

What is the SHe-Box Portal?

SHe-Box (Sexual Harassment electronic Box) is a centralised online complaint and monitoring portal launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, to facilitate reporting, tracking, and redressal of sexual harassment complaints at the workplace under the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Act, 2013. It functions as a single-window digital interface enabling aggrieved women to file complaints and allowing authorities and employers to monitor compliance with statutory redressal obligations.

➤ Legal Basis and Purpose

The SHe-Box Portal operationalises the objectives of the PoSH Act, 2013, particularly:

- Ensuring accessible and confidential complaint mechanisms
- Strengthening accountability of employers and Internal Committees
- Enabling government oversight and monitoring of complaint redressal

Note:- It aligns with the Act's mandate that every employer must provide an effective, transparent, and time-bound grievance redressal mechanism.

Who Can Use the SHe-Box Portal?

- Aggrieved women (employees, interns, trainees, consultants, contractual staff, or visitors)
- Women working in:
 - Government establishments
 - Public Sector Undertakings
 - Private sector organisations
 - Unorganised sector
- Where the Internal Committee (IC) is:
 - Not constituted
 - Non-functional
 - Biased or inaccessible

➤ Key Features of the SHe-Box Portal

- Online filing of complaints of workplace sexual harassment
- Confidential and secure submission
- Real-time tracking of complaint status
- Automatic forwarding of complaints to the appropriate authority:
 - Employer's Internal Committee, or
 - Local Committee (where IC does not exist)
- Monitoring by the Ministry to ensure timely action
- Record of compliance and redressal timelines

➤ Role of Employers under SHe-Box

While the portal is complaint-centric, it indirectly places significant compliance obligations on employers, including:

- Prompt response to complaints forwarded via SHe-Box
- Ensuring a properly constituted Internal Committee

- Adhering to statutory timelines under the PoSH Act
- Maintaining confidentiality and non-retaliation safeguards

➤ **Negative Impact of Not Having / Not Engaging with the SHe-Box Portal by Employers**

While registration on the SHe-Box portal is not expressly mandatory under the PoSH Act, failure to engage with SHe-Box complaints or lack of preparedness for SHe-Box cases exposes employers to significant legal, regulatory, and reputational risks.

Increased Risk of Direct Government Oversight:- Complaints filed on SHe-Box are directly monitored by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. If an employer:

- Does not respond
- Delays action
- Claims lack of awareness

the matter may be:

- Escalated to the District Officer / Local Committee
- Flagged for regulatory intervention

Note : The would be professional risk of Loss of autonomy in internal redressal.

Presumption of PoSH Non-Compliance

Absence of SHe-Box engagement often signals:

- Non-functional or improperly constituted Internal Committee
- Inadequate complaint mechanisms
- Weak PoSH governance framework

This presumption significantly weakens the employer's defence in inspections, audits, or litigation.

Exposure to Statutory Penalties under the PoSH Act

Failure to act on SHe-Box complaints may trigger penalties under Section 26 of the PoSH Act, including:

- Fine up to ₹50,000
- Higher penalties for repeat violations
- Cancellation or non-renewal of licences/registrations in serious cases

Note:- Penalties apply even if the employer claims internal processes existed but were ineffective.

Loss of Confidentiality Control

When complaints bypass internal mechanisms and reach SHe-Box:

- The employer loses procedural control
- External authorities supervise timelines and outcomes

- Confidentiality risks increase due to multiple stakeholders

Adverse Impact on Litigation and Judicial Scrutiny

In court proceedings, non-engagement with SHe-Box may be cited as:

- Evidence of employer negligence
- Failure to provide effective grievance redressal
- Violation of constitutional and statutory duties

Reputational and ESG Consequences

Non-responsiveness to SHe-Box complaints can result in:

- Negative employer branding
- Loss of trust among employees
- Adverse ESG and governance ratings
- Heightened scrutiny from investors, clients, and auditors

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – SHe-Box Portal

1. What is the SHe-Box Portal?

The SHe-Box (Sexual Harassment electronic Box) is a centralized online complaint and monitoring platform established by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, to enable women to file complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace under the PoSH Act, 2013.

2. Is the SHe-Box Portal a substitute for the Internal Committee (IC)?

No. The SHe-Box Portal does not replace the Internal Committee. It functions as a supplementary digital mechanism that forwards complaints to the employer's IC or the Local Committee, as applicable.

3. Is registration on the SHe-Box Portal mandatory for employers?

The PoSH Act does not expressly mandate employer registration on the SHe-Box Portal. However, employers are legally obligated to respond to and act upon complaints received through SHe-Box, making preparedness and engagement essential for compliance.

4. Who can file a complaint on the SHe-Box Portal?

Any **aggrieved woman** who has faced sexual harassment at the workplace may file a complaint, including:

- Permanent and contractual employees
- Interns, trainees, consultants
- Gig and platform workers
- Domestic and unorganised sector workers
- Visitors to the workplace

5. When can a complaint be filed on SHe-Box instead of with the IC?

A complaint may be filed on SHe-Box when:

- The Internal Committee is not constituted
- The IC is non-functional or biased
- The complainant is unable or unwilling to approach the IC
- The employer is unresponsive

6. What happens after a complaint is filed on SHe-Box?

The complaint is:

- Acknowledged on the portal
- Forwarded to the appropriate Internal Committee or Local Committee
- Monitored by the Ministry for time-bound action

7. What are the employer's responsibilities upon receiving a SHe-Box complaint?

Employers must:

- Acknowledge the complaint promptly
- Ensure inquiry through a properly constituted IC
- Follow statutory timelines under the PoSH Act
- Maintain confidentiality
- Implement IC recommendations

8. Can an employer reject or ignore a SHe-Box complaint?

No. A SHe-Box complaint carries statutory oversight. Ignoring or delaying action may lead to:

- Regulatory escalation
- Penalties under Section 26 of the PoSH Act
- Adverse legal and reputational consequences

9. Does filing a complaint on SHe-Box affect confidentiality?

Yes, confidentiality obligations under Section 16 of the PoSH Act **continue to apply**.

However, employer control over confidentiality is reduced due to **multi-authority monitoring**.

10. Is SHe-Box applicable to private sector organisations?

Yes. The SHe-Box Portal applies to:

- Government establishments
- PSUs
- Private sector employers
- NGOs
- Unorganised sector workplaces

11. What if an employer does not have an Internal Committee?

In such cases:

- The complaint is referred to the Local Committee
- The employer may face penalties for failure to constitute an IC
- Government oversight increases

12. Can a complaint be withdrawn from SHe-Box?

Withdrawal is subject to:

- Applicable PoSH Act provisions
 - Consent of the aggrieved woman
 - Approval of the concerned Committee
- The complaint remains part of official records.

13. Are false or malicious complaints filed through SHe-Box punishable?

Yes. If, after inquiry, a complaint is found to be malicious or knowingly false, action may be taken against the complainant as per service rules, subject to safeguards under the PoSH Act.

14. How does SHe-Box impact employer liability?

SHe-Box:

- Creates a digital audit trail
- Strengthens evidence of employer action or inaction
- Increases accountability and scrutiny
- Influences judicial and regulatory assessment of compliance

15. What best practices should employers adopt regarding SHe-Box?

Employers should:

- Maintain a fully compliant Internal Committee
- Nominate a SHe-Box nodal officer
- Monitor SHe-Box communications regularly
- Train IC members on handling portal-based complaints
- Maintain detailed inquiry documentation