

## **POLICY ON PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

### **1. 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.

### **2. OBJECTIVE:**

Keshava Prabha Mircofin Pvt Ltd (“KPM”) is committed to creating and maintaining a secure work environment where it's Employees, Agents, Vendors and Partners can work and pursue business together in an atmosphere free of harassment, exploitation and intimidation caused by acts of Sexual Harassment within but not limited to the office premises and other locations directly related to the Company's business.

The ‘Policy on Prevention of Sexual Harassment at workplace: Guidelines for KPM’ intends to provide for protection against sexual harassment of employees at workplace and for the prevention and redressal of complaints of sexual harassment and for matters connected therewith.

All concerned should take cognizance of the fact that KPM strongly opposes sexual harassment, and that such behavior is prohibited by the law and Rules framed thereunder being the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (hereinafter referred to as “Act”) as well as the terms of employment. Commission of any act of sexual harassment as defined in the Act and in this Policy shall result in strict disciplinary action.

At KPM, we have zero-tolerance for sexual harassment. We value each and every employee working with us and wish to protect their dignity and self-respect. In doing so, we are determined to promote a working environment in which persons of both genders complement each other as equals in an environment that encourages maximum productivity and to keep the personal dignity.

We at KPM are committed towards giving every employee a just and fair hearing on issues encountered by them at the workplace with special attention to sexual harassment. KPM will take very serious disciplinary action against any victimization of the employee who is complaining or the alleged harasser that may result from a complaint.

## **II. SEXUAL HARASSMENT - DEFINITION:**

- a) "Aggrieved Person" means a person in relation to work place whether employed or not, who alleges to have been subject to any act of sexual harassment by the Respondent;
- b) "Company" means Keshava Prabha Microfin Pvt Ltd
- c) "Employer" A person responsible for management, supervision and control of the workplace
- d) "Employee" means a person employed at a workplace for any work on regular, temporary, ad hoc or daily wages 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 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;
- e) "Internal Complaints Committee" means a committee constituted by Company as per this Policy;
- f) "Respondent" means a person against whom the aggrieved person has made a complaint;
- g) "Workplace" includes any department, organization, undertaking, establishment, enterprise institution, office or branch unit. Any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment including transportation provided by the employer for undertaking such journey.
- h) "Sexual Harassment" includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviour (whether directly or by implication) such as:
  - 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 other offensive or
  - v) derogatory pictures, cartoons, representations, graphics, pamphlets or sayings; or Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non - verbal conduct of sexual nature; or

Following circumstances amongst other circumstances mentioned above may constitute sexual harassment if it occurs or is present in relation or connected with any act or behaviour of sexual harassment:

- implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in their employment;
- implied or explicit threat of detrimental treatment in their employment;
- implied or explicit threat about their present or future employment status;
- interfering with their work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment; humiliation treatment likely to affect their health or safety;
- humiliating treatment likely to affect the health and safety of the aggrieved person.

In addition to the instances mentioned hereinabove, any other acts or behaviour, which outrages the modesty of a female employee, will be considered as sexual harassment.

### **III. SCOPE**

KPM's Policy with regard to Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment covers every "employee" across the Company. KPM encourages every employee who believes they are sexually harassed to use the redressal mechanism as provided in this policy.

The Policy is with respect to Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal of Sexual Harassment which may arise in places not limited to geographical location viz. Company's offices / branches but includes all such places or locations where acts are conducted in context of working relationships or whilst fulfilling professional duties or which may be visited by an employee during the course of employment including transportation provided by the company for undertaking such visit. KPM's Policy against sexual harassment includes sexual harassment by fellow employees, supervisors, managers as well as agents, contractors, customers, vendors, partners and, visitors including outsource employees. Any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment including transportation provided by the employer for undertaking such journey.

Sexual harassment is judged by the impact on the complainant and not the intent of the Respondent.

This Policy comes into force with immediate effect.

#### **IV INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE:**

Every complaint received shall be forwarded to internal complaint committee formed under the policy for redressal. The investigation shall be carried out by Internal Complaints Committee constituted for this purpose.

Internal Complaints Committee has been constituted of the following members as nominated by the Company:

- a) A woman employee employed at a senior level amongst the employees shall act as President/Presiding Officer of the committee.
- b) Not less than 2 members from amongst employees preferably committed to the cause of women or who have had experience in social work or have legal knowledge.
- c) One External member shall be from amongst Non-governmental organizations or associations committed to the cause of women or a person familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment.

The Name of the Members of the Internal Complaints Committee is as per **Annexure - A** of this Policy and any change in such composition shall be effected in the policy.

The Presiding Officer and every member shall hold office for such period, not exceeding three years, from the date of their nomination as may be specified by the employer.

#### **Responsibilities of the Committee**

The committee is responsible for:

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

#### **V. COMPLAINT REDRESSAL MECHANISM:**

##### **Lodging a complaint**

In compliance with the Act, if the complainant's 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.

The complaint must be lodged within 3 months from the date of 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.

- 1) The Presiding Officer or any Member of the Internal Complaints Committee can render reasonable assistance to the person for making complaint in writing, in case they are unable to do so.

2) On receipt of complaint, the Internal Complaint Committee shall decide the place and time for hearing the complaint and shall intimate the date, time and place of hearing to the Complainant and Respondent. The Internal Complaints Committee shall follow principle of Natural Justice while handling such complaints.

3) (i) Where the aggrieved person is unable to make a complaint on account of their physical incapacity, a complaint may be filed by-

- i. a relative or friend; or
- ii. a co-worker; or
- iii. an officer of the National Commission for Women or State Women's Commission; or
- iv. any person who has knowledge of the incident, with the written consent of the aggrieved person.

(ii) Where the aggrieved person is unable to make a complaint on account of their mental incapacity, a complaint may be filed by-

- a) a relative or friend; or
- b) a special educator; or
- c) a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist; or
- d) the guardian or authority under whose care they are receiving treatment or care; or
- e) any person who has knowledge of the incident jointly with any of the above

(iii) Where the aggrieved person for any other reason is unable to make a complaint, a complaint may be filed by any person who has knowledge of the incident, with their written consent.

(iv) Where the aggrieved person is dead, a complaint may be filed by any person who has knowledge of the incident, with the written consent of their legal heir.

### **Dealing with Complaints**

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 informed that the Company takes the concerns seriously.
- 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. Complainant is allowed to bring another person to the meeting if they wish. When taking accurate notes, complainants' own words, where possible, is used. 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. Complainant's agreement is taken to allow proceeding with the matter, which involves a formal investigation.
- 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.

## **Receiving a Complaint**

1) Internal Complaints Committee on receipt of such written complaint, may, if require ask the aggrieved person to furnish additional information about the alleged harassment.

2) The Complainant or person authorized on their behalf as per above provision, shall make a complaint to the Internal Complaints Committee through following mode:

- a) Copy of complaint along with supporting documents and names and address of witness shall be sent to Internal Complaints Committee at [mayap@kpmicrofin.in](mailto:mayap@kpmicrofin.in)
- b) On receipt of such complaint, Internal Complaints Committee shall provide a copy along with supporting documents of such complaints to the Respondent within 7 working days.
- c) Respondent shall file reply within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint along with list of documents, names and addresses of witnesses.
- d) Internal Complaint Committee shall investigate in detail into the matter of the complaint. The Internal Complaint committee shall have the right to call the person against whom the complaint is made or any other witnesses as when necessary.
- e) Internal Complaint Committee shall have the right to terminate the enquiry or give ex-parte decision on the complaint, if the Respondent or complainant remains absent for 3 consecutive hearings, without sufficient cause.
- f) The Internal Committee must complete its investigation within a period 90 days.
- g) For conducting the enquiry the quorum of the Internal Complaints Committee shall be of 3 Members including one President and one Secretary.

3) The Internal Committee may before initiating an inquiry, and at the aggrieved person's request, attempt to settle the matter through conciliation. However, Internal Complaints Committee shall ensure that:

- a. Monetary settlement will not be made as a basis of conciliation.
- b. Where a settlement has been arrived, the settlement terms shall be signed by both the parties and shall be provided with a copy of it.

Where, a settlement is arrived as mentioned hereinabove, no further enquiry shall be conducted by the Internal Complaints Committee.

4) The Internal Complaints Committee may during such investigation may exercise the power of a civil court, vested in it, in respect of:

- a. summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person and examining him under oath;
- b. requiring discovery and production of documents;
- c. any other prescribed matter.

5) During such enquiry, upon written request by the aggrieved person, the committee may at its discretion recommend:

- a. to transfer the aggrieved person or the respondent to any other workplace;
- b. grant leave to the aggrieved person of up to three months which is in addition to leave to which she is otherwise entitled.

Provided, the aggrieved person has to tender justified reason for such transfer or leave, such us threat to work in the workplace.

## **VI. ACTION:**

1. The Committee shall on completion of the enquiry provide a report of its findings within 10 days from the date of completion of the enquiry and such report shall be made available to the concerned parties.
2. If the allegation against the respondent has not been proved, the Committee may recommend that no action needs to be taken in the matter.
3. If the Internal Complaints Committee arrives at the conclusion that the allegation against the respondent has been proved, it shall recommend to:
  - a. Take action for sexual harassment as a misconduct.
  - b. To tender written apology to the complainant, issue warning, withholding of promotions / increments of the Respondent, terminating the Respondent.
  - c. To deduct from salary / wages of the respondent or issue direction for payment; such sum as it may consider appropriate to be paid to the aggrieved person or to their legal heirs, as it may determine.
  - d. If the issue is severe, the action shall be initiated as per Indian Penal Code (IPC)
4. Such action will be taken within 60 days of the receipt of report.

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

### **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

## **VII. AWARENESS:**

- 1) All the Employees, Agents, Customers, Vendors, Partners and Visitors shall have access to this Policy at any given point of time and clarification related to this Policy shall be addressed by the HR team.
- 2) A brief shall be given to all existing employees regarding the features of this Policy immediately on formulation of the Policy and to new employees in KPM during their initial Induction.
- 3) The Company shall comply with all other details as set out under Section 19 of the Act to ensure that all employees are provided with the safe working environment at the workplace.

The Company shall display the notice showing the name of the Internal Complaints Committee members at its every establishment at a conspicuous place.

## **VIII. FALSE ACCUSATIONS:**

- 1) The complaint of sexual harassment made by any employee shall be taken up with utmost seriousness by Company. However, there shall be zero tolerance for any false accusation.
- 2) If the Internal Complaint Committee comes to a conclusion that the allegation was made with malicious intent or the aggrieved person or any other person making the complaint on behalf of the aggrieved person produced false or forged or misleading documents to prove his/her case, the Internal Complaint Committee may recommend action to be taken against the person who has made the complaint, including termination of service. In such a case, malicious intent has to be established after an inquiry, before any action is recommended. A mere inability to substantiate a complaint or provide adequate proof would not attract action as provided herein. A similar recommendation for taking action would be recommended against any witness whom the Internal Complaint Committee concludes, that he/she has given false evidence or produced forged or misleading documents.
- 3) It is to be noted that this statement is not intended to discourage employees from coming forward with any complaints. KPM recognizes and expects that some claims may be difficult to prove or support, or may not in fact be found to raise to the level of seriousness deemed necessary to constitute Sexual Harassment. These types of complaints will not be considered to be false accusations.

## **IX. MISCELLANEOUS:**

- 1) The Company may make any alteration or amendment or rescind any of the clauses of this Policy as and when it finds it necessary to do so as long as it complies with the Act. Any such alterations or amendment or rescinding will be intimated to the employee.
- 2) Nothing contained in these rules shall operate in derogation of any law for the time being in force or to the prejudice of any right of any employee under any other Rules or Law.

3) The Internal Complaint Committee shall prepare an annual report with the following details and shall submit the same to the Company to include in its Annual report:

- a. Number of complaints of sexual harassment received during the year;
- b. Number of complaints disposed-off during the year;
- c. Number of cases pending for more than 90 days;
- d. Number of workshops or awareness program against sexual harassment carried out;
- e. Nature of action taken by the employer.

#### **Confidentiality**

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

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

#### **X. CONCLUSION:**

The complaints relating to Sexual Harassment shall be handled and investigations will be conducted under the principles of natural justice, basis of fundamental fairness, in an impartial and confidential manner so as to protect the identity of all viz., the person bringing the charge, potential witnesses, and the person accused of improper behaviour. Also, all efforts shall be taken to ensure objectivity and thoroughness throughout the process of investigation.

The identity and address of the aggrieved person, respondent and witnesses must not be published or disclosed to the public or media.

The decision of Company shall be final and binding on all. However, the same is without prejudice to any recourse that Company or the individual concerned may have against the respondent and it shall not limit or restrict the rights of the Complainant and/or Company to pursue, nor shall they be precluded from pursuing, such further and other legal actions as may be available.

**ANNEXURE - A**

**Composition of Internal Complaints Committee**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation in Committee</b>	<b>Designation/Experience</b>
1	Maya P	Presiding Officer	Company Secretary
2	Adv Smitha Nair	External Member	Advocate registered with Bar Council of Kerala with 13 years of legal experience
3	Nimna P V	Member	Assistant Manager- Data
4	Ajith Subash	Member	Manager – Human Resources