



MProfit Software Private Limited

Policy on Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

Version	Description	Effective Period	Author	Reviewed by	Comments
1.0	Document Creation				POSH policy created and rolled out

Class. Level	Definition	Select any 1
Public	Information that may be broadly distributed without causing damage to the organization and stakeholders	
Internal	Information which can be distributed within MSPL	✓
Confidential	Sensitive information available within a group of people which must not be disclosed outside the organization without explicit permission of document owner	
Highly Confidential	Highly sensitive and critical information meant for a limited group which must not be disclosed outside the organization without explicit permission of document owner	

Distribution

This document has been distributed to all employees of MProfit Software Pvt Ltd hereinafter referred to as "MSPL"

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Policy on Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace (POSH)

1. Introduction

1.1 MProfit Software Private Limited is an equal employment opportunity company and is committed to creating a healthy working environment that enables employees to work without fear of prejudice, gender bias and sexual harassment. The Company also believes that all employees of the Company have the right to be treated with dignity. Sexual harassment is a grave offence and is, therefore, punishable.

1.2 This policy takes complete cognizance of the legislation by the Government of India “The Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 (“the Act”) and shall be revised to adhere with any modifications to the Act, that may be introduced from time to time. This Act seeks to prevent and prohibit sexual harassment and provide a forum for redressal of complaints.

This policy has been framed in accordance with the provisions of “The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013” and rules framed there under (hereinafter “the Act”). Accordingly, while the policy covers all the key aspects of the Act, for any further clarification reference shall always be made to the Act and the Rules framed thereunder and the provisions of the Act and Rules shall prevail.

2. Scope

The said Act and Rules cover provisions of sexual harassment of women at the workplace. However, MSPL recognizes that sexual harassment at the workplace can occur with other genders also and has formulated a **Gender Neutral Policy** to provide a forum for redressal of their complaints.

Accordingly, complaints of sexual harassment of women will be handled by the Internal Committee as per provisions of the Act and Rules and complaints of sexual harassment filed by men or transgenders will be dealt with by HR under the Code of Conduct Policy.

3. Applicability

This policy applies to

1. All offices of MSPL located in India.

2. All employees of MSPL including those on contract, consultants if any. It is deemed to be incorporated in the service conditions of all employees.

3. This Policy will come into force with immediate effect.

4. Definitions

4.1 Aggrieved woman

a) means any woman of any age, whether employed or not, who alleges to have been subjected to any act of Sexual Harassment by the respondent.

b) in relation to a dwelling place or house - a woman of any age employed in such a dwelling place or house.

4.2 Respondent

means a person against whom the aggrieved woman has made a complaint. It could be a man, woman, or a person from the third gender.

4.3 Employee

means a person employed or engaged on a retainership basis at a workplace for

- any work on a regular, temporary, ad hoc, or daily wage basis,
- either directly by MSPL or through an agent, including a contractor,
- with or, without the knowledge of the principal employer,
- whether for remuneration or not, or working voluntarily or otherwise,
- whether the terms of employment are express or implied.

It includes a co-worker, a contract worker, probationer, trainee, apprentice, or a person called by any other such name.

4.4 Employer

shall mean any person responsible for the management, supervision and control of the workplace and the person discharging contractual obligations with respect to his or her employees.

4.5 Workplace - includes

- i. any department, organization, undertaking, establishment, enterprise, institution, office, branch, or unit established, owned, controlled, or wholly or substantially financed by funds provided directly or indirectly by the appropriate Government or the local authority or a corporation or a co-operative society.
- ii. Any private sector organization or a private venture, undertaking, enterprise, institution, establishment, society, trust, non-governmental organization, unit, or service provider carrying on commercial, professional, vocational, educational, entertainment, industrial, health services, or financial activities including production, supply, sale, distribution, or service.
- iii. Hospitals or nursing homes.
- iv. Any sports institute, stadium, sports complex, or competition or games venue, whether residential or not used for training, sports, or other activities relating thereto.
- v. any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment, including transportation provided by the employer for undertaking such a journey.
- vi. a dwelling place or house.

As per Sec 2 (o) (v), Workplace includes the following places hereinafter termed as "**extended workplaces.**"

- i) Places visited by the employee during the course of employment. These include visits to client offices, vendor offices or attending conferences, exhibitions, workshops, etc.
- ii) Transportation provided by MSPL for their employees.
- iii) Business Travel
- iv) MSPL sponsored entertainment/events - offsites, parties, picnics, etc.
- v) Digital workspaces- virtual meeting rooms, email, telephone calls, video calls, messages, etc.
- vi) MSPL provided accommodation or amenities like office cafeteria, office gym, company guest house, hotel room etc.

4.6 Sexual Harassment

For any act or behavior to amount to an act of sexual harassment, it must meet three criteria.

- The act must be sexual in nature or have a sexual undertone.
- It must be un-welcome and make the women feel uncomfortable
- It must happen at the workplace.

If any of the above three criteria are not met, the act will not fall under the provisions of the POSH Act 2013.

4.7 Internal Committee –means the committee constituted by MSPL as per the provisions of the Act. Details of the IC members are provided in this policy in Annexure “A”.

5.0 Forms of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behavior (whether direct or by implication) such as:

a. **Physical contact and sexual advances**, which include unwelcome touching, unwelcome sexual advances.

Physical contact without a sexual undertone, though unwelcome and occurring at the workplace, would not fall under the Act.

b. **Demand or request for sexual favors**, which includes

- unwelcome invitations to go out,
- unwelcome requests or demand for sexual favors,
- either explicitly or implicitly,
- in return for employment, promotion, favors, examination, or evaluation of a person towards any MSPL related activity.
- Repeatedly asking to socialize during off-duty hours or continued expressions of sexual interest against a person’s wishes.

c. **Sexually colored remarks** include

- eve-teasing,
- innuendoes,
- taunts,
- jokes, letters,

- phone calls which are sexually offensive
- email of a sexually offensive nature,
- intrusive questions about a person's private life or body,
- insults or taunts based on sex,
- obscene communication,
- verbal communication, which offends the individual's sensibilities and affects her performance or association with MSPL

d. Showing pornography, which includes showing or displaying sexually explicit pictures. This includes the sharing of sexually explicit pictures, cartoons, videos or other material, through any electronic medium, sexual jokes, sexually demeaning or offensive pictures, cartoons or other materials through email, SMS, MMS etc.

e. Any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal or written conduct of a sexual nature which includes

- Obscene gestures,
- Winking
- Sending out a flying kiss
- lurid stares,
- stalking,
- indecent exposure,
- any obscene sounds,
- standing too close
- non-verbal communication, which offends the individual's sensibilities and affects her/his performance or association with MSPL.
- Persistent watching, following, contacting of a person

In short, any behavior, whether intentional or not, which outrages the modesty of a female employee will be considered as sexual harassment.

f. Third-party harassment- Sexual harassment is caused by a third party (not an employee of the organization) - for example, an employee of a business partner or a client or a vendor or a consultant or any other person with whom the employee is interacting with for work purposes.

6.0 Presumption of Sexual Harassment - No woman shall be subjected to sexual harassment at any workplace.

The following acts are not punishable by themselves but if their presence is in relation to or connected with any act or behavior of sexual harassment, it may amount to sexual harassment.

6.1 Quid Pro Quo

- Implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in her employment
- Implied or explicit threat of detrimental treatment in her employment.
- Implied or explicit threat about her present or future employment status.

6.2 Hostile Environment

- Interference with her work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment for her.
- Humiliating treatment is likely to affect her health and safety.

6.3 Responsibilities in Working from Home

While working from home, all the employees are covered under the POSH Act guidelines and the Code of Conduct is applicable.

Virtual Sexual Harassment can be construed of the follows:

- **Demanding or asking for sexual favors** - This could be verbal or through email or text message, or even of an implied nature, such as indicating that not providing a sexual favor could adversely impact a woman's career, or that doing the favor would be beneficial to her.
- **Use of sexual/racially offensive nicknames in online or offline communications channels**- Using sexual/racially offensive nicknames or avatars, or other nicknames/avatars that might detract from a friendly, safe, and welcoming environment for all.
- **Saying something that is sexual in nature**, such as overt sexual innuendos, offensive jokes, remarks about a person's sexual orientation or sex life.
- **Showing pornography.**
- **Any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.**

- **Creating a hostile work environment for a woman**, in connection with any of the above.
- **Personal comments of a sexual nature** on the person's social media handles
- **Inappropriate emojis and messages**
- **Stalking virtually**
- **Insisting on video calls well after office hours**
- **Undefined work hours**

7. Roles & Responsibilities

7.1 Responsibilities of Individual:

It is the responsibility of all to respect the rights of others and to never encourage harassment. It can be done by:

- Refusing to participate in any activity which constitutes harassment.
- Supporting the person to reject unwelcome behavior
- Acting as a witness if the person being harassed decides to lodge a complaint
- All are encouraged to advise others to correct behavior that is unwelcome.
- Often, some behaviors are not intentional. While this does not make it acceptable, it does give the person behaving inappropriately, the opportunity to modify or stop their offensive behavior.

7.2 Responsibilities of Managers/Heads:

All managers/heads at MSPL must ensure that nobody is subjected to harassment and there is equal treatment. They must also ensure that all employees understand that harassment is not to be tolerated; that the complaints are taken seriously; and that the complainant, respondent/s, or witnesses are not victimized in any way.

8.0 Constitution of the Internal Committee.

8.1 Structure of the Committee - The committee at each location comprises of:

- a) Presiding Officer**- A woman employed at a senior level in the organization or workplace.

- b) Employees** -At least 2 employees from amongst employees, preferably
 - committed to the cause of women or
 - having legal knowledge or
 - experience in social work
- c) External Member** - One external member,
 - from an NGO committed to the cause of women or
 - a person familiar with handling complaints of sexual harassment.

At least one-half of the total IC members will be women.

8.2 Names of members of the Internal Committee:

Names of the IC members is provided in Annexure "A."

8.3 Responsibilities of the Committee

The committee is responsible for:

- ✓ Prevent discrimination and sexual harassment against women, by promoting gender harmony among employees
- ✓ Receiving complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace
- ✓ Initiating and conducting inquiry as per the established procedure
- ✓ Submitting findings and recommendations of inquiries
- ✓ Coordinating with the employer in implementing appropriate action
- ✓ Maintaining strict confidentiality throughout the process as per established guidelines
- ✓ Submitting annual reports in the prescribed format

The IC nominated employees, and the External member will review all cases of sexual harassment reported within MSPL.

8.4 Term:

The term of the office of the Internal Committee is for a period of 3 years. When the three-year period is over - the exiting employees of the Internal Committee will continue to hold office till the new Internal Committee is constituted.

8.5 Quorum:

A quorum of three employees is required to be present for the proceedings to take place. The quorum shall include the Presiding Officer and at least two other members.

9.0 Complaint Redressal Mechanism

MSPL is committed to providing a supportive environment to resolve complaints of sexual harassment, if any.

9.1. Procedure to File a Complaint

If any aggrieved person believes that she has been subjected to sexual harassment, such employee may file a complaint providing all details including evidence, list of witnesses, if any to the email id of the Internal Committee _____

9.2 Time period for filing the complaint:

a. In case of an incident- within a period of 3 months from the date of the incident

b. In case of a series of incidents – within a period of 3 months from the date of the last incident

c. Inability to file the complaint within 3 months - if the aggrieved woman cannot file the complaint within a period of 3 months due to circumstances beyond her control, she can put forth the reasons for the same before the Internal Committee.

The Internal Committee may at its discretion, extend the period by 3 months if it is satisfied that the circumstances were such that they prevented the aggrieved woman from filing the complaint.

9.3 What should the complaint contain?

A complaint should include the following points.

- **Date of the incident** (when did the incident happen?)
- **Location of the incident** (where did the incident happen?)
- **Details of the incident** – (what happened?)
- **Time of the incident** – (at what time did it happen?)
- **Name of Respondent** – (with whom did it happen?)

- **Nature of parties' working relationship** (what is the relationship between the parties? Are they colleagues, manager -subordinate relationship, etc.)?
- **Evidence if any**- Necessary supporting documents (if available to support her complaint as evidence)
- **List of witnesses** (if any to support her complaint)

9.4 Submission of complaint

- **In physical form** - if the complaint is being submitted in physical form, the Complainant shall submit six copies of the complaint and supporting documents and witnesses' names and addresses.
- **By email** - The Complainant may send all the necessary documents by email to the IC _____.

9.5 What can be done in case the Complainant is unable to make the complaint in writing?

a. Physical incapacity

In case the Complainant is physically unable to make the complaint in writing, the complaint can be filed by

- A relative or
- A friend,
- Co-worker or an officer of the National Commission for Women or State Women's Commission or
- any person who knows about the incident with the written consent of the Complainant.

b) **Mental incapacity** -In case of the Complainant's mental incapacity, the complaint can be filed by

- A relative or
- A friend or
- Special Educator or
- Qualified Psychiatrist/ Psychologist or

- A guardian/authority under whom the Complainant is receiving treatment or care or
- Any person who knows about the incident jointly with any of the 5 persons mentioned above.

c. Death

In the case of the Complainant's death, the complaint can be filed by any person who knows about the incident with her legal heir's written consent.

d. Any other reason

If the Complainant is unable to file the complaint for any other reason, then the complaint can be filed by any person who knows about the incident with her written consent.

e. Inability to put in writing

If the complainant cannot write the complaint, the Internal Committee will render reasonable assistance to the employee for making the complaint in writing.

9.6 Manner of dealing with the complaints

9.6.1 Resolution procedure

- On receipt of the complaint, the Presiding Officer will schedule a meeting to evaluate if there is a prima facie case or not.
- Once it is evaluated that a prima facie case has been made out, the IC shall provide a copy of the complaint, supporting documents, list of witnesses received from the aggrieved woman to the Respondent within 7 working days.
- Respondent shall file his reply and supporting documents and list of witnesses he relies upon to prove his innocence within a period of 10 working days of receipt of the complaint.

9.6.2 Conciliation/Settlement

Once the complaint is received, the Internal Committee may take steps to settle the complaint between the Complainant and the Respondent before initiating the inquiry.

This can only be initiated at the request of the Complainant.

Conciliation doesn't necessarily mean acceptance of a complaint by the Respondent. It is a practical mechanism through which issues are resolved or misunderstandings cleared.

Resolution through conciliation generally happens within 2 weeks of receipt of the complaint.

If a settlement is arrived at, IC records the same and reports the same to the Employer for taking appropriate action. The committee provides copies of the settlement to the Complainant and the Respondent. Once the action is implemented, no further inquiry is conducted, and the complaint is treated as closed.

9.6.3 When can an Internal Committee refuse conciliation

- **No request** has been made by the aggrieved woman for conciliation. Conciliation is initiated at the request of the Complainant.
- **In the case of monetary settlement** – If the internal Committee becomes aware that money is being exchanged to settle the matter, it may not permit conciliation.
- **In case the offense is grave** - In cases where the offense alleged to have been committed is of a serious nature; the Internal Committee may not permit conciliation.

9.6.4 Failure of Conciliation-

In cases where,

- The Respondent doesn't agree to the terms of conciliation
- Disobeys / fails to comply with the terms of the settlement, the aggrieved woman can refer the same to Internal Committee, who will then go ahead with an inquiry in the matter.

9.6.5 Impact of Conciliation

Once a Conciliation agreement is signed by both the parties, the complaint is closed. No further inquiry takes place. Conciliation does not mean that the Respondent is guilty.

10. Inquiry process

The Committee will organize verbal/virtual hearings with the Complainant, Respondent, witnesses as per the provisions of the POSH Act 2013.

In brief:

- IC will speak to both parties separately.
- Listen, look at the proof to see if it has been provided.
- Verify documents produced by the parties,
- Allow the parties to produce witnesses and to put forth their say.

- Share copies of the witness statements with both Complainant and the Respondent.
- If the Complainant or Respondent desires to cross-examine any witnesses, they may share the questions with the IC and the IC will facilitate the same and record the statements.
- If necessary, IC will take testimonies of other relevant persons and review the evidence wherever necessary.
- IC may request documents or information from other parties where deemed necessary.
- Give both the parties an opportunity to be heard. The inquiry procedure will ensure absolute fairness to all parties.
- The committee will conduct the inquiry as per the principles of natural justice.
- The legal practitioner will not be permitted to represent any of the parties at any stage of the inquiry procedure.
- Confidentiality - Under no circumstances will the committee reveal or disclose the identity of the Complainant, Respondent, witnesses, etc., to anyone other than all those who are required to know about the case. The Complainant, Respondent, witnesses shall also be bound by confidentiality.

10.1 Interim relief

During the pendency of the inquiry, on a written request made by the Complainant, the committee may recommend to the employer to –

- **Transfer** the Complainant or the Respondent to any other workplace
- **Grant paid leave to the aggrieved woman up to a maximum of 3 months**, in addition to the leave she would be otherwise entitled
- **Prevent the Respondent from assessing Complainant's work performance**
- **Grant such other relief** as may be appropriate to maintain a conducive work atmosphere.

10.2 Termination of Inquiry/Ex parte order

In a situation where the Complainant or Respondent is **absent** for three consecutive hearings without justifiable cause or intimation, the Committee may dismiss the complaint or pass an ex parte order based on the evidence before it.

However, before dismissing the complaint or passing an ex-parte order, the Internal Committee will send a written notice to the parties granting them 15 days to show cause, why the complaint should not be dismissed, or an ex-parte order passed.

10.3 Action by IC post Inquiry

After the inquiry is completed, the IC will decide and prepare an Inquiry Report within 10 days and submit its recommendation to the Employer.

A copy of the Inquiry Report and recommendation will also be provided to the Complainant and the Respondent. The complaint will be treated as closed.

The decision of the IC, along with observations, recommendations will be final and binding.

The Employer will implement the recommendations within 60 days of receiving the recommendations. While implementing the recommendations, the Employer will ensure that the names of the Complainant, Respondent, witnesses, and any other persons are always kept strictly confidential.

10.4. If the charge has been proved.

The committee concludes that the allegation against the Respondent has been proved. It recommends that the employer take necessary action for sexual harassment as misconduct, as mentioned in the Code of Conduct or Appointment letter. The actions may be as follows:

10.4.1 Disciplinary penalty

- Apology to be tendered by Respondent
- Warning
- Censure or reprimand
- Withholding promotion
- Withholding pay hike or increments.
- Termination of services
- Counselling
- Community Service
- Any other action which IC may deem fit.

10.4.2 Financial Penalty

Deduct from the Respondent's salary, an amount it may consider appropriate to be paid to the aggrieved woman.

The **quantum** of the Financial Penalty would be based on parameters like

- The **mental trauma** experienced by the Complainant.
- **Loss of career opportunity** due to the incident of sexual harassment.
- **Medical Expenses** incurred by the victim for physical or psychiatric treatment.
- **Income and financial status** of the respondent.
- **Feasibility** of whether the amount should be paid as a lump sum or in instalments.

10.4.3 Timeline for Implementation

Employer will then act upon the recommendations within **60** days and confirm to the Internal committee that the recommendations have been implemented.

10.4.4 Prevention of retaliation

a) The Company will ensure that the victim or witnesses are not victimized or discriminated against while dealing with complaints of sexual harassment. However, anyone who abuses the procedure (for example, by maliciously putting an allegation knowing it to be untrue) will be subject to disciplinary action.

b) The IC will follow up periodically with the Complainant to ascertain whether the offensive behavior has, in fact, stopped, the solution is working satisfactorily and there is no victimization of any of the parties to the complaint. Any victimization/reprisal will be subject to disciplinary action.

10.4.5. If the charge has not been proved

Where the committee concludes that the allegation against the Respondent has not been proved, it recommends to the employer that no action is required to be taken in this matter.

The committee ensures that both parties understand that the matter has been fully investigated. That the matter is now concluded, and neither will be disadvantaged within MSPL.

10.4.6. Inability to prove the complaint due to lack of evidence.

Mere inability by the Complainant to prove the complaint does not mean that the complaint is false. In such a case, no action is taken against the Complainant or the Respondent.

10.4.7. If it is found that the charge is false, or malicious or knowingly false evidence has been furnished by any of the parties.

The Internal Committee will take action against the party who has knowingly made a false statement or furnished false evidence.

10.4.8. Consequences of False Complaint

Making a false complaint of sexual harassment or providing false information regarding a complaint will also be treated as a violation of policy.

In case the Internal Committee concludes at the end of the inquiry that the allegations made,

- Were malicious or
- Have been made by the Complainant knowing them to be false, or
- Any false or forged document or document intended to mislead the IC has been

produced to prove the case, the Internal Committee will recommend action against the Complainant or against the person who has deposed falsely or produced a forged document intending to mislead the Internal Committee in their inquiry.

While deciding malicious intent, the committee will consider that mere inability to substantiate a complaint need not mean malicious intent. A separate inquiry shall be conducted to establish malicious intent.

11. Appeal

Any party not satisfied or further aggrieved by the implementation or non-implementation of recommendations made may appeal to the Appellate Authority as per the Act and rules, within 90 days of the recommendations being communicated.

12. Preventive Action

MSPL has zero-tolerance towards sexual harassment and will take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment at work. This will include:

- ✓ Drafting policy
- ✓ Dissemination of information through the production, distribution, and circulation of printed materials, posters, and handouts

- ✓ Creating awareness by conducting training for all Employees, Team Leaders, and Managers & Top Management. The aim is to develop a non-threatening and non-intimidating atmosphere of mutual learning.
- ✓ **Counselling:** Confidential counselling service is an important service as it provides a safe space to speak about the incident and how it has affected the victim because sexual harassment cases are rarely reported and is a sensitive issue.

13. Obligations of Employer/Management

MSPL shall provide all necessary assistance to ensure full effective and speedy implementation of the policy, providing support to the Internal Committee (IC) constituted as above, and shall expeditiously implement the decisions of the Internal Committee as per the provisions of the Act.

13.1 Third-Party Harassment

In case of sexual harassment by a third-party, IC will assist the Complainant in pursuing the complaint as per the laws prevailing in the country, e.g., under the Indian Penal Code or any other Acts for the time being in force.

MSPL encourages its clients/partners to commit to a working atmosphere free from sexual harassment in their organizations. MSPL may act as a Facilitator in the redressal of complaints of sexual harassment in such circumstances.

13.2. Confidentiality

MSPL understands that it is difficult for the Complainant to come forward with a complaint of sexual harassment and recognizes the victim's interest in keeping the matter confidential. The Complainant's identity, Respondent, witnesses, statements, and other evidence obtained during the inquiry process, recommendations of the committees, and action taken by the employer are considered confidential and shall not published or made known to the public or media.

If there is a breach of confidentiality, the Company shall recover the sum of Rupees Five Thousand only as a penalty from such person or act as per the provisions of the Act.

13.3. Access To Reports & Documents:

All records of complaints, including contents of meetings, results of investigations and other relevant material shall be kept confidential by the Company except where disclosure is required under disciplinary or other remedial processes.

14. Savings

The proceedings under the policy shall not be stalled or postponed merely because the Complainant is proceeding against the Respondent under any other provision of civil or criminal law.

MSPL reserves the right to modify, add or delete any policy guideline or practice at its discretion. Such changes will supersede the previous policy guidelines or practices set and will be communicated to all employees as soon as possible.

15. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Company reiterates its commitment to providing its employees with a workplace free from harassment/discrimination and where every employee is treated with dignity and respect.

Annexure A

Names of Internal Committee Members

Sr. No.	Name	Position Held
1	Gauri Dandekar	Chairperson
2	Swarali Churi	Committee Member
3	Tanmay Keni	Committee Member
4	Poonam Jaiswar	Committee Member
5	Dr. Sandya Advani	External Member: sandhya@poshsystems.com

For any complaints, concerns, or queries related to the POSH Policy:

- POSH Committee Email ID: posh@mprofit.in
- POSH Helpline Number: +91-8655005696