

A survey to check the compliance with the act by various companies shows that a startling 97 per cent of the establishments have not complied with it. What is even more shocking is that 86 per cent of them are not even aware of the existence of such a law that protects women in work places.

"Our survey at Mumbai's business districts of Nariman Point and Parel shows that there is a shockingly apathetic attitude among various managements on the issue of sexual harassment of women at workplaces," says Vishal Kedia, investment professional-turned entrepreneur, who launched an outfit called Complykaro. "The law is clear and quite harsh at that."

Under The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013, it is mandatory for all companies and organisations with more than 10 people to have their own Internal Complaint Committees (ICCs) to deal with the complaints of sexual harassment of women. Non-compliance could have serious consequences including imprisonment and closing down of the violating companies. Recently, a Chennai-based company was imposed a hefty penalty of ₹1.68 crore by Madras High Court for non-compliance.

"The management of a company which does not have its ICC and where a sexual harassment case occurs can face the charges of abetting the crime," says Kedia, who, along with his wife Neha, has now taken up spreading the awareness about the anti-sexual harassment act as his life's mission. They have addressed a media seminar at Mumbai Press Club, spoken at various industry forums such as ASSOCHAM and PR professionals' national body PRCI as part of the awareness campaign.

**Online training** Advised by full service law firm, Rajani Singhania & Partners, Complykaro has managed an impressive list of clientele, which includes Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI), Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), Gems & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), international



Kedia: spreading awareness

airlines, MNC banks, production houses, e-commerce establishments and several other listed companies, apart from small and medium enterprises. Complykaro has developed a one of a kind online training modules for employees and ICC members in multiple languages and offers them solutions to incorporate.

Kedia, a commerce graduate from Mumbai University, has done his Executive Masters in Business Administration (EMBA) from National University of Singapore. He began his career by joining his family's tourism business, Ramniranjan Kedia Group, and later joined Enam Holdings. At Enam, he headed the company's new and emerging business initiatives, while being part of the PE team. But the entrepreneur bug bit him and soon he started Complykaro.

"As an organisation that employs both men and women, we want them to feel safe to come to work and to know that we take any grievances related to harassment seriously," says Amit Goenka, VP, finance & company secretary, Hindustan Composites Limited, a Mumbai-based listed entity. HCL, which had a Complykaro team training its employees, says the module was very well received "and we hope this will lead to an environment more conducive to working in harmony." Priyanka Goel, head, HR, Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council, is also happy with Kedia's team's presentation.

"The Act has come out as a result of the untiring efforts of Vishakha,

## LAW

# Ignorance is not bliss

**W**omen in work places often suffer sexual harassment silently, fearing adverse repercussions. And this phenomenon is common across establishments – big and small. The harassment could come as dirty jokes, innuendos, ogling, inappropriate and uncalled for remarks, photographs, text messaging and even MMS.

The Anti-sexual Harassment Act, enacted in December 2013 does not seem to have made any difference.



