Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine the role of institutional mechanisms in addressing workplace sexual harassment while ensuring dignity and due process.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 24/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

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Answer Hint

POSH Act 2013, gender justice, Internal Committee, Local Committee, procedural fairness, workplace accountability

Model Answer

Introduction

Workplace sexual harassment violates women's dignity, equality and right to a safe working environment. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, establishes a statutory framework for prevention and redressal across public and private workplaces.

Role of Institutional Mechanisms

1. **Internal Committees:** The Act requires organisations with ten or more employees to constitute Internal Committees to receive and inquire into complaints.

2. **Local Committees:** District-level Local Committees provide a redressal mechanism for establishments with fewer than ten workers and complaints against the employer.

3. **Employer Accountability:** Employers are required to provide a safe working environment, organise awareness programmes and assist in addressing complaints.

4. **Confidentiality:** The Act protects the identity of the complainant, respondent and witnesses, helping prevent victimisation and reputational harm during proceedings.

5. **Statutory Redressal:** The inquiry process provides an institutional mechanism to examine allegations and recommend appropriate action in accordance with law.

Ensuring Dignity and Due Process

1. **Fair Inquiry:** Complaints must be examined impartially, with a reasonable opportunity for the respondent to present their case.

2. **Protection against Retaliation:** Complainants and witnesses should be protected against intimidation, discrimination and workplace victimisation.

3. **Institutional Independence:** Committees must function without political or administrative interference.

4. **Accountability of Public Representatives:** Allegations involving elected representatives should be addressed through appropriate legal and institutional procedures without presuming guilt or granting immunity based on public position.

Conclusion

Effective implementation of the POSH Act requires accessible complaint mechanisms, impartial investigations and protection against retaliation. A balance between gender justice, institutional accountability and procedural fairness is essential for ensuring safe and dignified workplaces.