



POLICY ON PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT (POSH)

Introduction

This policy has been framed in accordance with the provisions of “The Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013” and rules framed thereunder (hereinafter “the Act”). Accordingly, while the policy covers all the key aspects of the Act, for any further clarification reference shall always be made to the Act and the provisions of the Act shall prevail.

Our success is based on our people. We treat each other with respect and dignity and expect everyone to promote a sense of personal responsibility. We recruit competent and motivated people who respect our values, provide equal opportunities for their development and advancement; protect their privacy and **do not tolerate any form of harassment or discrimination**.

The ‘Policy on Prevention of Sexual Harassment at workplace: Guidelines for “Xtranet Technologies Limited” intends to provide protection against sexual harassment at workplace and the prevention and redressal of complaints of sexual harassment and matters related to it.

Definitions

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, —

(a) **“aggrieved woman”** means—

(i) in relation to a workplace, a woman, of any age whether employed or not, who alleges to have been subjected to any act of sexual harassment by the respondent;

(ii) in relation to dwelling place or house, a woman of any age who is employed in such a dwelling place or house;

(b) **“appropriate Government”** means—

(i) in relation to a workplace which is established, owned, controlled or wholly or substantially financed by funds provided directly or indirectly—

(A) by the Central Government or the Union territory administration, the Central Government;

(B) by the State Government, the State Government;

(ii) in relation to any workplace not covered under sub-clause (i) and falling within its territory, the State Government;

(c) **“Chairperson”** means the Chairperson of the Local Complaints Committee nominated under sub-section (1) of section 7;

(d) **“District Officer”** means an officer notified under section 5;

(e) **“domestic worker”** means a woman who is employed to do the household work in any household for remuneration whether in cash or kind, either directly or through any agency on a temporary, permanent, part time or full time basis, but does not include any member of the family of the employer;

(f) **“employee”** means a person employed at a workplace for any work on regular, temporary, ad hoc or daily wage basis, either directly or through an agent, including a contractor, with or, without the knowledge of the principal employer, whether for remuneration or not, or working on a voluntary basis or otherwise, whether the

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terms of employment are express or implied and includes a co-worker, a contract worker, probationer, trainee, apprentice or called by any other such name;

(g) **"employer"** means—

(i) in relation to any department, organisation, undertaking, establishment, enterprise, institution, office, branch or unit of the appropriate Government or a local authority, the head of that department, organisation, undertaking, establishment, enterprise, institution, office, branch or unit or such other officer as the appropriate Government or the local authority, as the case may be, may by an order specify in this behalf;

(ii) in any workplace not covered under sub-clause (i), any person responsible for the management, supervision and control of the workplace.

Explanation. —For the purposes of this sub-clause “management” includes the person or board or committee responsible for formulation and administration of policies for such organisation;

(iii) in relation to workplace covered under sub-clauses (i) and (ii), the person discharging contractual obligations with respect to his or her employees;

(iv) in relation to a dwelling place or house, a person or a household who employs or benefits from the employment of domestic worker, irrespective of the number, time period or type of such worker employed, or the nature of the employment or activities performed by the domestic worker;

(h) **"Internal Committee"** means an Internal Complaints Committee constituted under section 4;

(i) **"Local Committee"** means the Local Complaints Committee constituted under section 6;

(j) **"Member"** means a Member of the Internal Committee or the Local Committee, as the case may be;

(k) **"prescribed"** means prescribed by rules made under this Act;

(l) **"Presiding Officer"** means the Presiding Officer of the Internal Complaints Committee nominated under sub-section (2) of section 4;

(m) **"respondent"** means a person against whom the aggrieved woman has made a complaint under section 9;

(n) **"sexual harassment"** includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behavior (whether directly or by implication) namely:—

(i) physical contact and advances; or

(ii) a demand or request for sexual favours; or

(iii) making sexually coloured remarks; or

(iv) showing pornography; or

(v) any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature;

(o) **"workplace"** includes—

(i) any department, organisation, undertaking, establishment, enterprise, institution, office, branch or unit which is established, owned, controlled or wholly or substantially financed by funds provided directly or indirectly by the appropriate Government or the local authority or a Government company or a corporation or a co-operative society;

(ii) any private sector organisation or a private venture, undertaking, enterprise, institution, establishment, society, trust, non-governmental organisation, unit or service provider carrying on commercial, professional, vocational, educational, entertainment, industrial, health services or financial activities including production, supply, sale, distribution or service;

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(iii) hospitals or nursing homes;

(iv) any sports institute, stadium, sports complex or competition or games venue, whether residential or not used for training, sports or other activities relating thereto;

(v) any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment including transportation by the employer for undertaking such journey;

(vi) a dwelling place or a house;

(p) **“unorganised sector”** in relation to a workplace means an enterprise owned by individuals or self-employed workers and engaged in the production or sale of goods or providing service of any kind whatsoever, and where the enterprise employs workers, the number of such workers is less than ten.

Roles & Responsibilities

1. **Responsibilities of Individuals:** It is the responsibility of all to respect the rights of others and to never encourage harassment. It can be done by:

- a. Refusing to participate in any activity which constitutes harassment
- b. Supporting the person to reject unwelcome behavior
- c. Acting as a witness if the person being harassed decides to lodge a complaint

All are encouraged to advise others of behavior that is unwelcome. Often, some behaviors are not intentional. While this does not make it acceptable, it does give the person behaving inappropriately, the opportunity to modify or stop their offensive behavior.

2. **Responsibilities of Managers:** All managers at XTRANET must ensure that nobody is subject to harassment and there is equal treatment. They must also ensure that all employees understand that harassment will not be tolerated; that complaints will be taken seriously; and that the complainant, respondent/s, or witnesses are not victimized in any way.

Redressal Mechanism – Formal Intervention

In compliance with the Act, if the complainant warrants formal intervention, the complainant needs to lodge a written complaint, which shall be followed by a formal redressal mechanism as described in this Policy. In case of a verbal complaint, the complaint will be reduced in writing by the receiver of the complaint, and signatures of the complainant will be obtained.

Internal Complaints Committee (Henceforth known as ‘committee’)

To prevent instances of sexual harassment and to receive and effectively deal with complaints pertaining to the same, an **“Internal Complaints Committee”** is constituted. The detail of the committee is notified to all covered persons at the workplace.

The committee comprises of:

- **Presiding Officer: A woman employed at a senior level in the organization or workplace**
- **At least 2 members from amongst employees, committed to the cause of women and/or having legal knowledge**
- **One external member, familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment**
- **At least one-half of the total members is women.**

The composition of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), is as below:

1. Ms. Shiney Sukhbir, Chairperson
2. Ms. Kavita Malik, Member
3. Mr. Sukhbir Singh Kukreja, Member

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4. Mr. Hitesh Verma, Member (External)

The **committee** is responsible for:

- Receiving complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace
- Initiating and conducting an inquiry as per the established procedure
- Submitting findings and recommendations of inquiries
- Coordinating with the employer in implementing appropriate action
- Maintaining strict confidentiality throughout the process as per established guidelines
- Submitting annual reports in the prescribed format

Lodging a Complaint

The complainant needs to submit a detailed complaint, along with any documentary evidence available or names of witnesses, to any of the committee members at the workplace.

The complaint must be lodged within **3 months** from the date of the incident/ last incident. The Committee can extend the timeline by **another 3 months** for reasons recorded in writing, if satisfied that these reasons prevented the lodging of the complaint.

Provided that where such a complaint cannot be made in writing, the Presiding Officer or any Member of the Internal Complaint Committee shall render all reasonable assistance to the woman for making the complaint in writing.

If the aggrieved woman is unable to lodge the complaint in account of her incapacity, the following may do so on her behalf, **with her written consent**.

- Legal heir, relative, or friend
- Co-worker
- Any person having knowledge of the incident

If the initial complaint is made to a person other than a committee member, upon receiving such a complaint, it will be the responsibility of the complaint receiver to report the same to the committee immediately.

Wherever possible XTRANET ensures that all the complaints of harassment are dealt with speedily, discreetly, and as close as possible to the point of origin.

Receiving a Complaint (guidelines)

Dealing with incidents of harassment is not like any other type of dispute. Complainants may be embarrassed and distressed and it requires tact and discretion while receiving the complaint.

The following points are kept in mind by the receiver of the complaint:

- Complaints are listened to and the complainant is informed that the Company takes the concerns seriously. The complainant is informed that these concerns will be reported to the appropriate committee and follow-up will be done speedily.
- Situations are not be pre-judged. Written notes are taken while listening to the person. The complainant is allowed to bring another person to the meeting if they wish. When taking accurate notes, the complainant's own words, where possible, is used. A clear description of the incident in simple and direct terms is prepared and details are confirmed with the complainant.
- All notes are kept strictly confidential. The complainant's agreement is taken to allow proceeding with the matter, which involves a formal investigation.

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- The complainant is advised that although the process is confidential, the respondent needs to be informed and any witnesses and persons directly involved in the complaint process will also learn of the complainant's identity.

Care is taken to prevent any disadvantage to or victimization of either the complainant or the respondent.

Resolution procedure through conciliation

Once the complaint is received, before initiating the inquiry the committee may take steps to conciliate the complaint between the complainant and the respondent. **This is only if requested by the aggrieved woman.**

It is made clear to all parties that conciliation in itself doesn't necessarily mean acceptance of a complaint by the respondent. It is a practical mechanism through which issues are resolved or misunderstandings cleared.

In case a settlement is arrived at, the committee records & reports the same to the employer for taking appropriate action. Resolution through conciliation happens within **2 weeks** of receipt of the complaint.

The committee provides copies of the settlement to the complainant & respondent. Once the settlement has been implemented as agreed, the committee shall not proceed with any further inquiry into the complaint.

Resolution procedure through formal inquiry

Conducting Inquiry

The committee initiates inquiry in the following cases:

- No conciliation is requested by aggrieved woman
- Conciliation has not resulted in any settlement
- Complainant informs the committee that any term or condition of the settlement arrived through conciliation has not been complied with by the respondent.

The Committee proceeds to make an inquiry into the complaint within a period of **1 week** of its receipt of the original complaint/closure of conciliation/repeat complaint.

Manner of inquiry into complaint:

- Complainant should submit the complaint along with supporting documents and the names of the witnesses
- Upon receipt of the complaint, the committee sends 1 copy of the complaint to the respondent within 7 working days
- Respondent replies with all supporting documents within 10 working days of receiving the copy of the complaint
- No legal practitioner can represent any party at any stage of the inquiry procedure
- The Complaints Committee makes an inquiry into the complaint in accordance with the principles of natural justice
- In conducting the inquiry, a minimum of three committee members including the Presiding Officer is present

Interim relief

During the pendency of the inquiry, on a written request made by the complainant, the committee may recommend to the employer to –

- Transfer the complainant or the respondent to any other workplace
- Grant leave to the aggrieved woman of a maximum 3 months, in addition to the leave she would be otherwise entitled to Prevent the respondent from assessing the complainant's work performance
- Grant such other relief as may be appropriate

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Once the recommendations of interim relief are implemented, the employer will inform the committee regarding the same.

Termination of Inquiry

The committee at XTRANET may terminate the inquiry or give an ex-parte decision, if the complainant or respondent respectively is absent for 3 consecutive hearings, without reason. 15-day written notice to be given to the party, before termination or ex-parte order.

Inquiry procedure

All proceedings of the inquiry are documented. The Committee interviews the respondent separately and impartially. The committee states exactly what the allegation is and who has made the allegation. The respondent is given full opportunity to respond and provide any evidence etc. Detailed notes of the meetings are prepared which may be shared with the respondent and complainant upon request. Any witnesses produced by the respondent are also interviewed & statements are taken.

If the complainant or respondent desires to cross-examine any witnesses, the Committee facilitates the same and records the statements.

In case the complainant or respondent seeks to ask questions to the other party, they may give them to the Committee which asks them and records the statement of the other party.

Any such inquiry is completed, including the submission of the Inquiry Report, within **90 days** from the date on which the inquiry is commenced. The inquiry procedure ensures absolute fairness to all parties.

Considerations while preparing inquiry report

While preparing the findings/recommendations, following are considered:

- Whether the language used (written or spoken), visual material or physical behavior was of sexual or derogatory nature
- Whether the allegations or events follow logically and reasonably from the evidence
- Credibility of complainant, respondent, witnesses and evidence
- Other similar facts, evidence, for e.g. if there have been any previous accounts of harassment pertaining to the respondent
- Both parties have been given an opportunity of being heard
- A copy of the proceedings were made available to both parties enabling them to make representation against the findings

A copy of the final findings is shared with the complainant and the respondent to give them an opportunity to make a representation on the findings to the committee.

Action to be taken after inquiry

Post the inquiry the committee submits its report containing the findings and recommendations to the employer, within **10 days** of completion of the inquiry.

The findings and recommendations are reached from the facts established and is recorded accurately.

If the situation so requires, or upon request of the complainant, respondent or witness, Management at XTRANET may decide to take interim measures such as transfer, changing of shift, grant of leave etc. to protect against victimization or distress during or subsequent to the course of inquiry, pending the final outcome.

Complaint unsubstantiated

Where the committee arrives at the conclusion that the allegation against the respondent has not been proved, it recommends to the employer that no action is required to be taken in this matter.

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Further, the committee ensures that both parties understand that the matter has been fully investigated, that the matter is now concluded and neither will be disadvantaged within the company.

Complaint substantiated

Where the committee arrives at the conclusion that the allegation against the respondent has been proved, it recommends to the employer to take necessary action for sexual harassment as misconduct, in accordance with the applicable service rules and policies, and this may include:

- i. Counseling
- ii. Censure or reprimand
- iii. Apology to be tendered by respondent
- iv. Written warning
- v. Withholding promotion and/or increments
- vi. Suspension
- vii. Termination
- viii. Or any other action that the Management may deem fit.

The employer at XTRANET acts upon the recommendations within **60 days** and confirms to the committee.

Post implementation of the actions, follow-up with the complainant occurs to ascertain whether the behavior has in fact stopped, the solution is working satisfactorily, and if no victimization of either party is occurring. This follow-up is undertaken by the complainant's Line Manager supported by HR.

Malicious Allegations

Where the committee arrives at the 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 against the woman or the person making the complaint.

The action recommended should be similar to the ones proposed for the respondent in case of substantiated complaints.

While deciding malicious intent, the committee should consider that mere inability to substantiate a complaint need not mean malicious intent. Malicious intent must be clearly established through a separate inquiry.

Confidentiality

The identity of the complainant, respondent, witnesses, statements, and other evidence obtained in the course of the inquiry process, recommendations of the committees, and action taken by the employer is considered as confidential materials, and not published or made known to the public or media.

Any person contravening the confidentiality clauses is subject to disciplinary action as prescribed in the act.

Appeal

Any party not satisfied or further aggrieved by the implementation or non-implementation of recommendations made may appeal to the appellate authority in accordance with the Act and rules, within **90 days** of the recommendations being communicated.

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