



Readers Summary

This document is mandatory reading material for all staff working with Nature Mates Nature Club. Gender issue and sexual harassment (GISH) is a major concern in all organizations. Understanding this document is essential to conduct oneself fairly at workplace and in public spaces.

Nature Mates as an organization, is committed to the policy on GISH, Prevention of sexual harassment (POSH) and Prevention of Child abuse. This document provides guidelines for reporting, inquisition, fairness of hearing and reprimand (if found guilty) on violation of these policies.

The document is divided into 3 sections:

1. Gender issues and sexual harassment
2. Prevention of sexual harassment and workplace harassment
3. Child protection

A subsequent document deals with safeguarding these policies with names of committee members who will deal with inquisitions and redressals.

Policy 1: NATURE MATES-NATURE CLUB's POLICY ON GENDER ISSUES AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

(Policy no: PC/01/NM/GISH/2023;

Date of establishment: 05.12.2019; updated and revised on 20.07.2023)

I. Background and Objective

Nature Mates-Nature Club (NMNC) is an organization that believes in providing equal opportunity to all its members and volunteers irrespective of one's caste, creed, religion and gender. We are committed to provide a safe and healthy working environment for the staffs. NMNC has zero-tolerance to sexual harassment in workplace and any act/s violating the dignity of an employee of the organization at or outside the workplace or during field visits will be considered a punishable offence. This policy has been framed with the objective to prevent sexual harassment at the workplace and includes a redressal mechanism for dealing with instances of sexual harassment faced by the staffs at the workplace.

NMNC's policy to Prevent, Prohibit and Redress Sexual Harassment covers every "employee" across the organization in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court of India in "*Vishaka and others v. State of Rajasthan*" in the year 1997 as well as on the "*Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013*" ("Act"); Pursuant to these guidelines and the Act, NMNC has affirmed the need for a policy on Sexual Harassment at the Workplace in all offices and workplaces of the organization, including in field sites and other work environments of Nature Mates Staff Members.



II. Scope of the policy

This Policy will be applicable to:

- (a) All allegations of Sexual Harassment by a member against another, irrespective of gender or whether the Sexual Harassment is alleged to have taken place within or outside NMNC office.
- (b) All allegations of Sexual Harassment made by an outsider against an employee (as defined in III) or made by an employee against a third party, if the Sexual Harassment is alleged to have taken place within the Workplace.
- (c) All Employees, as defined hereunder.
- (d) All employees during field visits. A list containing contacts of the policy heads to be provided to the personnel going for field visits. This list of contacts will be made available through the annexure of the policy as well as on site. All complaints have to be brought to the notice of the IC.

III. Definitions

1. **"Management"** is the Trustees and the Head of **"NMNC"** Nature Conservation Foundation. They will be responsible for the implementation of this policy and the committee related to this.
2. **"Members"** shall mean any staff or person engaged by NMNC including full-time, part-time, temporary, voluntary, honorary, contracted or casual staff, researchers, trainees, interns and consultants.
3. **"Sexual Harassment"** includes any unwelcome act or behavior (whether direct or by implication) such as:
 - (a) physical contact and advances
 - (b) a demand or request for sexual favors
 - (c) sexually coloured remarks
 - (d) showing pornographic content
 - (e) any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.

Explanation: "Unwelcome act or behavior" shall include but not be limited to the following instances listed below, while it is not possible to list all circumstances that may constitute Sexual Harassment, the following are some examples of conduct, which if unwelcome, may constitute Sexual Harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstance including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- (a) Unwelcome sexual advances—whether they involve physical touching or not;



- (b) Discussion of one's sexual activities;
- (c) where submission to, or rejection of sexual advances, request or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of employment, basis for employment decisions, or benefits in existing employment; or,
- (d) Sexual epithets, lurid stares, jokes, written or oral reference to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life; comment on an individual's appearance, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- (e) such advances, requests or conduct (whether direct or implied) have the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or sexually offensive work environment; or
- (f) humiliating treatment likely to affect health and safety of an employee.

Under these definitions, direct or implied requests or offers by a member, favors of a sexual nature in exchange for actual or promised job benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, increased benefits, or continued employment, constitutes Sexual Harassment.

The legal definition of Sexual Harassment is broad and in addition to the above examples, other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a work place environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to staff will also constitute Sexual Harassment.

- 4. **“Head”** means the Secretary of NMNC.
- 5. **“Workplace”** means (i) office, locations, units established, owned or controlled by NMNC and (ii) places visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment, including any transportation provided by NMNC to travel to such places
- 6. **“Complainant”** means in relation to a Workplace, any employee or other person who alleges to have been subjected to any act of Sexual Harassment.
- 7. **“GISH Cell”** means the Internal Committee, also known as the Sexual Harassment (Redressal and Complaints) Committee constituted in accordance with Section V below.
- 8. **“Respondent”** means the person against whom the Complainant has made a complaint.
- 9. **“Act”** is The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and the rules framed thereunder.



IV. Preventive action

Consistent with the Act, NMNC shall take all reasonable steps to ensure prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace. This includes:

1. Circulation of this Policy by NNMC on gender issues and Sexual Harassment to all members and persons connected with the work and/ or functioning of NNMC.
2. Ensuring that Sexual Harassment as an issue is raised and discussed at NNMC meetings from time to time;
3. The names and contact details of all members of the GISH Cell shall be prominently displayed on the main notice board of NNMC office;
4. Training / orientation programs will be conducted periodically within NNMC to make members aware of gender and sexual harassment issues and the organization's policy on the same;
5. Wherever possible, the GISH Cell will collaborate with other organizations in organizing workshops or counseling about gender and sexual harassment issues;
6. All staffs of NNMC will contain provisions and obligations in relation to Sexual Harassment at the Workplace;
7. The Policy and related information will be available with NNMC administration staff, head, all committees, and programme heads;
8. Wherever necessary, this Policy shall be translated to the local language such that it can be shared and disseminated within the local field staff; and
9. The NNMC website will contain brief details of its views on Sexual Harassment. It is the responsibility of the programme heads to make the policy available for all associated with their programmes both in the field as well as in the offices.

V. The Internal Committee, also known as the Gender Issues and Sexual Harassment (Redressal and Complaints) Committee.

1. **Cell:** NNMC has an Internal Committee (IC) called the Gender Issues and Sexual Harassment (Redressal and Complaints) Committee (hereinafter referred to as "GISH Cell") to investigate and adjudicate on Sexual Harassment complaints and also to function as a committee that would address gender-related issues.
2. **Membership:**
 - (a) The GISH Cell shall be comprised of at least four members including three from within NNMC and one external member as follows:



- (i) A Presiding Officer (a woman) who shall be a senior member of NMNC;
 - (ii) A person (a man), also a senior member of NMNC;
 - (iii) One person (a woman) selected from among the Research Affiliates/Senior Research Associates;
 - (iv) External member - One or more third party individual familiar with the issue of Sexual Harassment;
- (b) Additional member(s) can be appointed to GISH Cell at the discretion of the Management provided such member complies with the minimum qualifications set out in the Act. Membership to the GISH Cell shall be for a period of three years. Thereafter, the Employer shall make new appointments, keeping in mind the prescribed qualifications. In the event of any vacancy on the GISH Cell due to resignation, termination, death or for any other reason, such vacancy shall be filled in accordance with the procedures prescribed by this Policy within a reasonable time period but no later than 3 months from the date of vacancy.

3. Disqualification of members: A member of the GISH Cell shall not be member of the IC in the event of any of the following scenarios:

- (a) Upon she/he ceasing to be an employee or associated with NMNC;
- (b) There being any complaint of Sexual Harassment pending against him or her;
- (c) If he or she is found guilty of Sexual Harassment at any point of time or is convicted for an offence or an enquiry into an offence under any law;
- (d) If he/she is guilty of confidentiality obligations as set out in this Policy;
- (e) If he/she is found guilty in disciplinary proceedings or a disciplinary proceeding is pending against him/her;
- (f) If he/she has abused his/her position as a member of GISH Cell so as to render his/her continuance in office prejudicial.
- (g) If he/she is a Complainant (till the period of inquiry and disposal of that particular case).

4. Resignation of members:

A member of the GISH Cell can resign at any time by writing to the Chairperson of the GISH Cell. The resignation shall take effect once accepted by the Chairperson. On resignation of a member of the GISH cell, the cell must appoint another member in that place immediately (within 1 month).



VI. Procedures of the GISH Cell

1. Place of meetings and inquiry: All meetings of the GISH Cell shall take place by at least 3 members, which shall include the Presiding Officer and External Member.
2. General meetings: The GISH Cell should meet at least once a year regardless of whether complaints have been made to it. In these meetings, the GISH Cell would review status of preventive actions taken by the organization and discuss matters pertaining to prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace.
3. Meetings to address complaints: In the event of a complaint being lodged with the GISH Cell, it may decide the number of times it should meet, participants in the meetings, and the venue of these meetings, with the consensus of at least 3 members, which shall include the Presiding Officer and External Member.
4. Quorum: The quorum for any meeting of GISH Cell shall be 3 members of GISH Cell, which shall include the Presiding Officer and External Member, and shall have a minimum 50% of female members. In conducting an inquiry into a Sexual Harassment complaint, a quorum shall be present.

VII. Powers and duties of the GISH Cell

1. To enquire into grievances, concerning Sexual Harassment and to establish the facts based on a thorough and exhaustive enquiry.
2. To recommend to the Management appropriate action to be taken against the Respondent in the case the Respondent is found guilty.
3. To recommend to the Management appropriate action to be taken against the Complainant if the complaint is found to be false, malicious or frivolous.
4. To recommend to the Management appropriate action to be taken against a witness who provides false testimony or evidence, or intentionally tries to mislead the GISH Cell.
5. To take steps to ensure the prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace through awareness and other activities.
6. To maintain records related to NMNC's actions to prevent Sexual Harassment at the Workplace and to duly submit to the appropriate government authorities necessary filings and reports.
7. To be available to discuss any concerns, questions and clarification that employees may have in relation to this Policy and the process of enquiry and adjudication of Sexual Harassment complaints.



VIII. Complaints procedure for Sexual Harassment complaints

1. The Complainant may file a complaint with GISH Cell in writing or as an official email.
2. The Complainant may provide supporting documents and a list of witnesses along with the complaint letter.
3. A complaint may be filed with any of the members of the GISH Cell whose name and contact details are communicated to the employees from time to time.
4. If the complaint is oral, then this will be reduced into writing by the member who receives the complaint. The Complainant will then review this written report of the complaint and sign it or agree to the contents of the report over email if he/she finds it to be correct and in line with the oral complaint.
5. The Complainant shall be afforded full confidentiality at this stage.
6. Upon receipt of the complaint and in no event later than 2 working days from the date of receipt of the complaint, the member of GISH Cell to whom the complaint is made, shall communicate the same to the Chairperson. The GISH Cell is not required to share details of the enquiry with the Director or the Management. The GISH Cell shall conduct the enquiry process independently.
7. Within one week from the date of receipt of the complaint, the Chairperson shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint. The GISH Cell shall send one copy of the complaint to the Respondent within a period of seven working days from date of receipt of written complaint, along with a notice explaining his/her rights as a Respondent in the inquiry process.
8. The GISH Cell shall be empowered to do all things necessary to ensure a fair hearing to the parties involved in the complaint i.e., the Complainant and the Respondent including all things necessary to ensure that such persons or witnesses are not victimized or discriminated against at the Workplace. In this regard, the GISH Cell shall also have discretion to make appropriate recommendations for interim relief, such as (i) suspension or transfer of the Respondent pending outcome of the complaint; (ii) upon the request of the Complainant, transfer of the Complainant to another Workplace or granting of paid leave for a period up to, and not exceeding three months.
9. Upon request from the Complainant, the GISH Cell shall recommend interim relief measures, for immediate implementation by the Employer.



10. The Respondent shall file his/her reply to the complaint along with supporting documents and list of witnesses within a period not exceeding ten days from the date of receipt of complaint from the GISH Cell.
11. Based on convenience of the parties and members of GISH Cell, the Chairperson shall expeditiously convene a meeting of the GISH Cell to look into the complaint and to initiate (at the option of the Complainant), conciliation or an enquiry into the matter.
12. The Complainant and the Respondent shall be given advance intimation of this meeting.
13. The Respondent and Complainant must remain personally present throughout the Conciliation/Enquiry process. Under exceptional circumstances and her sole discretion, the Chairperson may allow the Complainant or the Respondent to participate through teleconferencing. Legal representative cannot be brought by either party to represent them, during the course of these proceedings.
14. The GISH Cell will explain the process to the Complainant and the Respondent, their rights, confidentiality, as well as the option of conciliation or inquiry.
15. The enquiry into a complaint by GISH Cell may include interviews with the Complainant, Respondent, the person filing the complaint, witnesses and other persons considered relevant to the adjudication of case.

15.1 Conciliation:

- i. Conciliation can take place only at the option of the Complainant.
- ii. No monetary settlement shall be made as a basis of conciliation.
- iii. The IC shall only record the settlement so arrived at and forward the same to the Employer to take action as specified in the recommendation.
- iv. The IC shall provide copies of the settlement to the Complainant and the Respondent.
- v. Where a settlement is arrived at under conciliation, no further inquiry shall be conducted by the IC, unless the settlement arrived upon is not followed.

Note: In cases where the Complainant feels that it is a minor incident which could be redressed through conciliation settlement, and wherein the Respondent does not refute the allegations that have been made, only in such cases, can conciliation be arrived at.



- 15.2 The Employer shall assist the Complainant in filing a FIR against the Respondent, if so desired by the Complainant.
- 15.3 It is the Employer's obligation to implement the recommendations of the IC within 60 days of receiving a copy of the Inquiry Report.
- 15.4 Failure to comply with any of the provisions of the SH Act will result in a fine of Rs. 50,000 for the Employer, and in case of repetition of offence, a fine of Rs. 1,00,000 and cancellation of business licenses.
- 15.5 Where the Complainant, the Respondent and/or any other Employee, who is a part of the proceedings of the complaint as a witness, violate the confidentiality provisions of this Policy, he/she shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, in addition to being liable for a fine of Rs. 5,000.
16. Appeal: The Complainant and the Respondent shall have the right to appeal against the recommendation of the IC, to the Court of appropriate jurisdiction, within ninety days of the decision of the IC, if they are not satisfied with the decision.
17. The GISH Cell shall have the right to terminate proceedings or give ex parte orders (i.e. orders without the presence of one or more parties), if the Complainant or the Respondent fails to present themselves for more than three consecutive hearings without sufficient cause. The ex parte orders shall be issued after giving the party concerned a 15 days' notice.
18. All complaints shall be treated as confidential and be heard and investigated into within the shortest possible period of the complaint having been made, which in no event shall be greater than 90 days from the date of the complaint. However, a final report of the case, findings and recommended action (if any) proposed by the GISH Cell may be completed outside this 90 day time period.
19. The GISH Cell should not share the draft of the enquiry report with any member of the Management.
20. The final enquiry report containing findings on the alleged Sexual Harassment along with recommended remedial action made by the GISH Cell shall be forwarded to the Employer for necessary action within one week of such recommendations being made. The report of the GISH Cell (including its findings and recommendations) shall be deemed to be final and binding on the Complainant and the Respondent. Any party unhappy with the recommendations of the GISH Cell may appeal against it in a court of appropriate civil jurisdiction.
21. All the proceedings of the GISH Cell including statements of the Complainant, Respondent, witnesses and other relevant persons shall be recorded and signed



by such person in addition to the Chairperson or any other member present at the time such statements were made. These records shall be available for review and inspection to all members of GISH Cell.

22. The investigation into a complaint will be conducted in such a manner so as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances.
23. In the case of a Sexual Harassment complaint against the Employer, it will have to be filed with the District Local Complaints Committee.
24. In the course of investigating any complaint of Sexual Harassment, the GISH Cell shall ensure that the principles of natural justice are adhered to namely:
 - No bias: All members shall conduct the inquiry in a fair and unbiased manner, irrespective of their professional or other relationships with any of the parties of an inquiry. The IC shall adopt the due process as is legally mandated as well as maintaining the highest level of integrity and empathy.
 - Equal opportunity to be heard: Both parties (i.e. the Complainant and the Respondent) shall be given reasonable opportunity to be heard along with witnesses and to produce any other relevant documents before the GISH Cell;
 - Justice shall not just be done, but seen to be done: The GISH Committee shall not just give recommendations at the end of an inquiry, but also provide clear reasoning for the actions recommended by them.



POLICY 2: PREVENTION OF SEXUAL AND WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

NMNC is committed to providing all its employees and related personnel with a work environment free of harassment, harm, abuse, and bullying. This policy prohibits all types of harassment including sexual harassment and harassment based on gender, sexual orientation, medical condition, race, religion creed, colour, national origin or ancestry, physical disability, age, work environment, or any other biases. If case an employee, or related personnel is being harassed, tortured, or bullied, they may report to their immediate head or to the GISH committee.

NMNC classifies Violence/Abuse into the following categories which are all considered to be forms of misconduct:

- **Physical Abuse-** Physical abuse occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child. This may for instance, take the form of slapping, hitting, punching, shaking, kicking, beating, burning, shoving, or grabbing. Physical abuse can be a single or repeated act. It doesn't always leave visible marks or injuries.
- **Sexual Abuse-** Sexual abuse means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions
- **Sexual Exploitation-** Sexual exploitation means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
- **Sexual Harassment-** Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. While typically involving a pattern of behavior, it can take the form of a single incident.
- **Emotional Abuse-** Emotional abuse is inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts toward a child or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurture and emotional availability. Such acts have a high probability of damaging a child's self-esteem or social competence.
- **Spiritual Abuse-** Spiritual (or religious) abuse occurs when someone uses an individual's spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control that person. • **Cultural Abuse -** Cultural abuse occurs when an individual is harmed as a result of practices that are part of her or his culture, religion, or tradition.



- **Verbal Abuse-** Verbal abuse occurs when someone uses language, whether spoken or written, to cause harm to an individual.
- **Financial Abuse-** Financial abuse occurs when someone controls an individual's financial resources without the person's consent or misuses those resources.
- **Neglect-** Neglect is the failure to provide a child (where they are in a position to do so) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and well-being.

I. Maintaining a Safe Environment

Every employee/members are responsible for maintaining a safe and respectful workplace. NMNC has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of violence, abuse, harm, exploitation and/or threatening or bullying behaviour.

All employees and related personnel will commit to not:

- Making harassing or threatening phone calls.
- Sending harassing or threatening emails or other written communications to anyone.
- Treat colleagues, partner staff or related personnel in an undignified or disrespectful manner.
- Intentionally causes harm to others.
- Using unlawful, derogatory or intimidating language as a way of communication
- Stalk any other person.
- Destroy personal and/or Organisation assets.
- Possess dangerous items of any nature such as weapons, explosives or firearms on NMNC's property, or on their own person while conducting business off-site.
- Steal assets belonging to NMNC.

Any violations of these guidelines for maintaining a safe environment are grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including potential termination in accordance with local laws.

II. Definitions

'Good faith' is taken to mean a disclosure which is made with honest intentions without malicious reason or spite.

"Bullying" is behaviour directed either against an individual or a group of individuals that creates a threatening or intimidating environment undermining the confidence and self-esteem of the recipient. It could be an abuse or misuse of power, real or perceived, that humiliates or injures the recipient(s).



Bullying include but are not limited to:

- Abuse of authority by management or their acting in such a way that the employee feels threatened or coerced. Making unreasonable or intimidating demands of an employee to deliver beyond the responsibilities of their role.
- Aggressive or intimidating behaviour towards an individual including shouting or unreasonable anger.
- Repeated unfair criticism or destructive and negative criticism along with lack of reasonable support for future improvement.
- Criticism in front of others that humiliates and undermines them including by email.
- Criticism that focuses on a personal characteristic rather than work performance.
- Ostracising someone e.g. refusing to speak to them, blatantly ignoring their views or comments, or deliberately excluding them from work related or social activities.
- Deliberately imposing grossly excessive or unachievable workloads or impossible deadlines in order to make life difficult for a particular employee.
- Unjustified micromanagement that may undermine confidence or disempower an individual.
- Coercion or pressure to perform social favours or participate in religious or political activity.
- Withholding vital work-related information in order to embarrass someone.
- Making threats or comments about job security without foundation.

The above is not exhaustive and can only be used as a guide for examples of bullying.

“Harassment” is verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct, which meets the following criteria:

- Is related to a person’s characteristics, whether they are actual or perceived which include age, disability, caste or social position, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.
- Is unwanted and uninvited.
- Has the purpose or effect of violating that person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive work environment for that person.



POLICY 3: NATURE MATES-NATURE CLUB'S CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Background and Objective

The Indian Preamble and the Indian Constitution states that all children has the right to happy childhood and an opportunity to lead a dignified life safe from violence, exploitation, neglect, deprivation and discrimination. India is also signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and accordingly has a strong legal framework to protect children which include the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015; the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012; Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act 1994; the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act 2005; the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009; Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006; and Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016.

The Child Protection Policy and the above mentioned acts, treaties and legislations ensure the protection and wellbeing of children. It aims at providing a safe and evolving environment through the prevention and response to child abuse, exploitation and neglect. It provides a framework for all organizations to understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding/protecting children and promoting their welfare.

Declaration

Nature Mates-Nature Club (NMNC) has Zero-tolerance towards child abuse. NMNC declares that it will:

1. always respect all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity;
2. support a child's right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
3. not employ any child (under the age of 18) except a volunteer or an intern for any office work or field work, as defined under Child Labour (prohibition and regulation) Amendment Act, 2016;
4. report any case of child abuse, exploitation and neglect which comes to our knowledge to appropriate authority.

Punishment and penalties: Any vendor if found to be hiring a child will be immediately blacklisted.

I. Management obligations



The management of NNMC shall provide all necessary assistance for the purpose of ensuring full, effective and prompt implementation of this Policy. It shall be further bound by the decisions of the deciding cell and shall implement the same within four weeks.

II. Third-party harassment

1. In the event that the conduct about which a complaint is lodged, is committed by a third-party, with whom the Complainant came into contact at the Workplace, and where this conduct amounts to a specific offence under Section 354A of the IPC or under any other law in existence, the GISH Cell, subject to the wishes of the Complainant, shall assist the complainant in filing of FIR (First Information Report) at the appropriate Police Station or with the Local Committee in that district.
2. The GISH Cell will actively assist and do all that is necessary to ensure the safety of a Complainant at the Workplace or otherwise in respect to any duties/activities performed in connection with his/her work.

III. Confidentiality

1. The GISH Cell shall abide by the following rules relating to confidentiality:
 - (a) The entire proceedings of the GISH Cell shall remain confidential unless required to be disclosed under provisions of applicable law;
 - (b) The Complainant's identity shall be revealed to the Respondent, including at the time of publication of the report, unless a request to keep this identity confidential has been made in writing by the Complainant, and the GISH Cell believes that it is essential for the safety of the Complainant, or for any other valid reason, to keep the Complainant's identity confidential.

However, the Complainant's identity cannot be kept confidential from the GISH Cell.

- (c) Reports relating to proceedings of the GISH Cell are confidential documents and are not subject to the RTI Act.
- (d) All main documents pertaining to the workings of the GISH cell, particularly in relation to complaints, shall be in the custody of the Chairperson.
- (e) Information in relation to enquiry into Sexual Harassment complaints will be shared with the Management only if the members think it necessary.

IV. False and malicious complaints or witness statements

1. If the GISH Cell is of the opinion, substantiated by facts that the complaint with regard to Sexual Harassment was false, and has been lodged deliberately and with



malicious intent, such an act would amount to misconduct. The GISH Cell shall recommend to the Management, appropriate action in this regard. Absence of evidence to support a complaint will not make a complaint as false. Intention to file a false or malicious complaint must be determined based on a full inquiry.

2. Action can be taken against a witness for providing false testimony or evidence with the intention of misleading the IC.

V. Protection against victimization

As stated above, retaliation against an individual who has complained about Sexual Harassment, and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a Sexual Harassment complaint is unlawful and will not be tolerated.

In the event of the Complainant and the Respondent being Employees/Employer, during the investigation and enquiry, and until the case is adjudicated by GISH Cell, the Respondent shall not:

- (a) Write confidential reports in relation to the Complainant;
- (b) Evaluate the performance of the Complainant;
- (c) Supervise the work of the Complainant; or
- (d) Require the Complainant to report to him/her.

VI. Punishment and penalties

1. In addition to the penalties for misconduct stipulated in other Nature Mates policies, a Respondent guilty of Sexual Harassment shall be liable for any or all of the following minor and major penalties depending on the nature of the offence, conduct and subsequent behavior of such Respondent:

(a) Minor penalties:

- (i) Reprimand;
- (ii) Warning or censure;
- (iii) Withholding of an increment not exceeding one year
- (iv) Internal transfers within other offices

(b) Major penalties:

- (i) Deducting appropriate amounts from the salary and/or payment of compensation considered adequate by GISH Cell;
- (ii) Withholding of increment for more than one year;
- (iii) Suspension from office for a period not exceeding one month;



(iv) Termination of service.

2. The Respondent may also be required to give a written apology to the Complainant, and upon his/her failure to do so his/her punishment can be enhanced by the GISH Cell.
3. In case a minor penalty has been imposed on the Respondent on an earlier occasion, on a second offence, he or she shall be imposed with a major penalty irrespective of the gravity of the second offence.

VII. Others

1. The proceedings under this Policy shall not be stalled or postponed merely because the Complainant is proceeding against the Respondent under any other provision of law.
2. The provisions of this Policy shall not restrict the powers of the Management or the Complainant to proceed against the Respondent for any other misconduct (which does not constitute Sexual Harassment).
3. To the extent the Policy does not cover or deal with any aspect relating to protection against Sexual Harassment or in relation to prevention and redressal of complaints of Sexual Harassment, the provisions of the Act shall apply.



Notice no: NMNC/P/2023/07/001

Dated: 20 July 2023

In pursuance of Policy no: PC/01/NM/GISH/2023 on Gender Issues and Sexual Harassment of all members, staff and visitors at workplace (Policy, prevention and redressal), a policy document has been revised and re-advertised to all concerned. The documents contain the following

1. Gender issues and sexual harassment policy (GISH)
2. Prevention of sexual harassment policy (POSH)
3. Prevention of child abuse policy

Please read and understand the document, attached along with this order notice. Further to the policy please find attached a safeguarding of the policy document. The document contains names of a committee of internal inquisition and redressal. The members of the committee are:

- Presiding officer: Ms. Soma Dutta
- Member: Mr. Uttam Mahatha
- Member: Dr. Anindita Majumdar
- External member: Ms. Lipika Ray

The committee has the authority to act as per provision laid down in the GISH policy document, in respect to Nature Mates Nature Club

The order shall be in effect immediately.

Signed and stamped on 20 day of July 2023


Secretary
Nature Mates Nature Club