

'No Excuses' for sexual harassment

2 B'lore-based firms float e-learning solution to check workplace harassment

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RASHMI, a cheery 20 something techie, is the only lady in her team of 10 people at work. This single girl has had her share of unsolicited invites for dates, crude jokes and unsavory screen savers on neighbouring computers. Rashmi didn't like what was happening but wasn't sure whether these bordered on sexual harassment. Neither could she ask anyone.

A scenario that is quite common in the Indian corporate world where the words 'sexual harassment' are still spoken in hush-hush tones.

Now, two Bangalore-based firms, Interweave, a consultancy in diversity management, and Tarang Software, an e-learning solutions company, are coming out with an e-learning solution on sexual harassment aptly called 'No Excuses'.

The courseware, initially targeted at the IT and ITeS sectors, is expected to help companies educate their employees about how to create a safe and respectful workplace. It will help companies comply with statutory requirements, while also being a cost-efficient way to reach out to staff in multi-locations.

Speaking about the 'No Excuses' module, Nirmala Menon, CEO, Interweave says: "With the help of real-life cases, the learner is guided through the subject, from recognising sexual harassment to how to prevent and report incidents appropriately. Through the narrator, the learner gets as close an experience as possible to a class room session, with the added advantage of it being self paced and available 24x7 for employees to go to whenever they want." The 70-minute interactive module

will be customised for companies which will include information on the complaints committee and who are the people to be contacted for counselling and reporting. After the session, employees have to take an assessment test and get certified.

Sexual harassment could range from small irritating cases like being asked for dates or

NO RULES YET

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movies, e-mails, screensavers and pictures in indecent poses, behaviour like sitting too close or putting a hand over the shoulder to the more serious cases of asking for favours. According to Ms Menon, "about 80% of instances are the annoying kind and are solved once you tell the manager and a strong word from him. The rest 20% constitute the ones taken forward and complaints registered by the employees."

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