



# Policy against Sexual Harassment

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Nature Conservation Foundation



## This presentation...

- is meant to give you an overview of NCF's policy against sexual harassment
- lists the steps you can take to prevent and prohibit sexual harassment at workplace
- lists the actions to take as a Complainant and as a Respondent and what you can expect from the Gender Issues and Sexual Harassment (GISH) Committee and NCF
- tries to break down the policy in points, and thus some of the nuance around legality and process may be lost

## Policy statement

Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) is:

- an organisation that provides **equal employment opportunities** meaning that individuals are given equal consideration irrespective of caste, race, colour, gender, sexual preference, religious belief, etc. It is committed to creating a healthy working environment that enables its staff members to work without the fear of sexual harassment, as well as gender-related prejudice or bias

NCF's Gender Issues and Sexual Harassment policy is:

- intended to prevent and prohibit **sexual harassment at the workplace**, irrespective of gender
- intended to lay out a **redressal mechanism for complaints that may arise.**

## Who does the policy against sexual harassment apply to?

Everyone working in NCF including volunteers, interns, contractual employees, field staff, visitors to NCF offices and NCF field stations and NCF guest houses

## What constitutes sexual harassment?

- The conduct must be **unwelcome** to the target of the harassment, irrespective of the gender. “Unwelcome” means that the person/s does not solicit or incite the conduct and regards it as undesirable
- The affected person need not be the person experiencing harassment. It could also be a third party who has witnessed it

## Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to...

**Verbal:** disrespectful comments, sexual nicknames, requests for sexual favours, sexual hints, sexually-coloured jokes or stories, propositioning

**Non-Verbal:** staring, derogatory or suggestive gestures, non-inclusion

**Visual:** sexually-coloured or suggestive pictures, photos, cartoons, posters, calendars, magazines or objects

**Physical:** touching, hugging, kissing, patting, stroking, standing too close

**Written:** personal letters, notes, emails, text messages, communication on or through social media

# GISH Committee Members

## Internal members (members from within NCF):

Ms Smitha S Prabhakar (Presiding Officer)– [smita@ncf-india.org](mailto:smita@ncf-india.org) (98809 20110)

Dr Erika D Souza– [erika@ncf-india.org](mailto:erika@ncf-india.org)

Dr Suhel Quader– [suhelq@ncf-india.org](mailto:suhelq@ncf-india.org)

## External members (members who don't work at NCF):

Dr. Prashanth NS – [prashanth.ns@gmail.com](mailto:prashanth.ns@gmail.com)

Ms Shweta Luthra – [shweta@sashaindia.com](mailto:shweta@sashaindia.com) (87468 20305)

Write to the Internal Committee members on [gish@ncf-india.org](mailto:gish@ncf-india.org)

## Who is a Complainant?

The person/s receiving any "unwelcome sexually determined behaviour" (whether direct or by implication)

Can be anyone affected by the conduct at workplace, including bystanders

## Who is a Respondent?

The person/s against whom the complaint of sexual harassment has been made

**Having your case treated with sensitivity and fairness is your right. All information shared with the committee will be confidential**



## If you are a Complainant

Keep a **detailed log** of incidents, so that you do not have to only rely on memory

**Do not blame yourself**; do not tell yourself that it is/may have been your fault

Approach the committee or a member of the committee as soon as possible, not only to make a **complaint** but also for **advice** or **help**

If you feel a committee member may have a **conflict of interest**, please bring this to the notice of another member/ Director of NCF or the external member/s

## If you are a Respondent

It may not have been your **intention** to harass, but if your actions have had an **impact** on the Complainant and are treated as unwelcome, the committee will still consider the complaint and proceed

**Approach the committee** for help/advice and to find out about your rights

If you feel a committee member may have a **conflict of interest**, please bring this to the notice of another member/ Director of NCF or the external member/s

## If you are a Bystander

**Speak up** if you see someone engaging in sexually inappropriate behaviour

Clearly **inform the person/s** engaging in it, that you find it objectionable and to stop — even if you may believe that there may be no real/ intended harm or that it may be a joke

Please **seek assistance** from the Internal Committee or the NCF Director promptly if you feel that someone is the target of any kind of unwelcome behaviour that is sexual in nature

## How to make a complaint?

The Complainant may opt for:

A **written complaint** to any member/s of the Internal Committee to initiate an enquiry or investigation. This will be summarised in writing by the committee member/s and signed by you as the complainant

OR

An **oral complaint** to any member/s of the Internal Committee to seek advice or arbitration, which will then be reduced into writing by the IC member, and signed by the Complainant

## Steps to make a complaint

The Complainant/s will need to submit a written complaint along with supporting documents and names of witnesses to the Internal Committee

When the Internal Committee receives this, they will send one copy to the Respondent against whom the complaint has been made within seven working days

The Respondent will have to reply with supporting documents within ten working days of receiving the complaint copy

## Once you make a complaint

The Respondent will reply with supporting evidence

The Internal Committee will recommend two Resolution Paths: Conciliation or Committee Enquiry

The Complainant can choose one of the two recommended paths

**Note on anonymity:** The Complainant cannot be anonymous to the Committee, but can remain anonymous to the Respondent, in certain circumstances, which will be ascertained by the Committee on a case to case basis

**This committee is a quasi-judicial authority and action may be taken against an individual for filing a false complaint (intentionally), providing false evidence, or if a witness provides false testimony or tries to mislead the committee**

*For more details  
Please refer to the actual **GISH Policy**  
or ask the Internal Committee*

*Thank you!*