

**Article 14**

Equality before law The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

**Article 15**

Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth

(1) The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them

(2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to

(a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and palaces of public entertainment; or

(b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public

(3) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children

(4) Nothing in this article or in clause ( 2 ) of Article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes

**Article 16**

1. There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.
2. No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office under the State.
3. Nothing in this article shall prevent Parliament from...

**Article 39 A**

To promote justice, on a basis of equal opportunity and to provide free legal aid by suitable legislation or scheme or in any other way to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities)

**Article 42**

The State to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief

**Article 46**

The State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

**Article 47**

The State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and, in particular, the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medicinal purpose of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health.

## Article 51A

To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women

## Article 243D

Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat.

## Article 243T

Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Municipality.

**Sexual harassment** is unwelcome sexual behaviour that's offensive, humiliating or intimidating. It can be written, verbal or physical, and can happen in person or online.

Both men and women can be the victims of sexual harassment. When it happens at work, school or uni, it may amount to sex discrimination.

Sexual harassment can include someone:

- touching, grabbing or making other physical contact with you without your consent
- making comments to you that have a sexual meaning
- asking you for sex or sexual favours
- leering and staring at you
- displaying rude and offensive material so that you or others can see it
- making sexual gestures or suggestive body movements towards you
- cracking sexual jokes and comments around or to you
- questioning you about your sex life
- insulting you with sexual comments
- committing a criminal offence against you, such as making an obscene phone call, indecently exposing themselves or sexually assaulting you.

The **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace** (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 is a legislative act in India that seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their place of work. It was passed by the Lok Sabha (the lower house of the Indian) on 3 September 2012. It was passed by the Rajya Sabha (the upper house of the Indian Parliament) on 26 February 2013. The Bill got the assent of the President on 23 April 2013. The Act came into force from 9 December 2013. This statute superseded the Vishakha Guidelines for prevention of sexual harassment introduced by the Supreme Court of India. It was reported by the International Labour Organization that very few Indian employers were compliant to this statute. Indian employer's have not implemented the law despite the legal requirement that any workplace with more than 10 employees need to implement it. According to a FICCI-EY November 2015 report, 36% of Indian companies and 25% among MNCs are not compliant with the Sexual Harassment Act, 2013. The introductory text of the Act is:

An Act to provide protection against sexual harassment of women at workplace and for the prevention and redressal of complaints of sexual harassment and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

- WHEREAS sexual harassment results in violation of the fundamental rights of a woman to equality under articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution of India and her right to life and to live with dignity under article 21 of the Constitution and right to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business which includes a right to a safe environment free from sexual harassment;

- AND WHEREAS the protection against sexual harassment and the right to work with dignity are universally recognised human rights by international conventions and instruments such as Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, which has been ratified on the 25th June, 1993 by the Government of India;
- AND WHEREAS it is expedient to make provisions for giving effect to the said Convention for protection of women against sexual harassment at workplace.
- The Act defines sexual harassment at the work place and creates a mechanism for redressal of complaints. It also provides safeguards against false or malicious charges.
- The Act also covers concepts of 'quid pro quo harassment' and 'hostile work environment' as forms of sexual harassment if it occurs in connection with an act or behaviour of sexual harassment.

### **Abuses in school**

**Every child has the right to a full and productive life. It is up to all of us to ensure our children grow up in the environments that build confidence, friendship, security and happiness, irrespective their family circumstances or backgrounds. Keeping children safe from harm requires a vigilant and informed community.** To pave effective ways to prevent child abuse in schools, we need to set up a well vigilant and informed community that is confident in making judgments and assertive in taking actions. Additionally, schools and educational institutions have a great role to play in it as they not only render learning and education, but also ensure children's safety and protection as priority. So, it is essential that parents, teachers and educators working with children and young people are able to understand the role each plays in protecting children.

### **Preventive measures**

**Proper talking:** Talking to the children about age appropriate and accepted behaviour is important. Every child should know and understand their right to refuse and reject if someone's behaviour or act creates hurt and pain to them physically, emotionally or psychologically. Teach children their rights. When children are taught they are special and have the right to be safe, they are less likely to think abuse is their fault, and more likely to report an offender.

**Encourage and answer questions:** Even if you feel it is least important, encourage and answer questions — many a time children suppress and fail to express emotional hurt which in other hand reflects in their action and behaviour emotionally and psychologically.

**Avoid denial and remain calm:** A common reaction to news as unpleasant and shocking as child abuse is denial. However, if you display denial to a child, or show shock or disgust at what they are saying, the child may be afraid to continue and will shut down. As hard as it may be, remain as calm and reassuring as you can.

**Don't interrupt or interrogate:** Let the child explain to you in his/her own words what happened, but don't interrogate the child or ask leading questions. This may confuse and fluster the child and make it harder for them to continue their story. It is important to pay attention to understand what the child is saying.

**Understand the non-verbal quos:** Sometimes it is necessary to observe the silence behind the child's behaviour. They may fear of expressing or may become manipulating.

**Be respectful:** Giving respect to each other can help in better trust building and bonding between teacher and students.

**Maintain confidentiality and privacy:** Students should be given assurance for maintaining secrecy when it comes to their personal information and sharing. This helps in creating trust relationship.

**Encourage them:** Reassure the children that they did nothing wrong. It takes a lot for a child to come forward about abuse. Reassure him/her that you take what is said seriously, and that it is not the child's fault.

**Volunteering time:** This is the time to be planned for listening and understanding the harm or difficulty of the students. Most of the time children don't get or find a source to vent out their feelings of pain and harm. Many schools have specially defined classes included in the curriculum to discuss concerns which are bothering; for example, life skills and QCT (Quality Circle Time).

**Establish connection and be empathetic:** Being empathetic gives children reassurance that they are being heard. Sometimes only paying attention and showing concern can help children gain confidence and overcome their problems themselves.

**Be supportive:** Examine your behaviour for being a support to the child. Abuse is not just physical. Both words and actions can inflict deep, lasting wounds. Be a nurturing. Use actions to show children and other adults that conflicts can be settled without hitting or yelling.

**Know the signs:** Unexplained injuries aren't the only signs of abuse. Depression, fear of a certain adult, difficulty trusting others or making friends, sudden changes in eating or sleeping patterns, inappropriate sexual behavior, poor hygiene, secrecy, and hostility are often signs of family problems and may indicate a child is being neglected or physically, sexually, or emotionally abused.

**Educating all to work as a team:** Simple support for children and parents can be the best way to prevent child abuse. After-school activities, parent education classes, mentoring programs, and respite care are some of the many ways to keep children safe from harm.

**Report abuse:** If you witness a child being harmed or see evidence of abuse, make a report to your state's child protective service department or local police. When talking to a child about abuse, listen carefully, assure the child that he/she did the right thing by telling an adult, and affirm that he/she is not responsible for what happened.

**Develop skills:** While learning to control your emotions is critical, you also need a game plan of what you are going to do instead. Start by learning appropriate discipline techniques and how to set clear boundaries for your children. Child abuse awareness classes, books, and seminars are a way to get this information. You can also turn to other colleague for tips and advice.

**Counseling:** Giving support through counseling can enhance better problem solving and decision making in students.

**Try expert approach:** It is important to train general public, teachers and educators the ways to deal with children and start communication as not everyone should be allowed to discuss concerns with students as these being very sensitive issues which may hurt the child's self respect and esteem.

### **Status of women in formal education**

There's an African proverb which goes "If you educate a man you educate an individual but if you educate a woman you educate an entire nation" and this is the single most important thing that our country needs to understand at this moment. In 2015 3.7 million eligible girls were out of school and in rural areas girls receive an average of fewer than four years of education. In a country where 21.9% of the population is below its official poverty limit, it does not come as a surprise that poverty is the major obstacle that limits education for girls.

But poverty is not the only thing that is disrupting the fundamental right of education amongst Indian girls there are many more contributing factors such as the distance of schools from the corresponding villages, lack of sanitation facilities in schools, shortage of female teachers, gender bias in curriculum, absence of support from their respective families and this list is never ending. There's a common belief among rural households that girls should stop schooling after reaching puberty because more often than not they are teased by boys throughout the long walk from their home to school. India has the highest number of child brides in Asia and inevitably there is this dogma surrounding young girls that educating them is a waste of time and money as they are born only to be married off and manage the household. In rural households and especially amongst the poor, the girl child is a valuable resource for housework and in the fields, an additional hand that cannot be wasted away through an education with almost invisible gains and far too heavy a price that most rural and poor families cannot afford to pay.

***As a result, a large gender gap emerges which was highlighted in the 2011 census that showed the male literacy rate to be 82.14% while for females it lags behind at 65.46%. Although getting the girl child to enrol in primary schools seems to be most problematic, once enrolled, girl children are more likely to continue their primary education. At the secondary level of education, girls tend to drop out more than boys, again posing a challenge to retain the girl child for secondary education. In our so-called 'modern India', estimates show that for every 100 girls in rural India only a single one reaches class 12 and almost 40% of girls leave school even before reaching the fifth standard and more than 15% children in schools can't read a simple story in Hindi, our national language.***

The differences between the positions of men and women in the society will not lessen; leave alone disappear, as long as there are differences between the education levels of men and women. We must realize that going to school is one thing, on the other hand, the quality of education that one gets is another. Within government schools- overcrowded classrooms, absent teacher, unsanitary conditions are common complaints and can cause parents to decide that it is not worth their child going to school. A 2010 report conducted by the National Council for Teacher Education estimated that an additional 1.2 million teachers were needed to fulfil the RTE act requirements and merely 5 % of government schools complied with all the basic standards and infrastructure set by the act. Moreover 40% of classrooms had more than 30 students and over 60% didn't have any electricity and over 21% of the teachers were not professionally trained. Although much work has been done to improve the state of education in India, we are still a long way off from attaining standards comparable even to other developing nations.

India is ranked 105 amongst 128 countries in its Education for All Development Index. There is much work to be done to enhance education in India; particular attention is warranted to women's access to education. An attempt has to be made to remove the social, psychological and structural barriers, for the participation of the majority of women in education. Even though the Government and various voluntary organisations are engaged in several attempts to sensitise the local population to the need for women education, unless parents of the girl child see value and merit in sending the girl child to school, they will resist doing so and instead prefer to use her help in household chores or agricultural activities. It is absolutely vital that we incorporate the belief among women that they must stand on their two feet and the only feasible way to achieve this is through education and its proper utilisation. One way to make the families more interested is by making the school come to them rather than sending their girls to school far away from home by implementing more mobile schools across rural India.