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Q8(b)

What is POSH Act? "Identification of tormentor by women at workplace does not come easily even today". Examine the statement with substantive examples from India

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2019 · Sociology GS 2 · 20 marks · Challenges of Social Transformation

Challenges of Social Transformation: Crisis of development: displacement, environmental problems and sustainability; Poverty, deprivation and inequalities; Violence against women; Caste conflicts; Ethnic conflicts, communalism, religious revivalism; Illiteracy and disparities in education.

Core demand of the question

- What is POSH Act? "Identification of tormentor by women at workplace does not come easily even today". Examine the statement with substantive examples from India

Revision summary

POSH 2013 mandates workplace harassment law and ICCs after **Vishaka**.

Naming the tormentor risks wage, honour and **retaliation**.

Informal and domestic work largely fall outside ICC reality.

Media, campus and factory cases show serial silence.

Law needs tenure and organisation to make identification possible.

Introduction

The **POSH Act** is the 2013 law that defines workplace sexual harassment and requires **Internal Complaints Committees**. Identification of the tormentor still does not come easily because patriarchy, informal work, and fear of the seed-line honour code sit inside the office.

Body

What POSH is

- It grew from **Vishaka** guidelines. It names harassment, duties of employers, and a local complaints path.
- **It is a legal instrument of women's empowerment in Beteille's disharmonic sense:** equality as statute against ranked gender power.

Why naming is hard

- The tormentor is often a supervisor, client, or kin in a family firm. Naming him is naming the wage.
- Informal and domestic workplaces, the majority of Indian women workers, sit poorly inside ICC architecture.
- Honour and victim-blame, which Dube's kinship lens explains, make the woman the problem if she speaks.

- **Police and campus examples:** delayed complaints, character questions, and retaliatory transfers.

Indian illustrations

- Media and film-industry testimonies showed serial harassment behind closed sets, with careers as hostage.
- **Factory and garment units:** contractors mediate; a complaint can mean lost piece-rate days.
- **Universities:** student-teacher power plus caste can silence Dalit women twice.
- Domestic workers in cities rarely have an ICC; the home is the workplace.

What would make identification easier

- Secure tenure, anonymous first reporting, and unions. Law without those remains a form on the wall.

Flow diagram

POSH ICC -> Legal name of harm
Honour informal power -> Silence
Silence -> Tormentor unnamed

Conclusion

POSH is the statutory name for workplace sexual harassment procedures. The statement is true: women still struggle to identify the tormentor because work, honour, and informality punish the speaker. Examples from media, campuses, factories, and homes show the gap between the Act and the floor.

Facts & figures

POSH Act 2013

Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act creating ICC duties.

Vishaka

Supreme Court guidelines that preceded the statute.

Informal women workers

Majority without a formal employer ICC.

Retaliation

Transfer, gossip, or lost contracts after a complaint.