

CHETTINAD ACADEMY OF RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

(A Deemed to be University under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLIANCE CELL FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN

Following the judgment of Supreme Court in 1997 in the case of Vishaka and others Vs. State of Rajasthan, a Compliance Cell for Sexual Harassment of Women was constituted in accordance with the mandate that it shall be the duty of the employer and other responsible persons to prevent or deter the commission of acts of sexual harassment and to provide the procedures for the resolution, settlement or prosecution of acts, of sexual harassment by taking all steps required.

Sexual harassment results in violation of the fundamental rights of a woman to equality under articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution of India and her right to life and to live with dignity under article 21 of the Constitution and right to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business which includes a right to a safe environment free from sexual harassment;

Definition of Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment includes such unwelcome sexually determined behavior (whether directly or by implication) as:

- i) Physical contact and advances;
- ii) A demand or request for sexual favours;
- iii) Sexually coloured remarks;
- iv) Showing pornography;
- v) Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

Other types of unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature can also constitute sexual harassment, if sufficiently severe or pervasive that the target finds, and a reasonable person would find, that an intimidating, hostile or abusive work or academic environment has been created. Examples of this kind of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual comments, teasing, or jokes;
- Sexual slurs, demeaning epithets, derogatory statements, or other verbal abuse;
- Graphic or sexually suggestive comments about an individual's attire or body;
- Inquiries or discussions about sexual activities;
- Pressure to accept social invitations, to meet privately, to date, or to have sexual relations;
- Sexually suggestive letters or other written materials;
- Sexual touching, brushing up against another in a sexual manner, graphic or sexually suggestive gestures, cornering, pinching, grabbing, kissing, or fondling;
- Coerced sexual intercourse or sexual assault.

Objectives of the Compliance Cell:

1. To ensure that women are protected against sexual harassment at all the work places, be it in public or private. This will contribute to realization of their right to gender equality, life and liberty and equality in working conditions everywhere. The sense of security at the workplace will improve women's participation in work, resulting in their economic empowerment and inclusive growth.
2. To prevent gender discrimination and sexual harassment, by promoting gender amity amongst all employees.
3. To deal with cases of sexual harassment, in a time bound manner, aiming at ensuring support services to the victimized and termination of the harassment.
4. Recommend appropriate punitive action against the guilty party.

Duties of the Compliance Cell:

1. Awareness of the rights of female employees in this regard should be created in particular by prominently notifying the guidelines in a suitable manner.
2. Complaints received by the Compliance Cell should ensure time-bound treatment of complaints.

Complaint Process:

Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be investigated promptly. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be promptly investigated and addressed.

Misconduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be dealt with appropriately. Any complaints received in this regard shall be resolved within one month. If no complaint is received, the Convener has to submit the "NIL" report by every quarter to the University.