

Gender & Sexual Harassment Policy (GSHP)

Bhavishya Bharat

(A Public Charitable Trust)

7th Floor, B-Block, Roxana Towers,
Greenlands, Begumpet, Hyderabad,
Telangana – 500016

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Policy on creating a Gender-Neutral Workplace

1. Purpose

Organisation's philosophy is to be a professional Organisation, encouraging growth of individuals irrespective of gender, religion, caste or community. Organisation endeavors to ensure a safe, secure and congenial work environment, so that employees can deliver their best without inhibition. Through all its policies, Organisation seeks to ensure that both sexes have equal opportunity and no preferential or discriminatory treatment is meted out to anyone on grounds of sex alone.

In that context, where a large percentage of the workforce is female, the need was felt to spread awareness to prevent gender related harassment or discrimination, and in event of such occurrence, provide recourse to the concerned individual.

2. Definitions

The awareness of the broader problem of gender discrimination and the specific instances of sexual harassment gained focus in the 1970s. But even today there is little agreement on the definition of such behavior. Research shows that men and women differ in what they view as acceptable behavior. Women define a wide variety of sexual behaviors at work as sexual harassment, while men tended to rate only the more extreme behaviors as harassment. (Collins and Blodgett, 1981)

Therefore, based on the guidelines given by the Supreme Court and the National Commission for Women, given below are details of what would be considered harassment.

3. What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is a serious offence that can destroy human dignity and violates the right to gender equality, the right to 'life and liberty', and the fundamental right 'to practice any profession or to carry out any occupation, trade, or business.' It is an act amounting to misconduct in employment. The complainant (victim) does not have to be the person harassed but could be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.

Sexual harassment in the workplace has been defined as including unwelcome sexually determined behavior, whether direct or implicit.

- Eve teasing including any indecent gesture, use of indecent language, or any act intended to insult the modesty of a woman or intruding the privacy of a woman employee;
- Unsavory or sexually colored remarks, jokes, innuendos, taunts, pet names;
- Steering conversation improperly towards sexual preferences, fantasy, or sex life;
- Gender based insults or sexist remarks;
- Unwelcome sexual hints/ suggestions in any manner such as over telephone and the like;
- Touching or brushing against any part of the body and the like;
- Displaying pornographic or other offensive or derogatory pictures, cartoons, pamphlets, sayings, items or décor (Accessing, storing or forwarding pornographic material is also against the IT policy and other rules of the company and constitutes an act of indiscipline);
- Forcible physical touch or molestation;
- Physical confinement against one's will and any other act likely to violate one's privacy;
- It could be done by a person individually or acting with others.
- It could be directed at either males or females
- It could occur between peers or individuals in a hierarchical relationship (covert or overtly use of power inherent in the status of the manager to affect negatively an employee's work experience and opportunities)
- It could either result in a "Quid Pro Quo" (this in exchange for something) or in a hostile working environment. (To threaten, coerce, or intimidate an employee to accept sexual advances or making employment decision affecting the individual or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment)

Any of these acts is discriminatory when the person has reasonable grounds to believe that her objection would disadvantage her in connection with her employment or work including recruitment or promotion, or when it creates a hostile work environment or other adverse consequences.

4. Complaints Mechanism:

A Steering Committee has been constituted to objectively review the facts and recommendations of the complaints committee in any case of sexual harassment or gender discrimination, and decide as to the appropriate course of action for dealing with the same. The members are:

1. Mr A
2. Mr B
3. Ms C

A Complaints Committee has been constituted to take up and enquire into cases of sexual harassment and gender discrimination. The committee members are as follows:

A, B, C, D etc.

5. Complaint Process:

1. The aggrieved person should give a written complaint to any of the Committee members at the earliest point of time and in any case within 15 days from the date of occurrence of the alleged incident.
2. The complaint should contain all the material and relevant details concerning the alleged sexual harassment including the name of the contravener.
3. Confidentiality of the identity of the involved parties will be maintained by the Committee members.
4. The Complaints Committee will enquire into the matter within 2 days or hold an enquiry if necessary. It would be entitled to elicit all forms of evidence in this regard and the concerned parties would co-operate. The entire process will be completed within 30 days from date of submission of the complaint.
5. Both parties will be given an opportunity to present their views to the Committee. After examination of the complaint, the Committee will submit its recommendation to the Steering committee.
6. If the employee is found guilty then the Steering Committee shall decide on the appropriate punishment and in consultation with HR shall initiate the disciplinary action, including a verbal warning, suspension, or termination of employment. If the action amounts to offence under Indian Penal Code, then the Bank will initiate criminal proceedings.

6. Guidelines to the Individual

The primary focus of this policy is to ensure a congenial work environment that is free from threat or fear. There are a few things you can do to help translate the policy into day-to-day practices.

- Discrimination can take many forms: spoken, unspoken, or physical. Recognize that you may be conditioned to accept behaviors that infringe on your rights and constitute harassment, as normal workplace conduct.

- Firmly say NO. It is possible that the offender does not know that his/ her behavior is unacceptable to you. Promptly make direct statements and communicate that the offender's conduct is not acceptable to you.
- Participating in jokes and sexually tinged conversations is often taken as tacit permission to continue. Communicate early on that this conduct is unacceptable to you.
- Warn the offender to immediately desist, first orally, and then if necessary, follow it up with a warning in writing.
- Assess the situation and appropriately time your complaint.
- If you are unsure of the course of action to take in a given situation, we encourage you to approach any of the committee members informally and take their counsel.
- We also encourage you to discuss any issues you may have in this area with your supervisor or with HR representatives.

Any concerns can be expressed or reporting can be made without any fear of retaliation. The Complaints committee will maintain confidentiality and the person reporting as well as the person reported against will be protected from unnecessary disclosure.

7. A Note to People Managers

Constant reinforcement is needed to build a culture of openness and trust which is congenial to performance. As people managers, you carry an additional responsibility of providing an enabling climate to those working under you. In this context, there are simple things that you can do to ensure this.

- If an employee approaches you with a complaint, please guide him/ her as to the proper procedure for registering the complaint.
- Often, the employee may not want to make a formal complaint but may seek your advice on how to deal with a situation. Please give the person a patient ear and if the matter cannot be resolved informally, guide the individual to escalate the matter to the Complaints committee.
- When approached by an employee for your counsel, avoid making a quick judgment as to right and wrong and hold back advice/ opinions.
- It is often difficult for victims of discrimination/ harassment to come forward with their reports. Do not cross-question the individual or give the impression of doubting the authenticity of her/his report.
- Ensure privacy for the meeting and help the employee feel that confidentiality will be maintained.

- Actually, protect the privacy of the employee and treat her/him in a manner that communicates respect for feelings and dignity.
- Be conscious of your position and your power to impact the well being of the subordinate and the decisions she/he may make.


Gender discrimination is not an individual issue between persons involved. This reinforces the tendency of women to try to cope with their own instead of complaining and seeking redress. It must be treated as an Organisational climate issue.

8. Effective Date

This Gender & Sexual Harassment Policy shall enter into force from the date of approval of the manual by the Management Committee.

DECLARATION

It is hereby declared and agreed that this document shall be binding on the Management Team and Project Employees of the Bhavishya Bharat, at present and in the future.


Name, Designation & Signature:

Raveendra Chintha


Manager Finance

Emp Code: 1003-7319

Date: 22 Dec 2015

Place: Hyderabad




Name, Designation & Signature:

Hemant Kumar Jha

Deputy Director (Operations)

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