

Seminar on Prevention of Sexual Harassment Within the Workplace

Martha Farrell

PRIA, New Delhi

March 2010

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

- **Even though there are more women in the workplace, it still remains a male centric area**
- **Discrimination exists in all forms and sexual harassment is one of the most severe**
- **Organisations seem determined to treat sexual threats, aggression and intimidation as trivial issues and often as a figment of a woman's imagination**

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

- **Why are women not enraged at these incidents?**
- **Is the fear of reprisal and further victimisation and intimidation keeping a lid on a growing problem?**
- **Why do they not find the environment of the organisation supportive in making complaints?**

Our Experience

- **Organisations have low commitment towards gender issues**
- **Mere presence of women in the workplace is assumed to indicate their representation and inclusion of their voice**
- **Committees will be constituted only when there is a case of sexual harassment**

Our Experiences

- **Women have dealt with the issue by either ignoring the same or quitting their jobs or life**
- **Sexual harassment is viewed as harmless fun by male colleagues which includes abusive language, lewd jokes, looks and gestures**
- **Women must develop a “thick skin”, be “less emotional”, “bold” in order to survive**
- **Organisations are smaller spaces to affect change and initiate action against harassers and create spaces for women to speak up**

Ways Forward

- **Why are we here today?**
- **To deliberate on the role that we all can play as**
 - **Individuals**
 - **Representatives of organisations**
 - **Collectives and networks**
- **To use our collective experiences to create effective mechanisms for**
 - **Effective implementation of the Vishaka Guidelines**
 - **Advocacy for the passage of the Bill**
 - **Build capacities and raise awareness on this issue**



Thank you