact details
 - Whether notified on website / notice board
 - (b) **Anti-Ragging Squad**
 - Date of constitution
 - Name of In-charge
 - Contact details
 - Whether notified on website / notice board
 - (c) **Student Grievance Redressal Committee / Cell**
 - Date of constitution
 - Name of Chairperson
 - Contact details
 - Whether notified on website / notice board
 - (d) **Internal Complaints Committee**
 - Date of constitution
 - Name of Presiding Officer / Chairperson
 - Contact details
 - Whether notified on website / notice board
 - (e) **Counselling and Wellness Centre / referral arrangement**
 - Details of in-house / external arrangement
 - Name and contact details of relevant person / service

- (f) Anti-Discrimination / Equal Opportunity mechanism, wherever applicable

Date of constitution

Contact details

Whether notified on website / notice board

7. Anti-ragging compliance status

- (a) Whether anti-ragging undertakings are being obtained from all students
(b) Whether a 24x7 anti-ragging helpline / complaint channel is available
(c) Whether anti-ragging policy and penalties are displayed
(d) Whether awareness / sensitisation activities have been conducted

Rule 33 of the Rules of Legal Education, 2008 expressly mandates anti-ragging measures by every University and Centre of Legal Education.

8. Student Grievance Redressal status

- (a) Whether online grievance submission is available
(b) Whether offline grievance submission is available
(c) Whether grievance register / digital records are maintained
(d) Whether anti-retaliation safeguards are in place

The compliance framework already requires a Student Grievance Redressal Cell to be maintained in accordance with BCI guidelines, with proper records and no retaliation.

9. Counselling / mental health / wellness support status

- (a) Whether counselling support is available
(b) Whether emergency referral support is available
(c) Whether student-facing information is published
(d) Whether any internal review / audit mechanism is in place

10. Gender sensitisation / complaint-handling status

- (a) Whether complaint mechanism is functional
(b) Whether sensitisation / awareness programmes have been conducted
(c) Whether confidentiality safeguards are in place

11. Deficiencies identified, if any

12. Time-bound rectification plan

13. List of annexures enclosed

14. Verification

Certified that the above particulars are true and correct, are based on institutional records, and that the institution shall remain bound by the Rules of Legal Education, 2008, the BCI circulars and guidelines, and the directions contained in the present circular.

Signature

Name

Designation

Seal



Part B

Format of Monthly Action Taken Report

(To be submitted by the affiliating University in consolidated form)

1. **Reporting month and year**
2. **Name of University**
3. **Name and designation of reporting officer**
4. **Total number of affiliated Centres of Legal Education covered**
5. **Whether the University's own law faculty / department / school / centre is also covered in this report Yes / No**
6. **Summary of measures implemented during the month**
 - (a) anti-ragging measures,
 - (b) grievance redressal measures,
 - (c) counselling / mental health initiatives,
 - (d) sensitisation / awareness activities.
7. **Anti-ragging complaints (consolidated)**
 - (a) number received during the month,
 - (b) number disposed of,
 - (c) number pending,
 - (d) broad nature of action taken.
8. **Student grievances (consolidated)**
 - (a) number received during the month,
 - (b) number disposed of,
 - (c) number pending,
 - (d) broad categories of grievances,
 - (e) broad nature of action taken.
9. **Gender-based / harassment complaints (consolidated)**
 - a) number received during the month,
 - (b) number disposed of,
 - (c) number pending,
 - (d) broad nature of action taken.
10. **Counselling / mental health support measures**
 - (a) number of counselling / support interventions reported,
 - (b) awareness / wellness programmes conducted,
 - (c) gaps identified in institutional support systems.
11. **Institution-wise deficiencies noticed by the University**

For each defaulting / deficient institution, state:

 - (a) name of institution,
 - (b) nature of deficiency,
 - (c) date of deficiency notice / corrective direction issued by the University,
 - (d) present status.
12. **Serious incidents, if any**

State, in legally permissible summary form:

- (a) name of institution,
- (b) nature of incident,
- (c) whether police intimation was made,
- (d) whether BCI was informed,
- (e) immediate steps taken.

13. **Clarification / assistance sought from BCI, if any**

14. **List of annexures enclosed**

15. **Verification**

Certified that the above report is based on records received from the affiliated Centres of Legal Education and the University's own records, and is true to the best of knowledge and belief.

Signature

Name

Designation

Seal

Part C
Institution-wise Consolidation Sheet

(To accompany the University's Monthly Action Taken Report)

For each affiliated Centre of Legal Education, the following brief entry shall be given:

1. **Name of Centre of Legal Education**
2. **Whether monthly report received from the CLE Yes / No**
3. **Whether Anti-Ragging Committee functional Yes / No**
4. **Whether SGRC functional Yes / No**
5. **Whether counselling / wellness support in place Yes / No**
6. **Whether any serious incident reported during the month Yes / No**
7. **Whether any major deficiency noticed Yes / No**
8. **Brief remark by University**

This will ensure institution-wise traceability and accountability in the consolidated report.

M

Part D
Immediate Incident Reporting Format

(To be used by any University or Centre of Legal Education for direct reporting to BCI under Clause 2)

1. Name of Institution
2. Nature of Institution
3. Full address
4. Name and designation of reporting officer
5. Date and approximate time of incident
6. Nature of incident
7. Whether police informed Yes / No
8. Date and time of police intimation
9. Whether family / guardian informed Yes / No
10. Immediate medical / administrative steps taken
11. Whether affiliating University informed Yes / No / Not Applicable
12. Brief factual note (without speculative or confidential excess detail)
13. Further action proposed

Verification

Certified that the above intimation is being furnished immediately in compliance with Clause 2 of the circular and is true to the best of knowledge based on the facts presently available.

Signature

Name

Designation

Seal



F. No. IC-14/2/2026- Imp. Cell
Government of India
Ministry of Law and Justice
Department of Legal Affairs
(Implementation Cell)

Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi

Dated: 18.02.2026

To,

Secretary,
Bar Council of India,
21, Rouse Avenue Institutional Area,
Near Bal Bhawan, New Delhi-110002.

Subject: Submission of Monthly Action Taken Report in compliance with directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court-reg.

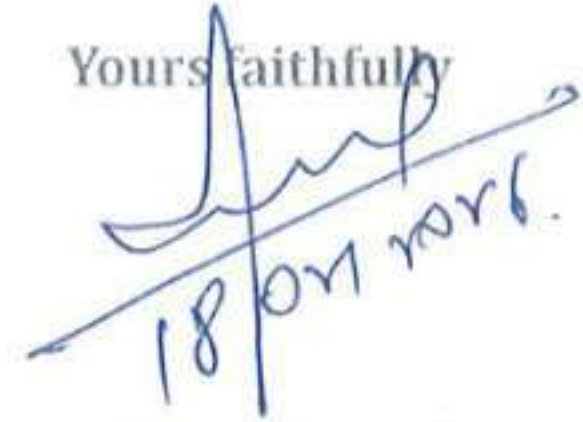
Sir,

I am directed to forward herewith O.M No. 5-21/2025-PN.II dated 05.02.2026 of Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education along with order dated 15.01.2026 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, wherein, in para 45(iv), various directions have been issued to State/UT Governments, Regulatory Bodies, the National Crime Records Bureau, Higher Educational Institutions, and concerned Ministries/Departments, including the Bar Council of India, to ensure compliance with the National Task Force guidelines in respect of professional courses. (Copy enclosed)

2. Since the Bar Council of India has been specifically referred to in the aforesaid Order and is the statutory body responsible for regulation of legal education in India under the Advocates Act, 1961, it is requested that a Monthly Action Taken Report indicating the steps taken in compliance with the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court may kindly be furnished to the Ministry of Education, with a copy endorsed to this Department, on a monthly basis until further orders.

3. This issues with the approval of the competent authority.

Yours faithfully



18/02/2026

(Amit Kumar)

Under Secretary to the Govt. of India

Ph. No. 23380015 (0)

Email: impcell-dla@nic.in

No. 5-21/2025-PN.II
Government of India
Ministry of Education
Department of Higher Education
(PN.II Section)

Room No. 535 C, Shastri Bhawan
 New Delhi, Dated 5th February, 2026

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Compliance of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India order dated 15.01.2026 in Criminal Appeal No. 1425/2025 in the matter of Amit Kumar & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Ors. -reg.


The undersigned is directed to refer to Hon'ble Supreme Court of India's judgment dated 24.03.2025 in the matter of Amit Kumar & Ors. vs. Union of India & Ors., wherein Hon'ble SCI has constituted a National Task Force (NTF) to address Mental Health concerns of students and prevent the commission of suicides in Higher Educational Institutions under the Chairmanship of Justice (Retd.) S. Ravindra Bhat, Former Judge, Supreme Court of India.

2. The NTF has submitted its Interim Report in the Hon'ble Supreme Court and taking cognizance of the issues raised and observations made by NTF in its report, **Hon'ble SCI, vide its order dated 15.01.2026 (copy enclosed), has inter-alia issued a number of directions for appropriate and immediate action by all State/UT Governments, Regulatory Bodies, National Crime Records Bureau, Higher Educational Institutions, and concerned Ministries/Departments.**

3. In view of the above, it is requested to kindly take necessary action as per the directions issued by Hon'ble Court and furnish action taken report on the same on monthly basis for further submission to the Hon'ble Court.

4. This issues with the approval of competent authority.

Encl: As above


(Ajay Kumar Sinha)
 Under Secretary to Govt. of India

To,

1. Ex-officio members of National Task Force
2. Director, National Crime Records Bureau



2026 INSC 62

REPORTABLE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION
CRIMINAL APPEAL NO. 1425 OF 2025
(Arising out of S.L.P. (Criminal) No. 13324 of 2024)

AMIT KUMAR & ORS.

...APPELLANT(S)

VERSUS

UNION OF INDIA & ORS.

...RESPONDENT(S)

ORDER

Signature Not Verified
Digitally signed by
CHANDREKHA
Date: 2026.01.15
17:59:02 IST
Reason:

Page 1 of 38

J.B. PARDIWALA & R. MAHADEVAN, J.J. :-

1. By our judgment and order dated 24.03.2025, we had clarified the law as regards the mandatory registration of an F.I.R. in the event of disclosure of a cognizable offence and simultaneously, reminded the administration of every educational institution that, it is their unequivocal moral and legal obligation to promptly lodge an F.I.R. with the appropriate authorities, if an incident of suicide occurs on campus.

2. While holding so, we had taken note of the disturbing pattern of student suicides being reported from various educational institutions across the country and deemed it necessary to understand what could be the underlying causes contributing to distress amongst students. This was done with a view to propel some affirmative action through the formulation of comprehensive and effective guidelines/strategies that would address the core of the problem and build a robust institutionalized response for ensuring the mental well-being of students studying in Higher Educational Institutions (hereinafter, the "HEIs").

3. In light of the same, a National Task Force (hereinafter, the "NTF") to address the mental health concerns of students and prevent the commission of suicides in HEIs, was constituted by this Court. Their remit broadly included the (a) identification of the predominant causes leading to the commission of suicides by students; (b) analysis of the existing legal and institutional frameworks along with its (in)adequacies; and (c) recommendations for strengthening protections from a preventive, remedial and reformatory perspective, all which ensured inclusivity, accountability and student well-being in HEIs.
4. The NTF has prepared and placed before us an interim report in pursuance of the aforesaid.
5. Before giving a broad overview of the interim report prepared by the NTF, we are deeply saddened to acknowledge that we have come across several more incidents of student suicides which have been reported to have occurred in educational institutions across the country. Such repeated unfortunate incidents, time and again, reminds us of the

gravity and enormity of the issue that we have been presented with in the present matter.

6. Youth and young adulthood, are increasingly recognised as vulnerable phases, with most mental health conditions emerging before the age of 24. The 2022 National Suicide Prevention Strategy, also identifies the youth and students as priority groups while recommending multi-sectoral interventions. However, in such multi-sectoral interventions, it is found that academic campus-based efforts in India are fragmented and under-evaluated.
7. While some discourse surrounding the mental well-being of students studying in HEIs and its close nexus with the incidence of suicides already exists in academia, the NTF has moved one step further to look into the sub-merged sections of the 'ice-berg of student distress' in order to offer some structural, preventive and sustainable solutions to the system and functioning of higher education in India. This is in acknowledgment of the fact that student suicide represents only the visible tip of a much larger ice-berg of student distress and well-being.

Other manifestations of student distress and consequential low student academic integration would include increased drop-out rates, poor academic outcomes etc.

8. Although the suicide epidemic must be looked at from a mental health or a public health perspective, yet it is equally important to explore what the social, economic and other determinants of such behaviours are, especially if we wish to holistically address the occurrences of suicides in HEIs.

9. Many of the ills that beset the student are admittedly larger societal issues. However, within the metaphorical four walls of the educational institution, there are many things that remain within the immediate control of the educational authorities. Therefore, scope for much reform rests with the administrative and other authorities of the HEIs, at least insofar as creating a nurturing and responsive environment for students is concerned.

10. There also exists some debate as regards the extent or nature of responsibility that the HEIs hold in ensuring the mental well-being of students. The tussle in particular is regarding whether a clear line can be drawn between student autonomy and institutional responsibility respectively. This dilemma between the aforesaid is especially accentuated in the aftermath of the occurrence of any suicide, during which, there is a heightened tendency to ascribe a larger role to the individual autonomy of the deceased and remove any direct or even incidental institutional responsibility. In other words, there exists a predisposition to "shift the blame" and individualise the incident i.e., to attribute individual-specific reasons and personal short-comings as the closely-related cause. There is hardly any introspection into the institutionally normalised 'stressors' which may have had any contributory effect. However, irrespective of upon whom the culpability may lie from a strict penal perspective, all that we are trying to convey is that HEIs cannot shirk away from their fundamental duty to ensure that their institutions as a whole are safe, equitable, inclusive and conducive spaces of learning.

11. The NTF has approached the task assigned to them from both an academic and a practical lens. Along with conducting a detailed review of all the laws, policies, guidelines, recommendations, previous reports etc., and examining the public data on student suicides from Sample Registration Surveys (for short, the "SRS"), the National Crime Records Bureau (for short, the "NCRB") and online newspaper reports, the NTF also launched a dedicated website to gather inputs *via* tailored surveys from five stakeholder groups i.e., students, faculty, parents, mental health providers and HEIs all over the country. Although the response rate of the HEIs was relatively low i.e., 3.5% of 60,383 HEIs, yet they give us a good representative idea of the reality in HEIs in this country. Some valuable perspectives that have been particularly insightful have emerged through these surveys. Further supplementing the aforesaid, the NTF has also conducted a series of institutional visits and stakeholder consultations, more precisely, a total of 30 meetings at 19 institutional sites, spanning different States, institutions and disciplines.

12. The NTF has also taken due note of the elaborate guidelines issued by this Court in *Sukdeb Saha v. The State of Andhra Pradesh* reported in 2025 SCC OnLine SC 1515.

I. IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING THE UNDERLYING CONTRIBUTORS TO THE INCREASED INCIDENCE OF STUDENT SUICIDES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

13. Upon analysing SRS data, the NTF has found that in the 15-29 age group, suicides are either the second highest cause of death in the case of men or, the highest cause of death in the case of women, with medical reasons falling far behind. Such is not the case in any other age group, where medical reasons visibly occupy a greater role. It is also pertinent to mention that the suicide rate in India is way ahead of the global rates pertaining to this age group.

14. According to NCRB data for the year 2022, the total number of student suicides stood at an alarming 13,000 cases. The youth of this country are increasingly becoming vulnerable to suicides than the overall population. Several studies also seem to indicate that such a rise in the

number of student suicides is occurring at a time when the proportion of the youth in the overall population is seeing a decline.

i. The manner of Expansion of the Higher Education System in India

15. In setting the context for further discussion, the NTF has begun by highlighting that the unique complexities of higher education has its genesis in the way in which it has expanded in the past few decades. The “massification” and “privatisation” of the higher education system in India has brought in unprecedented levels of student enrolment. India is already the world’s second largest higher education system in terms of student enrolment. In addition to this, the National Education Policy, 2020 (for short, the “NEP, 2020”) has also set an ambitious target of achieving a 50 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (for short, “GER”) by the year 2035. There is no doubt that this expansion coupled with affirmative action has also translated into the increased enrolment of students belong to disadvantaged groups including SC/ST/OBCs, PwDs, transgender persons, individuals from rural and remote areas etc.

16. However, this growth has brought with itself some substantial challenges and unprecedented pressure on academic standards. The purely quantitative expansion without any adequate institutional support framework, has left students vulnerable, as is directly evidenced by the recurring instances of campus tragedies.
17. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that our myopic focus on quantity does not eclipse the creation of qualitative support systems or reforms within our higher education system. Numerical progress would only superficially fulfil legal requirements and policy goals. What we must strive to achieve is the “substantive and full participation” of all students within the higher education learning environment as envisioned within our constitutional ideals.

ii. Structural and social inequalities

18. It is in this context, that it becomes necessary to address the persistent structural inequalities that students may be confronted with, post their entry into college. In simple terms, we must acknowledge that all students entering college life may not be similarly placed in all aspects.

The lived realities of students belonging to marginalised groups (SC/ST/OBC), persons with disabilities (for short, "PwDs"), transgender persons, women, students from rural backgrounds, non-English speaking students etc. remain different even within the college atmosphere. Affirmative action cannot stop at merely ensuring their entry into higher education. It must also reflect in the creation of adequate support systems which ameliorate instead of exacerbate existing inequities. The existence of such systems would significantly disarm a significant host of stressors which disproportionately affect students from marginalised groups and disadvantaged communities and as a consequence, ensure their overall mental well-being.

19. Such support systems would range from:

- i. the existence of well-functioning Equal Opportunity Cells/Centres (for short, "EOCs") as mandated by the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012;
- ii. The existence of a well-functioning, independent and effective Internal Complaints Committee (for short, "ICCs") as mandated

by the University Grants Commission (Prevention, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment of women employees and students in higher educational institutions) Regulations, 2015;

- iii. Proportionate representation of marginalised groups in faculty and other positions of administrative authority within HEIs which attempt to close the educator-student mismatch and create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment;
- iv. A representative and non-skewed social composition of the student body;
- v. Accessible infrastructure for PwDs not just in terms of a few ramps and handrails but also with careful attention paid to tactile paths, signage, lifts, digital accessibility etc.;
- vi. Initiatives that foster more inclusivity including but not limited to language development centres and structured initiatives that facilitate English language training for students educated in vernacular/regional languages so that they can handle the exclusively English-medium pedagogy and English-dominated social environment; robust faculty and student mentorship initiatives that offer academic and other necessary forms of

support; absence of barriers to membership and full participation in extra-curricular activities, co-curricular activities, clubs etc.; institutionally created 'safe spaces' to build community which would include separate infrastructural facilities which are to be created by college authorities along with the promotion a culture of non-academic activities and initiatives which encourage socialisation etc.

20. One might argue that aforesaid support systems, all predominantly exist in most HEIs, in some form or the other. However, such an averment would be visibly distant from the truth as the work of the NTF has itself revealed that they either only exist on paper, or not at all; even when they exist in actuality, they are merely tokenistic.
21. Especially in the context of EOCs and ICCs, what has been gathered from some first-hand accounts of students and faculty members from the online survey and the institutional visits of the NTF, is deeply disheartening. Though these bodies may find existence in several institutions, they lack independence and often work to favour the

perpetrators or aggressors rather than the students for whom it was created. Cases are suppressed and proceedings are often biased. This also induces fears of academic or social backlash in students and prevents them from accessing grievance redressal mechanisms. Even if such bodies are constituted with the right members, they are said to lack any real authority in the larger administrative framework of the HEIs to take any action, rendering them virtually powerless when faced with any incident of sexual harassment or discrimination.

22. This discloses the very sad reality that inclusion often remains more symbolic than real and brings to the fore the fragility of higher education in India -those that are attitudinal, infrastructural and procedural.

iii. Ragging

23. The menace of ragging still seems to persist within several HEIs with the same also being normalised and touted as a “bonding exercise” or a “friendly ice-breaking effort”. We would be remiss

if we did not acknowledge that significant steps have been taken to rid educational campuses of the problem of ragging. However, what seems to be the concern of many is that while HEIs obtain anti-ragging declarations from students on paper, in the event of such incidents occurring, they are not properly addressed and the consequences for erring students are minimal or absent.

iv. Increased academic pressure

- 24.** The transition from school to university is a phase in young adulthood that brings with it some unique responsibilities, challenges and difficulties but without proper support systems. During the NTF's institutional visits, many students shared how they go from being academically exceptional to one of many over-achievers at their college/university. This combined with the institutional culture which persistently creates anxiety and heightened stress levels to compete and excel, brings about a sharp rise in mental health issues.
- 25.** Extremely rigid attendance policies, overburdening and unplanned phasing/scheduling of the academic curriculum, exam assessment

methodologies, faculty shortage, vacant teaching posts, excessive reliance on inexperienced guest faculty, non-transparent or non-existent placement processes etc. were all pointed out as stressors by the responses received by the NTF from students. Medical students, in particular, spoke about the entrenched borderline exploitative academic culture coupled with on-call hours being stretched well beyond the prescribed limit – going as far as 36-48 hours at a go. In technical institutions offering PhD programmes, it was pointed out that high research demands, burnout, financial difficulties were combined with uneven and inconsistent relationship with their supervisors, lack of adequate lab equipment etc. Engineering college going students also highlighted the intense nature of academic expectations heavily driven by placements and salary packages. Several other course-specific and discipline-specific issues were raised in these responses.

- 26.** All of the aforesaid are not shockingly new findings – discussions around these issues have long pre-occupied policy makers and educators alike but with no long-lasting or real solution.

27. A by-product of this competitive culture is the difficulty in building healthy peer groups which then directly translates into social isolation. When institutional spaces have no space for camaraderie , all students suffer and especially, students from diverse social and economic backgrounds suffer more.
28. Such a competitive culture is, no doubt, also carried over due to parental pressure regarding career prospects etc. While we recognise that sensitising parents is equally important, there is much that we can do to change the normalised institutional culture at these places of learning.
- v. *Failure to properly redress mental health concerns of student by HEIs.*
29. The role of Mental Health Service Providers (for short, the “MHSPs”) in campus ecosystems is especially important if one conceptualises student mental health as a continuum, extending beyond clinical diagnoses to encompass broader well-being and suicide prevention efforts.

30. The NTF has highlighted that there is a persistent and significant treatment gap for common mental health concerns in HEIs, driven both by supply-side barriers (scarcity of trained professionals, uneven service distribution, etc.) and demand-side barriers (stigma, low prioritization, fear of academic repercussions etc.). Any strategy must focus on a combination of reforms which addresses both these barriers equally.
31. The survey conducted by the NTF and the preliminary responses indicate that around 65% of the institutes surveyed currently do not provide access to any MHSPs. Furthermore, the lack of presence of any full-time MHSPs was indicated in 73% of the surveyed HEIs. Preliminary figures also suggested a poor uptake of these services, even in institutes where they existed. However, such a sub-optimal utilisation may stem from several factors which include *inter-alia* poor awareness about its existence within the student community, the positioning of these services, lack of trust in administration, doubts regarding the maintenance of confidentiality, apprehensions about negative academic or social consequences, quality of services and

corresponding satisfaction, its student-friendliness in terms of location/timing/appointment procedures/nature of services etc. In the absence of in-campus presence, even the presence of any formal liaison or external linkages with MHSPs were reported in less than 20% of the HEIs.

32. On the other hand, it must be mentioned that a handful of HEIs seem to have also embraced an overreaching approach – by adopting an overly standardised method and mandating that all students be sent to counselling centres to undergo psychiatric evaluation, irrespective of their individual needs. Such approaches fail to understand that mental health problems need to be tailored to the subjective needs of students instead of taking a ‘one size fits all’ outlook with a view to minimise on-paper culpability.
33. In this context, we must also mention that views from several faculty members given to the NTF are also noteworthy. In the absence of MHSPs, the faculty members themselves felt unprepared to offer support, especially for sensitive and severe problems, including crises

such as suicidal ideation. They stated that they are equally over-extended with academic workloads and other administrative responsibilities. Therefore, we must be cognisant before holding the faculty members solely responsible for the students' mental health outcomes as well. Having said so, they are important stakeholders within the HEI environment who must be trained to identify signs of mental health risk and refer such students to MHSPs in appropriate cases.

vi. Financial Stress

34. Financial stress was also frequently brought as a recurring theme directly impacting the mental well-being of several students, especially those belonging to rural and middle-income backgrounds. In several HEIs, they were extensive delays, inconsistencies and inequities in scholarship disbursement. Some HEIs even have institutional policies wherein the students are held accountable for the payment of fees when reimbursements/disbursements from the government faced any administrative delays. The absence of any support on other costs which

are equally high such as hostel fees, exam and administrative fees etc. were also said to exacerbate financial pressure.

35. The NTF also received several e-mail communications from students themselves (which have been annexed in the interim report) complaining of scholarship lapses due to systemic failures. The necessity for immediate and time-bound grievance redressal was an anguished plea on part of many students relying on such benefits for the pursuance of their studies.

II. EXISTING LEGAL, POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS ALONG WITH THEIR GAPS, IF ANY.

36. The global measures for suicide prevention have all been aligned with the World Health Organisation (for short, the "WHO") policy on suicide prevention. The NTF has identified that the nature of interventions, however vary, with some countries framing a legal statute (e.g., Japan, South Korea, the US, Canada, Argentina etc.) and others relying on policies (e.g., UK, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden,

Thailand etc.). In the particular context of suicide prevention measures in colleges and universities, it is found that the system rests on a layered structure but universities themselves, across these diverse contexts, have converged on a set of common practices which include the establishment of counselling and psychological services, strong referral systems to external mental health providers, gatekeeper training, crisis helplines, awareness initiatives and structured postvention protocols.

37. What we have noticed from the interim report is that policies and measures to ensure student well-being in India, do exist to a very large extent, but they are scattered across several individual documents and therefore, its implementation and accountability for non-compliance slips through the cracks. Just to give an idea of the measures which already exist, the NTF has identified the following policies, several that have been spearheaded by the University Grants Commission (for short, the "UGC"), which address suicides and the issues leading to suicides in India:

- i. The UGC Regulation on Curbing the Menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions, 2009;

- ii. The UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012;
- iii. The National Mental Health Programme (NMHP), 1982;
- iv. The National Mental Health Policy, 2014;
- v. UGC (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2016;
- vi. National Education Policy, 2020;
- vii. Nasha Mukti Abhiyaan Task Force and Nasha Mukh Bharat campaign;
- viii. The UGC Accessibility Guidelines and Standards for Higher Education Institutions and Universities, 2022;
- ix. National Suicide Prevention Strategy, 2022;
- x. National Tele Mental Health Programme (Tele MANAS), 2022;
- xi. UGC (Redressal of Grievances of Students) Regulations, 2023; and
- xii. The Ministry of Education's Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme (MMTTP) and its component on Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health Resilience and Well-being in HEIs;

38. Some relevant legislations also include, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989; the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992; the National Trust Act, 1999; the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016; the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017; and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
39. It is of relevance to also note that some prior reports on issues related to mental health and prevention of suicides in HEIs have also been looked into by the NTF which include *inter-alia* the MHRD Task Force on Centrally Funded Technical Institutions, 2012; Medical Institutions Task Force under the National Medical Commission, 2024; independent study conducted by IIT, Delhi in 2024; Report on Mental Health Services at NLSIU Bengaluru (November, 2024); Reformation of National Common Entrance Examination Testing (NEET) Report by the Department of Higher Education, MHRD (October, 2024); Sexual Harassment (Saksham Report) by the UGC, 2013; and the Psycho-social study of Ragging released by the UGC, 2017.

40. These seven reports provide certain benchmarks with which the work of the NTF has progressed. Furthermore, the NTF seeks to draw from these prior efforts to see what needs to be strengthened and where new directions are called for, especially to ensure that the same wheels are not reinvented or recycled.
41. A significant gap as regards the previous reports, recommendations and guidelines on student well-being, which has been identified by the NTF is that, more often than not, the discussions remain prescriptive in nature without any mechanism outlined for effective implementation. To put it simply, there is no implementation roadmap or any guiding operating procedures which could help with a universal and modelled response. The existing measures stop at identifying the issues and provide no guidance on the next step – its effective redressal.
42. Even if a roadmap or some procedural nitty-gritties are outlined, they do not find any strict real-world application, in the absence of accountability being fixed on HEIs. To put it simply, most interventions are generic, abstract and reactive. Although several of these measures

are statutory regulations which have a binding effect, they are not taken seriously because HEIs do not run the risk of any adverse consequences for non-compliance. When it comes to guidelines, its enforcement obviously throws up some serious challenges.

43. However, if we are to keep student well-being in HEIs at the forefront, we would have to close these gaps, with the help of the NTF and the Union of India, and put all HEIs to notice that non-compliance will carry some commensurate and serious consequences. We have taken such a firm view also considering that a majority of the HEIs have not even shown any initiative in doing the bare-minimum i.e., providing relevant information by responding to the online survey conducted by the NTF, despite several reminders given on behalf of the Union of India. We are deeply disappointed with the apathetic attitude of most HEIs, which serve as a reminder of the deep-rooted complexities and formidable barriers that hinder the implementation of any national-level initiative aimed at strengthening student mental health support systems within HEIs.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NTF

44. The NTF has made some valuable recommendations in its interim report after their preliminary study. These recommendations are over and above the guidelines which have been issued in the decision of this Court in *Sukdeb Saha (supra)*.

45. Keeping in view the recommendations of the NTF, we deem it fit to issue the following directions in exercise of our plenary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution of India:

- i. The Sample Registration System data on Suicides, especially those falling within the age group of 15-29 years, must be centrally maintained for better and more accurate estimates of Deaths by Suicide of students in HEIs. The mechanisms for obtaining and maintaining the same, may be developed with the help of experts in the field of public health and demography.
- ii. The NCRB, in its annual report, must distinguish between school-going students and students of higher education in its

categorisation of “student suicides” in order to aid the study of the trends of student suicides in HEIs.

- iii. All HEIs must report any incident of suicide or unnatural death of a student, regardless of the location of its occurrence (i.e. on campus, hostels, PG accommodations, or otherwise outside the institutional premises), to the police authorities no sooner they come to know about the incident. This should cover all students - irrespective of whether they are studying in the classroom, distance or online mode of learning.
- iv. In addition to the above, an annual report of student suicides or unnatural deaths must also be submitted to the UGC & all other relevant regulatory bodies for professional courses (e.g. AICTE, NMC, DCI, BCI etc.). In case of Central Universities and Institutes of National Importance (for short, the “INIs”), or any HEI that does not fall within the above-mentioned framework, it must be reported to the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India.
- v. Every residential HEI must have access to qualified medical help round the clock, if not on campus, then within a one-km

radius to provide emergency medical health support to students.

- vi. Keeping in mind the faculty shortages which have been reported in several HEIs, both public and private, it must be ensured that all vacant faculty positions (both teaching and non-teaching) be filled within a period of four months, with priority given to posts reserved for candidates from marginalized and underrepresented communities including those posts reserved for PwDs. Special recruitment drives may be held for faculty recruitment that come under various forms of reservations as per central and state government rules.
- vii. Appointment and filling of vacancies of the post of Vice-Chancellor, Registrars, and other key institutional/administrative positions, must also be made within a period of four months. Moreover, it must be ensured as a matter of practice that, these positions are filled within a period of one month from the date on which the vacancy arises, in order to ensure the smooth functioning of HEIs.

Since the date of retirement is known much ahead in time, recruitment processes must begin well in advance to ensure that such posts do not remain vacant for more than a month.

All HEIs must report on an annual basis to the Central and relevant State Governments, as to how many reserved posts are vacant, how many are filled, reasons for non-filling, time taken, etc., so that periodic accountability is ensured.

- viii. The backlog of any and all pending scholarship disbursements must be cleared within a period of four months by the relevant Central and State government authorities. If there exists any reason behind the non-disbursal of the same, a notice with reasons must be sent to the relevant HEI along with the student recipient, within a period of two months. It must be ensured that the disbursement of all future scholarships are done with clear timelines, without any delay by the relevant Central and State Government authorities. Disbursal dates and schedules must also be made known to the student recipient. Even in cases of unavoidable administrative delay, HEIs must not, as a policy, make the

student recipients accountable for paying or clearing their fees. No student should be prevented from appearing in an examination, removed from hostels, barred from attending classes, or have their marksheets and degrees withheld because of delays in disbursement of scholarships. Any such institutional policy, may be viewed strictly.

- ix.** All HEIs, are particularly put to strict notice, to remain fully compliant with all the regulations that have a binding effect on them including *inter-alia* the UGC Regulation on Curbing the Menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions, 2009; the UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012; the UGC (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2016; the UGC (Redressal of Grievances of Students) Regulations, 2023, amongst others. More, particularly, the establishment of Anti-Ragging Committees and Anti-Ragging Squads, Anti-Discrimination Officers, Internal Complaints Committees and Student Grievance

Redressal Committees along with the procedures detailed for the respective grievance redressal mechanisms, must be strictly adhered to.

46. The NTF has also made some other pertinent recommendations and the same is reproduced as thus:

“4. Inclusion and Accessibility for Marginalised Groups (including Students with Disability and Transgender Students)

- *Conduct mandatory accessibility audits in all HEIs to ensure compliance with inclusivity standards.*
- *Following the audit, strengthen accessibility measures for students and staff from marginalized groups (including persons with disability and transgender students) across admission, reservation (wherever applicable), hostel accommodation, and campus facilities.*
- *Guarantee reasonable accommodation for all students with disability, including assistive technologies, accessible materials, and exam-related adjustments.*
- *Ensure that accommodation facilities, washrooms, sports facilities, etc are accessible to students with disability and gender-diverse students.*
- *Ensure that sufficient Scholarships are available and accessible to students from these marginalised sections.*

-xxx-

7. Faculty Sensitization and Training

- *Mandate training for faculty and administrative staff to recognize academic, financial, social, and discrimination-related stressors affecting students, particularly those from disadvantaged groups.*

Page 32 of 38

- *Training should equip faculty and administrative staff to provide appropriate referral, support, and early intervention for students in distress.*
- *The capacity building should equip the faculty and staff with existing applicable legislations, regulations, policies, and grievance redressal mechanisms.*

-xxx-

9. Campus Mental Health Services

- *Ensure that students have access to student-friendly mental health support services provided by qualified professionals, while avoiding the indiscriminate use of the term "counsellor." For instance, the current practice of labelling faculty members from diverse academic disciplines as counsellors - without standardized orientation, training, or supervision can create misleading impressions about the availability of mental health services.*
- *Establish periodic, anonymized feedback mechanisms to assess student satisfaction with campus mental health services and inform ongoing improvements in service delivery. Monitor overall service uptake and implement targeted programs to reduce stigma and raise awareness about when and how to seek support.*
- *Develop clear and transparent standard operating procedures for all stakeholders (students, administrators, service providers, and faculty) detailing measures to protect confidentiality for students who seek mental health services and outlining the specific circumstances (e.g., imminent suicide risk) under which the confidentiality clause may be ethically overridden.*
- *Strengthen the capacity of campus-based mental health professionals through ongoing, student-centred training in crisis intervention, and collaborative approaches to address academic and institutional stressors. Equip service providers with the skills to effectively liaise with administration and advocate for student wellbeing across campus systems rather than work in isolation."*

47. However, before we proceed to pass some detailed directions on the specific recommendations reproduced hereinabove, we require some further assistance from the NTF which they may incorporate in their final report. This is with a view to ensure that the painstaking exercise conducted by the NTF and our resultant directions do not suffer from the same problem that has already been identified i.e., that they do not remain prescriptive without any mechanism for implementation. We request the NTF to assist us in the following aspects:

- i. Creation of a model SOP for periodic "well-being audits" which may be conducted in HEIs. This would include aspects delineating which authority/body of persons would be empowered to conduct such an audit and their composition; the parameters of evaluation including but not limited to compliance with binding regulations and other measures necessary for inclusive education, the effectiveness of complaint resolution by the Anti-ragging Committee, Internal Complaints Committee, Anti-discrimination Officer, and Student Grievance Redressal Committee, infrastructural requirements etc.; post-audit feedback

and necessary action to be taken by the HEIs including the mechanism for ensuring compliance in case any non-compliance is found; the overall scoring system or assessment methodology of the audit including the consequences for HEIs who perform poorly etc. Scores received in such audits may be directly imported to reflect in the NAAC grading scale for the concerned HEI.

- ii. Creation of a model SOP for faculty sensitisation and training which may include the frequency at which such training must be conducted; its scope in terms of including both faculty and non-faculty members; the aspects or topics on which training would be given; how the effectiveness of the training and its translation into practice would be assessed etc.
- iii. Creation of a model SOP for Mental Health Services which is to be provided for students in HEIs. This would begin from answering how gatekeeper training is to be provided to relevant stakeholders; the infrastructural facilities along with expert personnel requirements for mental health services which is to be made available on campus; the remote provision of services

through online video-conferencing; external-referral linkages, whether they must be made free/subsidised and if so, to what extent; rules of confidentiality and when they may be breached; follow-up procedures; how the periodic and anonymized feedback mechanisms which assess student satisfaction with the mental health services offered must be conducted; how such feedback would be incorporated in further provision of mental health services; record keeping of wellness interventions, referrals etc.; including a list of measures that can improve overall service uptake by students and address the demand-side barriers etc.

48. The aforesaid would be in addition to the existing work of the NTF and what they plan to incorporate in their final report.
49. What we wish to achieve through the aforesaid and also hope from the NTF is that they suggest a model 'Universal Design Framework' or a model 'Suicide Prevention and Postvention Protocol' or a model 'Student well-being Protocol' which cohesively and comprehensively incorporates the aforementioned model SOPs, the existing guidelines

on ragging, promotion of equity, sexual harassment, etc., and any other relevant measures which they may consider necessary, into one single guiding document. We would also request the NTF to leverage their study of the existing laws, policies, guidelines and recommendations, in this regard so that parallel bodies and mechanisms are not created over and above those that already exist.

50. If any need be, it will be upon the statutory professional bodies and sectoral organisations like UGC, All India Council for Technical Education (for short, the "AICTE"), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (for short, the "ICAR"), Pharmacy Council of India (for short, the "PCI"), Indian Nursing Council (for short, the "INC"), Dental Council of India (for short, the "DCI"), Central Council of Indian Medicine (for short, the "CCIM"), Council of Architecture (for short, the "COA"), National Council for Teacher Education (for short, the "NCTE"), National Medical Commission (for short, the "NMC"), Bar Council of India (for short, the "BCI") etc. to incorporate additional measures that address other specific issues which are unique to the HEIs and technical institutes under their purview.

51. We wish to record and express our deepest gratitude towards the Chairperson and all the members of the NTF for the resolute devotion with which they have been working to address the issue of student suicides in HEIs.
52. The Union of India and the respective State Governments shall make sure that the directions given by us in paragraph 45 of this order are communicated to all HEIs all over this country, at the earliest and appropriate action is taken in this regard.

.....J.
[J.B. PARDIWALA]

.....J.
[R. MAHADEVAN]

New Delhi
15th January, 2026.



भारतीय विधिज्ञ परिषद् BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA

(Statutory Body Constituted under the Advocates Act, 1961)

21, Rouse Avenue Institutional Area, Near Bal Bhawan, New Delhi - 110002

Guidelines regarding The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013) for Bar Associations, Law Offices, State Bar Councils and Bar Council of India

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013) is a crucial legal framework in India aimed at preventing and addressing sexual harassment at the workplace.

While it primarily focuses on employers and organizations, bar associations, law offices, State Bar Councils, and the Bar Council of India can take steps to ensure compliance and promote a safe working environment for their members.

A. Awareness and Training:

Awareness and training are fundamental aspects of ensuring compliance with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, and promoting a safe workplace for all members of bar associations, law offices, State Bar Councils, and the Bar Council of India. By prioritizing awareness and training, bar associations, law offices, State Bar Councils, and the Bar Council of India can ensure that all members are not only aware of their legal obligations but are also equipped with the knowledge and tools to prevent and address sexual harassment effectively. This proactive approach not only helps with legal compliance but also encourages a culture of respect and inclusivity within the legal community.



1. Awareness Programs:

Conduct regular awareness programs and workshops that educate all members, including lawyers and support staff, about the provisions of the Act and the importance of maintaining a safe workplace. These programs should cover the definition of sexual harassment, types of behaviors that constitute harassment, and the legal framework for addressing it.

2. Training Sessions:

Organize training sessions to familiarize members with their rights and responsibilities under the Act. This includes understanding the role of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) and the complaint redressal process.

3. Customized Training:

Tailor training to the specific needs of the legal profession. For example, emphasize the importance of client-Advocate relationships and ethical considerations when dealing with sensitive cases that may involve harassment.

4. Sensitivity and Empathy:

Promote sensitivity and empathy and all necessary assistance possible in dealing with victims of harassment., which may include counselling and legal assistance/aid, if the victim is financially unable to bear the expenses for the same. Ensure that all members understand the emotional and psychological toll that harassment can take on victims and the importance of supporting them.

5. Accessible Resources:

Provide easily accessible resources such as handbooks, pamphlets, and online materials that explain the Act, reporting procedures, and contact information for the ICC.



6. Regular Updates:

Keep members informed about any updates or changes to the Act or related guidelines, ensuring they stay current with legal requirements.

- (a) The organisation/management should take regular review and update their policies and procedures in line with best practises and legal environment in order to create a workplace that is free from sexual harassment.
- (b) The organisation and its management must encourage the employees to give opinion, views and suggestion regarding improving the environment at workplace for the women

7. Promote Reporting:

Encourage members to report any incidents of harassment promptly and ensure they understand the benefits of reporting, including the protection provided by the Act against retaliation.

8. Senior Leadership Involvement:

Engage senior leaders and office heads in the training process to set a positive example and demonstrate their commitment to maintaining a harassment-free workplace.

9. Interactive Workshops:

Conduct interactive workshops, role-playing exercises, and case studies to illustrate how to recognize, prevent, and address sexual harassment.



10. Feedback Mechanism:

Create a feedback mechanism for members to provide input on the effectiveness of awareness and training programs. Use this feedback to improve and refine future sessions.

11. Regular Refreshers:

Offer refresher courses or updates on the Act periodically to ensure that all members remain well-informed and vigilant in maintaining a safe workplace.

B. Internal Complaints Committee (IC):

The Internal Complaints Committee (IC) is a crucial component of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013.

The IC is a critical body that ensures the fair and effective resolution of complaints of sexual harassment in the workplace. By establishing a well-functioning IC, organizations within the legal profession can uphold the principles of justice and create a safe and inclusive working environment for all members. It plays a central role in ensuring that complaints of sexual harassment are addressed effectively and fairly within organizations, including bar associations, law offices, State Bar Councils, and the Bar Council of India.

1. Composition:

The IC should be composed of both internal and external members. Internal members can be employees or members of the organization, while external members should be experts in the field of law, women's rights, or social work.

The chairperson of the IC must be a senior woman employee or a member from the concerned association/office/organization/Council

It should consist of minimum of four members as follows:



1. A Presiding Officer who has to be a woman employed at a senior level at workplace. She has to be from amongst the employees.
2. Two Members from amongst employees who are committed to the cause of women or who have had experience in social work or have legal knowledge.
3. One Member from amongst non-governmental organisations or associations committed to the cause of women or a person familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment ("External Member").

At least half of the total Members of the IC should be women.

Powers of Internal Complaints Committee (IC):

Powers of the Internal Complaints Committee

The Internal Complaints Committee plays an important role in the functioning of the provisions of the Act and to ensure the fulfilment of its objectives of the Internal Complaints Committee Policy.

Thus, the main function of the Internal Complaints Committee is:

- Implementation of the Internal Complaints Committee Policy relating to the prevention of sexual harassment.
- Resolving complaints by the aggrieved based on the guidelines of the Internal Complaints Committee Policy.
- Recommending actions to be taken by the Employer.

As per Section 11(3) the Internal Complaints Committee enjoys the powers same as that of a Civil Court and therefore:

- It is empowered to initiate an inquiry into a complaint of sexual harassment at the workplace according to the Internal Complaints Committee Policy.



- IC has the power to summon witnesses and parties to state the committee.
- It enjoys the discretion of summoning evidence to be examined if it may be deemed necessary to do so by the members of the Committee.

Responsibilities of Internal Complaints Committee

Every organization is bound by POSH law to publish the names and details of the current IC members on the premises at prominent places as well as on their official website.

The main responsibility that lies with the IC is:

- Receive complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace
- Initiate and conduct an inquiry as per the company's procedure
- Submit findings and recommendations of all such inquiries
- Coordinate with the Employer in implementing appropriate action
- Maintain strict confidentiality throughout the process as per established guidelines of the Internal Complaints Committee Policy
- Submit annual reports in the prescribed format as prescribed
- The Internal Complaints Committee is required to be vigilant to redress the sexual harassment complaints and resolve the same ASAP.

Redressal Process

1. Conciliation

Procedure for Conciliation:

Before initiating an inquiry, the Internal Complaints Committee may, at the written request of the Complainant, take steps to settle the matter between the Complainant and the Respondent through conciliation.

Monetary settlement cannot be made the basis of such conciliation. In case a settlement has been arrived at, the IC shall record it and forward it to the Company to take action as specified in the recommendation of the IC.

The Internal Complaints Committee will also provide copies of the settlement as recorded to the Complainant and the Respondent.



If conciliation has been reached, the IC will not be required to conduct any further inquiry.

If Complainant feels that the terms of Settlement are not being complied with by the Respondent or action has not been taken by the Company, Complainant can make a written complaint to the IC to conduct an inquiry into the complaint.

2. Investigation:

Upon receiving a complaint, the ICC should conduct a thorough and impartial investigation. This may involve interviewing the complainant, the accused, and any witnesses, as well as examining relevant documents or evidence.

3. Inquiry

The procedure of inquiry begins when a settlement is not feasible or could not be arrived at through conciliation and the Internal Complaints Committee is then bound to conduct an inquiry into the complaint.

An inquiry may also be initiated if the aggrieved person informs the IC that any terms of the settlement have not been complied with by the respondent.

The Internal Complaints Committee within 7 working days of receiving the complaint shall forward one copy to the respondent and seek a response.

The respondent shall file his/her reply to the complaint along with a list of supporting documents, names, and addresses of witnesses, within 10 working days of receiving the complaint.

The complainant or the respondent to the complaint shall not be allowed to bring any legal practitioner to represent them.

At any stage of the proceedings before the IC, neither the complainant nor the respondent shall be allowed to bring any legal practitioner to represent them.



The Internal Complaints Committee shall hear both the complainant and the respondent on the date(s) intimated to them in advance and the principles of natural justice will be followed accordingly.

If the complainant or the respondent fails to attend a personal hearing before the IC on three consecutive dates without sufficient cause, the IC shall have the right to terminate the inquiry proceedings or give an ex-parte decision.

However, before such termination or the ex-parte order, the IC shall serve a notice in writing to the party/parties, 15 days in advance.

The process of inquiry shall be completed by the Internal Complaints Committee within 90 days from the date of receipt of the complaint.

From the date of completion of the inquiry, the IC shall provide a report of its findings and recommendation(s) within 10 days to the concerned authorities as well as complainant(s) and respondent(s).

4. Interim Relief

As per the Internal Complaints Committee Policy, during the period of pendency of the inquiry, if a written request is made by the complainant, the Internal Complaints Committee may recommend to the employer:

- To transfer either the aggrieved or the respondent to some other workplace.
- To grant leave to the aggrieved individual for a period of a maximum of 3 months, but this should be in addition to the leave she would be otherwise entitled to.
- To accord any other relief to the aggrieved as may be found to be appropriate.
- To restrain the respondent from reporting on the performance of the complainant.

5. Compensation

Internal Complaints Committee Policy mandates that the compensation by IC shall be determined based on:



- The mental trauma, pain, suffering, and emotional distress caused to the aggrieved employee;
- The loss in career opportunity due to the incident of sexual harassment;
- Medical expenses incurred by the victim for physical/ psychiatric treatment;
- The income and status of the alleged perpetrator; and
- Feasibility of such payment in a lump sum or instalments.

In a judgment dated December 16, 2020, the Delhi High Court, in the case of Bibha Pandey vs. Punjab National Bank and Ors., stated that "Moral policing is not the job of the management or of the IC."

The Court held that:

1. IC holds power to enquire and give a report only within the stipulated statute.
2. In cases where sexual harassment is not made out, the IC can only conclude that no action is required to be taken and in cases of the contrary wherein of sexual harassment is made out, then the recommendation of the IC can only be for taking appropriate action for misconduct as per POSH Law.
3. Moral Policing' is not the job of the Management or of the IC. Any consensual relationship among adults would not be the concern of the Management or of the IC, so long as the said relationship does not affect the working and the discipline of the organisation and is not contrary to the Rules or code of conduct binding on the said employees.
4. IC cannot make comments on the personal conduct of the parties and the IC's jurisdiction would be restricted to the allegations of sexual harassment and whether a complaint is made out or not, to that effect.

6. Expertise and Sensitivity:

ICC members should be well-versed in the Act, its provisions, and the procedures for handling complaints. They should also be trained to approach complaints with sensitivity and empathy.



7. Independence:

The ICC must operate independently from the influence of the organization or any external parties to ensure impartiality in the complaint redressal process.

8. Confidentiality:

The IC must maintain strict confidentiality throughout the complaint-handling process to protect the privacy and reputation of both the complainant and the accused.

9. Handling Complaints:

The ICC should establish a procedure for receiving and processing complaints, which includes setting up a mechanism for the complainant to report incidents without fear of retaliation, which may include creating safe and accessible reporting system.

10. Action Taken:

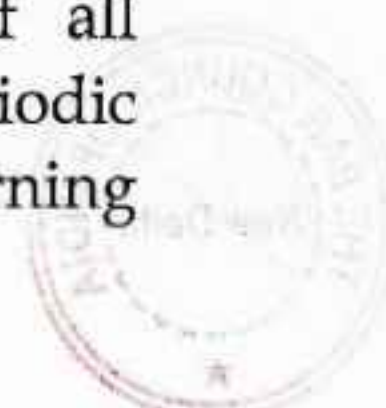
After the investigation, the ICC should determine whether the complaint is valid. If harassment is proven, the ICC must recommend appropriate action to the organization, which may include disciplinary measures against the perpetrator.

11. Redressal:

The ICC should work to ensure that the victim is provided with adequate redressal, which may involve counseling, legal assistance, or any other support the victim requires.

12. Reporting:

The ICC is responsible for maintaining records of all complaints and actions taken, and it should provide periodic reports to the organization's management or the governing body.



13. Legal Compliance:

Ensure that the ICC is fully compliant with the requirements of the Act and any updates to the law.

14. Training and Capacity Building:

Regularly train and build the capacity of ICC members to ensure they remain updated on best practices in addressing sexual harassment cases.

15. Support for the Accused:

While the primary focus is on supporting the complainant, ensure that the accused also receives due process and support during the investigation.

16. Timely Resolution:

Strive for timely resolution of complaints to minimize the stress and uncertainty faced by both the complainant and the accused.

C. Policy Implementation:

Policy implementation is a key component in ensuring compliance with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, and for creating a safe and harassment-free environment within bar associations, law offices, State Bar Councils, and the Bar Council of India.

1. Development of a Comprehensive Policy:

Create a well-defined sexual harassment policy that complies with the Act. The policy should clearly outline the organization's commitment to preventing and addressing sexual harassment.



2. Dissemination:

Ensure that the policy is communicated to all members, and employees.

D. Complaint mechanism:

It is a critical component in addressing and preventing sexual harassment within organizations, including bar associations, law offices, State Bar Councils, and the Bar Council of India. A well-designed complaint mechanism is essential for ensuring that members feel safe and empowered to report incidents of sexual harassment. It sends a clear message that the organization takes harassment seriously and is committed to addressing it promptly and fairly. This not only helps protect the rights and well-being of the complainants but also contributes to creating a more respectful and inclusive workplace culture. Create a transparent and confidential mechanism for reporting complaints.

Encourage victims to come forward without fear of retaliation and ensure prompt and fair investigation of complaints.

1. Accessibility and Clarity:

The complaint mechanism should be easily accessible and clearly communicated to all members and employees. It should be prominently displayed in the workplace and available on the organization's website or intranet.

2. Multiple Reporting Options:

Offer multiple channels for reporting complaints. This could include in-person reporting to designated individuals, a dedicated email address, a toll-free helpline, or an online portal.



3. Anonymity and Confidentiality:

Assure complainants that they can report incidents anonymously if they wish. Stress the importance of maintaining strict confidentiality throughout the process.

4. Whistleblower Protection:

Highlight that whistleblowers will be protected from any form of retaliation for reporting harassment in good faith. Encourage members to report without fear.

5. Designated Contact Persons:

Appoint specific contact persons, such as Human Resources personnel or members of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), who are trained to handle harassment complaints.

6. Timely Response:

Establish a clear timeline for acknowledging and responding to complaints. Typically, organizations should acknowledge receipt of a complaint within a certain timeframe, initiate an investigation promptly, and provide regular updates to the complainant.

7. Support for the Complainant:

Ensure that complainants receive necessary support, including counseling and legal assistance, during the complaint process.

8. Non-Retaliation Assurance:

Explicitly state that complainants will not face any form of retaliation for reporting harassment and emphasize the organization's commitment to protecting their rights.



9. Documentation:

Implement a systematic process for documenting complaints. This includes maintaining detailed records of the complaint, actions taken, and communication with the complainant.

10. Alternative Dispute Resolution:

Provide the option for alternative dispute resolution methods if both parties are open to it, although it should be entirely voluntary.

11. Reporting to the ICC:

Specify the process for forwarding complaints to the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) when necessary, ensuring that the ICC follows the procedure outlined in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act.

12. Timely Resolution:

Strive for a timely resolution of complaints to minimize the stress and uncertainty faced by complainants.

13. Appeals Process:

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, establish an appeals process that allows them to seek a review of the decision, which should be heard by the highest persons in the organisations.

14. Legal Compliance:

Ensure that the complaint mechanism aligns with the legal requirements outlined in the Act.



15. Reporting and Transparency:

Periodically publish reports on the number of complaints received, actions taken, and outcomes achieved to demonstrate transparency and accountability.

E. Redressal:

It is the process of providing remedies and addressing complaints of sexual harassment within organizations, including bar associations, law offices, State Bar Councils, and the Bar Council of India. The redressal process is critical for ensuring that complaints of sexual harassment are addressed effectively and justly. It serves to protect the rights and well-being of the complainant, hold the accused accountable for their actions, and create a workplace culture where harassment is not tolerated. An efficient and transparent redressal process not only ensures legal compliance but also contributes to building a safe and respectful working environment.

1. Fair and Impartial Investigation:

The redressal process should begin with a fair and impartial investigation conducted by the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC). The complainant, the accused, and any witnesses should be interviewed, and relevant evidence should be examined.

2. Determining Validity:

Based on the investigation, the ICC should determine the validity of the complaint. If harassment is found, the ICC should proceed to recommend appropriate actions.

3. Disciplinary Action:

If the accused is found guilty of sexual harassment, the organization should take appropriate disciplinary actions, which may include warnings, suspension, termination, or legal action.



4. Support for Complainant:

Ensure that the complainant is provided with the necessary support, which may include counseling, legal assistance, or any other resources they require during the redressal process. Take necessary actions in case of proven harassment, following the Act's provisions. Ensure the victim's confidentiality and provide support during the redressal process.

5. Appeals Process:

Establish an appeals process that allows both parties, the complainant and the accused, to seek a review of the decision if they are dissatisfied with the outcome.

6. Timely Resolution:

Strive for a timely resolution of the complaint to minimize the stress and uncertainty faced by both parties.

7. Legal Consequences:

Emphasize the legal consequences of sexual harassment and assure that these consequences will be enforced to the full extent of the law.

8. Prevention Measures:

After resolution, the organization should implement preventative measures to reduce the risk of future incidents, which may include additional training, awareness programs, or changes in workplace culture.

9. Transparency:

Maintain transparency throughout the redressal process by keeping the complainant informed about the progress and outcome of the complaint.



10. Documentation:

Ensure that all actions taken during the redressal process are meticulously documented. This includes records of the investigation, disciplinary actions, support provided to the complainant, and any appeals.

11. Legal Compliance:

Ensure that the redressal process is in full compliance with the legal requirements outlined in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act.

12. Non-Retaliation Assurance:

Reiterate the organization's commitment to protecting the complainant from any form of retaliation for reporting harassment.

F. Monitoring and reporting-

It is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of measures in place to prevent and address sexual harassment within organizations, including bar associations, law offices, State Bar Councils, and the Bar Council of India.

Monitoring and reporting are crucial aspects of creating a workplace environment free from sexual harassment. By systematically tracking and evaluating the organization's efforts, it becomes possible to identify weaknesses, take corrective actions, and continuously improve practices, thereby ensuring that the workplace remains safe and respectful for all members and employees. These efforts not only help meet legal obligations but also promote a culture of accountability and transparency.

1. Regular Evaluation:

Establish a system for regular evaluation and monitoring of the organization's efforts in preventing and addressing sexual



harassment. This evaluation should be ongoing and systematic. Regularly review and monitor the effectiveness of the ICC and the implementation of the Act.

2. Data Collection:

Collect data on the number of harassment complaints received, actions taken, outcomes, and any trends or patterns that may emerge.

3. Periodic Reports:

Prepare and maintain periodic reports on the organization's compliance with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, including any actions taken to prevent harassment and redress complaints.

4. Reporting to Authorities:

Comply with legal requirements by submitting reports/annual to the appropriate authorities as mandated by the Act.

5. Feedback from ICC:

Seek feedback from the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) on the effectiveness of the redressal process and their experiences in handling complaints.

6. Member and Employees Surveys:

Conduct surveys or solicit feedback from members and employees to gauge their perceptions of the workplace environment regarding sexual harassment. This feedback can help identify areas that require improvement.



7. Trend Analysis:

Analyze the data collected to identify any emerging trends, recurring issues, or hotspots within the organization that may need special attention.

8. Benchmarks and Comparisons:

Compare your organization's data and practices to industry benchmarks or best practices to determine areas where you may be falling behind or excelling.

9. Corrective Actions:

Use the monitoring data to take corrective actions. If a particular area or department has a high number of harassment complaints, for example, address the issue with targeted training or interventions.

10. Improvement Measures:

Continuously work on improving policies, procedures, and preventive measures based on the insights gained from monitoring and feedback.

11. Accountability:

Hold individuals and departments accountable for meeting the organization's anti-harassment objectives. This accountability may include setting performance goals and expectations related to harassment prevention.

12. Transparency:

Maintain transparency by sharing monitoring results with members and employees. This can demonstrate the organization's commitment to accountability and improvement.



13. Legal Compliance:

Ensure that the monitoring and reporting processes align with the legal requirements outlined in the Act.

G. Support and counseling:

This is a vital component of addressing and preventing sexual harassment within organizations, including bar associations, law offices, State Bar Councils, and the Bar Council of India. Support and counseling play a crucial role in helping victims of sexual harassment cope with their experiences, seek redress, and regain their emotional and psychological well-being. By offering comprehensive and sensitive support services, organizations can demonstrate their commitment to creating a safe and supportive workplace culture and contribute to the healing and empowerment of victims.

1. Immediate Assistance:

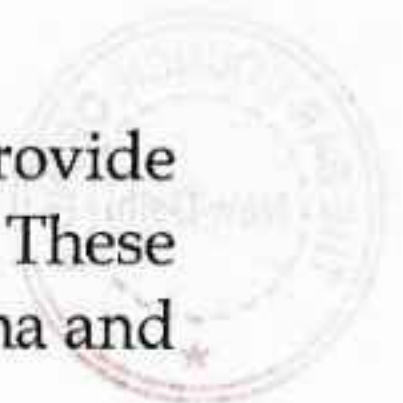
Ensure that immediate support is available for individuals who have experienced or reported sexual harassment. This may include a designated point of contact, a helpline, or access to counseling services.

2. Confidentiality:

Stress the importance of maintaining strict confidentiality when providing support and counseling to victims. Assure them that their information will not be shared without their consent.

3. Professional Counselors:

Have trained and experienced counselors available to provide emotional and psychological support to victims. These counselors should be well-versed in dealing with trauma and the aftermath of harassment.



4. Legal Guidance:

Offer access to legal assistance for victims who want to pursue legal action or understand their rights and options under the law.]

5. Rehabilitation:

Where necessary, provide rehabilitation services that can help victims cope with the emotional and psychological impact of harassment and regain their well-being.

6. Empowerment:

Empower victims to make informed decisions about how to proceed with their complaints, ensuring they have agency and control over their choices.

7. Referrals:

Establish relationships with external organizations and service providers, such as crisis hotlines, mental health professionals, and legal aid organizations, to refer victims to the appropriate resources.

8. Ongoing Support:

Recognize that the impact of sexual harassment may be ongoing, and ensure that victims have access to ongoing counseling and support as needed.

9. Holistic Approach:

Take a holistic approach to support, addressing not only the immediate emotional and psychological needs but also the long-term well-being of the victim.



10. Education:

Provide education and resources to members and employees about the effects of sexual harassment and the importance of offering support to victims.

11. Awareness Programs for empathetic response

Conduct awareness programs that emphasize the significance of a supportive and empathetic response to harassment victims.

12. Monitoring and Follow-Up:

Establish mechanisms for monitoring and following up with victims to ensure they are receiving the support they need and that their recovery is on track.

13. Legal Protections:

Ensure that the rights of victims are protected and that they are aware of the legal protections available to them.

14. Coordination with the ICC:

Coordinate with the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) to ensure that the support and counseling provided align with the ICC's findings and recommendations.

15. Cultural Sensitivity:

Consider cultural and social factors that may affect the victim's experience and tailor support and counseling accordingly.

H. Promote a Culture of Respect:

Promoting a culture of respect is not only an ethical imperative but also contributes to a more productive and harmonious workplace. It attracts and retains a diverse and talented workforce and helps in



preventing and addressing issues of sexual harassment. A respectful workplace culture is one where all members feel valued, heard, and supported, creating a more positive and inclusive work environment.

1. Leadership Commitment:

Leadership within the organization, including senior lawyers and management, should lead by example and demonstrate a strong commitment to fostering a culture of respect. This commitment should be communicated through words and actions.

2. Clear Anti-Harassment Policies:

Develop, communicate, and enforce clear anti-harassment policies. Ensure that all members understand the organization's stance against harassment and the consequences of violating these policies.- Sensitize members to the consequences of sexual harassment and the importance of prevention.

3. Training and Awareness:

Conduct regular training and awareness programs for all members and employees to educate them about the organization's values, expectations, and the importance of respect in the workplace.

4. Zero Tolerance:

Clearly communicate a zero-tolerance policy for any form of harassment, discrimination, or disrespectful behavior. Make it known that such actions will not be tolerated.

5. Reporting Culture:

Encourage a culture where all members feel comfortable reporting incidents of harassment. Assure them that their reports will be taken seriously and kept confidential.



6. Empower Bystanders:

Encourage bystanders to intervene when they witness disrespectful or inappropriate behavior. Provide them with guidance on how to support victims and report incidents.

7. Inclusive Practices:

Promote diversity and inclusion within the organization. Embrace a workplace culture that respects and values the unique backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences of all members.

8. Conflict Resolution Training:

Offer conflict resolution and communication training to help members address conflicts in a respectful and constructive manner.

9. Accountability:

Hold individuals accountable for their behavior and ensure that there are consequences for those who engage in disrespectful or harassing conduct.

10. Supportive Environment:

Create an environment where victims of harassment feel supported and empowered to report incidents. Ensure that support and counseling services are readily available.

11. Regular Surveys and Feedback:

Conduct regular surveys and gather feedback from members and employees to assess the organization's culture. Use this feedback to make necessary improvements.



12. **Recognize and Reward Respectful Behavior:**

Recognize and reward individuals who exemplify respectful behavior and contribute to a positive work environment.

13. **Collaboration with External Organizations:**

Collaborate with external organizations, such as NGOs or experts in diversity and inclusion, to gain insights and strategies for promoting respect.

14. **Culture of Empathy:**

Cultivate a culture of empathy, where members are encouraged to understand and consider the feelings and perspectives of others.

15. **Ongoing Evaluation:**

Continuously evaluate the organization's progress in promoting a culture of respect and make adjustments as necessary.

I. **Regular Audits and Compliance:**

Conduct periodic audits to ensure compliance with the Act and take corrective actions where necessary. Regular audits and compliance assessments are essential for ensuring that an organization's efforts to prevent and address sexual harassment are effective, up-to-date, and in line with legal requirements. By systematically reviewing and improving anti-harassment measures, organizations can create a safer and more respectful workplace environment, reducing the risk of harassment and enhancing the well-being of all members and employees.

1. **Audit Process:**

Establish a systematic and well-documented audit process that assesses the organization's compliance with the Sexual



Harassment of Women at Workplace Act and its own anti-harassment policies.

2. Periodic Audits:

Conduct periodic audits at regular intervals, such as annually, to ensure ongoing compliance with legal requirements and internal policies.

3. Audit Team:

Assemble an audit team with relevant expertise, which may include HR professionals, legal experts, and representatives from the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC).

4. Compliance Checklist:

Develop a comprehensive compliance checklist that covers all aspects of the Act, the organization's anti-harassment policies, and best practices in preventing harassment.

5. Documentation Review:

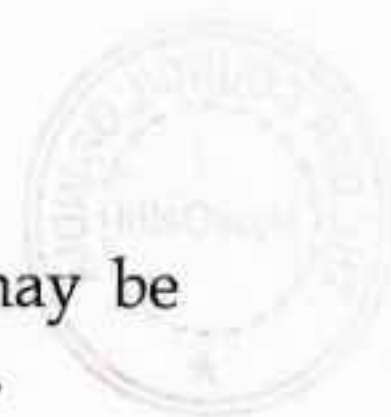
Review all relevant documentation, including complaint records, actions taken, training records, and the functioning of the Internal Complaints Committee.

6. Interviews and Surveys:

Conduct interviews or surveys with members and employees to gauge their awareness of the organization's anti-harassment policies and their experiences regarding harassment prevention.

7. Identify Gaps:

Identify any gaps or areas where the organization may be falling short in terms of compliance or implementation.



8. Recommendations:

Based on the audit findings, create a set of recommendations for improving compliance and strengthening anti-harassment efforts.

9. Corrective Action Plans:

Develop corrective action plans to address the identified gaps and ensure that the organization takes specific steps to rectify non-compliance.

10. Monitoring Progress:

Monitor the progress of corrective actions and ensure that they are implemented in a timely manner.

11. Training and Education:

If the audit reveals shortcomings in training or awareness, provide additional training and education to members and employees.

12. Expert/Legal Consultation:

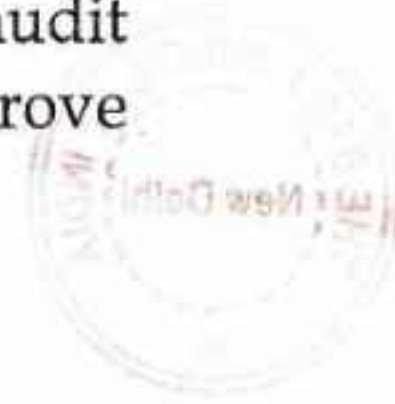
Seek Expert/legal consultation to ensure that the organization's policies and practices align with current legal requirements.

13. Ongoing Improvement:

Use audit results as a basis for ongoing improvement in the organization's anti-harassment measures. Implement changes to policies and practices as needed.

14. Transparency:

Be transparent with members and employees about the audit process, its findings, and the actions being taken to improve compliance.



15. Accountability:

Hold individuals and departments accountable for implementing corrective actions and ensuring compliance with anti-harassment policies.

J. Legal Assistance:

1. Legal Expertise:

Ensure that individuals who have experienced or reported sexual harassment have access to legal experts or professionals who specialize in workplace harassment cases. Provide legal assistance to victims when required.

2. Information and Guidance:

Offer information and guidance on the legal rights of victims and the options available to them under the law.

Ensure that members are aware of the legal remedies available under the Act.

3. Assistance with Complaint Filing:

Assist victims in filing complaints with relevant authorities, including the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) or external bodies when necessary.

K. Documentation and Reporting:

Documentation and reporting are critical aspects of a comprehensive anti-harassment strategy. They provide transparency, accountability, and the means to assess the effectiveness of harassment prevention efforts. Additionally, they support compliance with legal requirements and demonstrate the organization's commitment to maintaining a respectful and safe workplace environment.



(i) **Documentation:**

1. Complaint Records:

Maintain detailed records of all sexual harassment complaints, including the date, nature of the complaint, the individuals involved, and the actions taken in response. This documentation is crucial for tracking the progress of complaints and ensuring that they are resolved appropriately.

2. Investigation Records:

Document the investigation process, including interviews, evidence gathered, and witness statements. This documentation helps establish the validity of complaints and supports the decision-making process.

3. Actions Taken:

Record any disciplinary actions or remedies provided to the victim. Document the steps taken to prevent future incidents, such as additional training or policy changes.

4. Communication:

Keep records of all communication related to harassment complaints, including emails, letters, and meeting notes. These records help maintain transparency and accountability.

5. Training Records:

Document participation in anti-harassment training and awareness programs. This documentation demonstrates that the organization is committed to educating its members and employees about harassment prevention.



(ii) Reporting:**1. Regular Reports:**

Prepare periodic reports summarizing the number of harassment complaints received, actions taken, and outcomes achieved. These reports can be shared with the organization's management or governing body and help track trends over time.

2. Legal Reporting:

Comply with legal reporting requirements outlined in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act. This may include submitting annual reports to the district officer or state government, as mandated by the Act.

3. Transparency:

Maintain transparency by sharing information with members and employees about the reporting process and outcomes. This encourages a culture of openness and accountability.

4. Trend Analysis:

Analyze the data collected to identify any recurring issues, hotspots, or emerging trends related to sexual harassment. This analysis can inform targeted prevention efforts.

5. Benchmarking:

Compare your organization's data and practices to industry benchmarks or best practices to assess where improvements are needed and where you excel.



6. Member Feedback:

Solicit feedback from members and employees regarding their experiences with the reporting process. Use their insights to make necessary improvements.

7. Corrective Actions:

Based on the data and reporting, take corrective actions to address any shortcomings or areas of concern. This may involve policy revisions, additional training, or targeted interventions.

8. Accountability:

Ensure that individuals and departments are held accountable for meeting reporting and documentation requirements and for taking action based on the data and reports.

L. Seeking guidance from State Bar Councils and Bar Council of India

1. Guidance:

The Bar Councils can help ensure that the organization's anti-harassment policies and practices align with the legal requirements outlined in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act and other relevant laws.

2. Regulatory Compliance:

The Bar Councils can help organizations understand and adhere to the legal obligations specific to the legal profession, ensuring that they meet the highest standards of legal compliance.



3. Awareness and Training:

The Bar Councils can assist in developing and delivering tailored awareness and training programs for legal professionals. These programs can focus on the unique challenges and ethical considerations faced by lawyers in dealing with sexual harassment cases.

4. Ethical Considerations:

The Bar Councils can provide guidance on the ethical considerations surrounding sexual harassment cases, especially when dealing with client-Advocate relationships and confidentiality.

5. Reporting Mechanisms:

Ensure that reporting mechanisms within the organization align with the legal requirements and ethical standards.

6. Leading Standards:

The Bar Council sets leading standards for legal professionals. Guidance can ensure that the organization aligns with these standards in its approach to sexual harassment prevention and redressal.

7. Accountability and Oversight:

The Bar Councils can provide oversight and accountability, ensuring that organizations within the legal profession maintain the highest ethical and legal standards in addressing sexual harassment.



Liberty to State Bar Council/s to further enhance the above regulations as per their specific needs and requirements without changing minimum and basic requirement/structure of these regulations, which shall be subject to approval of the Bar Council of India.



CERTIFIED TO BE A TRUE COPY

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Srimento Sen".

**SRIMANTO SEN
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY
BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA**