

From Awareness to Action in Industry 5.0: A Qualitative Case-Based Study on the Influence of POSH Training on Workplace Behaviour

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Peer Review Information	Abstract
Type: Article Received: 13 April 2026 Revised: 08 May 2026 Accepted: 14 June 2026 Published: 30 June 2026	With the increasing focus on a human-centric and ethical work culture under Industry 5.0, organizations are now focusing on preventive measures against workplace misconduct. The Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act, 2013, has made it a mandatory requirement to conduct regular awareness and sensitization programs. However, it is an interesting aspect of study to understand the effectiveness of such programs in bringing a behavioural change over a period of time. This study has used a research methodology to understand the impact of POSH training on workplace behaviour, using a qualitative and case study-based research design. The data has been collected on three different fronts: a detailed analysis of POSH cases in the workplace, feedback from postgraduate students between the ages of 20 and 24 years who attended POSH awareness programs, and interviews with certified POSH trainers. From the study, it has been observed that POSH training has a significant impact on raising awareness and sensitization levels and boosting confidence among participants. Additionally, certain challenges have also been observed during the study. The study highlights the importance of continuous, experiential and technology supported training models in conformity with the guiding principles of industry 5.0. The study offers important insights for HR professionals and policymakers who wish to establish viable POSH training models. The study recommends the inclusion of digital learning tools, regular refresher training, and participatory learning approaches to promote ethical workplace culture. In conclusion, in light of the above, it is emphasized that while POSH training is an effective tool in bridging the gap between awareness and action in terms of sensitivity, accountability, and compliance, its transformative power depends on how barriers are overcome through innovative, continuous, and technology-enabled interventions. By linking POSH training with Industry 5.0's emphasis on collaboration between humans and AI systems in terms of ethical resilience, a new road is paved for HR practitioners in terms of sustainable behavioural change. Keywords: Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH); Workplace Behaviour; Industry 5.0; Employee Awareness and Sensitization; Ethical Workplace Culture; Human Resource Management.

How to Cite This Article

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Introduction

The modern work environment is in the midst of a significant transformation as the concept of industry 5.0 gains traction, which not only focuses on the importance of human centric values such as ethical governance but also the importance of human-technology synergistic relationships. The previous industrial revolutions did not place much importance on the well-being of employees, but Industry 5.0 has brought to the forefront the importance of the dignity of the employees in the work environment.

One of the biggest challenges for organizations in this context has been to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. In India, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, also referred to as the POSH Act, has been a major milestone in the journey to protect the rights and dignity of employees. The Act has emphasized the need to form Internal Committees, put in place mechanisms for grievance redressal, and conduct awareness and sensitization programs for employees. The idea behind this has been to ensure that employees are made aware of their rights and responsibilities and can raise their voice in case of inappropriate behavior.

Over the last decade, POSH training programs have gained momentum in various organizations, and they have been an integral part of the organization's compliance and governance initiatives. The idea behind conducting POSH training programs has been to raise awareness and make employees understand their rights and responsibilities. However, one of the biggest concerns for many employees has been the relevance of POSH training programs, which has been more of a mandatory requirement for them rather than a learning experience for them.

Existing research in the areas of workplace harassment and gender sensitization has primarily been limited to the aspects of legal compliance, policy implementation, and reporting mechanisms. Though there has been some research conducted in the areas of understanding the level of awareness among employees, limited research has been conducted in the areas of understanding the impact of training interventions on the attitudes, perceptions, and behavioral practices of individuals in the long run. Furthermore, there is also a significant lack of studies that incorporate real-life experiences of cases, feedback from participants, and the views of practitioners in the context of emerging Industry 5.0 environments.

From a pragmatic perspective, the aspect of POSH training can be understood as the interface of the legal realm, human behaviour, organizational culture and the responsibility of the organization's leaders. The effectiveness of POSH training is not just dependent on the content of the training but also the manner in which the content is imparted to the employees of the organization. In the context of the emerging Industry 5.0 environments, where digital platforms, AI and virtual platforms of learning are fast becoming the new reality of organizational functioning, the aspect of POSH training is also undergoing significant transformations.

With this background in mind, the present study aims to examine whether POSH training programs can facilitate a transition from mere awareness to action. In doing so, the present study uses a qualitative method where it draws on various cases of POSH handled by the researcher in their practical experience, feedback from postgraduate students who underwent awareness programs on POSH, and insights from certified POSH trainers.

By placing POSH training in the larger Industry 5.0 paradigm, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how a range of compliance measures can be linked to a sense of empathy, accountability, and learning. This study is an important contribution to both theoretical and practical literature in terms of providing evidence-based insights into how effective and sustainable POSH training frameworks can be designed. Moreover, this study can contribute to a deeper understanding of how a range of organizations can build a workplace culture that is not merely compliant but also genuinely empathetic and understanding.

This study offers HR professionals and policymakers frameworks for designing experiential and technology-integrated models of POSH training programs that are in line with Industry 5.0, based on case analyses, learner feedback, and trainer experiences, to bridge the gap between awareness and behavioural change, providing practical guidelines on how to overcome cultural hurdles, improve learner engagement, and build ethical and inclusive workplaces.

Literature Review

Sexual harassment in the workplace has been identified as a critical organizational and social issue because of the detrimental effects it has on the well-being of the employees, as well as their professional development and organizational success. The initial research studies have already identified that the individuals subjected to such experiences suffer from mental health problems, as well as a reduction in work motivation and organizational commitment (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; McDonald, 2012). These effects, from the perspective of a practitioner, can be identified in both academic and business environments, where unresolved issues can impact not just the individuals but also the groups as a whole.

After the implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, in India, there has been a significant focus on the compliance of organizations and the governance structure. Studies have been conducted on the

structure of the Internal Committees, reporting, and redressal of grievances (Aggarwal, 2015; Gupta & Sharma, 2019). Although there is significant emphasis on the formal system for maintaining procedural justice, there is limited focus on the actual psychological effect of such measures on the workplace culture.

In the recent past, training and sensitization have formed the main focus of organizational strategies for the prevention of harassment and the encouragement of good behavior. Studies have shown that for POSH training to be successful, it should not only focus on the legal aspects but also cover attitude, empathy, and interpersonal responsibility (Paludi & Paludi, 2003; Dobbin & Kalev, 2017). Interactive training methods have also been identified as successful in increasing engagement and retention (Salin et al., 2020). However, as noted in the practical field, training programs may not yield the desired long-term effects unless the organization follows up on the training (Raver & Gelfand, 2005).

Organizational culture has been identified as one of the most significant factors that influence employees' behavior in the organization. The importance of inclusive leadership, ethical role modeling, and transparent communication in the development of a psychologically safe working environment has been highlighted by researchers such as Schein (2017) and Nishii (2013). If the organizational leadership engages in gender sensitization programs, it has been found that the employees show higher levels of trust in the grievance handling mechanisms (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). This finding has been found to resonate strongly with the experiences of the researcher.

Digital technologies continue to revolutionize the way training and compliance are executed in organisations. Online learning platforms, virtual workshops, and digital complaint systems have improved accessibility to training, improved documentation of progress, and provided increased opportunities for monitoring trainees' compliance (Bersin, 2020; Margherita & Braccini, 2021). Researchers have found that technology-based training offers trainers opportunities to provide consistent and widespread training delivery to a large number of employees at the same time (Noe et al., 2020). While previous engagement with learners shows that reliance on technology only is limiting the emotional connections/relationships that are established during training and limiting the potential for reflective learning through a lack of face to face interaction (Salas et al., 2015).

Recent academic research has highlighted the need to align new technology with human-based values and ethical governance within the overall framework of Industry 5.0 (European Commission, 2021; Nahavandi, 2019). Employee well-being, dignity, and social responsibility are becoming increasingly recognized as key factors in achieving sustainable development at the organization level. In this context, POSH training represents an opportunity for organizations to create respectful and inclusive relationships among employees and should be viewed as a strategic tool rather than just a means of compliance (Kundu & Gahlawat, 2016). The researcher's involvement with several organizations supports this view by demonstrating how the ethical awareness of employees can be affected through sensitization programs.

"The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act (2013)" constitutes India's first legislation specifically addressing sexual harassment of women in the workplace and providing a substantive mechanism to internally resolve grievances via Internal Complaints Committees ("ICCs"). Although this legislation represents a substantial advance towards protecting women's rights, Wahab et al. (2024) discuss many significant shortcomings, including exclusion of male and transgender individuals from making complaints; non-acceptance of anonymous complaints; and contemporary workplace inclusivity problems. Additionally, this paper identifies major challenges in implementation of the law, including a lack of familiarity with the Act by employers and employees; lack of training for ICC members; and inadequate enforcement of Section 19 requirements. The authors address significant deficiencies in the legal and structural implementation of the Law, as well as acknowledging the lack of examination regarding whether training for ICC members leads to behavioural change in the workplace, exposing a major disconnect between compliance-oriented implementation efforts and resulting behaviours.

Research Objectives

Objectives of the Study

With the increasing competition at the global level, organizations are under immense pressure to strike a balance between technological progress and social responsibility. With the coming of Industry 5.0, it has become crucial to maintain social norms at workplaces where human dignity is respected. With the rising cases of workplace misconduct, compliance with the POSH guidelines through awareness of POSH training has become inevitable. While it plays a key role in bringing about social change in a workplace, its effectiveness in influencing the human behaviour is a dimension that needs to be worked upon. The study aims at examining the working of POSH (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment) training programs and their effectiveness in leading to desired workplace behaviour. The objective of the study is to explore the following issues:

- To examine how POSH training contributes to behavioural awareness and ethical conduct in organizations operating in the context of Industry 5.0.

- Study of few selected cases of POSH as they occur in real life to understand the acts of commission / omission during the time period covering the incident that occurred prior to the training session as also the time period subsequent thereto.
- To find out the views and reaction of post graduate students after attending the POSH awareness sessions.
- To obtain the opinion of the veteran POSH trainers on the effective and not so effective areas of the training, and their views on the impact, obstacles and limitations in the implementation of the activities of the POSH training.
- To identify existing strengths and gaps in present POSH training practices.
- To identify possible solutions for improving the effectiveness of POSH training within educational institutions that are grounded in human-centered design and supported by innovative technologies.

Research Methodology

Research Design

Research methodology refers to the procedures employed to implement research. In this research, the methodology employed was qualitative and the research design adopted was exploratory in nature. The main intention behind adopting this design is to elicit deeper insights into the influence of POSH on workplace behaviour in place of numerical measurements. In this respect, the case study method was employed with a view to arriving at in depth insights and perceptions about workplace behaviour. The information was collected directly from the primary sources, using the qualitative approach and by applying philosophical base of interpretation that provides qualitative exploration, through an intellectual tool known as the hermeneutics that is heavily dependent on interpreting, describing and analyzing, while concentrating on the significance of the implementation of POSH in the workplace.

Sources of Data

Primary data for the study was collected from three main sources:

- a) Case Study Analysis: A detailed analysis of POSH cases in the workplace were looked into in greater detail. A case-by-case examination of the cases helped to highlight the different types of harassment that were being complained about as well as the manner in which organisations responded to these cases, how they conducted their investigations and finally, the kind of conduct that perpetrators engaged in after undergoing mandatory training.
- b) Student Feedback: Feedback was collected from post graduate students in the age group of 20 – 24 years, who underwent POSH awareness sessions. The feedback provided by the students reflected the increase in awareness, change in mindset and confidence levels after undergoing the training sessions.
- c) Trainer Interviews: An online semi-structured interview was conducted with four TII certified POSH trainers. The interview sought to understand their experiences of conducting training sessions, the effectiveness of the training, the level of participation from the workforce and any challenges they have faced.

Sampling Technique

Cases, students and trainers were selected through Purposive sampling method for this study as they were directly involved in POSH issues. This sampling method is considered appropriate in this study because it ensures that participants with relevant knowledge and skills on POSH are selected.

Data Collection Tools

The following tools were used for data collection:

- Case records and inquiry documentation
- Structured feedback forms
- Interview schedules
- Observation notes

These tools helped in gathering detailed and reliable information.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using thematic and content analysis methodologies, and the underlying patterns and themes such as awareness, sensitivity, accountability, compliance and ethics were recognized, interpreted and examined.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics were scrupulously observed throughout the investigation. The anonymity of individuals and organisations involved was guaranteed and consent was obtained from all those involved in the survey, the data being used solely for academic purposes.

Testing of Hypothesis 1: Association between POSH Training Attendance and Awareness of Gender-Neutral Reporting Provisions*Hypothesis Statement*

The first component of the main hypothesis posited that:

H₁: POSH training attendance is significantly associated with higher awareness that individuals of any gender can report or be accused of sexual harassment under POSH guidelines.

The null hypothesis (H₀) stated that no such association exists; that is, awareness levels are independent of training attendance.

Statistical Test Selection

A chi-square test of independence was initially conducted to examine the association between POSH training attendance (Yes/No) and awareness of gender-neutral reporting provisions (Aware/Not Aware/Not Sure). However, examination of expected frequencies revealed that 33.3% of cells (2 of 6) had expected counts below 5 (Training Not Attended × Not Aware: expected = 0.56; Training Not Attended × Not Sure: expected = 0.40), violating the Cochran (1954) assumption that no more than 20% of expected frequencies should be below 5. Consequently, the Pearson chi-square statistic was deemed unreliable, and Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test—the appropriate extension of Fisher's Exact Test for contingency tables larger than 2×2—was interpreted as the valid test of significance (Field, 2018).

Results

Table 1. Cross-tabulation of POSH Training Attendance and Awareness of Gender-Neutral Reporting Provisions

	Aware (n)	Not Aware (n)	Not Sure (n)	Total (n)	% Aware
Training Attended	82	5	5	92	89.1%
Training Not Attended	6	2	0	8	75.0%
Total	88	7	5	100	88.0%

Table 2. Chi-Square and Exact Test Results

Test	Value	df	p-value	Effect Size (Cramér's V)
Pearson χ^2	4.63	2	.099	.215
Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test	—	—	.036	.215
N	100			

Note. Cramér's V = .215 indicates a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988).

Table 3. Decision Regarding Hypothesis

Criterion	Value	Threshold	Outcome
p-value (Fisher's Exact)	.036	$\alpha = .05$	Significant
Effect size (Cramér's V)	.215	$\geq .20$ (medium)	Practically meaningful
Direction of association	Trained > Untrained	—	Consistent with hypothesis

Decision: Reject the null hypothesis (H₀). The alternative hypothesis (H₁) is accepted.

Interpretation

The Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test revealed a statistically significant association between POSH training attendance and awareness of gender-neutral reporting provisions ($p = .036$). The medium effect size (Cramér's V = .215) indicates that this association is not merely statistically detectable but also practically meaningful.

Examination of the contingency table (Table 4.X.1) demonstrates the direction and magnitude of this association:

1. Awareness levels were substantially higher among respondents who had attended POSH training (89.1%, $n = 82/92$) compared to those who had not (75.0%, $n = 6/8$).
2. Unawareness levels were markedly lower among trained respondents (5.4%, $n = 5/92$) than among untrained respondents (25.0%, $n = 2/8$).

These findings provide empirical support for the first component of the main hypothesis: POSH training significantly improves awareness of gender-neutral reporting provisions under the POSH Act.

Qualification: The Uncertainty Paradox

An important qualification merits attention. All five respondents who expressed uncertainty ("Not Sure") regarding gender-neutral reporting provisions had attended POSH training. No untrained respondent selected this response category.

This finding does not contradict the hypothesis but rather refines it:

- Training reduces explicit unawareness (from 25.0% to 5.4%)
- However, training may simultaneously surface ambiguity regarding the Act's scope that untrained individuals do not contemplate
- This residual uncertainty (5.4% among trained respondents) suggests that while training successfully conveys baseline awareness, it may insufficiently address nuanced aspects of the legislation

This pattern aligns with the broader thesis of the present study: awareness is necessary but not sufficient. Training creates foundational knowledge, yet without reinforcement and experiential learning, ambiguity persists even among those who have received formal sensitization.

Summary Statement

The hypothesis that POSH training significantly improves awareness was supported. A statistically significant association was found between training attendance and awareness of gender-neutral reporting provisions (Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test, $p = .036$), with a medium effect size (Cramér's $V = .215$). Respondents who had attended POSH training demonstrated substantially higher awareness (89.1%) and markedly lower unawareness (5.4%) compared to those who had not (75.0% and 25.0%, respectively). However, the finding that uncertainty ('Not Sure') emerged exclusively among trained participants (5.4%) indicates that while training reduces explicit unawareness, it may not fully resolve ambiguity regarding the scope of the POSH Act. This qualification reinforces the study's central argument: awareness initiatives must be complemented by continuous, reinforcement-based learning to achieve complete procedural clarity.

Testing of Hypothesis 2: Association between POSH Training Attendance and Perception of Fear as a Reporting Barrier

Hypothesis Statement

The second component of the main hypothesis posited that:

H₂: POSH training attendance is NOT significantly associated with reduced perception that fear of judgment or consequences affects reporting of sexual harassment cases.

The null hypothesis (H₀) stated that no association exists; that is, perceptions of fear are independent of training attendance. The hypothesis PREDICTS a non-significant result (retention of H₀).

Variable Coding

The dependent variable—"In your opinion, does fear of judgment or consequences affect reporting of sexual harassment cases?"—was originally measured on a four-point Likert scale. Examination of the raw data revealed the following response categories in the contingency table output:

Code	Response Category
0	Strongly Agree / Agree (collapsed in output)
1	Disagree
2	Strongly Disagree

Note on coding: The contingency table displays three categories (0, 1, 2). Based on the percentage distributions and expected frequencies, code 0 represents affirmative responses

(Strongly Agree/Agree), code 1 represents Disagree, and code 2 represents Strongly Disagree. The extremely low expected frequency for code 1 (Disagree: expected = 0.32 for untrained group; 3.68 for trained group) indicates a violation of chi-square assumptions, necessitating caution in interpretation.

Contingency Table

Table 4. Cross-tabulation of POSH Training Attendance and Perception that Fear Affects Reporting

	Agree/Strongly Agree (n)	Disagree (n)	Strongly Disagree (n)	Total (n)	% Agree
Training Attended	48	3	41	92	52.2%
Training Not Attended	4	1	3	8	50.0%

Total	52	4	44	100	52.0%
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Note. Column headers have been relabeled from numerical codes for clarity: 0 = Agree/Strongly Agree, 1 = Disagree, 2 = Strongly Disagree.

Assessment of Chi-Square Assumptions

Examination of expected frequencies reveals a severe violation of chi-square assumptions:

Cell	Expected Frequency	Status
Training Not Attended × Disagree	0.32	< 5
Training Not Attended × Strongly Disagree	3.52	< 5
Training Attended × Disagree	3.68	< 5

Three of six cells (50.0%) have expected frequencies below 5. This substantially exceeds the maximum allowable threshold of 20% (Cochran, 1954; Field, 2018). The Pearson chi-square statistic ($\chi^2 = 1.66$, $p = .436$) is therefore invalid and cannot be interpreted.

Appropriate Statistical Test

For contingency tables with expected frequencies below 5, Fisher's Exact Test (or its extension, the Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test for tables larger than 2×2) provides a valid test of association without distributional assumptions.

Table 5. Post-hoc analysis using Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test

Test	Value	p-value
Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test	—	.686

The exact test yields a p-value of .686, which is not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

Effect Size

As the contingency table is 2×3 , Phi coefficient cannot be computed. Cramér's V is the appropriate effect size measure.

Effect Size Measure	Value	Interpretation*
Cramér's V	.129	Small effect
Contingency Coefficient	.128	

Interpretation benchmarks for Cramér's V with $df = 2$: .10 = small, .20 = medium, .30 = large (Cohen, 1988).

The obtained Cramér's V of .129 indicates a small effect size.

Table 6. Decision Regarding Hypothesis

Criterion	Value	Threshold	Outcome
p-value (Fisher's Exact)	.686	$\alpha = .05$	Not significant
Effect size (Cramér's V)	.129	< .20 (small)	Weak association
Direction of association	Trained (52.2% Agree) vs. Untrained (50.0% Agree)	—	Negligible difference

Decision: Fail to reject the null hypothesis (H_0). There is no statistically significant association between POSH training attendance and perception that fear affects reporting.

This finding ACCEPTS the second component of the main hypothesis. The hypothesis PREDICTED a non-significant result, and the evidence supports this prediction.

Interpretation of Findings

The Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test revealed a statistically non-significant association between POSH training attendance and perception that fear of judgment or consequences affects reporting of sexual harassment cases ($p = .686$). The small effect size (Cramér's V = .129) further confirms the absence of a meaningful relationship.

Examination of the contingency table (Table 4.Y.1) demonstrates:

1. Nearly identical agreement rates between trained (52.2%, $n = 48/92$) and untrained respondents (50.0%, $n = 4/8$).

2. Substantial agreement overall: 52.0% of all respondents (52/100) affirmed that fear affects reporting, while 44.0% (44/100) strongly disagreed and only 4.0% (4/100) disagreed.

1. No evidence of training effect: The marginal difference of 2.2 percentage points between groups is neither statistically significant nor practically meaningful.

Substantive Significance: The Fear Paradox

This finding carries substantial theoretical and practical importance for the present study.

The Fear Paradox: Despite demonstrating that POSH training significantly improves awareness of rights and reporting mechanisms (see Section 4.X), training does not appear to mitigate the pervasive perception that fear of judgment or consequences remains a barrier to reporting.

Construct	Trained	Untrained	Difference	Significance
Awareness of gender-neutral reporting	89.1%	75.0%	+14.1%	Significant (p = .036)
Perception that fear affects reporting	52.2%	50.0%	+2.2%	Not significant (p = .686)

This contrast is the central empirical contribution of the study.

The findings demonstrate a clear dissociation between cognitive knowledge acquisition and psychological safety. Training successfully transfers information and improves legal awareness, yet it fails to address the affective and institutional barriers—fear of judgment, retaliation, social stigma, and organizational mistrust—that inhibit reporting behaviour.

Summary Statement

The hypothesis that POSH training attendance is NOT associated with reduced perception of fear as a reporting barrier was supported. The Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test revealed no statistically significant association between training attendance and perceptions that fear of judgment or consequences affects reporting (p = .686), with a negligible effect size (Cramér's V = .129). Trained and untrained respondents reported nearly identical agreement rates (52.2% and 50.0%, respectively), indicating that POSH training does not mitigate the perceived psychological barriers to reporting.

This finding, considered alongside the significant association between training and awareness (Section 4.X), empirically validates the study's central thesis: awareness does not equal action. While training effectively transmits knowledge and improves legal literacy, it does not address the deeper organizational and psychological factors—fear of judgment, retaliation, and institutional mistrust—that sustain underreporting. The results underscore the urgent need for continuous, culture-oriented, and psychologically safe training models that extend beyond compliance-driven awareness to foster genuine behavioural change.

Integrated Findings Statement

The first analysis revealed a statistically significant association between POSH training attendance and awareness that individuals of any gender can report or be accused of sexual harassment under POSH guidelines (Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test, p = .036; Cramér's V = .215). Respondents who had attended training demonstrated substantially higher awareness (89.1%) compared to those who had not (75.0%), and markedly lower unawareness (5.4% vs. 25.0%). This confirms that POSH training effectively transmits legal knowledge and improves cognitive awareness of workplace harassment policies.

The second analysis revealed a statistically non-significant association between POSH training attendance and perception that fear of judgment or consequences affects reporting of sexual harassment cases (Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test, p = .686; Cramér's V = .129). Trained and untrained respondents reported nearly identical agreement rates (52.2% and 50.0%, respectively), indicating that POSH training does not mitigate the perceived psychological and institutional barriers to reporting.

Test 1:

Contingency Tables

Contingency Tables		Are you aware that individuals of any gender can report or be accused of sexual harassment under POSH guidelines?				
Have you attended a POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) awareness or training session?		0	1	2	Total	
0	Observed	2	0	6	8	
	Expected	0.560	0.400	7.04	8.00	
	% within row	25.0 %	0.0 %	75.0 %	100.0 %	
	% within column	28.6 %	0.0 %	6.8 %	8.0 %	
	% of total	2.0 %	0.0 %	6.0 %	8.0 %	
1	Observed	5	5	82	92	
	Expected	6.440	4.600	80.96	92.00	
	% within row	5.4 %	5.4 %	89.1 %	100.0 %	
	% within column	71.4 %	100.0 %	93.2 %	92.0 %	
	% of total	5.0 %	5.0 %	82.0 %	92.0 %	
Total	Observed	7	5	88	100	
	Expected	7	5	88	100	
	% within row	7.0 %	5.0 %	88.0 %	100.0 %	
	% within column	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	
	% of total	7.0 %	5.0 %	88.0 %	100.0 %	

χ^2 Tests			
	Value	df	p
χ^2	4.63	2	0.099
N	100		

Nominal	
	Value
Contingency coefficient	0.210
Phi-coefficient	NaN
Cramer's V	0.215

Test 2:

χ^2 Tests			
	Value	df	p
χ^2	1.66	2	0.436
N	100		

Nominal	
	Value
Contingency coefficient	0.128
Phi-coefficient	NaN
Cramer's V	0.129

Results and Findings of the Data Collected

Case Study Analysis

Case 1: The complainant was a senior Director at the National Academy of Audit and Accounts. She alleged that her senior, the Respondent, had committed misconduct by indulging in physical acts with her at her residence after a dinner at officers' mess. The complainant submitted that at the dinner function, the Respondent had heavily drinks, and he had forcibly entered her quarters and when she told him not to, he physically restrained her, and attempted to commit an act that would amount to an outrage of her modesty. The respondent appears to have treated the officers' mess and its extension as his personal domain rather than as part of a working environment. The case highlights that even with broad awareness of the POSH laws, there may be instances where those in power and positions of influence disregard appropriate and professional conduct. This is particularly evident in the case of workplace relationships that may exist beyond formal working hours. Simply being aware of the mighty attitude, act with absolute disregard to what is expected of them while at the workplace.

Case 2: In this case, a sexual harassment and victimisation case was brought up when a senior official to a educational institution sent an unwanted and lewd love letter to a school principal, asking for sexual contact. This was reported to the Chief Executive Officer by the principal, following which she was terminated based on anonymous 'concerns'. The High Court later reinstated the principal, stating that there was enough evidence that the official had sexually harassed her, and that the institution had victimised her for reporting it. It is clear that the official was motivated by sexual and other ulterior agendas, and that institutions can misbehave even when they have functioning Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) committees. Case law shows that having POSH Committees in place, is not always enough to ensure that proper procedures and management practices are in place to police the behaviour of officials and managers towards employees.

Case 3: Case study: A Secretary of Defence Force at a national training academy allegedly drunkenly fondled and invaded the personal space of the Director People and Culture at an official dinner in the Director's residence. The respondent argued that the assault did not occur at work and therefore did not engage the workplace behaviour protocol. However, the analysis determined that the assault was a workplace incident based on the proximity of the behaviour and the power dynamic at play. This case illustrates how people in authority positions can fail to appreciate or consider the extent of the 'workplace' when the location is residential or informal. It also reflects the disconnect between learning and the time taken for an individual to properly come to appreciate the workplace extension factors at play.

Case 4: In this case, the act complained of allegedly took place at a social meeting attended by public servants. The complaint alleged that a High Ranking Official (HRO) used his official capacity to coercively enter the residential home of an acquaintance, allegedly in an effort to harass and intimidate them. The respondent argued that a dwelling house is a distinct entity from an official office and that therefore actions carried out in a home could not be classed as occurring in the workplace. However, the conciliator found that the circumstances indicated that the contact had taken place within the context of a working relationship and so in a work environment. The conciliator's finding that the home was considered part of the workplace in this case points to the continuing issue of employers and officials not always realising that civil servants consider to extend their place of work beyond working hours in the "notional extension" of their workplace, and so that improper conduct in a residence is not always recognised for what it is a breach of boundaries.

Case 5: These cases together examined many instances where there was serious misconduct exhibited by people in high-level positions of government and education. An example was a senior government employee who exhibited both physical and sexual misconduct during a railway tour with officials. Another example was the inappropriate termination of an employee based on the contents of a letter that was sent by the employee to a member of the educational establishment. A third example was the inappropriate gender-specific behaviour exhibited by a government official towards an employee working on an overseas assignment, as well as intimidation during that same assignment. All three examples highlight the patterns exhibited by those in senior positions of authority abusing their professional hierarchy and taking advantage of non-traditional work settings, such as travel and official tours. Therefore, while many organizations appear to comply with the requirements of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy, the failure of training to produce valid behaviours has resulted in an absence of accountability for these individuals to exhibit appropriate behaviour.

Case 6: In this case review, there was a focus on misconduct and institutional failures in the redressal system. For example, there was a case where a director forced entry into a colleague's private quarters after an official dinner. In another instance, a senior official's inappropriate written communication led to retaliatory action, terminating the complainant. Other examples include inappropriate physical gestures during professional tours and verbal intimidation in the laboratory. Overall, these examples illustrate the gap between the theoretical knowledge of POSH policies and the actual practice of ethical behaviour. Respondents, with the backing of hierarchy and power, take advantage of the extended working hours to exploit the gaps between policy and practice.

The data collected includes that sexual harassment in the workplace often goes beyond the physical workplace (office) to include "extended workplaces" such as official housing, travelling on business and social events, where the workplace is seen to have more relaxed professional boundaries. The examples provide a disturbing pattern in which senior staff take advantage of their higher title/seniority and informal location to justify their inappropriate behaviour through lewd acts, ignoring consent and subsequently using blame-shifting and emotional manipulation. Another major problem noted is the absence of an effective institutional redress mechanism. Many internal committees show prejudice against complainants/complaints, minimise the severity of complaints, retaliate against complainants or provide no accountability to the perpetrator. The research is indicative of how POSH policies may exist in an institution's policy manual but the knowledge and behaviour of senior leadership are primarily complacent and superficial (little to no understanding or empathy). The implications demonstrate that training must include more than the definition of sexual harassment and compliance with the law; training must include more than an understanding of practical boundaries, consent in a mixed-use work environment and further strengthen the independence and accountability of an institution's internal committee to stop retaliation against complainants and assure real behavioural change occurs.

Student Feedback Analysis

An analysis of the survey data shows that a majority of the students have participated in POSH Awareness sessions / POSH training and feel they have knowledge of the POSH Act. Further, the majority of respondents strongly agreed that prior to entering the corporate world,

POSH training is needed and that it should be a requirement prior to internships and job placements; implying they have a positive view of Formal POSH education.

However, upon further exploration of the participants' responses, there are gaps that exist. The participants stated that they were "totally aware" of the Act; however, there were also numerous participants who were "somewhat aware" or "have just heard of it." Furthermore, while a higher percentage of participants responded positively about there being new harassment issues associated with digital platforms, a minority stated they were unsure of reporting avenues, and a few indicated they were unsure if POSH protections are available to all genders. Lastly, a small number of participants indicated uncertainty as to who to approach after being subjected to harassment; therefore they have little knowledge of how to address harassment, even though they had theoretical awareness.

The other notable observation is that the majority of the participants were of the view that fear of judgment or consequences is an overriding factor in the reporting of cases of sexual harassment. This indicates that although awareness exists, barriers still influence action. It is, therefore, evident that the overall feedback indicates a difference between awareness and action, and this is in line with the main theme of this research, which is moving from awareness to actual behavioural readiness.

The research study yielded the following five key findings:

1. The value of POSH training is highly perceived as critical for all students before they can transition from their academic life to the workplace and provide those students with an internship opportunity.
2. Most respondents reported a significant increase in the number of ways harassment can happen due to the increases in the number of platforms available for employees to engage with each other digitally.
3. Nearly all participants endorsed the development of gender-inclusive POSH policy and, as such, expect all POSH policies to provide protection to all sexes/genders without any preference to one sex or gender over another, indicating a more progressive mindset among young professionals than their predecessors.
4. Fear of retribution, judgment, or shame continues to be a significant barrier for individuals reporting potential violations of POSH Policies, showing that the knowledge of the existence of the policy does not necessarily equate to a willingness to report a violation of the policy.
5. Although participants were knowledgeable in their understanding of POSH Policies, some participants exhibited a lack of understanding of the reporting structure established to accept reports and the procedure for reporting potential violations of POSH Policies.

The implications of the findings are that although awareness of POSH among students is high, there is a need to strengthen their behavioural readiness and procedural understanding. It is clear that training programs are effective in instilling positive attitudes towards safety and inclusivity but may not be entirely effective in instilling understanding.

The high level of awareness of the implications of digital harassment suggests that POSH training should not focus merely on the physical workplace but should also cover online meetings, online messaging, internships, and even the blended workplace.

Most importantly, the findings support the main argument of this research that awareness is not enough. POSH training, in order to be effective in the Industry 5.0 scenario, should not simply focus on awareness but should also instil confidence, clarity, and behavioural accountability.

Trainer Interviews

1. Analysis of Training Techniques through Qualitative Measures

Overall, the research demonstrates a movement away from teaching law theoretically (compliance with the law) toward providing experiential learning rooted in empathy (i.e., "living the scenario"). This shift from "reading the act" to "living through the scenario" has been cited as the most significant factor in effective retention.

- Pedagogical Shift: The use of role plays and video cases/films lessens the "apathy gap" that exists in traditional corporate training programs.
- Expert Testimony: The experts in the training program have indicated that using content that participants can relate to is very important:
"Real life examples/scenarios are the most powerful because people can relate to how the law is applied to real life."
- Finding: Static training using PowerPoint presentations is being replaced with Dynamic Interactive Sessions to enable participants not only to learn about laws but also to be able to rapidly and accurately identify violations of laws as they occur.

2. Structural Integrity and the Paradox of the 'Internal Committee' (IC)

The major research finding of this study is the inherent paradox of power inherent in the hierarchy of an organization. The 'Internal' nature of the 'Justice' being delivered by the 'Internal Committee' is, in fact, a paradox.

- The Power Imbalance: The 'Internal' nature of the IC, in many instances, results in a 'chilling effect' on the complainant.
- Expert Testimony:
"One gap is that some organizations might try to brush aside complaints to avoid the hassle... ICs are often composed of people within the organization, which can result in bias if the respondent is from the top management."
- Interpretation: For the IC to be effective, the role of the 'External Member' is to act as a 'Sovereign Auditor' and not as a 'Legal Consultant'.

3. The "Digital Frontier": Harassment in Industry 5.0

The workplace has become a "Digital Frontier" and, as a result, there are no longer physical boundaries in the workplace. Technology has created "Grey Zones", where it is more difficult to identify harassment.

- Evidence Manipulation: With the advent of the "Delete for Everyone" function or ephemeral messaging on certain sites, digital forensic evidence in POSH cases faces new challenges related to the potential erasure of evidence from electronic records.
- Expert Testimony:
"Technologies such as WhatsApp provide individuals with the ability to easily delete messages... they also provide individuals with the ability to electronically transcribe and forward communications—this can create an entirely new avenue for improper use of electronic communications."
- Finding: Organizations need to amend Electronic Communication Policies to incorporate expressly defined clauses regarding the use of Private Messaging Platforms (e.g., WhatsApp) when conducting official business.

4. Socio-Cultural Interpretation: The Gendered Silence

There is a significant gap in Awareness and Disclosure. Although women are more aware of their rights, the fear of talking continues to remain a barrier in the workplace, especially when men are involved.

- The Comfort Threshold: Awareness programs are effective in creating awareness, but the "Stigma of Reporting" has not yet been completely eradicated.
- Expert Testimony:
"It's rare to see them share personal experiences in that setting [mixed-gender groups], but lately, women have become more open to speaking about it."
- Analysis: The change is incremental but sure. The "Me Too" phenomenon has penetrated the collective Indian corporate mind, leading to an increase in formal investigations, although not necessarily open discussions.

5. Institutional Findings: The Role of Early Education

The data reveals that the gap in the training process is the absence of "Pre-Corporate" Ethical Training.

- The Early Intervention Model: It is a failure in the system to wait for an MBA graduate to reach their first job to begin POSH training.
- Expert Testimony:
"It involves developing a civic sense in individuals from an early age... This should start in childhood, rather than waiting until people enter the corporate world."
- Strategic Recommendation: Educational institutions must go beyond the classroom to achieve academic excellence in the classroom to include Workplace Ethics and Gender Sensitization as non-credit, mandatory courses.

Findings and Discussion

A combination of three important sources of information including analysis of cases, feedback from students, and interviews with trainers who provide training about POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) has been used in this research giving an overall look at how training about POSH has been applied to behaviour in the work environment.

Results from Analysis of Cases

It is clear from the analysis of four cases of POSH handled by the researcher that employees who have received training in sensitisation programs respond differently to misconduct at work than those who have not. The employees who had taken part in structured awareness training were more likely to have a better understanding of what to do when reporting misconduct, where their professional boundaries lie, and what constitutes acceptable behaviour than those without any prior training. Employees who reported misconduct had a greater degree of confidence to approach the Internal Committee (IC) for assistance, while respondents had a higher degree of awareness about their legal and ethical obligations.

However, the analysis of some cases showed that, despite prior sensitisation training, individuals continued to engage in inappropriate behaviour. This was especially true when there were hierarchies, informal power structures, and/or cultural norms at play within

organisations. From a practitioner's standpoint, the aforementioned findings highlight the fact that awareness is not guaranteed to lead to ethical behaviour without the support of strong institutional values and a commitment to accountability from leadership.

Findings from Student Feedback

Postgraduate students attending POSH awareness sessions provided feedback indicating a significant improvement in their understanding of their rights at work, grievance process, and personal responsibility. Many indicated that they were able to identify some of the more subtle and indirect forms of harassment that are so often normalised in the workplace.

When it comes to discussing sensitive topics and seeking support from the institution, students indicated that they now have more confidence in doing so. However, many of the respondents conveyed that continued engagement through practical illustrations would enhance their learning and retention. Therefore, while awareness sessions create a solid foundation for initial awareness, uninterrupted development through behaviour change requires ongoing reinforcement and experiential learning.

Insights from Trainer Interviews

The interviews conducted with certified POSH trainers provided insight into the challenges encountered when delivering training. Most trainers placed a high level of importance on providing interactive methodologies as well as examples from their context, along with having the organisational backing, in order to ensure participant engagement.

In addition, trainers also noted that behavioural change is a lengthy and complex process that can be affected by one's own values, workplace culture, and the way managers lead. Barriers to change included the difficulty of changing one's established behaviours, how culture shapes behaviours, and the limited follow-up after the training session. The researcher personally relates to the barriers identified by trainers based on their professional experience of facilitating and conducting POSH programs.

Integrated Discussion

Overall, POSH training was shown to positively affect awareness of sexual assault and harassment, confidence to report, and an organisation's compliance orientation to such behaviours. The degree of continuing changes for behaviours associated with POSH training will depend on a number of interdependent variables (leadership commitment, an organisational culture of cooperation and encouragement; as well as opportunities for continuing learning).

Industry 5.0 Principles A Crosswalk with the Study's Findings. This study's findings highlight the value of marrying technology with human-focused values across the spectrum of Industry 5.0. Digital methods facilitate accessibility and record keeping. To accomplish significant changes, empathy, ethics, and reflective behaviours of leaders will be critical.

Conclusion

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Training: POSH Training on Behavioural Influences Within Emerging Industry 5.0. This research used a qualitative case study-based methodology to gather data in the form of lived experiences (real-life examples), participant perspectives and practitioner italics, to determine whether initiatives designed to increase awareness lead to responsible behaviours.

The results of this research confirm that there is often a disconnect between knowing the law and actually practicing it. As organisations transition, under the model of Industry 5.0 from traditional to innovative; from traditional through human centred growth to ethical responsibility; and with the added emphasis on ethical leadership and inclusiveness, behaviourally implementing POSH policy within the workplace is often incomplete and inconsistent.

The data illustrates that harassment exists in many formal organisational settings but in the absence of formal scrutiny, where professional hierarchies exist, harassment is present in what are termed "extended workplace" environments. Factors such as seniority, informal power dynamics (or use of informal power), and institutional impact create environments in which consent is not reinforced or boundaries are repeatedly disregarded. The path to achieving true workplace culture change is not only based on teaching awareness; it is also based on embedding accountability, empathy, and ethical leadership within the day-to-day workplace culture. Shifting to action from awareness requires the following: structural reform; behavioural sensitivity; and a substantial degree of institutional courage.

Based on the study's findings, training on POSH can make a significant contribution toward increasing legal awareness, sensitivity and confidence in both the employees and students participating in the training program. The use of well-structured and planned sensitization programs is essential to create an improved understanding of professional boundaries within organizations, as well as an improved understanding of grievance redressal mechanisms.

However, while it is important to raise awareness, simply being aware of an issue does not guarantee that the individual will behave either ethically or morally. Many factors will influence how an individual chooses to behave, including organizational culture, involvement by leaders, and opportunities for continued learning and development.

It has been shown that when there is ethical leadership and participative engagement, employees have a greater sense of accountability and a higher level of trust in institutions when they have been involved in a POSH initiative. In order to be successful in implementing POSH training within the framework of Industry 5.0, POSH needs to be seen as a strategic human development initiative instead of a required statutory requirement; technology-enabled platforms combined with experiential learning and empathetic facilitation methods will help strengthen ethical workplace practices. The findings from this study will contribute to both the academic literature on POSH as well as providing guidance on how to implement POSH training effectively in order to create sustainable, inclusive and respectful working environments.

Limitations and Scope for Future Research

The study used a qualitative, case-based methodology to provide depth at the expense of generalizability to all sectors. Due to relying mainly on documented case studies and survey responses, some internal organizational dynamics may have gone unrecognized. There is also likely a response bias as participants likely answered in a socially desirable manner. Moreover, the organisation of the study predominantly focused on formal organisations, which may not reflect the composition of informal or small workplaces.

Although this research offers valuable evidence regarding the effectiveness of POSH training, the limitations described below need to be addressed before drawing any definitive conclusions.

First, the study was conducted with a limited number of cases as well as student participants and trainer interviews. While this enabled a detailed qualitative analysis, findings are not generalizable across all types of organisational environments.

Second, this research relied heavily on self-reported feedback and interview responses from participants; therefore, the responses could have been impacted by social desirability bias. Participants may have provided positive feedback because of the sensitive nature of POSH.

Third, this study only examined short- to medium-term outcomes of training interventions. This study does not include a longitudinal analysis of behavioural change over long-term periods.

Subsequent research designs will likely incorporate both longitudinal and mixed methodologies to make a long-term behavioral assessment of POSH training. Examining organizations of varying sizes across sectors and regions will enhance the body of knowledge on this topic. Future researchers may also wish to investigate how artificial intelligence, learning analytics, and digital engagement tools can enhance training effectiveness in Industry 5.0.

In addition, an examination of policy and recommendation-making processes from various stakeholders — including executives and policymakers can enhance institutional commitment levels by assessing governance processes that support the institutional commitment to POSH training.

Future research should utilise longitudinal methodologies to track behavioral changes after POSH training over time. Researchers can also collect sector-specific insights via comparative studies of various industries, such as corporate, government, education, and start-ups. There is also increased urgency to explore digital and hybrid workplaces in relation to Industry 5.0, as this is an area where blurring of the boundaries between personal and professional spaces is becoming more common.

Finally, continuing to provide new research on the effectiveness of leadership accountability models, Independent Internal Committee frameworks, and psychological safety indicators will result in major advancements in building systems of workplace justice. Building out this area of research will serve to break down barriers between policy and the reality employees experience in their workplaces.

Recommendations

The evidence supports that awareness alone is inadequate and POSH training has to transition from being viewed as a compliance requirement towards a behavioural transformational tool. Likewise, organisations need to redefine their current notion of workplace for employees and that the sense of accountability should extend to any space connected to their professional relationships regardless on if these are official tours of duty or for activities that occur well outside the typical bounds of employment such as renting/occupying employer's residential property to attending social dinners, having virtual meetings or meeting in any other location that could be classified as being connected to employee's work.

Secondly, another significant area of focus must be on senior leadership. There were many examples where misuse of authority occurred through the hierarchy; therefore, it creates the impression of immunity using one's position of power. Thus, it is suggested that all senior leaders must receive leadership specific POSH modules, training on ethical accountability in the workplace and periodic behavioural audits. Internal Committees should operate as independent entities without institutional pressures placed upon them and, where possible, should receive third party oversight. Conducting real life case studies/discussion, providing scenario-based training/learning experiences and having open dialogue sessions will ensure a greater level of application and impact from training.

Limitations of the Study and Scope of Further Research in This Area

The case-based approach and qualitative nature of this research allow for a thorough examination of the data; however, the generalizability of those findings to other industries is limited. The reliance on survey responses and review of existing documentation to identify potential trends means that some internal factors or issues within the organization may not have been available for analysis. Another limitation of this research is the potential for participants to provide responses that reflect social pressures rather than their true feelings. The majority of the research focused on formally structured organizations, but there are many informal or small/medium-sized business structures that were not represented in this research.

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