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Society for Community Health Awareness, Research and Action - SOCHARA

Registered under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act 17 of 1960, S.No. 44/91-92.

Passed at the EC meeting held on 04th September-2025

POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT (POSH)

THE SOCIETY FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH AWARENESS, RESEARCH AND ACTION (SOCHARA)

1.0 POLICY

1.1 The Society For Community Health Awareness, Research And Action (SOCHARA), is an equal employment opportunity Society and is committed to creating a healthy working environment that enables employees to work without fear of prejudice, gender bias and sexual harassment. The Society also believes that all employees of the Society have the right to be treated with dignity.

Sexual harassment at the work place or other than work place if involving employees is a grave offence and is, therefore, punishable.

1.2 The Supreme Court has also directed companies to lay down guidelines and a forum for redressal of grievances related to sexual harassment.

2.0 SCOPE AND EFFECTIVE DATE

2.1 This Policy extends to all employees of the Society and is deemed to be incorporated in the service conditions of all employees and comes into effect immediately.

2.2 Sexual harassment would mean and include any of the following:

- i) unwelcome sexual advances, requests or demand for sexual favours, either explicitly or implicitly, in return for employment, promotion, examination or evaluation of a person towards any Society activity;
- ii) unwelcome sexual advances involving verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct such as sexually coloured remarks, jokes, letters, phone calls, e-mail, gestures, showing of pornography, lurid stares, physical contact or molestation, stalking, sounds, display of pictures, signs, verbal or non-verbal communication which offends the individuals sensibilities and affect her/his performance;

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- iii) eve teasing, innuendos and taunts, physical confinement against one's will and likely to intrude upon one's privacy;
- iv) act or conduct by a person in authority which creates the environment at workplace hostile or intimidating to a person belonging to the other sex;
- v) conduct of such an act at work place or outside in relation to an Employee of SOCHARA, or vice versa during the course of employment; and
- vi) any unwelcome gesture by an employee having sexual overtones

2.3 "Employee" means any person on the rolls of the Society including those on deputation, contract, temporary, part time or working as consultants.

3.0 COMPLAINT REDRESSAL COMMITTEE

3.1 A Committee has been constituted by the Management to consider and redress complaints of Sexual Harassment. The Chairman and Members of the Committee are as follows:

Chairperson -Maria Dorothy Stella

Secretary - Ms. Nidhi Shukla

Members

1.Azam Khan

2.Vineela Julapalli

3.Suresh Dhandapani

4.Janella Fernandes & Alfred S. Raju

5. External Members -Ms.Pallavi Kulkari (Nirbhaya)

3.2 A quorum of 3 members is required to be present for the proceedings to take place. The quorum shall include the Chairperson, at least two members, one of whom shall be a Woman.

4.0 REDRESSAL PROCESS

4.1 Any employee who feels and is being sexually harassed directly or indirectly may submit a complaint of the alleged incident to any member of the Committee in writing with his/her signature within three months of the date of the last incident. This period can be extended up to a maximum of six months (three months plus three months) if special reasons are recorded.



4.2 The Committee will maintain a register to endorse the complaint received by it and keep the contents confidential, if it is so desired, except to use the same for discreet investigation.

4.3 The Committee will hold a meeting with the Complainant within five days of the receipt of the complaint, but no later than a week in any case.

4.4 At the first meeting, the Committee members shall hear the Complainant and record her/his allegations. The Complainant can also submit any corroborative material with documentary proof, oral or written material, etc., to substantiate his / her complaint. If the Complainant does not wish to depose personally due to embarrassment of narration of the event, a lady officer for lady employees involved and a male officer for male employees involved shall meet and record the statement.

4.5 Thereafter, the person against whom a complaint is made may be called for a deposition before the Committee and an opportunity will be given to him / her to give an explanation, where after, an "Enquiry" shall be conducted and concluded.

4.6 In the event, the complaint does not fall under the purview of Sexual Harassment or the complaint does not mean an offence of Sexual Harassment, the same would be dropped after recording the reasons thereof.

4.7 In case the complaint is found to be false, the Complainant shall, if deemed fit, be liable for appropriate disciplinary action by the Management.

4.8 Do's and don'ts for employees and employers

Dos

1. *Familiarize yourself with the POSH policy:* Read and understand your company's policy to know your rights and responsibilities.
2. *Confront harassment if possible:* If you are experiencing or witnessing harassment, tell the harasser to stop.
3. *Report harassment:* Report any instances of sexual harassment to the appropriate ICC.
4. *Preserve evidence:* Keep records like emails, messages, or social media posts related to incidents.
5. *Cooperate with the investigation:* Be a witness and provide truthful information when requested by the ICC.
6. *Promote a safe workplace:* Help make your workplace a safe and secure environment for everyone.



7. *Attend training and meetings:* Participate in awareness programs and discussions about creating a harassment-free workplace.

Don'ts

1. *Engage in unwelcome conduct:* Avoid any form of unwelcome sexual conduct, gestures, or remarks.
2. *Make suggestive comments:* Do not make sexually suggestive comments or remarks about a colleague's physical attributes.
3. *Use offensive language:* Refrain from using language that is insulting or demeaning.
4. *Make sexual advances or proposals:* Do not engage in sexual favors, advances, or propositions.
5. *Discuss sexual activities:* Avoid discussing sexual activities or making sexually colored statements at work.
6. *Be confrontational or retaliate:* Do not retaliate against someone who has filed a complaint, especially a false one.
7. *Ignore inappropriate behavior:* Do not stay silent about instances of harassment you observe or experience.

4.9 Languages -The existing policy is currently available in the English language. However, if there is need, it can be translated into regional languages to accommodate fellows joining from various parts of the country, interns, programme participants.

4.10 .Terms & Conditions (Local complaint committee)

- Annual audit and reporting
- The composition of the committee should be reviewed and reconstituted every three years.
- Any member found accused of misconduct must be immediately suspended from the committee.
- The ICC(Internal complaint committee) must report any incidents occurring outside the organization to the appropriate authorities.
- The consent of the complainant must be sought before proceeding, and both the complainant and respondent must be given an opportunity for individual discussions with committee members.
- The committee should meet every six months



- If someone or charged person is not satisfied with the internal committee, HE/she is free to go to court of Law and SOCHARA will assist the legal agencies in providing necessary information to the competent authorities.

5.0 ENQUIRY PROCESS

5.1 The Committee shall immediately proceed with the Enquiry and communicate the same to the Complainant and person against whom complaint is made.

5.2 The Committee shall prepare and hand over the Statement of Allegation to the person against whom a complaint is made and give him / her an opportunity to submit a written explanation if she / he so desires within 7 days of receipt of the same.

5.3 The Complainant shall be provided with a copy of the written explanation submitted by the person against whom complaint is made.

5.4 If the Complainant or the person against whom complaint is made desires any witness/es to be called, they shall communicate in writing to the Committee the names of witness/es whom they propose to call.

5.5 If the Complainant desires to tender any documents by way of evidence before the Committee, she / he shall supply original copies of such documents. Similarly, if the person against whom a complaint is made desires to tender any documents in evidence before the Committee he / she shall supply original copies of such documents. Both shall affix his / her signature on the respective documents to certify these to be original copies.

5.6 The Committee shall call upon all witnesses mentioned by both the parties.

5.7 The Committee shall provide every reasonable opportunity to the Complainant and to the person against whom complaint is made, for putting forward and defending their respective case.

5.8 The Committee shall complete the "Enquiry" within a reasonable period but not beyond three months and communicate its findings and its recommendations for action to the SECRETARY. The report of the committee shall be treated as an enquiry report on the basis of which an erring employee can be awarded appropriate punishment straightaway.

5.9 The Secretary will direct appropriate action in accordance with the recommendation proposed by the Committee.

5.10 The Committee shall be governed by such rules as may be framed by the Supreme Court orders or any other legislation enacted later on.



5.11. If any person is found guilty he/she will be suspended from the organisational responsibilities and further, recommended for legal course to take action against such person/s

6.0 OTHER POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED

6.1 The Committee may recommend to the Secretary action which may include transfer or any of the other appropriate disciplinary action.

6.2 The management shall provide all necessary assistance for the purpose of ensuring full, effective and speedy implementation of this policy.

6.3 Where sexual harassment occurs as a result of an act or omission by any third party or outsider, SOCHARA shall take all steps necessary and reasonable to assist the affected person in terms of support and preventive action.

6.4 The Committee shall analyse and put up a report on all complaints of this nature at the end of the year for submission to the Secretary.

6.5 In case the Committee finds the degree of offence coverable under the Indian Penal Code, then this fact shall be mentioned in its report and appropriate action shall be initiated by the Management, for making a Police Complaint.

6.6 Confidentiality

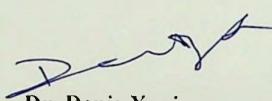
- All meetings should be minuted and only accessible to authorized personnel.
- Strict confidentiality must be maintained throughout the inquiry.
- Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who discloses information related to complaints or proceedings.
- The Chairperson is responsible for issuing the final decision in writing, based on the committee's deliberation.



6.7 Monitoring mechanism

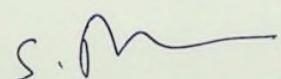
- The Organisation should ensure proper training on POSH to its employees.
- A complaint box should be made available in the office. The complaint box will be checked once in 15 days by the Secretary of ICC.
- All new employees must be provided with a copy of the policy. They should confirm in writing that they have read and understood the policy. If needed, the Internal Committee member must explain the contents to the employee.
- The Organisation should make provisions for Emotional support and counselling for the victims.
- Notice board with POSH displayed with contact details of the designated person.

For Society for Community Health Awareness, Research and Action (SOCHARA)



Dr. Denis Xavier

President



Ms. Prafulla S

Secretary Co ordinator