

## **Women's safety, security and dignity are paramount for gender balance and growth, says top UP Police officer**

**NEW DELHI, March 6, 2017: Ms. Sutapa Sanyal, Director General of Police, U.P. Police Mahila Samman Prakoshth**, today underscored the provision of safety, security and dignity of women both at the workplace and their homes by urging the stakeholders to regard the issues as critical infrastructure inputs such as water, electricity and roads. She urged employers to provide a work environment that help women to realize their full potential and achieve gender balance in the work space.

Addressing a workshop on **'Women Safety at Workplace'**, Ms. Sanyal said the need for gender balance was critical in raising a country's GDP. She said that in a full potential scenario roughly \$28 trillion or 26 per cent could be added to global GDP.

On the occasion, a **FICCI-EY report 'Reflections on the State of Women Safety at the Workplace in India'**, released by Ms. Sanyal, states that for tackling sexual harassment at the workplace, there was a need for invoking a strong commitment to this cause, creating a mechanism to address different perspectives, managing issues effectively and utilizing diligent investigative mechanisms.

The report also suggests ways for enhancing the safety of women at the workplace in India such as getting women to speak up, deploying technology, adopting a zero tolerance policy, dealing with cultural matters, engaging third-party service providers, instituting gender-sensitization trainings, mandating appropriate work practices and instituting safe working conditions.

"Greater number of women stepping out in the corporate world today has prompted organizations to build safer working establishments for women employees in India. While issues related to cases of sexual harassment at workplace are a major concern for corporates today, there exist many other factors that need to be accounted for to enable safer workplace for employees. The onus is on corporates to set the tone at the top that focuses on gender based challenges and enable sensitising trainings that reinforces the commitment of organizations to safer work environment," said **Ms. Saguna Sodhi, Executive Director, Fraud Investigation & Dispute Services, EY India**.

In his theme presentation, **Mr. Uday Dutt, Advisor, EY Fraud Investigation & Dispute Services**, said that with increasing number of women joining the workforce, it has become critical for organizations to reinforce the need to foster safer establishments. The growth in tier two and three cities into potential business hubs has also contributed to a higher number of women stepping into the corporate world. Thus, a strong stance toward fostering an inclusive environment and addressing workplace harassment issues can help in building a safer work environment in India.

**Ms. Ambika Sharma, Director General - International, FICCI and Chairperson, Internal Complaints Committee, FICCI,** said that safety should not be just confined to the physical environment of the office but should address all interactions that women engage in as part of the work. It was necessary to implement robust procedures as often most of the women employees were hesitant to bring this issue of harassment to the notice of the management. Hence a strong commitment from the organizations and sensitive treatment for all complaints with due diligence and speedy redressal was required and responsibility of an organization to assure women to bring up issues before the committee.

She said, “At FICCI we follow the code of conduct to keep women employees safe and have set up a committee to address issue of sexual harassment which I chair and I am happy to share with all of you that FICCI is very women friendly and safe place to work.”

The session was moderated by **Mr. Sumeet Gupta, Director, FICCI.**

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