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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR GENDER SENSITIZATION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to promote **gender equality, respect, dignity, inclusion, and a safe working environment** for all individuals associated with the organization.

It aims to create awareness about gender sensitivity, discrimination, stereotypes, respectful workplace behaviour, and prevention of harassment.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees and persons associated with the organization, including permanent and temporary employees, trainees, interns, consultants, contract staff, volunteers, and other relevant stakeholders.

It applies to workplace activities as well as work-related meetings, training, travel, events, and other official activities, as applicable.

3. Objectives

The organization shall:

- Promote equality and respectful treatment of all individuals.
- Create awareness about gender stereotypes and discrimination.
- Encourage professional and respectful workplace behaviour.
- Promote awareness regarding sexual harassment and inappropriate conduct.
- Inform employees about available reporting and complaint mechanisms.
- Conduct regular gender-sensitization and awareness programs.
- Promote a safe, inclusive, and supportive workplace.

4. Gender-Sensitive Workplace Behaviour

All employees are expected to:

- Treat colleagues and others with dignity and respect.
- Avoid gender-based jokes, comments, insults, or stereotypes.
- Respect personal boundaries and privacy.
- Avoid discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour.

- Communicate professionally and respectfully.
- Support equal opportunities and fair treatment

5. Awareness and Training

The organization shall conduct gender-sensitization awareness programs periodically and, where appropriate, during employee induction.

Training may include:

- Gender equality and inclusion.
- Gender stereotypes and unconscious bias.
- Respectful workplace behaviour.
- Prevention of discrimination and harassment.
- Personal boundaries and appropriate communication.
- Awareness of POSH provisions and reporting mechanisms.
- The official government portal for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act to file or monitor workplace complaints, use the official SHe-Box Portal.

Attendance and relevant training records should be maintained.

6. POSH and Internal Committee

- Gender sensitization is separate from, but connected with, the organization's POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) framework.
- Where applicable, the organization shall maintain an Internal Committee (IC/ICC) in accordance with the law.
- The Internal Committee handles complaints falling within its statutory scope, while gender-sensitization activities focus primarily on awareness and prevention.
- Employees shall be informed about the Internal Committee and the appropriate complaint-reporting channels.

7. Complaint and Reporting Mechanism

Employees who experience or become aware of inappropriate conduct should use the reporting mechanism provided by the organization.

Complaints covered under POSH shall be handled according to the applicable law and the organization's POSH policy.

8. Confidentiality and Non-Retaliation

Information relating to complaints and proceedings shall be handled confidentially as required by applicable law and organizational policy.

The organization should not tolerate retaliation against a person for making a genuine complaint, raising a concern, participating as a witness, or cooperating with an authorized inquiry.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Management

- Ensure a safe and respectful workplace.
- Support gender-sensitization initiatives.
- Provide necessary resources and support.
- Organize awareness and training programs.
- Maintain training and attendance records
- Communicate relevant policies and reporting mechanisms.

Employees

- Follow the SOP and organizational policies.
- Maintain respectful workplace behaviour.
- Participate in required training.
- Report concerns through appropriate channels.

Internal Committee

Where applicable, the Internal Committee shall perform its statutory functions in accordance with applicable law and the organization's POSH policy.

10. Monitoring and Review

The organization shall periodically review the effectiveness of this SOP, including training participation, employee feedback, awareness activities, and changes in applicable legal or organizational requirements.

The SOP shall be updated whenever necessary.

11. Records

The organization shall maintain appropriate records of:

- Gender-sensitization programs.
- Training materials, including presentations, handouts, case studies, videos, FAQs, quizzes, and other resources used for gender-sensitization/POSH training.
- Attendance records.
- Feedback and awareness activities.
- Periodic reviews.

Records relating to POSH complaints and proceedings shall be maintained separately and handled as required by applicable law.


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