

# Me Too treaty

July 4, 2019

## Manifest pedagogy

#MeToo issue had been a lot in news recently. This issue has multiple dimensions and can be asked in different sections of G. S like Polity, Society and the issue dealt with in the article can be asked in IR too. Every aspect of the issue needs to be covered diligently by the students. Also refer our earlier article on this in Indian Society section to understand social aspects of the issue

## In news

- **Recently International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted #Me too treaty.**

## Placing it in syllabus

- **International organisations**

## Static dimensions

- About ILO

## Current dimensions

- What is me too movement
- Provisions of the treaty
- Sexual harassment law in India

## Content

The ILO recently adopted a new treaty against violence and harassment in the workplace, fuelled by the women's #MeToo movement. Discriminatory social norms and major legal gaps enable such violence and harassment at the workplace. A 2018 World Bank report found that 59 out of 189 economies had no specific legal provisions providing protection from sexual

harassment in employment.

## **MeToo Movement**

It is a movement against sexual harassment and sexual assault. It was founded in 2006 by Tarana Burke, an American social activist and community organiser, to help survivors of sexual violence, particularly Black women and girls and other young women of colour from low wealth communities.

The vision was to address both the dearth in resources for survivors of sexual violence and to build a community of advocates, driven by survivors, who will be at the forefront of creating solutions to interrupt sexual violence in their communities. The movement began to spread virally in October 2017 as a hashtag on social media in an attempt to demonstrate the widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment, especially in the workplace. As the 'me too' movement affirms empowerment through empathy and community-based action, the work is survivor-led and specific to the needs of different communities

## **Provisions of the #Me Too treaty**

The treaty aims to protect workers, irrespective of contractual status, from harassment in places where they are paid, taking a rest, eating or using sanitary facilities. It also covers work-related trips, training, social activities, communications and commutes.

The **convention, which will be binding on governments that ratify it**, was agreed by a wide margin on the final day of the ILO's annual conference of governments, employers groups and workers. All but six governments voted in favour of the pact, with **Russia, Singapore, El Salvador, Malaysia, Paraguay and Kyrgyzstan abstaining**. Employers representatives from Malaysia and several Latin American countries voted against it. The text aims to protect workers but **does not specifically refer to LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex)**

**people** as being amongst the most vulnerable, as sought by activists.

## **ILO**

- The **only tripartite U.N. agency**, since 1919 which brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member States , to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.
- The ILO became the **first specialised agency of the UN** in 1946.
- The main aims of the ILO are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues.
- The ILO has developed a system of international labour standards aimed at promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity.
- In 1969, the ILO received the Nobel Peace Prize for improving fraternity and peace among nations, pursuing decent work and justice for workers, and providing technical assistance to other developing nations.

The **eight Core Conventions** of the ILO (also called fundamental/human rights conventions) are

- Forced Labour Convention
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention
- Equal Remuneration Convention
- Discrimination (Employment Occupation) Convention
- Minimum Age Convention
- Worst forms of Child Labour Convention

(The above six have been ratified by India)

- Freedom of Association and Protection of Right to Organised Convention

- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention

(These two have not been ratified by India)

### **Sexual harassment law in India**

The **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013** is a legislative act in India that seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their place of work. This statute superseded the **Vishakha Guidelines** for prevention of sexual harassment introduced by the Supreme Court of India. It was reported by the ILO that mostly the Indian employers have not implemented the law despite the legal requirement that any workplace with more than 10 employees need to implement it