

Gender & Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy

GENDER POLICY

The Organization believes in creating its capacity in terms of developing women volunteers, women groups and a large number of women as direct programme participants through different projects/services and women personnel to inspire and guide households that makes a big difference. Most of the beneficiaries targeted are women.

The organization is fully committed to put its energy, effort and resources into processes that develop a society that values women, men, girls and boys equally. Our gender policy aims to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment is central to:

Organization's programmes at all levels e.g. Ensure that women's voices are heard in mainstream development processes; Undertake capacity building to strengthen women's livelihoods, women's team of health volunteers and teachers, helping families through women adults, household health and financial education, skill development of girls of deprived families or groups, targeting vulnerable poorest of the poor women for their mainstreaming.

Organisational culture and behaviour e.g. Develop a common understanding around gender through induction and training, ensure that all training across organizations is gender-sensitive, make all HR systems and policies gender-sensitive and responsive, and integrate gender indicators into staff objectives, accountability and performance management systems.

Public image e.g. Design project proposals for grant making and appeals to fulfil Organization's mission and objectives on women empowerment addressing gender equality.

and equity. All IEC, publicity materials and general communications will be formulated to reflect Organization's objectives of women empowerment, challenging gender stereotypes and recognising diversity.

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Definition of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment may be one or a series of incidents involving unsolicited and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or any other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature. Sexual Harassment at the workplace includes:

1. Unwelcome sexual advances (verbal, written or physical);
2. Demand or request for sexual favours;
3. Any other type of sexually-oriented conduct;
4. Verbal abuse or 'joking' that is sex-oriented;
5. Any conduct that has purpose or the effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment and/or submission to such conduct is either an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment and /or submission or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for making employment decisions.

Responsibilities regarding sexual harassment

- All employees of the organisation have a personal responsibility to ensure that their behaviour is not contrary to this policy;
- All employees are encouraged to reinforce the maintenance of a work environment free from sexual harassment;

Complaint mechanism

An appropriate complaint mechanism in the form of "Complaints Committee" is necessary for time-bound redressal of the complaint made by the victim.

Complaints committee

Organization has to institute an Internal Complaints Committee for redressal of sexual harassment complaint (made by the victim) and for ensuring time bound treatment of such complaints. Initially, and till further notice, the Internal Complaints Committee will comprise the following members.

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PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

1. Presiding Officer who shall be a woman employed at a senior level at workplace from amongst the employees;
2. Not less than two members from amongst employees preferably committed to the cause of women or who have had experience in social work or have legal knowledge;
3. One member from amongst non-governmental organisations or associations committed to the cause of women or a person familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment;

The Complaints Committee is responsible for:

- Investigating every formal written complaint of sexual harassment.
- Taking appropriate remedial measures to respond to any substantiated allegations of sexual harassment.
- Discouraging and preventing employment-related sexual harassment.

Procedures for resolution, settlement or prosecution of acts of sexual harassment:

The organisation is committed to providing a supportive environment to resolve concerns of sexual harassment as under:

A. Informal Resolution Options

When an incident of sexual harassment occurs, the victim of such conduct can communicate their disapproval and objections immediately to the harasser and request the harasser to behave decently. If the victim is not comfortable with addressing the harasser directly, the victim can bring their concern to the attention of the Complaints Committee for redressal of their grievances. The Complaints Committee will thereafter provide advice or extend support as requested and will undertake prompt investigation to resolve the matter.

B. Complaints

1. An employee with a harassment concern, who is not comfortable with the informal resolution options or has exhausted such options, may make a formal complaint to the Presiding Officer of the Complaints Committee constituted by the Management. The complaint shall have to be in writing and can be in the form of a letter, preferably within 15 days from the date of occurrence of the alleged incident, sent in a sealed envelope. Alternatively, the employee can send a complaint through an email. The employee is required to disclose their name, department/programme, division and location they are working in, to enable the Presiding Officer to contact them and take the matter forward.

2. The Presiding Officer of the Complaints Committee will proceed to determine whether the allegations (assuming them to be true only for the purpose of this determination) made in the complaint fall under the purview of Sexual Harassment, preferably within 30 days from receipt of the complaint.

In the event, the allegation does not fall under the purview of Sexual Harassment or the allegation does not constitute an offence of Sexual Harassment, the Presiding Officer will record this finding with reasons and communicate the same to the complainant.

3. If the Presiding Officer of the Complaints Committee determines that the allegations constitute an act of sexual harassment, he/ she will proceed to investigate the allegation with the assistance of the Complaints Committee.

4. Where such conduct, on the part of the accused, amounts to a specific offence under the law, the organisation shall initiate appropriate action in accordance with law by making a complaint with the appropriate authority.

5. The Complaints Committee shall conduct such investigations in a timely manner and shall submit a written report containing the findings and recommendations to the Head-HR as soon as practically possible and in any case, not later than 90 days from the date of

receipt of the complaint. Head-HR will ensure corrective action on the recommendations of the Complaints Committee and keep the complainant informed of the same. Corrective action may include any of the following:

a. Formal apology; b. counselling; c. written warning to the perpetrator and a copy of it maintained in the employee's file
d. Change of work assignment / transfer for either the perpetrator or the victim; e. Suspension or termination of services of the employee found guilty of the offence; 6. In case the complaint is found to be false, the Complainant shall, if deemed fit, be liable for appropriate disciplinary action by the Management.

Confidentiality

- Organisation understands that it is difficult for the victim to come forward with a complaint of sexual harassment and recognizes the victim's interest in keeping the matter confidential.
- To protect the interests of the victim, the accused person and others who may report incidents of sexual harassment, confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances.

Access to reports and documents

All records of complaints, including contents of meetings, results of investigations and other relevant material will be kept confidential by the organisation except where disclosure is required under disciplinary or other remedial processes.

Protection to complainant / victim

The organisation is committed to ensuring that no employee who brings forward a harassment concern is subject to any form of reprisal. Any reprisal will be subject to disciplinary action. The organisation will ensure that the victim or witnesses are not victimized or discriminated against while dealing with complaints of sexual harassment. However, anyone who abuses the procedure (for example, by maliciously putting an allegation knowing it to be untrue) will be subject to disciplinary action.

In conclusion, the organisation reiterates its commitment to providing its employees a workplace free from harassment/ discrimination where every employee is treated with dignity and respect.

This policy document is subject to annual review by the management of the Organisation.