

## **PREVENTION OF THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, the Company has framed a policy for Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace. Vide notification dated 9th December, 2013; Ministry of Women and Child Development have introduced Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Rules, 2013

The objective of the policy is to provide its women employees, a workplace, free from harassment/ discrimination and every employee is treated with dignity and respect

#### **I. COMMITMENT:**

The Company is committed to provide a work environment that ensures every woman employee is treated with dignity and respect and afforded equitable treatment. The Company is also committed to promote a work environment that is conducive to the professional growth of its women employees and encourages equality of opportunity

The Company will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment and is committed to take all necessary steps to ensure that its women employees are not subjected to any form of harassment

#### **II. SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all categories of women employees of the Company, including permanent management and workmen, temporaries, trainees and employees on contract at its workplace or at client sites. The Company will not tolerate sexual harassment, if engaged in by clients or by suppliers or any other business associates

The workplace includes:

- (1) All offices or other premises where the Company's business is conducted
- (2) All company-related activities performed at any other site away from the Company's premises
- (3) Any social, business or other functions where the conduct or comments may have an adverse impact on the workplace or workplace relations

### III. DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

“**Sexual Harassment**” includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviour (whether directly or by implication) namely:-

- (1) Physical contact and advances; or
- (2) A demand or request for sexual favours; or
- (3) Making sexually coloured remarks; or
- (4) Showing pornography; or
- (5) Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature

### IV. RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

All employees of the Company 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

### V. COMPLAINT MECHANISM:

Whether or not such conduct constitutes an offence under law or a breach of the service rules, an appropriate complaint mechanism in the form of “**Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)**” has been created in the Company for time-bound redressal of the complaint made by the victim

### VI. INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE:

The Company has instituted an Internal Complaints Committee for redressal of sexual harassment complaint (made by the victim) and for ensuring time bound treatment of such complaints. An Internal Complaints Committee will be constituted in accordance with the provisions of sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

The Internal Complaints Committee is responsible for:

- (1) Investigating every formal written complaint of sexual harassment
- (2) Taking appropriate remedial measures to respond to any substantiated allegations of sexual harassment
- (3) Discouraging and preventing employment-related sexual harassment
- (4) Reporting the number of cases filed and their disposal under this Act in each calendar year in the Annual Report of the organisation and submit the same to the employer

**VII. PROCEDURES FOR RESOLUTION, SETTLEMENT OR PROSECUTION OF ACTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT:**

The Company is committed to providing a supportive environment in which the concerns of sexual harassment shall be resolved as follows:

**(1) Informal Resolution Options**

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

**(2) Complaints**

- (a) Any 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 Chairperson of the Internal Complaints Committee constituted by the Management

- (b) The complainant shall submit 6 (six) copies of the Complaint to the Complaint Committee along with supporting documents and the names and addresses of the witnesses in writing and can be in form of a letter, preferably within 3 months from the date of the alleged incident, sent in a sealed envelope. Alternately, the employee can send complaint through an email. The employee is required to disclose her name, department, division and location she is working in, to enable the Chairperson to contact her and take the matter forward
- (c) The Complaint Committee shall send 1(one) of the copies received from the aggrieved woman to the accused (respondent) within a period of 7 working days
- (d) The Accused (respondent) shall file his reply to the Complaint along with supporting documents and the names and addresses of the witnesses, within a period not exceeding 10 working days from the date of receipt of the documents
- (e) The Complaint Committee have the right to terminate the inquiry proceedings or to give an ex-parte decision on the complaint, if the Aggrieved (complainant) or Accused (respondent) fails, without sufficient cause, to present herself or himself for 3 consecutive hearings convened by the Chairperson, as the case may be, provided that such termination or ex-parte order may not be passed without giving a notice in writing, 15 days in advance, to the party concerned

In conducting the inquiry, a minimum of 3 Members of the Complaints Committee including the chairperson, as the case may be, shall be present

- (f) The parties shall not be allowed to bring in any legal practitioner to represent them in their case at any stage of the proceedings before the Complaints Committee
- (g) The Internal Complaints Committee shall conduct such investigations in a timely manner and shall submit a written report containing the findings and recommendations to the employer as soon as practically possible and in any case, not later than 10 days from the date of completion of inquiry

The employer shall act upon the recommendation within 60 days of its receipt by him

- (h) The Complaint's Committee report will also be made available to concerned parties

**VIII. MANNER OF TAKING ACTION AGAINST THE RESPONDENT:**

Where the Complaints Committee arrives at the conclusion that the allegation against the respondents been proved, it shall recommend to the employer to take action which may include the following:

- (1) Written apology;
- (2) Warning;
- (3) Reprimand or Censure;
- (4) Withholding of Promotion;
- (5) Withholding of pay rise or increments; or
- (6) Terminating the respondent from service; or
- (7) Undergoing a counselling session or carrying out community service

**IX. PUNISHMENT FOR FALSE OR MALICIOUS COMPLAINT AND FALSE EVIDENCE:**

Where the Internal Complaints Committee arrives at a conclusion that the allegation against the respondent is malicious or the aggrieved woman or any other person making the complaint has made the complaint knowing it to be false or the aggrieved woman or any other person making the complaint has produced any forged or misleading document, it may recommend to the employer to take action in accordance with the provisions of the service rules applicable to her or him

**X. CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The Company 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 any investigatory process to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances

**XI. 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 Company except where disclosure is required under disciplinary or other remedial processes

**XII. PROTECTION TO COMPLAINANT / VICTIM:**

The Company 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 Company will ensure that 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

**XIII. CONCLUSION:**

In conclusion, the Company reiterates its commitment to provide the followings:-

- (1) a safe working workplace free from harassment/ discrimination and where every employee is treated with dignity and respect

- (2) organise workshops and awareness programmes at regular intervals for sensitising employee with the provisions of this Act.
- (3) Conduct orientation programmes for the members of the Internal Complaint Committee
- (4) Facilities to the Internal Committee for dealing and conducting an enquiry
- (5) Securing attendances of respondent and witnesses before the Internal Committee