

# CREATING INCLUSIVE SPACES

## COMMITTEE FOR MANAGING GENDER ISSUES



*IIMA adopts a strict stance against sexual harassment. Apart from the Committee for Managing Gender Issues, which is the official body, we also have other community led initiatives such as Students Against Sexual Harassment (SASH) and IIM Ally, working on issues spanning gender and sexuality. This month's edition is a window into these informal bodies and their work around campus.*

**IIM Ally** is the LGBTQ+ resource group of IIM Ahmedabad, working to create a safe space for the queer community. IIM Ally is driven by the support from students, teachers, staff and family on campus. The group collaborates with other clubs of IIM Ahmedabad to promote a harmonious culture on campus for all individuals, irrespective of their sexual identity. IIM Ally is motivated by the thought that being an ally is more than silent acceptance. It strives to create a society where everyone is equal irrespective of their sexual or gender identity.

**Students Against Sexual Harassment (SASH)** is a club with the primary objective of creating a safe environment within the college for the entire IIMA fraternity. It consists of three cells: awareness, event, and wellness. Some of the activities this year were an online quiz based on the topic "Prevention of Sexual Harassment," which educated the participants on this front. A wellness survey was also floated to understand the problems being faced by the community. An event regarding Good and Bad touch was also conducted in collaboration with Prayaas club to increase awareness amongst the children regarding the issue.

Please note that while other forums are available, CMGI is the sole official body authorised to deal with sexual harassment complaints. You can reach out to us at [chr-cmgi@iima.ac.in](mailto:chr-cmgi@iima.ac.in). All communications will be confidential.

# GOOD TOUCH BAD TOUCH

*Sexual harassment targeting children has seen shocking numbers, especially in India. As per the Crime in India Report for 2021 released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), there is a 16.2% increase in crimes against children placing the total cases at 1,49,404. Out of this, 38.1% cases are registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act<sup>1</sup>. Even then, claims have been made that the actual numbers may be much higher owing to reporting errors<sup>2</sup>. It is also seen that most cases go unreported due to various factors<sup>3</sup>. The pandemic induced lockdown saw increased vulnerability of children who were staying with abusers with limited access to external help. The period also saw increased sexual abuse cases online<sup>4</sup>. Recent statistics also point out how the perpetrator is often someone who is known to the child, in most cases an authority figure whom the child trusts<sup>5</sup>. It thus becomes imperative that children are taught how to identify if someone is misusing their proximity.*

**Shivangi Jain**, a SASH member, gives an overview of a session conducted on child sexual abuse.



SASH, in collaboration with Prayaas, organized a workshop on 'Good Touch Bad Touch' for students from economically weaker backgrounds. The event was aimed at making the children aware of the different touches they may experience and classifying those into appropriate and inappropriate. Good touches are those that are not abusive (such as hugs from family, a pat on the back, or shaking hands), while bad touches are those that are abusive and involve touching a child's private body parts. The objective was also to teach how to react in each of the scenarios.

For the session, the children were divided into groups of 10 each. They were given a worksheet containing various images/pictures of different kinds of touches, e.g., hug from parents, a stranger touching on a bus etc. The children were asked to classify them as good or bad. They were also asked to express how they felt in each of the situations.

After the activity, they were shown two videos elaborating further on Good Touch and Bad Touch. The students were told about the different kind of situations and how to respond in each of them. The session concluded by answering the questions that the students had. The workshop was successful in communicating the various abuses that they might unknowingly face and telling them the importance of speaking up if they face any uncomfortable situation in their life.



1 NCRB. (2021). Crime in India 2021. Ministry of Home Affairs. Crime in India 2021 | National Crime Records Bureau (ncrb.gov.in)

2 "To Tackle Rising Cases of Child Sex Abuse, the NCRB Must Address Gaps in POCSO Data," accessed October 25, 2022, <https://thewire.in/government/tackle-rising-cases-child-sex-abuse-ncrb-gaps-pocso-data>.

3 Crossbarrier, "Gross Facts about Child Abuse in India," Cross Barriers (blog), June 6, 2016, <https://crossbarriers.org/gross-facts-child-abuse-in-india/>.

4 Ramya Kannan, "COVID-19 Pandemic Fuelled Rise in Child Sexual Abuse Online: Report," The Hindu, October 20, 2021, sec. India, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/covid-19-pandemic-fuelled-rise-in-child-sexual-abuse-online-report/article37098788.ece>.

5 Nithya Nair, "Child Abuse in India: 5 Shocking Facts Revealed by the UNICEF | India.Com," accessed October 25, 2022, <https://www.india.com/viral/child-abuse-in-india-5-shocking-facts-revealed-by-the-unicef-125712/>.



Committee for Managing Gender Issues primarily acts as an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) under the POSH Act for all cases related to sexual harassment. More details about the composition and its members can be accessed [here](#). Apart from this, CMGI also aims to create an inclusive space free of discrimination and harassment based on gender. It also builds awareness surrounding sexual harassment through multiple outreach activities. We address some of the recurring questions that have come up during our interactions with the students.

***The POSH Act only protects women. Men get sexually harassed as well, and what about false allegations levelled on us?***

While the POSH Act is not gender-neutral, it doesn't stop us from having a gender equal policy. CMGI recognises that it is not just women who face sexual violence; our policy reflects that. As for false allegations, there are penalties instituted for the same if the committee finds that this has been done with malicious intent.

***Why are you talking only about sexual harassment? Don't topics such as discrimination, bullying, and body shaming deserve the same attention?***

The primary role of the CMGI is to function as the ICC for IIMA. At the same time, we also address broader issues under the ambit of gender. The newsletter, informal discussions with students, and Friday Safe Spaces are all initiatives to kick-start a healthy discourse on gender within our community.

***It would be helpful if there is a booklet or rule book where the procedure is listed clearly so we can look it up if the need arises.***

The CMGI policy document, available on the [website](#), has detailed explanations. Also, the community members can directly reach out to the committee members in case of any queries. We are happy to assist you.

***Orientation sessions serve a limited role. We would want more one-to-one sessions and interactive activities.***

The CMGI is always available to assist any member with issues regarding sexual harassment. Feel free to get in touch with us, and remember that the entire process will remain confidential. We also have group discussions and screenings lined up for you in the coming months. If there is any other activity that you feel the CMGI should spearhead, please do reach out to us.

***What is the requirement for separate bodies such as SASH and IIM Ally? Shouldn't all these be consolidated to ensure non-duplication of efforts?***

These bodies work under the broad ambit of gender issues. However, it is essential to note that the CMGI is a legally mandated body with vested powers. SASH and IIM Ally carry out initiatives that are significant in their respective spheres. However, they do not have the legal mandate to look into sexual harassment. Informal student-led groups serve a crucial role in spreading awareness and ensuring that the community has multiple forums that can be approached as and when needed. The bodies work in tandem and complement each other.

If you feel you have been subjected to sexual harassment or if you would like to make any suggestions to us regarding curbing sexual harassment or gender bias on campus, please reach out to us at:  
Email: [chr-cmgi@iima.ac.in](mailto:chr-cmgi@iima.ac.in)  
Phone: 97129 15533  
Please note that any communication with the CMGI is strictly confidential.

The monthly newsletter from the Committee for Managing Gender Issues (CMGI) is an attempt to initiate conversations on discrimination, gender bias, sexual harassment, and related issues. We would love to have the community participate. Please reach out to Therese Abraham at [theresea@iima.ac.in](mailto:theresea@iima.ac.in) for submissions, queries, and/or feedback.