

**GANGADHAR MEHER UNIVERSITY, AMRUTA VIHAR,**

**SAMBALPUR, ODISHA**

**Policy**

**on**

**(Anti-Sexual Harassment)**

**2020-2024**

**“To Work Without Harassment Is Your Fundamental Right”**

**The Supreme Court Guidelines define Sexual Harassment to Include**

- Physical contact and advances.
- Demand or request for sexual favours.
- Sexually coloured remarks.
- Display of pornography.
- Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature

**Policy**

The Anti- Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 was enacted to provide safeguarding measures to women and ensure free work environment. Its aim is to give respect ‘women’s right to equality of status and opportunity’. This Act will enable to gender equality, life and liberty, 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. Sexual harassment constitutes a gross violation of women's right to equality and dignity. Following this principles, Gangadhar Meher University has constituted an Internal Complaint Committee (ICC) to fulfil the criteria of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (prevention, prohibition and redressal) Act2013. The committee formed in G M University to look into the complaints received from the students and employees who fall victim to such kinds of allegations. The work of the committee involves counselling, resolving, research and extension activities. It is also taken care by the committee to keep the name and address and related information confidential. The process of inquiry follows the rules and regulations of Act-2013 and guidelines of Gangadhar Meher University.

## **The Act**

Considering the responsibility and accountability in the Vishaka Guidelines, the Supreme Court has placed an obligation on workplaces, institutions and those in positions of responsibility, to uphold working women's fundamental right to equality and dignity at the workplace. Three key obligations required to meet the standard by the University are, namely:

1. Prohibition
2. Prevention
3. Redressal

## **Key Elements of Workplace Harassment**

Very often situations end up in inappropriate and unprofessional behaviours. It is important to remember that workplace sexual harassment is sexual, unwelcome and the experience is subjective. It is the impact and not the intent that matters and it almost always occurs in a matrix of power. It is possible that a woman may experience a single instance of sexual harassment or a series of incidents over a period of time. It is important also to remember that each case is unique and should be examined in its own context and according to the surrounding circumstances as a whole. It covers a spectrum of behaviours including verbal harassment, physical harassment, psychological harassment, cyberbullying, discrimination and the like.

## **Sexual Harassment Takes Place If A Person**

- Subjects another person to an unwelcome act of physical intimacy, like grabbing, brushing, touching, pinching etc.
- Makes an unwelcome demand or request (whether directly or by implication) for sexual favour from another person, and further makes it a condition for employment/payment of wages/increment/promotion etc.
- Makes an unwelcome remark with sexual connotations, like sexually explicit compliments/cracking loud jokes with sexual connotations/ making sexist remarks etc.
- Shows a person any sexually explicit visual material, in the form of pictures/cartoons/pinups/calendars/screen savers on computers/any offensive written material/pornographic emails, etc.

- Engages in any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, which could be verbal, or even non-verbal, like staring to make the other person uncomfortable, making offensive gestures, kissing sounds, etc.

Often such behaviour goes unpunished because of hesitation on the part of victim/s to report such behaviour out of a sense of shame or fear or both. It is important to protest against any behaviour that they feel is unwanted and unacceptable. The Complaint Cell at Gangadhar Meher University has been set up with the aim of providing a platform to complain about any unwelcome behaviour.

### **If You Are Being Harassed, This Is What You Can Do**

- Don't feel a sense of shame. Tell the harasser very clearly that you find his/her behaviour offensive.
- Don't ignore the harassment in the hope that it will stop on its own. Come forward and complain.
- Talk to somebody you trust about the harassment. It will not only give you strength but also help others in similar situations to come forward and complain.
- Keep a record of all incidents of sexual harassment in a notebook. If you feel the need to register a formal complaint later, this record will be helpful.

### **The Role of the “Internal Complaints Committee”**

- To take proactive measures towards sensitization of the staff, students, and faculty members of the Institute on gender issues.
- To act as Inquiry Authority on a complaint of sexual harassment.
- To ensure that victims and witnesses are not victimized or discriminated because of their complaint.
- To take care of the above at department level to make it more popular and accessible.

### **Anti- Sexual Harassment Committee**

Internal Complaints Committee of the University constituted as per the directions from UGC and National commission for women. On the directions of Department of Higher Education (letter No.HE-MC-MISC\_)!-2023-21182 /HE dated 18/05/2023) Anti-sexual harassment committee also constituted. University provides support resources to individuals who have experienced sexual harassments including

- a) counselling services
- b) Medical assistance
- c) Academic accommodation

University also is committed towards preventing the harassments through education and awareness, training initiatives, to promote a culture of respect and consent within university community.

**The present members are:**

1. Dr. Meera Swain, Associate Professor, Anthropology, Chairperson
2. Suneli Dei, Asst Professor, Sanskrit, Member
3. Dr. Banita Mahanandia, Assistant Professor, Political Science, Member
4. Dr. Puspa Hembram, Assistant Professor, Psychology, Member
5. Dr. Ashrita Patra, Ast. Professor, Mathematics, Member
6. Dr. Parikhita Bhoi, Assistant Professor, Odia., Member
7. Ms Bhumisuta Sahu, PATANG, (NGO), Member

The policy is hereby prepared by the following members and submitted (as per the letter no.1997/GMU dated 25/04/24) for consideration. The members are:

1. Meera Swain *M. Swain*  
26/04/24
2. Banita Mahanandia *B. Mahanandia*  
26/4/24
3. Pushpa Hembram *P. Hembram*  
26.04.24