



SVATANTRA MICRO HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION LTD

Policy Against Sexual Harassment (w.e.f April 1, 2019)

1. Background

The Company is committed to creating a healthy working environment that enables employees to work without fear of prejudice, gender bias and sexual harassment. The company firmly believes that all employees of the company have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and afforded a work environment that encourages mutual respect, courteous and congenial relationships.

Further, the management of the company adopts the guidelines and mandates as per provisions of "The Sexual Harassment Of Women At Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition And Redressal) Act, 2013" for laying a more robust mechanism for redressal of issues related to sexual harassment at workplace w.e.f August 21st, 2014 which will be ratified by the Board at the annual review of the various policies of the company which is usually at the beginning of the new financial year.

2. Objective

- 1) Through this Policy, Svatantra Micro Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. seeks to prevent Sexual Harassment at Workplace, provide protection against Sexual Harassment at Workplace, and provide a mechanism for the redressal of complaints relating to and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.
- 2) To ensure the implementation of the policy in letter and spirit by undertaking all necessary and reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment at workplace and also provide protection to employees against sexual harassment at workplace.
- 3) The Company shall propagate the existence and contents of this Policy to its Employees.

3. Definitions

Definitions of some of the key terms used in this Policy are given below:

- a) "Committee" shall mean a 'Complaint Redressal Committee' constituted (of the policy).
- b) "Member" means a member of the 'Complaint Redressal Committee'

- c) “Company” shall mean Svantra Micro Housing Finance Corporation Ltd.
- d) “Complaint” shall mean any written communication made in good faith that reports an act of Sexual Harassment.
- e) “Complainant” means the person reporting an incident of Sexual Harassment.
- f) “Alleged Harasser” means the person who is alleged or reported to have committed an act of Sexual Harassment.
- g) “Sexual Harassment” includes such unwelcome sexually determined behavior (whether directly or by implication) as-
 - i. physical contact and advances; or
 - ii. a demand or request for sexual favors; or
 - iii. making sexually coloured remarks; or
 - iv. showing pornography or any other such offensive content in electronic form or otherwise; or
 - v. any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature
 - vi. where any of these acts is committed in circumstances where the Complainant has reason to believe that the said conduct amounts to interference with work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment, or humiliating treatment likely to affect health and safety of the employee or is an explicit or implicit threat or promise in relation to preferential or detrimental treatment in to the current employment or future employment status.
- h) “Employee” means any person on the rolls of the Company including those on deputation, contract, temporary, or working as consultants at our office premises.
- i) “Victimization” shall be understood to mean any adverse action by an individual, group of individuals or organization against individuals because they have, in good faith, reported instances of sexual harassment, participated in or been witnesses to proceedings to redress an alleged instance of sexual harassment.
- j) “NGO” includes any Non-Governmental Organization registered under the Societies’ Registration Act or as a public charitable trust recognized under law. Such a society/charitable trust must not be affiliated to any political party, and should have been engaged in work for gender equality, particularly for the amelioration of the status of women, for a minimum of three years prior to the date of emplacement.

4. Scope

All employees of the company defined under section 3 (h). The workplace includes all offices and premises where company business is conducted, including sites away from the office where company related activities are carried out. However, workplace does not include our consultant’s or vendor’s offices/work area.

5. Constitution of Complaint Redressal Committee

- 1) A Complaint Redressal Committee shall be constituted for to consider and redress Complaints of Sexual Harassment. The Committee shall consist of a minimum of following members, provided that at least one-half of the total Members so nominated shall be women:
 - i. A Chairperson who shall be a woman employee in the grade of Manager or above, nominated by the Company. In case of non-availability of such women employee in that Location, the Chairperson shall be nominated from another relevant Location.
 - ii. Not less than 2 members, appointed by the Company from amongst employees who are preferably committed to the cause of women or who have had experience in social work or who have legal knowledge.
 - iii. One member appointed by the company from an NGO that operates on a secular non-profit basis and is involved in work concerning gender justice.
- 2) A member shall be removed from the Committee in case he / she is found to have contravened the provisions of the Policy, or
 - is found to have indulged in rampant abuse of their position or
 - if he / she is convicted of any offence or an inquiry into an offence which is pending against him / her under any Law, or
 - if he / she is found guilty in any disciplinary proceedings or a disciplinary proceeding is pending against him / her.
- 3). Each member shall hold his / her position in the Committee for a maximum period of 3 years from the date of their appointment. In case of removal or voluntary separation of a member from the Committee or on completion of the tenure (3 years) or in case of separation of any member from the organisation, the HR shall facilitate for suitable replacement of such member in the Committee under intimation to the Management.
- 4). The committee shall have a permanent email id, for employees to register their grievances, complaints or concerns online via email. The employee may email the complaint to the Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee on shpcommittee@mhfcindia.com
- 5). The quorum for the purpose of meeting/hearing shall be 2/3rd of the members of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee. However, this shall not be a prerequisite for the quorum of an adjourned meeting. In case any member of the Committee is a Complainant / Respondent / Witness, he/ she shall abstain from participating in the proceedings and shall not be a part of the required quorum. In such an event, the Company shall nominate another suitable person in place of such member.
- 6). Changes in the constitution of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee, whenever necessary, shall be made as expeditiously as possible and in any case within 30 days of the date of vacancy of office by one of the members.

6. Role of Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee

- The Committee shall decide whether the facts contained in the complaint make out a case of “sexual harassment” in light of the definition contained in the Policy.
- The Committee shall look into the truth of the allegations contained in the complaint.

- The Committee shall look into the truth of any allegation of retaliation against / victimization of the complainant or any other person assisting her as a result of such complaint having been made or such assistance having been offered.
- The Committee shall recommend the penalties / action to be taken against any person found guilty of having sexually harassed the complainant, up to and including termination, to the HR Department.
- The Committee shall recommend the penalties / actions to be taken against any person found guilty of having retaliated against / victimized the complainant or any other person assisting her as a result of such complaint having been made or such assistance having been offered.
- The Committee shall recommend appropriate psychological, emotional and physical support (counseling, security and other assistance) for the victim to the HR Department.
- The Committee shall recommend the penalties / action to be taken against any person found guilty of having made false claims of having been sexually harassed, up to and including termination, to the HR Department.
- The Committee shall monitor the follow-up action to be taken by the HR Department on receipt of the Report of the Committee
- All decisions of the Committee shall be taken by simple majority. No member of the Committee shall have a casting vote.

7. Rights and Powers of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Committee

- The Committee shall have the power to summon witnesses and call for documents or any information from any employee.
- If the Committee has reason to believe that an employee is capable of furnishing relevant documents or information, it may direct such a person to produce such documents or information by serving a notice in writing on that person, summoning the person, or calling for such documents or information at such place and within such time as may be specified in the written notice.
- Where any relevant document or information is recorded or stored by means of a mechanical, electronic or other device, the Committee shall have the power to direct that the same be produced, or that a clear reproduction in writing of the same be produced.
- Upon production of documents / information called for by it, the Committee shall have the power to make copies of such documents / information or extracts there from; or retain such documents / information for such period as may be deemed necessary for purposes of the proceedings before it.
- The Committee shall have the power to issue interim directions to / with regard to any person participating in the proceedings before it.
- The Committee shall have the power to recommend the action to be taken against any person found guilty of sexually harassing the complainant; retaliating against / victimizing the complainant or any other person before it; and making false charges of sexual harassment against the accused person.
- Committee shall have powers to take evidence on oath from parties involved in matters/charges presented before it for adjudication.
- Committee shall have powers to order interim relief including powers to suspend the accused till conclusion of proceedings or till such time it deems fit.

- Committee shall have powers to form an investigation team and also have powers to dissolve the investigation team so created for investigation into an accusation of sexual harassment.
- Issue restraining orders against harasser.
- Committee shall have powers to take any action that it deems necessary for conducting a fair investigation and carrying out its final decision in the matter.

8. Protection against retaliation/victimization

Regardless of the outcome of the complaint made in good faith, the employee lodging the complaint and any person providing information or any witness, will be protected from any form of retaliation. While dealing with complaints of sexual harassment, the Committee shall ensure that the Complainant or the witness are not victimized or discriminated against by the accused. Any unwarranted pressures, retaliatory or any other type of unethical behaviour from the accused against the complainant while the investigation is in progress should be reported by the complainant to the Complaints Committee as soon as possible. Disciplinary action will be taken by the Complaints Committee against any such complaints which are found genuine

9. Complaints made with a malicious intent

This policy has been evolved as a tool to ensure that in the interest of justice and fair play, our employees have a forum to approach in the event of instances of sexual harassment. However, if on investigation it is revealed that the complaint was made with a malicious intent and with the motive of maligning the concerned individual / tarnishing his/her image in the company and to settle personal/professional scores, strict action will be taken against the complainant.

10. Complaint lodging, redressal process & other relevant provisions

1. The Complainant may make, in writing, a complaint of Sexual Harassment at workplace to the Committee of the concerned workplace, within a period of three months from the date of incident and in case of a series of incidents, within a period of three months from the date of the last incident. Where the Complainant cannot make a complaint on account of his / her physical and mental incapacity or death or otherwise, his / her legal heir may make a complaint on his / her behalf. The Committee may, for reasons to be recorded in writing, extend further the time limit up to a maximum of three months beyond the time limit prescribed above, if it is satisfied that the circumstances prevented the Complainant or his / her legal heir from filing a complaint within the prescribed period of three months. From the date of receiving the complaint till the completion of the end of redressal procedure, it is mandatory for the committee to meet at least once every week to discuss the progress/further course of action.
2. The Committee may, before initiating an inquiry and at the request / demand of the Complainant, take steps to settle the matter between the Complainant and the Alleged Harasser through conciliation, provided that no monetary settlement shall be made as a basis of such conciliation. Such conciliation should be completed, in the presence of two witnesses, within one month from the date of making the complaint.

- 2.1. Where such settlement has been arrived at, the Committee shall record the settlement so arrived (including signatures of the witnesses) and forward the same to the Board) to take action as specified in the recommendation.
 - 2.2. The Committee shall provide copies of the settlement, as recorded under sub-section (i) above, to the Complainant and the Respondent.
 - 2.3. Where such settlement is arrived at, no further inquiry shall be conducted by the Committee.
 3. The inquiry shall be completed within a period of 90 days from the date of non-acceptance of conciliation by either the Complainant or Respondent or both. Such inquiry shall be conducted in an absolutely confidential manner. If the Complainant / Respondent desires to submit any documents as evidence before the Committee, he/she shall supply original copies of such documents, affixed with their signatures. During the course of inquiry, the Committee shall provide an opportunity to the Complainant and the Respondent to give depositions before the committee and offer their explanations.
 4. The Complainant, Respondent and any other employee assisting in the inquiry, shall have the responsibility to not interfere with the inquiry proceedings. Evidence shall not be withheld, destroyed or tampered with and witnesses / aggrieved shall not be directly, indirectly, explicitly or implicitly influenced, coached, coerced, threatened and/or intimidated by the Complainant, Respondent or any other person.
 5. On completion of an inquiry under this Policy, the Committee shall provide a “Findings report” to the Board, the Complainant and the Respondent within 10 working days of the completion of the inquiry.
 6. If the Committee arrives at the conclusion that the allegation(s) against the Respondent has not been proved, it shall recommend to the Board , that no action is required to be taken in the matter.
 7. Where the Committee arrives at the conclusion that the allegation(s) against the Respondent has been proved, it shall recommend to the Board take appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary and/or legal action for misconduct / deduct from the salary / wages of the Respondent, such sum as it may consider appropriate to be paid to the aggrieved or to his / her legal heir. If the Company is unable to make such deduction from the salary of the Respondent due to his being absent from duty or cessation of employment, it may direct the Respondent to pay such sum to the aggrieved. According to the degree of offence, the corrective action may include any of the following:
 - i. Formal, written and signed apology
 - ii. Counseling
 - iii. Written warning to the accused, a copy of which is to be maintained with his/her employee file
 - iv. Change of assignment/transfer of department for either the victim or the accused
 - v. Suspension or termination of services of the accused
- In case the Committee finds the degree of offence coverable under the Indian Penal Code, then this fact shall be mentioned in its report and appropriate action shall be initiated by the Management, for making a Police Complaint.
8. If any person is aggrieved by any findings and / or recommendations and / or non-implementation of the recommendations of the Committee, he/she may appeal to

the Board of the Company, preferably within 15 days from the date of passing of the order of the Committee.

11. Confidentiality

All information received shall be kept confidential. Any person (including witnesses) who breaches confidentiality shall be subject to disciplinary action.

12. Review Periodicity

The Company shall have the right to amend the Policy from time to time.

The policy shall be reviewed every year along with the other policies of the company.. However, it shall be reviewed earlier by the committee if need arises for the same and / or under special circumstances, for example a change in law.