



**AGHARKAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
G. G. AGARKAR ROAD  
PUNE 411 004**

**POLICY ON PREVENTION, PROHIBITION AND  
REDRESSAL OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE  
WORKPLACE**

In accordance with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

**Effective From:** 2014

**Review Cycle:** Every 3 Years or Earlier if Required

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# **1. PREAMBLE**

Agharkar Research Institute, G. G. Agarkar Road, Pune 411 004 is committed to providing a safe, dignified, and inclusive work environment free from sexual harassment. This Policy is framed in accordance with the provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (hereinafter referred to as the “POSH Act”) and the Rules framed thereunder.

The Institute adopts a zero-tolerance approach toward sexual harassment in all academic, research, administrative, laboratory, fieldwork, and collaborative settings.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

This Policy aims to:

- Prevent sexual harassment at the workplace
- Provide a fair and time-bound redressal mechanism
- Ensure confidentiality and protection from retaliation
- Promote awareness and gender sensitivity
- Comply with statutory obligations under the POSH Act

### **3. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY**

This Policy applies to:

- Faculty members and Principal Investigators
- Scientists and research personnel
- Postdoctoral fellows
- Ph.D., M.Sc., and project scholars
- Administrative and technical staff
- Laboratory personnel
- Interns and trainees
- Visiting researchers and consultants
- Any woman present at or associated with Institute activities

It covers incidents occurring:

- Within Institute premises (laboratories, offices, hostels, conference halls)
- During fieldwork, academic travel, conferences, workshops
- In virtual environments (email, video meetings, messaging platforms)
- In research collaborations under the authority of the Institute

## **4. DEFINITIONS**

### **4.1 Sexual Harassment**

Includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome physical contact or advances
- Demand or request for sexual favours
- Sexually coloured remarks
- Showing pornography
- Any unwelcome verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of sexual nature
- Abuse of authority affecting research supervision, authorship, evaluation, funding, promotion, or academic progress

### **4.2 Aggrieved Woman**

Any woman who alleges sexual harassment at the workplace.

### **4.3 Respondent**

A person against whom a complaint is made.

### **4.4 Workplace**

Includes all Institute facilities, field sites, transport, off-site events, and virtual platforms linked to official duties.

## **5. INTERNAL COMMITTEE (IC)**

The Institute shall constitute an Internal Committee as per Section 4 of the POSH Act.

### **5.1 Composition**

- Presiding Officer: Senior woman employee
- Minimum two employee members
- One external member familiar with women's rights or legal issues
- At least 50% women members

### **5.2 Tenure**

Three (3) years from date of nomination.

### **5.3 Powers**

The IC shall have powers equivalent to a civil court for:

- Summoning persons
- Requiring document production
- Examining witnesses

## **6. COMPLAINT MECHANISM**

### **6.1 Filing of Complaint**

- Complaint shall be made in writing within three (3) months of the incident.
- Extension of additional three (3) months may be granted for valid reasons.
- Complaints may be submitted via:
  - Official IC email
  - Written sealed submission
  - Designated grievance portal

If the complainant is unable to submit a written complaint, the IC shall provide assistance.

### **6.2 Acknowledgment**

- Written acknowledgment within three (3) working days.
- Confidential case number assigned.

## **7. CONCILIATION**

- Initiated only upon written request of the complainant.
- Monetary settlement shall not be the basis of conciliation.
- Settlement terms shall be documented and signed.
- Inquiry shall not proceed unless settlement terms are breached.

## **8. INQUIRY PROCEDURE**

### **8.1 Notice to Respondent**

- Notice issued within seven (7) working days of receipt of complaint.
- Respondent given ten (10) days to submit written response.

### **8.2 Conduct of Inquiry**

- Inquiry to be completed within ninety (90) days.
- Both parties shall have opportunity to:
  - Present evidence
  - Submit witness statements
  - Provide written submissions
- Cross-examination shall be conducted through the IC.

### **8.3 Research-Specific Safeguards**

Where the respondent is a research supervisor or evaluator:

- Temporary change of supervisor may be recommended.
- Protection of stipend, fellowship, and academic progress shall be ensured.
- Access to research data and laboratory facilities shall not be unfairly restricted.

## **9. INTERIM RELIEF**

During pendency of inquiry, IC may recommend:

- Transfer of either party
- Leave up to three (3) months for complainant
- Change in reporting structure
- Restriction from certain facilities
- Any other appropriate measure

The Institute shall implement such recommendations promptly.

## **10. CONFIDENTIALITY**

In accordance with Section 16 of the Act, the following shall not be disclosed:

- Identity of complainant and respondent
- Witness identities
- Complaint contents
- Evidence and proceedings
- Recommendations and findings

### **10.1 Confidential Handling Measures**

- Secure storage of physical and digital records
- Restricted access to IC members only
- Confidentiality undertaking signed by IC members
- Private hearings

Breach of confidentiality shall invite disciplinary action.

# **11. INQUIRY REPORT AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

## **11.1 Submission of Report**

- Report submitted within ten (10) days of completion of inquiry.
- Provided to both parties and the Head of the Institute.

## **11.2 If Allegations are Proved**

Recommendations may include:

- Written apology
- Warning or reprimand
- Withholding promotion or increment
- Removal from supervisory roles
- Suspension or termination
- Deduction from salary as compensation
- Mandatory sensitization training

Employer shall act within sixty (60) days.

## **11.3 If Allegations are Not Proved**

- Case shall be closed.
- No action against complainant unless malicious intent is clearly established.

## **12. APPEAL**

Either party may appeal to the appropriate authority within ninety (90) days of recommendations.

## **13. PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION**

The Institute shall ensure:

- No victimization or adverse academic action
- No intimidation of complainant or witnesses
- Protection of employment, academic status, and fellowship

Retaliation shall be treated as misconduct.

## **14. RECORD MAINTENANCE AND REPORTING**

The IC shall maintain records of:

- Complaints received
- Complaints disposed
- Pending cases
- Nature of action taken

An Annual Report shall be submitted as required under Section 21 of the Act.

## **15. PREVENTIVE AND AWARENESS MEASURES**

The Institute shall:

- Display the Policy prominently
- Conduct mandatory annual sensitization workshops
- Include POSH briefing during student and staff orientation
- Provide contact details of IC members on the website and notice-boards etc.
- Ensure representation of women in decision-making bodies

## **16. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **16.1 Institute Administration**

- Ensure compliance with statutory requirements
- Provide necessary infrastructure and support to IC

### **16.2 Employees and Scholars**

- Maintain professional conduct
- Report incidents promptly
- Cooperate during inquiry

### **16.3 Internal Committee**

- Conduct impartial inquiries
- Maintain confidentiality
- Submit timely reports

## **17. AMENDMENTS**

This Policy may be amended by the Governing Body in accordance with statutory changes or institutional requirements.

## **DECLARATION**

**AGHARKAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE, Pune** hereby affirms its commitment to creating a safe, respectful, and equitable research environment and shall enforce this Policy without exception.