

# WOMEN'S CELL

## IISER\_Thiruvananthapuram

### Policy document

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#### PREAMBLE

Following the 1997 Supreme Court Judgement in the case of Visaka and others versus the State of Rajasthan, it has been mandated that it shall be the duty of the employer to prevent or deter the commission of acts of sexual harassment and to provide procedures for the resolution, settlement or prosecution of acts of sexual harassment by taking all steps required and to be proactive by developing a conducive atmosphere on the campus, where all individuals can work safely and with dignity.

Complying with the directives of the Supreme Court of India, the Director, IISER-TVM has constituted a Women's Cell on 25 October 2012. The Women's Cell functions as a body that investigates and recommends action on all acts of harassment against any individual (of either sex). The Women's cell will have the following composition -

1. Dr Hema Somanathan	Chairperson
2. Dr Dharmatti Sheetal	Member-Secretary
3. Smt. A.G. Sudhamani Counselor, Association of Social Health in India-Kerala	External Member
4. Dr R.S Swathi	Member
5. Dr Deepshika Jaiswal Nagar	Member
6. Dr M.M Shaijumon	Member
7. Dr Sainul P Abideen	Member
8. Smt. Nimmy J Chaly	Member

**IISER TVM adheres to the principle that every individual is provided with a working environment free from any form of harassment (sexual, physical or mental) or discrimination.**

IISER TVM Women's Cell policy is guided by Supreme Court ruling 1997 Visaka vs State of Rajasthan ([http://www.iiap.res.in/files/VisakaVsRajasthan\\_1997.pdf](http://www.iiap.res.in/files/VisakaVsRajasthan_1997.pdf))

#### OBJECTIVES OF IISER TVM WOMEN CELL

- To uphold the dignity of women at IISER-TVM
- To facilitate a gender-sensitive and congenial working environment at IISER TVM so that an employee (contractual, casual, temporary and permanent) or student is not subjected to gender-specific discrimination or any form of harassment.
- To ensure that victims and witnesses are not discriminated or penalized for lodging complaints.
- To take proactive measures to educate the IISER TVM community about gender-sensitivity.

## **WHAT CONSTITUTES SEXUAL HARASSMENT?**

According to the guidelines of the Supreme Court, sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexually determined behavior such as:

- Physical contact, gestures or words
- Demand or request for sexual favours
- Sexually oriented remarks
- Showing pornography
- Use of electronic media (phone, internet, video, audio) for perpetrating offensive acts
- Any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.

It is important to note that what constitutes sexual harassment is defined by the victim, and not by the perpetrator.

## **BE AWARE THAT**

- Women have the following fundamental rights under Constitution of India
  - ✓ Right to gender equality
  - ✓ Right against gender -based discrimination
  - ✓ Right to practice any profession or to carry out any occupation, trade or business
  - ✓ Right to life and liberty
- Article 51 (A) of the constitution imposes on every citizen by way of fundamental duty and responsibility to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.
- Sexual harassment of individuals has been held as violation of individual's fundamental right by the Supreme Court.
- Assault or use of criminal force on an individual or uttering any word or making any gesture intended to outrage their modesty is a cognizable offence under Section 354 with laid down punishment of imprisonment for 2 years or fine or both.
- All of us have a collective responsibility to protect the rights of individual and eradicate behavior, which is unacceptable and discriminatory.

## **DEALING WITH HARASSMENT**

- Do not feel a sense of shame. Tell the harasser that you find the behavior very offensive.
- Do not ignore harassment in the hope that it will stop on its own. Come forward and complain.
- Keep a record of any incident of sexual harassment and include this while you lodge a complaint.

## **TO LODGE A COMPLAINT**

- You can send an email to [womenscell@iisertvm.ac.in](mailto:womenscell@iisertvm.ac.in)
- You can talk, call, email or write a letter to any member of the women's cell.
- Any faculty, staff or student who comes to know about an incident of harassment, shall advise the affected person to lodge a complaint or lodge a complaint on the victim's behalf.

- If a written complaint is made to the Director, Dean, Registrar or any of the members of the Women's Cell, the complaint shall be forwarded to the Chairperson of the Women's Cell.

**BE ASSURED THAT:**

**All complaints and name of the complainant /victim will be kept confidential.**

A baseless complaint will adversely affect the credibility of the complainant.

**NATURE OF PUNITIVE ACTION**

The committee will recommend suitable punitive action depending on the gravity of the case. This can include expulsion from the Institute without prejudice to external actions against the accused.