

Yuva (Rural) Association Sexual Harassment Policy

PREAMBLE

Yuva (Rural) Association recognizes that:

- All employees must be allowed to work in an environment free from any form of verbal and physical sexual advance.
- Sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct in the workplace and will not be tolerated.
- Violations of this policy will result in serious disciplinary action.
- The organization fosters equality of status between men and women and a safe working environment for both.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to create a good working environment free from any form of harassment of sexual nature and to provide a suitable mechanism to appropriately handle such cases of harassment, if any, in the organization.

BACKGROUND

The Constitution of India confers on its citizens certain fundamental rights and Right to Life is perhaps the most important out of these rights. Over a period of time “Right to Life” has been interpreted by various High Courts and the Supreme Court of India to mean not only “mere physical existence” but also a “life with dignity”. There is a prohibition on sexual harassment of working women vide Government of India (Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions) notification dated 13 February, 1998. *The need to have a policy on Sexual Harassment has been amply stated by the Supreme Court in Vishaka’s case in 1997.*

Yuva (Rural) Association in its role as an employer has taken the *position of seeking to totally eliminate sexual harassment of any form from the workplace.*

DEFINITION

Sexual harassment is any unsolicited or unwelcome verbal comment, gesture, or physical contact of a sexual nature. Criteria to be used in determining whether an action constitutes a misconduct of this kind are as follows:

- Submission to such sexual conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment; or
- Submission to or objection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment decision affecting such individual; or

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or of creating an unhealthy, intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment

Apart from the above specific criteria, any action, movement or gesture falling under the definition of Sexual Harassment as per the Vishaka guidelines will be considered as sexual harassment.

GOALS

- To create an atmosphere of openness towards any redressal on sexual harassment and transparency but yet maintain confidentiality
- To rigorously embrace zero tolerance for any form of incidence of sexual harassment or exclusionary practice
- Commit to recruiting, hiring, training and developing qualified staff irrespective of race, caste, class, ethnicity, gender, nationality, age, marital status, and/or people with disability
- To provide for a suitable mechanism that will confidentially and compassionately address and resolve sexual harassment problem in Yuva (Rural) Association.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director General, through Human Resource Executive or any other support will hold maximum accountability for the implementation of this policy and will incorporate the YRA policy against sexual harassment into employee orientation program and as a mandatory element for internal supervisory and management training. The entire Line Management is held accountable for enforcing standards of appropriate office behavior and is expected to take prompt action to deal with any conduct identified as sexual harassment under this policy. **All staffs** are expected to comply with the YRA policy against sexual harassment.

SYSTEMS AND PROCESS

The staffs who are faced with sexual harassment will take this matter with his/her immediate coordinator. If the complaint is against the Immediate Coordinator, then with the HR person in Head office as the case may be. Coordinator/HR person in Head office, in turn are expected to take positive and prompt action and resolve the problem presented to them within 5 days. If a staff does not receive a satisfactory response/resolution from the immediate coordinator/HR person in the Head Office, the staff may appeal to Director General in writing or verbally who will refer the matter to the Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee within two days. The Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee will include the following and will be constituted every two years. The composition of this committee would be as follows:

- *One Human Resource representative*
- *One Female Representative from the Senior Management*

- *One Female Staff*
- *One Representative from the concerned district office*
- *One External Gender Expert/ advocate*

The composition of the committee will be displayed on the notice board of the organization in a manner visible to all.

One of the lady members will be appointed as the Chairperson for this Committee. The Committee will receive the complaint and will have the hearing and give their final summary of findings and recommendations for action/punishment within 7 days to The Director General. *(In case the complain is against the Director General the same may be reported to the President of YRA)* The Committee is required to maintain confidentiality. Action will be taken on the members if there is evidence to show that the matters discussed in the Committee have been leaked outside. The Action taken would be decided on a case to case basis.

REMEDIAL MEASURES

Some of the remedial measures that will be taken by the organization in order to avoid sexual harassment would be as follows:

- Code of conduct to include dignity and respect for women colleagues
- Respect the right of staff (especially women) to say 'no' to any action that may be felt as a sexual gesture by the staff
- Open environment that promotes a gender friendly culture and an environment that is devoid of any fear
- Undertake regular (at least quarterly) gender sensitization activities
- Gender training will be included as a part of induction and orientation of new staff
- Gender Justice as a core value to be internalized in the interventions, programmes and other activities undertaken by the organization

This policy discussed and mandated in the YRA Governing Council Meeting held on 11th August 2012 and will be applicable from 1st April 2013.

Director General

Secretary

President