

## **COMMITTEE FOR REDRESSAL OF GENDER ISSUES DOON UNIVERSITY, DEHRADUN**

### **Handout for Students and Doon University Community**

At Doon University we sincerely care for the safety of the students, especially women students and all university residents. Every individual has the right to expect that s/he has the full freedom to her or his sense of who s/he is, how s/he wants to live, dress decently, intermingle, make friends with whom they desire, not make friends with whom they do not wish to do so. Every individual has the right to point out behavior that is offensive, and it is expected that if such behaviour has taken place unknowingly, that the perpetrator will take the objection with seriousness, without rancor, and modify their behavior accordingly.

As you all know sexual harassment is illegal and a punishable offense now. The guidelines of Hon'ble Supreme Court based on the Vishakha vs State of Rajasthan judgment, prohibit sexual harassment at workplaces. Why sexual harassment is a serious issue at workplaces? Because, it is a form of violence, quite often perpetrated against and faced by women in our socio-cultural setting. In most cases the victim feels guilty and fearful to report in the first instance and therefore ignore the harassment they faced. Sexual harassment is a taboo subject. Therefore even educated women avoid discussing this issue out of fear of ill reputation. A person who is subjected to sexual harassment experience a wide range of psychological trauma and even physical problems. It has adverse impact on the victim's mental well being, work efficiency, mobility, productivity, work ethics etc. Hence it is also an issue of equality and dignity, and occupational safety and health. Therefore, there is a need to work towards materializing the understanding that in any civilized society, especially in a place like University Campus which is supposed to be a place of knowledge creation, research and teaching aimed at developing students/scholars as responsible citizens in terms of information and awareness, knowledge, standards of ethics, character and conduct, it is the fundamental right of citizens to be able to lead their lives with dignity, free from fear, mental or physical torture and distress. Although the recognition of the right to protection against sexual harassment is an essential component of the protection of women's human rights, the legal provisions alone are simply inadequate. Sexual

harassment exists in our society as the most widespread, trivialized and culturally accepted form of violence. No woman will be there who has not experienced this violence at least once in her lifetime. It is because women are treated as inferior humans. Despite several advancement women have achieved in education, employment and in political participation, they are still treated as more like commodities than people and are subjected to different kinds of exploitation. Sexual harassment is a kind of exploitation. It is a paradigm of patriarchal oppression. In order to materialize the constitutional rights of women, sexual harassment in workplaces remains a central concern of women's rights movements in India. Because of the pressure of women's movement, Government of India has taken steps to combat sexual harassment in workplaces, as a step towards ensuring women's independence, equality of opportunity and the right to work with dignity. Hon'ble Supreme Court Judgment on sexual harassment made it mandatory for every institution to implement policy against sexual harassment at work place.

As required by the Judgment of Hon'ble Supreme Court, Doon University has formulated a very strong and comprehensive policy against sexual harassment with components of gender sensitization and orientation, crisis management and mediation, At Doon University we strive for zero tolerance towards sexual harassment. We respect equal and dignified space for every gender. Inside the class rooms, at canteen, in seminar rooms and at fresher welcome parties, we stand for gender equality. Sexual harassment is an act of gender discrimination. It violates the right of the women students to a comfortable, secure and hostile free environment in the campus and redressal of complaints. Nonetheless, the Committee for Redressal of Gender Issues (CGRI) works for the benefit of both men and women of the University community.

### **What is Sexual harassment?**

- Any unwelcome sexual advances both verbal and non-verbal.
- Physical conduct such as loaded comments, slander, remarks or jokes, letters, phone calls, sms or e-mail, gestures, showing of pornography.
- Lurid stares, physical contact or molestation, stalking.
- Sounds or display of a derogatory nature have the purpose or effect of interfering with an

individual's performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive campus environment.

### **What to do if you are being harassed?**

**Know your rights** – Sexual harassment is illegal; both the law of the land and Doon University prohibit sexual harassment.

**Speak up** – If you can, tell the person to stop. State clearly and firmly that you want a particular behaviour to cease.

**Get information and support** – If you feel you cannot speak up, ask your friends to help you and bring it to the notice of the University authority. Keep records that might be useful for pursuing the case.

### **What not to do?**

**Do not blame yourself.** Sexual harassment is not something one brings on oneself. It is not a consequence of certain ways of dressing or acting. It is a violation of an individual's right to live with dignity.

**Do not ignore it.** Ignoring sexual harassment does not make it go away. The harasser may misinterpret a lack of response as approval of the behaviour.

**Do not delay.** Delay in action increases the probability that unwanted behaviour will continue or escalate.

**Do not hesitate to ask for help.** Speaking up may prevent others from being harmed as well.

Committee for Redressal of Gender Issues (CRGI) is an institution of the University which works for gender sensitization, crisis management and complaint redressal. CGRI solicits the cooperation of campus community in its various efforts for making the campus environment free from gender discrimination, harassment, hostility and violence. The Committee urges the students and the university community to feel free to approach us at any time:-

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