

**POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORK PLACE**  
**VARUN BEVERAGES LIMITED**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
1.	Introduction/Purpose	2
2.	Objectives	2
3.	Who is Covered under the Sexual Harassment Policy	3
4.	What constitutes Sexual Harassment	3
5.	Responsibilities regarding Sexual Harassment	5
6.	Recourse to Alternative Redressal Mechanism	5
7.	Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)	6
8.	Functions, Power and Responsibilities of ICC	7
9.	Procedures for Resolution, Settlement or Prosecution of Acts of Sexual Harassment	8
10.	Redressal of Grievances	9
11.	Appeal	10
12.	Disciplinary Action	10
13.	Third Party Harassment	11
14.	Management Responsibility	11
15.	Confidentiality	13
17.	Protection to Complainant/Victim	13
18.	Conclusion	13

## **1. INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE**

- 1.1. At Varun Beverages Limited (VBL) (which includes all associates and group companies of VBL), we seek to promote a work environment free from harassment, in which executive directors, officers and employees at all levels avoid behaviors that may create an atmosphere of hostility or intimidation; it is our desire to promote a healthy and congenial working environment irrespective of gender, caste, creed or social class of the employees.
- 1.2. We value every individual and are committed to protect the dignity and respect of every individual. Therefore, we have zero-tolerance for sexual harassment and any act of sexual harassment will invite serious disciplinary action.
- 1.3. This policy is meant to educate about what conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the ways and means which we are adopting to prevent occurrence of any such event, and in unlikely situation of such an occurrence, to enable a fair mechanism for dealing with such conduct.
- 1.4. The policy is made under the overall ambit of the VBL Code of Conduct and is in accordance with the requirement of The Sexual Harassment of Women At Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal) Act, 2013 and the Rules framed thereunder and as amended from time to time.
- 1.5. This policy will be applicable to VBL and all other associate and group companies of VBL

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

2.1 The objectives of this Policy is to provide guidelines to:

- (i) PREVENT sexual harassment, sexual abuse, any unlawful and inappropriate behavior at workplace;
- (ii) PROHIBIT any kind of further harassment, coercion or intimidation of the victim of such sexual harassment, by way of retaliation for reporting an incident or participating in an investigation or proceeding concerning sexual harassment;
- (iii) REDRESS issues of sexual harassment nature with due sensitivity and with appropriate remedial action to check and deter occurrence and recurrence of such behavior.

### **3. WHO IS COVERED UNDER THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**

3.1 VBLs “Policy on Prevention and Redressal of Sexual Harassment at Workplace” is applicable to all employees of VBL and extends to:

- (i) Our Directors on the Board (Executive, Non-executive, Independent and Nominee etc.), officers, employees (permanent – part time or full time, temporary, on training and on contract) and those who work with us, as the context may require.
- (ii) All visitors and vendors associated with us & visiting any premises of the company, or whose premises our employees visit during the course of business. Our value-chain partners, including suppliers and service providers, distributors, sales representatives, contractors, channel partners, consultants, intermediaries and agents.
- (iii) An alleged act of sexual harassment, whether the incident
  - has occurred during or beyond office hours; or
  - has taken place within or outside the company premises; or
  - has taken place within the same or opposite gender relationships.
- (iv) Any act of sexual behavior is included if such an act is perceived to be detrimental to a healthy and congenial work environment. This policy is only applicable when both or either the alleged harasser and the complainant are employees/agents of the company. It is not applicable when both the alleged harasser & the complainant are third parties.

3.2 For the purposes of this Policy, Workplace includes:

- (i) All offices or other premises and areas where business of VBL is conducted which may be termed as an extension of VBL’s premises, including transportation provided by VBL.
- (ii) All company-related activities performed at any other site by its agents away from respective premises of VBL.
- (iii) Any social, business or other functions conducted by VBL in the course of its business operations.

### **4. WHAT CONSTITUTES SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

4.1 For the purposes of this Policy, Sexual Harassment shall mean and include, any unwelcome act, conduct or behavior (whether directly or by implication) as defined in the Act and considered/ perceived or alleged to be so, by the aggrieved member, which includes but not limited to:

- (i) Physical contact and advances; or
- (ii) A demand or request for sexual favors; or
- (iii) Sexually colored remarks, whether verbal, textual, graphic, electronic or by any other action; or
- (iv) Showing pornography; or

- (v) Verbal abuse or ‘joking’ that is sex-oriented, etc.
- (vi) Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature such as obnoxious comments or utterances, remarks or jokes, letters, phone calls, SMS or emails, gestures, stalking, sounds or display of a nature with sexual overtures, impeding or blocking movements, standing at a close distance that would make the other person uncomfortable, exclusion from workplace conversations/social events, unfair allocation of work & responsibilities etc.
- (vii) Any conduct that has the purpose or the effect of interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment and/or submission to such conduct is either an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment and /or submission or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for making employment decisions, making or threatening reprisals (revenge) after a negative response to sexual advances.
- (viii) It includes a demand or request for sexual favors as an implicit or explicit condition of employment or in return for with a promise of work related favors such as performance appraisals, promotions, transfers, salary increases and employment or any other form of reward or recognition.
- (ix) It also includes implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment, threat of detrimental treatment in employment, threat about present or future employment status, interference with work or creating an intimidation or offensive or hostile work environment for the victim or humiliating treatment likely to affect health or safety of the victim,

4.2 Whether a particular action or behavior constitutes sexual harassment is determined by the impact on the recipient, and is not dependent upon the intention of the perpetrator. It cannot, therefore, be excused or justified claiming that it was unintentional or humorous. The implications of harassment are serious and VBL will take appropriate disciplinary action as described further.

## **5. RECOURSE TO ALTERNATIVE REDRESSAL MECHANISM**

5.1 In case, the complainant chooses not to pursue further investigations, after having raised a complaint (for reasons of social stigma, negative publicity, etc.), the matter will be separately handled by HR of VBL with the accused as a disciplinary issue, as per the service conditions applicable to him/her.

5.2 Before initiating the inquiry, at the request of the complainant, the Internal Complaints Committee (as stated below) of VBL may take steps to settle the

matter between the Complainant and the Accused through conciliation. However, no monetary settlement shall be made as a basis of conciliation.

5.3 If the allegations have been proved, the Internal Complaints Committee may recommend, monetary compensation against the damages and/ or mental agony suffered by victim on account of sexual harassment and while determining the Compensation shall have regard to

- (a) the mental trauma, pain, suffering and emotional distress caused to the victim;
- (b) the loss in the career opportunity due to the incident of sexual harassment;
- (c) medical expenses incurred by the victim for physical or psychiatric treatment;
- (d) the income and financial status of the respondent;
- (e) feasibility of such payment in lump sum or in instalments.

In case of the compensation, the management is well within its right to recover such amount from and out of the employment dues of the accused. Except for the above, no other settlement can be made or demanded as a means or as a trade-off for making or dropping sexual harassment allegations.

## **6. INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE**

6.1 The Company has instituted an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) for redressal of sexual harassment complaint (made by the complainant) and for ensuring time bound treatment of such complaints.

6.2 Initially, and till further notice, the ICC will comprise of the following Four members out of which at least two members will be of the same gender as that of the complainant:

- (i) A senior woman employee from Corporate HR (Presiding Officer). In the event that the perpetrator is senior to the Chairperson of the Complaints Committee, a senior woman officer, who is senior to the perpetrator in rank and post, shall be co-opted as Chairperson for that case. In case there is no senior woman officer available in the workplace, an eminent woman who may not be an employee of the Company, shall be co-opted as Chairperson for that case.
- (ii) One Employee at the level of Senior Manager or above preferably Group Head Compliance who is committed to the cause of Women or who have had experience in social work or have legal knowledge.

- (iii) Respective Head-HR of the group Company from where the complaint has originated (Member).
- (iv) An independent member from an NGO or associations committed to the cause of women or a person familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment. (Member).

6.3 For any complaints pertaining to other factory locations, the Head-HR of the respective Factory shall be the representative of ICC and shall inform the ICC within 48 hours of the occurrence of complaint(s).

## **7. FUNCTIONS, POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ICC:**

- (i) Ensuring a safe working environment at the workplace which shall include safety from the person coming into contact at the workplace.
- (ii) Create awareness at the workplace about the penal consequences of sexual harassment.
- (iii) Organize workshops and awareness programmes at regular intervals for the gender sensitization of executives and employees and sensitize employees with the provisions of the Act. The Company may take the assistance of specialized NGOs/Outside agencies etc., if necessary, for this purpose.
- (iv) Deal with the complaint and conduct an inquiry in an expeditious, time bound and efficient manner.
- (v) Ensure that Sexual Harassment is treated as a misconduct under the service rules of VBL.
- (vi) Ensure timely preparation and submission of the annual report to concerned group company and the District Officer.
- (vii) Provide the number of cases filed, if any, and their disposal to the Corporate Secretarial Department at the end of the financial year for reporting the same in the Annual Report of the respective entity.
- (viii) Ensuring compliance with the obligations of the employer under the Act.
- (ix) Enforcing the outcome of the redressal measures, including conciliation review and appeal, as per the requirement of the Act.
- (x) Discouraging and preventing employment-related sexual harassment.

## **8. PROCEDURES FOR COMPLAINTS:**

8.1 An employee with a harassment concern, who is not comfortable with the informal resolution through conciliation or has exhausted such options, may make a formal complaint to the Presiding Officer of the ICC constituted

by the Management. The complaint shall have to be in writing in a sealed envelope and can be in form of a letter, to be sent, (preferably within 15 days) but not later than 3 months from the date of occurrence of the alleged incident and in case of series of incidents, within 3 months from the date of last incident. Alternately, the employee can send complaint through an email.

8.2 Any complaint received after the deadline specified above will normally not be considered.

## **9. REDRESSAL OF GRIEVANCES**

9.1 The ICC is required to take cognizance of a sexual harassment complaint only if it is raised within 15 days, not later than 90 days of its occurrence. However, for the reasons to be recorded in writing the ICC may extend the time limit not exceeding 3 months.

9.2 If the complainant has not made a written complaint, ICC shall render all assistance to the victim for making the complaint in writing. If the victim is unable to make a complaint on account of physical or mental incapacity or death or otherwise, his / her legal heir may make a complaint.

9.3. In case of a settlement through conciliation, ICC shall record the settlement so arrived and take action as specified in the recommendation. And no further inquiry shall be conducted in that case. Both, the complainant and the alleged party, shall be provided with the copies of the settlement.

9.4 In case the conciliation is not chosen or possible or any term or condition of the settlement arrived has not been complied with by the respondent, the ICC shall,

- where the respondent is an employee, proceed to make inquiry into the complaint in accordance with the provisions of the service rules applicable to the respondent and where no such rules exist, forward the complaint to the police, within a period of 7 days for registering the case under the Indian Penal Code.
- where both the parties are employees, the parties shall, during the course of inquiry, be given an opportunity of being heard and a copy of the findings shall be made available to both the parties enabling them to make representation against the findings before the ICC.

9.5 On the completion of an inquiry, the ICC, shall provide a report of its findings to the concerned parties within a period of 10 days from the date of completion of the inquiry.

**10. APPEAL**

If either of the party is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he/she may appeal to the CEO/ MD for review of the order within 90 days from the date of receipt of the order, with additional evidences or submissions, who shall decide the appeal within 30 days of receiving the copy of Order.

**11. THIRD PARTY HARASSMENT**

Necessary and reasonable steps in assisting the affected person in terms of support and preventive action will be taken against any harassment brought to the notice of the Company arising out of an act or omission by any third party or an outsider.

**12. DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

12.1 Based upon written report of the ICC of its investigations giving its findings and recommendations, in case the sexual harassment allegations stand established, the alleged harasser will be liable to be proceeded against and the punishment may include any of the following:

- (i) formal counselling,
- (ii) written apology;
- (iii) written warning to the perpetrator and a copy of it maintained in the employee's file;
- (iv) reprimand or censure;
- (v) change of work assignment/transfer for either or both the parties,
- (vi) withholding increments and promotions or suspension or termination of services of the employee found guilty of the offence.

12.2 The quantum of punishment will be a factor of:

- (i) Seniority of the person;
- (ii) Intent and motive of the person;
- (iii) Impact on the complainant;

12.3 In case of false or malicious complaints, the complainant may be debarred based upon the recommendation of the ICC, from making any further complaints for a period of next 180 days, apart from disciplinary action as mentioned in point no. 12.1 above.

12.4 The final decision shall be communicated to the complainant and the alleged harasser in both the instances above. Format of the report is provided in **Annexure A**.

**13. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY**

13.1 In compliance with the requirement of the Act, the management shall take all reasonable steps to ensure prevention of sexual harassment at work. Such steps amongst others, shall include:

1. provide a safe working environment at the workplace with shall include safety from the persons coming into contact at the workplace;
2. display at any conspicuous place in the workplace, the penal consequences of sexual harassments; and the order of ICC;
3. organize workshops and awareness programmes at regular intervals for sensitising the employees with the provisions of the Act and orientation programmes for the members of the ICC;
4. provide necessary facilities to the ICC for dealing with the complaint and conducting an inquiry;
5. assist in securing the attendance of respondent and witnesses before the ICC;
6. make available such information to the ICC as it may require having regard to the complaint made;
7. provide assistance to the woman if she so chooses to file a complaint in relation to the offence under the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860) or any other law for the time being in force;
8. cause to initiate action, under the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860) or any other law for the time being in force, against the perpetrator, or if the aggrieved woman so desires, where the perpetrator is not an employee, in the workplace at which the incident of sexual harassment took place;
9. treat sexual harassment as a misconduct under the service rules and initiate action for such misconduct;
10. monitor the timely submission of reports by the ICC.
11. Affirmatively discuss reported instances and queries/ clarifications with regard to sexual harassment, at periodically held meetings, workshops, etc.,
12. Conduct or cause to carry out in-house training on sexual harassment and addressing and redressal of grievances.
13. Prominently display the guidelines for raising sexual harassment complaints and the protocol for resolution of the same.
14. Widely publicize zero tolerance to Sexual Harassment as workplace behavior.
15. Display the Names and contact numbers of members of the ICC in all the offices/plants' notice boards.
16. Protection of identity is a legal right of the complainant. Therefore, absolute discretion, care and diligence shall be exercised in all communications (internal and external) as and when there is a need to disclose details of the complaint by ensuring that it is purely on a selective and need to know basis.

13.2 Facilitation to the Committee

- (i) Each team/ group / part / function shall provide all necessary assistance for the purpose of ensuring full, effective and prompt implementation of this Policy.
- (ii) Each team/ group/ part / function will ensure that the ICC and any Enquiry Committee retain their autonomy and work unhindered without any pressure or influence from any quarter.
- (iii) The proceedings under this Policy shall not be stalled or postponed merely because the complainant is proceeding against the accused under any other provision of law.
- (iv) The provisions of this Policy shall not restrict the powers of the Management or the Complainant to proceed against the alleged offender for any other misconduct or other legal remedies.

**14. CONFIDENTIALITY:**

14.1 The Company shall protect the interests of the complainant, the accused person and others who may report incidents of sexual harassment and shall maintain confidentiality throughout the investigatory process except where the disclosure is required under disciplinary or other remedial processes.

**15. PROTECTION TO COMPLAINANT / VICTIM:**

15.1 The Company is committed to ensuring that no employee who brings forward a harassment concern is subject to any form of reprisal. Any reprisal will be subject to disciplinary action.

15.2 The Company will ensure that the complainant or witnesses are not victimized or discriminated against while dealing with complaints of sexual harassment.

**16. CONCLUSION:**

16.1 VBL will exercise utmost care in treating the entire process with the dignity, sensitivity and respect it merits including protection of the complainant / harassed.

16.2 Any act of sexual behavior, if noticed by any third party may be brought to the notice of the committee or the management. Such acts may be considered as harassment, if *quid pro quo* or hostile work environment conditions prevail. Otherwise, it could be treated as non-professional

behavior at the workplace and may be dealt with by the company outside the purview of this policy.

16.3 The Company will provide counselor services to the complainant / harassed on request, at no additional cost to the complainant /harassed. The intent of this policy is to create a harmonious & safe working environment. To ensure that this is upheld in both letter and spirit, we urge all employees of VBL to desist from lodging wrongful allegations. This would apply to third parties also.

---

**Annexure-A**

Check List / Format For Reporting Findings

Sl. No.	Item	
1	DATE OF RECEIPT OF COMPLAINT	
2	NAME / CONTACT DETAILS OF COMPLAINANT/VICTIM (S)	
3	DATE / LOCATION OF INCIDENT	
4	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF COMPLAINT (CAN ENCLOSE THE COMPLAINT DOCUMENT)	
5	NAME / CONTACT DETAILS OF ALLEGED HARASSER (S)	
6	INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS (S)	
7	DATE (S) OF INVESTIGATION ENTER BEGINNING AND CLOSE DATES	
8	DOCUMENTS REFERRED /	1. STATEMENT FROM COMPLAINANT

	VERIFIED / COLLECTED / ENCLOSED	2. STATEMENT FROM WITNESSES  IF ANY  3. STATEMENT FROM HARASSER(S)  4. ANY OTHER CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE
9	ANALYSIS / OBSERVATIONS OF COMMITTEE	
10	CONCLUSION	
11	RECOMMENDATION OF COMMITTEE	