

Organizational Policies



VEDIC Society

At Mako, PO.: Latehar, Dist.: Latehar, Jharkhand – 829 206, India

Phone: +91 6565 247350 Cell No.: +91 9431135220

E-mail: vedic350@gmail.com, Website: <http://www.vedicsociety.net.in>

Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1 About VEDIC Society	3
1.2 Vision	4
1.3 Mission	5
1.4 Objectives	5
2. About Organizational Policy	6
2.1 Preamble	6
2.2 Scope of the Policy.....	6
2.3 Objectives of the Policy	6
2.4 Availability and Circulation of the Policy.....	6
3. Human Resources Policy	7
3.1 Introduction.....	7
3.2 Norms of Employee Recruitment.....	7
3.3 Recruitment.....	7
3.4 Leave.....	9
3.5 Special Provision for Women Employees.....	10
4. Financial Management Policy.....	12
4.1 Accounting System	12
4.2 Types of Forms.....	14
4.3 Types of Registers.....	15
4.4 Review and Monitoring Systems.....	15
5. Asset Acquisition and Management Policy.....	17
5.1 Procurement Policy.....	17
3. Procedures for Accounting	18
5.2 General Guideline to Use Office Facilities.....	18
5.3 Guideline to Use Vehicle.....	19
6. Gender Policy	20
6.1 Gender Policy.....	20
6.2 Sexual Harassment Policy	21

6.3	Complaint Process	22
7.	Child Protection Policy	25
7.1	Statement of Commitment.....	25
7.2	Definitions	25
7.3	The Core Principles and Values	26
7.4	Behaviour Protocols.....	27
7.5	Communications about Children	27
7.6	Reporting Incidents.....	27
7.7	Ramifications of Misconduct	28

1. Introduction

1.1 About VEDIC Society

The Voluntary Education Development and Integrated Cultural (VEDIC) Society had initiated its social development endeavours in the year 1990. The impetus behind it was the movement against the displacement of poor people due to the construction of the Auranga Dam that caused submergence of several villages. While this movement was going on, a group of like-minded people came up with the idea to set up an organization, dedicated to address different issues of sustainable development of area and its populace. In 1991, it got the registered as society and established its office at *Ranki Khurd at Palamu* district. The office later shifted to Tumbagara in 1995 and finally to Latehar in 2001.

Since the inception, this society has been relentlessly working for and with the people towards achieving its much-cherished goal of holistic development of the downtrodden people of the society. Though Latehar district and its adjacent districts are extremely affected by the extremist activities that pose severe threat to the process of development, this organization always nurtures its indomitable will of being thrived as a catalyst in bringing positive socio-economic changes in the lives of the poor people, especially women, children, and people of backward classes and of indigenous tribal communities.

VEDIC Society is at present working in two of the most backward districts of Jharkhand from its headquarters at Latehar and an extension office at Tumbagara. The operational area covers **Latehar** and **Palamu**.

During the course of time and based on its grass root level experience, VEDIC Society has identified few primary issues that are needed to be addressed for the sake of sustainable and inclusive development of the rural populace. These may be broadly categorized in following manner as the thematic areas of intervention.

- Basic Education
- Community Health
- Livelihood – Agriculture and Natural Resource Management
- Child Rights and Development
- Women Rights and Development
- Governance and People’s Participation

In the context of the socio-political situation that prevails in its operational area, the core of VEDIC Society's target and its major beneficiaries are formed with the most vulnerable tribal population and people from backward classes. In its entire endeavour, special emphasis has been given on the women, children, and the rural marginal farmers.

VEDIC Society considers human resources as the most valued assets of the organization. It has a dedicated team of about 50 social workers. This team is led by the Secretary of the organization. Other than these team members, there a number of specialists and consultants who provide periodical support to the programmes as well as the organization. To spearhead the initiatives, the organization has a very well managed campus of its own at Latehar town. Within this campus, there is an office building along with a training centre with all facilities and amenities for training and accommodation. The office is fully equipped with computers, telephone, fax machine, photocopier machine, generator, and other office furniture. A fleet of motorcycles, bicycles and a car is there to ease the job of the field employees.

The organization is managed on behalf of the Executive Committee by the Secretary as Chief Functionary. The Executive Committee consists of seven members and headed by the President. This committee is responsible for legal actions and policy making at the apex level. All the decisions are taken on the basis of general consensus and in accordance with the vision and mission of the organization. The committee also extends its active support to the Secretary in addressing the programmatic and administrative issues. At the operational level, all the planning and decisions are being made on the basis of participatory action. The organization has two wings, programme, and administration, which run with close coordination under the guidance of the Secretary. The programmes/projects are being managed by the respective Project Coordinators and there are accountants and office assistants in the administrative wing. Financial matters are being managed jointly by the Secretary, Treasurer, and the President. Transparency and cooperation are the core essence of the management of VEDIC Society.

1.2 Vision

Usher the society towards self-governance and holistic community development, especially for the sake of children and women.

1.3 Mission

To ensure emancipation from all sorts of exploitation and empowerment of the people belong to the tribal and backward communities with a special emphasis on children and women through people's participation and creation of CBOs at all required levels to achieve the goal of sustainable and holistic development of the society.

1.4 Objectives

- To ensure equal opportunity to growth for all irrespective caste, creed, and gender;
- To improve the status of children and women, especially of the tribal and backward communities in respect of their rights and entitlement;
- To create conducive environment for effective and quality basic and primary education;
- To generate community awareness towards health and facilitate the health service providers with quality training inputs for improving overall rural health status;
- To ensure steady progress in generating livelihood opportunities for the people of economically weak section of the society by organizing them under CBOs and SHGs, and by providing skill development training;
- To conserve the natural resources and promote efficient management thereon to mitigate environmental degradation and to enhance livelihood opportunities;
- To empower marginalized people and women, especially of the tribal and backward communities by assisting them in leadership development and awareness building towards increased participation in rural self-governance;
- To collaborate with the government departments and other development agencies to make convergence of all development programmes in an integrated manner for sustainable holistic development;

2. About Organizational Policy

2.1 Preamble

We members of governing members, employees and volunteers would like to share our organizational policy which is not an agreement by itself but a set of guiding rules and norms to govern all of us including those who intend to join and support us directly or indirectly to make change in the society.

This policy is a commitment to promote and enable a working and conducive working environment so that creativity and intellect of each employee, volunteer and consultant could be nurtured, cherished, and utilized to contribute for socio-cultural and economic advancements of all in our operational area.

The Organizational Policy encompasses guiding principles, rules, and norms to execute our responsibilities and definitely would give way to deal with emerging critical issue within and outside the organization premises.

2.2 Scope of the Policy

This policy is a set of rule and regulation to give a definite direction to each and every employee in executing his/her job. It will give a framework of action to everyone associated with the organization in his/her work and help him/her to understand what he/she needs to do in to accomplish his/her job in an efficient manner. It will define what must be done by each employee and volunteer.

2.3 Objectives of the Policy

The objectives of this policy are to create, nurture and promote working friendly and conducive environment in the organization; to provide a working guideline to all personnel associated with organization; and to promote transparency and accountability in the organization and in working culture of the organization.

2.4 Availability and Circulation of the Policy

The copy of this organization policy will be made available to and circulated among the people associated directly or indirectly with the organization, for example, Board Members, Employees and Volunteers, Consultants, Donors and Government Agencies.

3. Human Resources Policy

3.1 Introduction

There will be two broad categories of the employees in the organization: non-project employees and project employees. Non-project employees are supported through General Fund, while project employees are supported through different time bound projects/programmes. In both categories, there will be full-time employees, part-time employees, volunteers, and consultants.

3.2 Norms of Employee Recruitment

Qualification and experience of work are two major criteria to appoint the employees. VEDIC Society provides equal employment opportunities for men and women. The organization does not make any discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, creed, religion, faith, domicile, colour, and ethnicity or of any nature that creates differences in the society in recruiting the employees. However, local people will be given preference to work at the grassroots level. Women are given preference to work with women groups and women issues.

3.3 Recruitment

Recruitment of different categories of employees will be made as per laid norms that explained below:

1. Advertisement for the Post

When the project will be approved and sanctioned by the funding agency advertisement for full time employees will be published in. However, advertisement for part time employees and volunteers will be made in village level institutions and community-based organization of targeted area.

2. Short Listing of the Applicants

All the application received after the advertisement will be short listed for personal interview. In short listing, applicants' qualifications, experiences, and knowledge of local geo-cultural and socio-political dynamics are few important criteria.

3. Personal Interviews

Short listed applicant will be called for personal interview. For full time project employees, personal interviews will be conducted at headquarters of the organization. However, for part time employees or volunteers, personal interview may be conducted at block or central village of the targeted area. A panel of interviewers will conduct the personal interview.

4. Final Selection

After personal interview final selection will be done. The selected employees will be informed through e-mail, post, or other means.

5. Induction/Initial Orientation

When an employee is selected and joins his job, his/her induction will be organised at headquarters of the organization for one day. During induction employee will be oriented on the office procedure, job profile, reporting system and organizational rules and regulations that are essential to follow while rendering service in the organization.

6. Job Profile and Condition of Employment

Employees appointed for a particular project will be primarily responsible for their project and an outline of their role will be given to each employee at the time of induction/initial orientation. However, project employees may be involved in some other projects if it is required or inevitable to implement or assist the employees of other projects.

7. Agreements of Employment

Each selected employee will have to sign an agreement of 11 months with the organization. The agreement is renewable after performance review. Main content of the agreement could be summarized as below:

- Employees are expected to work towards fulfilling the vision, mission, and objectives of the organization.
- Initial agreement will be of 11 months out of which first six months will be probation period.
- Full time employees are expected to render services to VEDIC Society only.
- Employees have to work at least a minimum of 8 hours of office hours and fieldwork. The job involves travel in the project areas and outside the area.

- Employees will be entitled to get honorarium and other allowances as per the allocations made in the project.
- Employees have to give one-month notice or one-month salary for termination of the contracts. However, in the first six months of contracts, one month's notice period is not required for the organization.
- At the time of leaving/resignation employees are responsible to formally handover all assets, files, and records under your possession to the designated person of the organization.
- Employees are governed by the rules and regulations and policies of VEDIC Society for travel and other service matters.
- Renewal of the contract will be solely depending on the performance of the employees.

During the period of employment if employees are acting against the interest of the organization, wilfully neglecting or disobeying, failing to carry out the planned work, indulging in misconduct and misappropriation of money and abstaining from work for long periods without information, service contract will be terminated. In these circumstances the notice period of one month/one month salary will remain null and void.

The organization has the prerogative to transfer the employees in any place as per the needs of the organization.

Payment of salary is subject to the submission of monthly and other reports and employees' commitment to the organization.

The organization believes in strict observance of non-consumption of alcohol/intoxicants and smoking in the office and sensitively to gender issue, and employees are expected to follow the laid rules and regulations.

All the employees are expected to maintain confidentiality of the organizational records, documents, and information.

However, a detailed terms and conditions will be given to the prospective employee along with his appointment letter, acceptance of which in writing by him will be considered as his acceptance to the job offer.

3.4 Leave

Leave is one of the important and sensitive issues for the employees in the grassroots organisations. All Sundays are holidays in the organisation. But an employee may not

avail this holiday and public holidays (see below) because of emergent situation, like funding agency visit, evaluation, or some organisation work. If an employee loses his/her scheduled holiday, he/she may avail the same later on within three months. The organisations is also closed on public holidays declared by the State Government.

The employees are entitled to eighteen (18) days of leave, in one calendar year, that is, from January to December, in case of continuous service; otherwise, the leave will be calculated on the basis of proportion related to his period of service in one calendar year. In above mentioned leave days, all categories of leave (viz. casual, earned, sick, etc) are clubbed together. There will be no separate type of leave such as extraordinary leave or compensatory leave.

An employee can avail the leave for consecutive two days at a time, which is supposed to be duly authorized by the functional head. If he/she needs leave for more than three days, he/she is expected to take the permission from the Secretary of the organization at least one week before proceeding on leave.

All leaves need to be exhausted within the calendar year (January to December) and there will be no carry over.

In the event of his/her being absent from duties, for period excess of his/her eligible leave, which, in the opinion of organization is detrimental to its interest, his/her services may be terminated on the basis of abandonment of services by him/her.

3.5 Special Provision for Women Employees

VEDIC Society has a number of women employees, and it has always promoted participation of women in the development sector. To address needs of women employee, along with other provisions, we have formulated some special provisions for women employees.

1. Maternity Leave

Every full-time woman employee is entitled to get maternity leave, if such situation arises during her contract period. Since the nature of organization is voluntary and non-profit and is highly dependent on external resources, number of days for maternity leave will be decided by the Committee on Gender Issues. Maternity Leave with pay will be provided only for first two successful pregnancies. However, every woman employee will be entitled to maternity leave even after second pregnancy, but that will be leave without pay. In such situation her contract will not be affected if the project period is still going on.

2. Special Leave During Menstruation

Two days' special leave per month with pay may be granted to women employees in case emergency (that is, menstruation). Decision about this will be taken by the Committee on Gender Issues.

3. Other Miscellaneous Provisions

A woman employee can take a man employee during the field visit, if the field is hard to reach, or is in very interior part.

Though personal phone calls are restricted during the working hour, women employees can make them if they want to do so in case of need.

At least one woman employee will be the member of each committee constituted under the provisions of the organizational policy to deal with various specific issues.

4. Financial Management Policy

4.1 Accounting System

The organization is following the double entry system of accounting. The books of accounts are maintained in the computerized form. The accounts are prepared in Tally software.

1. Separate Books of Accounts Are Maintained

- i. Indian fund
- ii. Foreign fund

2. Recognition of Revenue Income

The income is recognized in the books of accounts as and when it is received.

3. Recognition of Revenue Expenditure

All the expenditure other than depreciation is recognized as and when it is incurred. Depreciation is provided at the end of the financial year on the written down value of the capital items.

4. Recognition of Capital Expenditure

All capital expenditures are capitalized in the books of accounts and are reflected in the balance sheet. The depreciation is provided on written down value basis at the end of each financial year.

5. Major Source of Income

- i. Grants
- ii. Contributions
- iii. Interest

The income of grants is received from government and private development agencies from within the countries, corporate and international donors.

The income of contributions is received in the form of consultancy charges, accommodation usage charges, equipment usage charges, sale of publications etc.

Interest income is received on fixed deposits and savings bank account and is accounted on accrual basis at the end of the year.

6. Major Expenditure

i. Direct Project Expenses

The direct project expenses are accounted as and when it is incurred.

Based on the agreement with the donors, the budget line for the total amount of project is prepared and code is allotted for each head for data entry and easy reporting of expenses. Project wise cost centres are opened for the project and expenses are accounted according to the budget head. Simultaneously all the vouchers for the expenses incurred are accounted in the regular accounting system for the purpose of preparing income-expenditure statement and balance sheet for the income tax and other purpose for all the projects.

ii. Salary and Honorarium

The expenditure of salary includes the salary of secretary, programme employee, administrative employee, and accounts employee along with management contribution for provident fund for the eligible employee. The expenditure of honorarium includes the payment made to the consultants.

iii. Administrative Expenditure

The administrative expenditure includes the expenditure other than project expenditure. These expenses include office maintenance, audit fees, travelling of admin employee, telephone, postage, courier, finance and management expenses like electricity, water, battery, diesel, DG set, local taxes, employee welfare etc. These expenses are paid from Indian accounts and is allocated to different projects on the availability of the budget along with 5 to 8 per cent institutional development cost.

Over and above, for the purchase of capital item movable properties and immovable properties, there is a separate procedure for the procurement of these items.

Movable properties consist of computers, office equipment, furniture and fixtures and vehicles located at different offices. Immovable properties consist of land and building located at Saharanpur and Uttarkashi districts.

iv. Depreciation

Depreciation is not considered as expenditure, but it is a charged to income and expenditure account for the usage of capital item and to create reserve. VEDIC Society follows the written down value) for the depreciation as per the Income Tax Act 1961. The property created under the project will be the property of the society.

7. Management of Project Accounts

All direct project expenditures are accounted based on the budget as determined in agreement between VEDIC Society and the respective funding agency. The books of accounts are maintained as per the requirement of donors as well as under the Society registration Act and Income tax Act 1961. These books of accounts are maintained simultaneously and are tallied. The books are maintained in Tally software.

When the project is completed, the Utilization Certificate (UC) to be issued to the respective funding agency is prepared based upon the data generated about the respective project.

8. Books of Accounts and Other Documents Maintenance

At VEDIC Society, the account keeping has been recorded as per various internal and external audit requirements. Separate vouchers are maintained for FC and Indian accounts and will be kept at head office or project office.

8. Physical Verification and Reconciliation

The physical verification of cash is conducted by the Internal Auditor /Finance Manager at every quarter and is reconciled with cash book. Any excess shortage in cash or in assets is dealt with proper accounting action.

4.2 Types of Forms

To facilitate the day-to-day operations of the organization, various types of forms have been made in easy to fill formats for the employee members:

1. Receipt
2. Project advance requisition
3. Cheque/DD requisition
4. Local travel claim
5. Outstation travel reimbursement
6. Leave application

7. Bill book/contribution book
8. Stationery requisition

4.3 Types of Registers

To have better internal control, the accounts department will maintain the following types of register regularly.

1. Salary and receipt (employee wise)
2. Assets
3. Stationery and training material stock
4. Postage (inward and outward)
5. Service contract
6. Vehicle logbook
7. Investment
8. Insurance
9. Leave record
10. Employee attendance
11. Employee movement
12. Trainees room

4.4 Review and Monitoring Systems

1. Review and Monitoring by Management

The accounts department should provide by way of Management Information System (MIS) following details to the Secretary.

2. Monthly MIS

- Budget comparison statement project wise
- List of grants received
- Bank reconciliation statement
- List of advances outstanding
- Statement of investment

3. Quarterly MIS

- Comparison of budget and actual expenditure statement
- Trial balance
- Receipts and payments accounts

- Income and expenditure accounts

4. Appointment of Internal Auditor

To have better internal control over the areas of accounts, finance and administration regularly, an internal auditor has been appointed. The scope of internal auditor has been decided by the management.

5. Review and Monitoring through Project Audit

Appointment of Independent Auditor

As required by the donor, when the project is completed, an independent qualified auditor is to be appointed as per MOU and the Utilization Certificate as required is to be obtained.

Appointment of Statutory Auditor

Auditing of the annual accounts of the organization is a statutory requirement. The management should appoint professional chartered accountant for the audit of books of the organization. After appointment of statutory auditors, audit of the books of accounts are carried out by them. The annual accounts (balance sheet and income and expenditure) of the organization and form FC-3 and receipts and payments and other required statements together with the reports of the auditors are presented before the Governing Body for consideration and approval. After approval the Secretary should sign the accounts and the accounts department should get the signature of the statutory auditors on the balance sheet, income and expenditure and FC-3 statements duly stamped. FC-3 return, and other statements as required under FCRA should be filed before due dates.

5. Asset Acquisition and Management Policy

5.1 Procurement Policy

The purpose of the procurement policy is to ensure procurement of relevant goods and services with market appropriate and competitive rates, ensuring quality and timely delivery. It also ensures transparency and accountability in the purchasing system. However, it needs to be understood that while the procedures are important it shall not undermine the relevance of the purpose. In case of branded and standard goods the rates will be of supplying company.

1. Procedure for Procurement

Procurement can be classified broadly in two categories: (i) Goods of capital and revenue items – items can be movable (computers, office equipment, furniture and fixtures, vehicles) and immovable (land and building); (ii) Services like maintenance contract, legal and audit fee, professional consultants, etc.

2. The Procurement Process

To check the validity of the procurement and ensure transparent procurement the following process is followed:

For any types of procurement, the Accountant and Secretary or their nominees will put up a requisition explaining the purpose, quantity, quality, and the time frame. All requisitions for procurement must be validated by another two members. No requisition is considered for further processing without the written validation. It shall be submitted to the Secretary for approval. All the processes shall be so documented that it satisfies the audit protocol.

1. For procurement of material and services up to Rs. 25,000, the item shall be purchased after informal market survey.
2. For regular procurement of goods/material of single set of items above Rs. 25,000/- to Rs. 2,00,000/- a three-member internal procurement committee will initiate the procurement process. Three quotations will be sought, and a comparative statement prepared by the committee. It will recommend the agency and rate from whom the procurement will made. If needed, the committee will negotiate for lower rate.
3. For the purchase of items like two-wheel or four-wheel vehicles no tender will be invited. If there is a single dealer in the city, the vehicle can be procured directly. However, it will be documented and approved by the internal procurement committee.

4. For the services like Annual Maintenance Contract for the computers, internet connection, photocopy machine, etc. three quotations will be obtained for AMC if fees/charges are above Rs. 50,000/-. It shall be procured through the procurement committee with the approval of the Secretary.
5. For professional services of consultants, services of experts who are familiar with the work of VEDIC Society is taken. After the selection of the consultants, a formal task contract may be agreed upon indicating the objectives, deliverables, timeframe, quality control, fee, and upper limit of the other expenditures. The consultants' fee will not include the actual expenditure like travel and other expenditure incurred towards completion of the task.
6. For procurement of any non-budgeted item of above Rs. 2,00,000/- the Secretary shall take written approval of the Executive Body. The process of procurement shall be same as mentioned above.

3. Procedures for Accounting

When the item is received on the basis of purchase order, the copy of delivery challan/bill sent by the vendor will be verified with the purchase order with respect to quantity, rate, and amount. This should then be forwarded to the person concerned who made the requisition for approval with respect to quality. Once it is approved then the delivery challan/purchase bill should be signed by the appropriate authority. The administrative department should make necessary inward entries in the inward register for recording purpose. When payment is to be made to the vendor, a copy of the order, challans and bills will be sent to the accounts department for payment. The bill should be approved by appropriate authority giving project code and quantity received.

5.2 General Guideline to Use Office Facilities

All employees can use the office facilities to accomplish their assigned job. An Asset Register will be maintained by the designated employee assigned for the purpose. Employees are expected to return the equipment and office accessories to the person from whom they have collected the equipment or accessories.

Office stationery will be issued by the front desk after getting approval either from the project head or secretary of the organization.

Any asset whether recurring or non-recurring in nature will be sold out after getting approval from the EC.

5.3 Guideline to Use Vehicle

Vehicle will be provided to the field after assessing the need. Even employees can use their own vehicle for field work. In both cases whether vehicle has been provided by the organization or employees have been using their own vehicle travelling allowances will be paid as per the budgeted amount in the project proposal.

Employees will be responsible to maintain their vehicle within the budgeted amount, no separate allocation for the vehicle maintenance will be given. Every employee has to maintain logbook along with travelling detail in their logbook to claim the travelling allowance.

Concerned head of the project will check logbook of their sub-ordinate and report to the secretary of the organization in case there is any discrepancies in the logbook for further action.

6. Gender Policy

6.1 Gender Policy

1. The Policy

VEDIC Society is committed to establish an equitable and just society, based on values where every individual can enjoy fundamental rights, guaranteed under the Constitution of India. To further its interventions to the marginalized and disadvantaged sections of the society, the organization has identified women as the largest vulnerable group.

The organization believes that due to dominant patriarchy in the region, women play a subservient role in the society and are relegated from any decision-making process. Gender discrimination, early marriages, physical and mental harassment, son preference leading to repetitive births and sexual harassment are some of the reasons requiring organizational interventions. To strengthen our efforts in the area of gender equality, the organization adopts the present policy.

2. Interventions

To ensure gender equality we propose the following interventions:

i. Governance

Efforts will be made to invite women members in the Governing Body to end the lopsided gender status. Efforts will be made to integrate gender concern in a meaningful way.

The organization will encourage participation of women employee throughout the organization and will constantly monitor their efforts to develop strategies to increase their representation at decision making levels.

ii. Organizational Management, System and Employee Rules

VEDIC Society recognizes the fact that unless there is commitment from the management to implement the policy, nothing is going to change. The organization will make necessary changes in the above-mentioned areas to create gender sensitive environment.

Efforts will be made to recruit women members in managerial positions. Analysis into the causes of employee turnover, especially those of women, in managerial positions will be done and corrective measures taken to avoid the situation in future.

VEDIC Society will develop gender sensitive performance appraisal system to promote or demote. The organization will provide sufficient orientation to sensitise the employee members so that they feel comfortable in raising gender issues at organizational as well as field levels.

The committee will be formed to promote gender equitable environment and to address the gender concerns. It will have a two-party representation (management and employee person). Any member of sexual harassment committee can be the head of committee irrespective of the gender. The organization head will not be a part of the committee. This is necessary to maintain the confidentiality and for the fair process of justice. The committee will hold meetings regularly and as and when need arises for the same.

More transparency and information sharing culture will be encouraged, especially to familiarise and include women members in management and planning processes.

6.2 Sexual Harassment Policy

Sexual harassment includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour (whether directly or by implication) as:

- Physical contact and advances;
- A demand or request for sexual favours;
- Sexually coloured remarks;
- Showing pornography;
- Unwelcome sexual advances involving verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct such as sexually coloured remarks, jokes, letters, phone calls, e-mail, gestures, showing of pornography, lurid stares, physical contact or molestation, stalking, sounds, display of pictures, signs, verbal or non-verbal communication which offends the individuals' sensibilities and affect her/his performance;
- Eve teasing, innuendos and taunts, physical confinement against one's will and likely to intrude upon one's privacy;
- Act or conduct by a person in authority which creates the environment at workplace hostile or intimidating to a person belonging to the other sex;
- Conduct of such an act at work place or outside in relation to an employee or vice versa during the course of employment; and

- Any unwelcome gesture by an employee having sexual overtones.

Sexual harassment is emotionally abusive and creates an unhealthy, unproductive atmosphere at the workplace. Sexual harassment cases can be classified into two categories:

In **quid pro quo** (meaning this for that) form of harassment, a person or authority, usually the superior of the victim, demands sexual favours for getting or keeping a job benefit and threatens to fire the employee if the conditions are not met.

A **hostile work environment** arises when a co-worker or supervisor creates a work environment through verbal or physical conduct that interferes with another co-worker's job performance or creates the workplace atmosphere which is intimidating, hostile, offensive or humiliating and experienced as an attack on personal dignity.

However, an employee who is sexually harassed can complain about the same even if there is no adverse job consequence.

6.3 Complaint Process

Whether or not such conduct constitutes an offence under law and a breach of the employment rules, an appropriate complaint mechanism in the form of "Complaints Committee" has been created in the organization for time-bound redressal of the complaint made by the complainant.

VEDIC Society will ensure that any complainant will not suffer adverse job consequences as a result of any complaint being made.

1. Complaints Committee

The organization has formed a Sexual Harassment Committee, which will act as Complaints Committee, for redressal of harassment complaints and for ensuring time bound treatment and resolution of such complaints. The Sexual Harassment Committee will be responsible for:

- Investigating every formal written complaint of harassment
- Taking appropriate remedial measures to respond to any substantiated allegations of harassment
- Discouraging and preventing any harassment at workplace.

2. Procedures for Resolution, Settlement of Acts of Harassment

The organization is committed to providing a supportive environment for resolution of concerns of harassment.

3. Informal Resolution Options

When an incident of harassment occurs, the victim can communicate her/his disapproval and objections immediately to the harasser and request the harasser to desist from such conduct in the future.

If the harassment does not stop or if the victim is not comfortable with addressing the harasser directly, she/ he can bring the concern to the attention of the Complaints Committee for redressal of grievances. The Complaints Committee will thereafter provide advice or extend support as requested and will do the needful to resolve the matter.

Depending on the gravity of the situation, the Complaints Committee may decide on either of the following actions:

- Formal written apology
- Suspension from services without pay
- Transfer
- Withholding promotion
- Termination
- Police complaint, if necessary
- Confidentiality

The organization understands that it is difficult for the victim to come forward with a complaint of sexual harassment and recognises the victim's interest in keeping the matter confidential. To protect the interests of the victim, the accused person and others who may report incidents of sexual harassment, confidentiality will be maintained throughout any investigatory process to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances.

It is advisable that the victim keeps a record of incident, that is, date, place, possible witness and file a complaint as soon as possible.

4. Access to Reports and Documents

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

5. Protection to Complainant/Victim

The organisation 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. The organisation will ensure that victim or witnesses are not victimised or discriminated against while dealing with complaints of sexual harassment. However, anyone who abuses the procedure will be subject to disciplinary action.

6. Complaints Made with a Malicious Intent

This policy has been evolved as a tool to ensure that in the interest of justice and fair play, our employees have a forum to approach in the event of instances of sexual harassment. However, if on investigation it is revealed that the complaint was made with a malicious intent and with the motive of maligning the individual concerned/tarnishing his/her image in the organization and to settle personal/professional scores, strict action will be taken against the complainant.

The sexual harassment committee may also take suo moto action, if any incident of harassment is brought to its attention, without any formal complaint being made in this regard.

7. Responsibility of Employees Regarding Sexual Harassment

All employees of the organization have a personal responsibility to ensure that their behaviour is not contrary to this policy. This policy is deemed to be a part of the terms of employment of every VEDIC Society employee. All employees are encouraged to reinforce the maintenance of a work environment free from sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment policy is as per the applicable laws of the country including The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 as well as any other applicable law governing sexual harassment, for the time being in force in the country.

7. Child Protection Policy

7.1 Statement of Commitment

VEDIC Society is committed to the welfare and rights of children. We are committed to comply with all relevant local legislation on child rights and welfare including labour laws that apply to children. We are also committed to educating its employee and volunteers about the importance of child protection, measures to ensure the rights of the child and what actions to take in the case of abuse of the rights of a child.

7.2 Definitions

Child

For the purposes of this policy, a “child” is defined as anyone under the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Child Abuse

According to the World Health Organization, “Child abuse” or “maltreatment” constitutes ‘all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.’

Different forms of child abuse are:

Physical abuse: any actions or punishments that affect the physical well-being of the child, like beatings with a stick or other materials, poisoning, shaking, or forcing the child to work in an unsafe way or environment.

Psychological abuse: any actions (gestures, words and behaviour) that deliberately affect a child’s mental/emotional well-being, for example by making them afraid, anxious, annoyed or discouraged.

Negligence: any actions that deliberately neglect to provide the four essential rights of children (right to live, right to learn, right to participate and the right to speak).

Sexual abuse: any actions with sexual intent towards children such as touching children’s genitals, forcing a child to watch or take part in pornography or coercing the child to have sex.

7.3 The Core Principles and Values

- **The legal basis:** This Policy is firmly based on the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Taken holistically, it provides a comprehensive framework for the protection, provision and participation of all children without discrimination to ensure their survival and development to the maximum extent possible.
- **The moral basis:** We believe that our organization has an absolute duty to protect this vulnerable group from abuse, mistreatment, and exploitation from within organization intended for their benefit. This duty is imperative and non-negotiable. Without adequate standards and mechanisms of protection in place, an organization may not only fail in its primary duty of care, but may also be negligently or recklessly fostering an environment of abuse.
- **An end to silence:** Silence breeds abuse and exploitation of children. Without proper policies and explicit procedures in place, NGOs are extremely vulnerable to false allegations of child abuse. VEDIC Society therefore believes in creating an environment where issues of child protection are discussed openly and are understood between children and adults; promoting open lines of communication both internally and externally within and between all stakeholders to improve awareness and implementation of child protection policies and practices; creating a framework to deal openly, consistently and fairly with allegations concerning both direct and indirect abuse.
- **Children's participation:** Creating a space where children feel able and willing to speak out about abuse, free from abusers, empowers them to become actors in their own protection without further discrimination or shame. Children have the right to communication – to enable them to receive information, to ask questions, to make choices, and to make decisions. VEDIC Society believes that helping children to find a voice is an essential step to helping them to claim their individual rights. Children will only benefit from this policy if they are aware of their rights and are given the proper environment in which to exercise them.
- **Taking it further:** Child protection is not just about reading and signing a piece of paper: the policy sets out guidelines and standards that must be put into practice. These include, amongst other measures: recruitment procedures, review of management structures, creation of a space for children to speak out, employee training, and development of transparent protocols. Above all, it must be remembered that it is the children, not the standards, that are sacrosanct; and although abuse must never be tolerated, the standards are no more than a tool in the service of promoting the welfare of children.

- **Challenging complacency:** Resistance to addressing child protection issues may come from lack of understanding of the nature of child abuse, lack of commitment to the organization/programme, and a sense that child abuse happens elsewhere. It should be asked: “If safety and well being of children are not at the centre of the organization’s programme/activities, then why not?” VEDIC Society will challenge complacency as a matter of course.

7.4 Behaviour Protocols

Any member, employee, officer, employee member, intern, volunteer, researcher, consultant, or adviser who has either direct or indirect contact with children will be fully informed of VEDIC Society’s Policy. This will guide on appropriate behaviour of adults towards children and of children towards children.

7.5 Communications about Children

All publications and the website that include images and text related to children will not contain the following:

- Manipulated or sensationalized text and/or images;
- Discriminatory and degrading language;
- Images in which children are inappropriately clothed; and
- Information that could be used to identify the location of the child and cause them to be put at risk.

Photos of children that will be included on the website or any of our publications must be taken with the child’s verbal permission. In addition, all information relating to children is limited to those members of employee who need to know and will be treated as confidential.

7.6 Reporting Incidents

All witnessed, suspected or alleged violations of this Policy will be immediately reported to the Secretary of this organization, who will record and act on these in a confidential manner in accordance with the standardized process developed by VEDIC Society and the best interests of the child. The organization will take appropriate action to protect the child/children in question from further harm and others in the organization during and following an incident or allegation. The relevant contact details for child protection services, local social services department, police, emergency medical help and help lines will also be readily available and easily accessible.

7.7 Ramifications of Misconduct

We will immediately suspend any member, employee, adviser, consultant, trustee, intern, or volunteer who is alleged to have violated this Child Policy, pending the outcome of an investigation. VEDIC Society reserves the right to take any disciplinary action against any of the above who have been proven guilty in an investigation, which may include reporting the incident to the police.