

COMMITTEE AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT

With regard to the Supreme Court Judgement and guidelines issued in 1997 to provide for the effective enforcement of the basic human right of gender equality and guarantee against sexual harassment and abuse, more particularly against sexual harassment at work places, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued circulars since 1998,, to all the universities, advising them to establish a permanent cell and a committee and to develop guidelines to combat sexual harassment, violence against women and ragging at the universities and colleges. It has further advised the universities to be proactive by developing a conducive atmosphere on the campus, where the status of woman is respected and they are treated with. Keeping the above guidelines in view TISS has constituted a Committee Against Sexual Harassment since 2003.

Composition

The Committee consists of members of the faculty, administration, service staff and students' representatives. The members of the committee for the academic year 2009–2010 are:

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11. Four students' representatives to be elected in July 2009.

Objectives

The objectives of the Committee are:

- Prevent discrimination and sexual harassment against women, by promoting gender amity among students and employees;
- Make recommendations to the Director for changes/elaborations in the Rules for students in the Prospectus and the Bye-Laws, to make them gender just and to lay down procedures for the prohibition, resolution, settlement and prosecution of acts of discrimination and sexual harassment against women, by the students and the employees;
- Deal with cases of discrimination and sexual harassment against women, in a time bound manner, aiming at ensuring support services to the victimized and termination of the harassment;
- Recommend appropriate punitive action against the guilty party to the Director.

Procedure for Approaching Committee

The Committee deals with issues relating to sexual harassment at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. It is applicable to all students, staff and faculty. A complaint of discrimination or sexual harassment may be lodged by the victim or a third party. A written complaint may be addressed to the Convener of the Committee. If the complaint is made to the Director, Deputy Director or any of the Committee members, they may forward it to the Convener of the Committee Against Sexual Harassment.

Here it should be noted that according to the Supreme Court guideline Sexual harassment can be defined as "unwelcome" sexually determined behaviour (whether directly or by implication) as:

- Physical contact and advances;
- Demand or request for sexual favours;
- Sexually coloured remarks;
- Showing pornography; and
- Other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature. (Vishaka judgement by Supreme Court)

The following is also sexual harassment and is covered by the committee:

- Eve-teasing,
- Unsavoury remarks,
- Jokes causing or likely to cause awkwardness or embarrassment,
- Innuendos and taunts,
- Gender based insults or sexist remarks,
- Unwelcome sexual overtone in any manner such as over telephone (obnoxious telephone calls) and the like,
- Touching or brushing against any part of the body and the like,
- Displaying pornographic or other offensive or derogatory pictures, cartoons, pamphlets or sayings,
- Forcible physical touch or molestation and
- Physical confinement against one's will and any other act likely to violate one's privacy.