

## POLICY ON PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Hachette Book Publishing India Private Limited (“**Hachette**” or “**we**”) is an equal opportunity employer, committed to maintaining a healthy, harassment-free and inclusive working environment that fosters professional growth. We uphold equality regardless of race, caste, religion, colour, ancestry, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, nationality, ethnic origin or disability or social background.
- 1.2 Hachette strives to maintain a work environment free of sexual harassment, intimidation, threats, coercion or discrimination. In line with the “**Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**” (“**Act**”) and the accompanying “**Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Rules, 2013**” (“**Rules**”), Hachette has adopted this Prevention Of Sexual Harassment At The Workplace (“**Policy**”) to ensure a workplace free from sexual harassment, intimidation, coercion, or discrimination. While this Policy summarizes key provisions, reference to the Act and Rules is encouraged for further clarity.
- 1.3 Hachette maintains a strict zero-tolerance stance towards sexual harassment or any form of related retaliation. Any act of sexual harassment, or related retaliation against an individual, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This Policy is designed to prevent and expressly prohibit all forms of sexual harassment in the workplace. It also outlines the procedures to be followed when an individual believes that a violation has occurred, in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- 1.4 Under this Policy, making a false complaint of sexual harassment or knowingly providing false information during the investigation of a complaint is considered a serious violation and may result in disciplinary action, as prescribed by law. This Policy aims to educate all employees about what constitutes sexual harassment – including, but not limited to, *quid pro quo harassment* and the creation of a *hostile work environment*. It also details the preventive measures adopted by Hachette and establishes a fair and transparent process for addressing complaints, ensuring that all concerns are handled promptly, impartially, and confidentially.

### 2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all persons engaged with Hachette – including employees, consultants, contract workers, trainees, and apprentices – whether employed directly, through an agency, or on any basis (regular, temporary, ad-hoc, daily-wage, voluntary, or unpaid) (“**Employees**”).
- 2.2 It also extends to third parties not employed by Hachette, such as clients, customers, vendors, service providers, visitors, and others (“**Third Parties**”), if they experience sexual harassment by an Employee at Hachette’s workplace.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Sexual-Harassment-at-Workplace-Act.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Sexual-Harassment-at-Workplace-Rules.pdf>

- 2.3 This Policy applies to all incidents of sexual harassment occurring within the workplace or in any context connected to Hachette's operations. This includes conduct outside the physical office when linked to official duties or work relationships. The scope covers, but is not limited to:
- 2.3.1 Company offices and premises;
  - 2.3.2 Work-related travel, off-sites, trainings, conferences, and business events;
  - 2.3.3 Accommodation and transportation provided by Hachette;
  - 2.3.4 Virtual workspaces and digital interactions on platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or other official communication channels;
  - 2.3.5 Work-related exchanges on social media and cloud-based platforms.
- 2.4 All Employees are expected to be aware of and comply with this Policy. Managers and team leaders must also ensure that their teams, including new joiners, are informed about its provisions. Each Employee shares responsibility for maintaining a workplace that is respectful, inclusive, and free from sexual harassment. Upholding the dignity, privacy, and rights of colleagues is a fundamental obligation under this Policy, which is gender-neutral and applicable to all, regardless of gender or gender identity.

**“This policy does not prevent any aggrieved person from taking recourse to the law of the land.”**

### **3. IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS**

- 3.1 **“Aggrieved Individual”** means in relation to a workplace, a person, of any age, whether employed or not (and includes contractual, temporary employees and visitors) who alleges to have been subject to any act of sexual harassment by the respondent.
- 3.2 **“Complainant”** is any aggrieved individual (including a representative as fully described under Rule 6 of the said Rules, if the aggrieved individual is unable to make a complaint on account of their physical or mental incapacity or death or otherwise) who makes a complaint alleging Sexual Harassment under this Policy.
- 3.3 **“Employer”** means a person (a) who is responsible for management, supervision and control of the Workplace or (b) discharging contractual obligations with respect to his or her employees. Please note that “management” includes a person or a board or a committee responsible for formulation and administration of policies for such organization. For the purpose of this Policy, Ms Riti Jagoorie (Managing Director) is the Employer for Hachette.
- 3.4 **“Internal Committee”** means and includes the Internal Committee at Hachette (“IC”).
- 3.5 **“Member”** means a member of the IC.
- 3.6 **“Parties”** means collectively the Complainant and the Respondent.
- 3.7 **“Presiding Officer”** means the Presiding Officer of the IC and shall be a woman employed at a senior level at the workplace amongst the Employees.

- 3.8 **“Respondent”** means a person against whom a complaint of alleged sexual harassment has been made under this Policy.
- 3.9 **“Sexual Harassment”** includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviour (whether directly or by implication) namely:
- 3.9.1 Physical contact and advances;
  - 3.9.2 Demand or request for sexual favours;
  - 3.9.3 Making sexually coloured remarks or remarks of sexual nature about a person’s clothing or body;
  - 3.9.4 Showing pornography;
  - 3.9.5 Any other unwelcome physical, visual, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature including but not limited to catcall, wolf/finger whistle, vulgar/indecent jokes, letters, phone calls, text messages, e-mails, gestures, etc.

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**“Sexual harassment can involve a series of incidents, or it can be a one-off occurrence; the frequency and severity of the incidents are usually a measurement of the impact on an individual.”**

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- 3.9.6 Further, the following circumstances, among other circumstances, if it occurs, or is present in relation to or connected with any act or behaviour of sexual harassment may amount to sexual harassment:
- 3.9.6.1 Implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in her employment; or
  - 3.9.6.2 Implied or explicit threat of detrimental treatment in her employment; or
  - 3.9.6.3 Implied or explicit threat about her present or future employment status; or
  - 3.9.6.4 Interference with her work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment for her; or
  - 3.9.6.5 Humiliating treatment likely to affect her health or safety.

3.9.7 **Hostile work environment:**

Hostile work environment constitutes inappropriate behaviour at the workplace that has the purpose or effect of:

- Creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment;
- Subjecting an individual to humiliating treatment likely to affect their health or safety; or
- Unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance.

Sexual harassment that creates a hostile work environment may include, but is not limited to:

- Showing or sharing pornography or sexually explicit images;
- Use of foul or sexually explicit language;
- Persistent unwanted advances;
- Retaliation for rejecting sexual advances;
- Lewd jokes, inappropriate gestures, or offensive remarks about appearance or body parts;
- Sharing or displaying sexually charged material in the workplace.

Such behaviour may not always be directed at a specific employee; even conduct not aimed at a particular individual can contribute to a hostile environment if it makes employees feel uncomfortable or unsafe

### 3.9.8 **Quid Pro Quo:**

'Quid Pro Quo' means an act of sexual harassment at workplace initiated by an Employee who is in a position of power or influence, usually with their subordinate. The following circumstances, amongst other circumstances, if they occur or are present in relation to or connected with any act or behaviour of sexual harassment may amount to sexual harassment:

- Implied or explicit promise of preferential treatment in employment; or
- Implied or explicit threat of detrimental treatment in employment; or
- Implied or explicit threat about the present or future employment status.

No Employee shall engage in a conduct amounting to sexual harassment and/ or to alter another Employee's terms or conditions of employment based on such other Employee's acceptance/refusal to submit to such sexual conduct. Hachette strictly prohibits its Employees from implying or suggesting that an applicant or Employee's submission or refusal to submit to sexual advances or participation in such sexual conduct is a condition of continued employment or receipt of any job benefit (including job assignment, compensation advancement, career development, promotions, salary raises, trainings, job postings, transfer or any other term or condition of employment).

3.9.9 While sexual harassment at workplace does not include occasional compliments or voluntary and consensual relationships amongst Employees, each Employee however needs to keep in mind that certain behaviours considered appropriate in social settings, may be deemed inappropriate at the workplace and inconsistent with the work culture, and hence should refrain from indulging in such conduct. Please note that repeated proposals for dating or marriage will be considered as sexual harassment.

***Examples of physical, verbal or non-verbal sexual harassment may include:***

- **Physical harassment:** Unwanted touching, patting, pinching, stroking, brushing against the body, hugging, kissing, fondling, sexual assault, etc.
- **Verbal harassment:** Offensive or suggestive remarks, comments, jokes, jesting, sounds, questioning, gossip regarding one's sexual activities or prowess, etc.
- **Non-verbal harassment:** Persistent leering, ogling with suggestive overtones, holding or eating food provocatively, hand signal or sign language denoting sexual activity, inappropriate references to the male or female anatomy. Viewing and showing pornographic materials, drawing sex-based sketches, writing sex-based letters, sexual exposure, display of photographs, artwork, objects or other material of a sexual nature.
- **Sexual harassment via electronic medium:** Displaying or transmitting sexually suggestive content via SMS, Messages on office groups, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp messages, Text messages via any messaging app, Video calls, Networking tools like MS Teams, Zoom, etc., Audio calls, Conference calls with team members, Social media messages, Emails etc. shall be considered as sexual harassment at the workplace.

3.10 **“Workplace”** means and includes establishments, enterprises, institutions, offices, factories, branches, premises, locations or units established, owned, controlled, managed, leased, licensed, utilized by Hachette, or places visited by the Employee out of or during the course of employment, including any remote working arrangement or work-from-home location approved or utilized for the performance of employment duties, as well as accommodation, transportation provided by Hachette for undertaking such journey.

*“In the present digital world, workplace for employees ... working in different branches which may be situated in different States has to be treated completely as **one workplace** on a digital platform. Thus, if a person may be posted in Jaipur and acts on a digital platform harassing another lady who may be posted in a different State, it would come within the ambit of being harassed in a **common workplace**.”* – Hon’ble High Court of Judicature for Rajasthan Bench at Jaipur (S.B. Civil Writ Petition No. 150/2021).

#### **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

4.1 All Employees of Hachette have a personal responsibility to ensure that their behaviour is not contrary to this Policy. Employees should be aware that they have an individual responsibility to respect the rights of others and to never encourage sexual harassment.

#### **4.2 Responsibilities of Employees:**

Some ways in which Employees can enable this behaviour at the workplace:

- 4.2.1 Raise objection to behaviour that is considered unwelcome.
- 4.2.2 Refuse to participate in any activity which constitutes sexual harassment.
- 4.2.3 Be honest, impartial if acting as a witness in an inquiry.

#### **4.3 Responsibilities of Managers:**

- 4.3.1 All Managers at Hachette must ensure that nobody is subject to sexual harassment and there is equal treatment. They must also ensure that all employees understand that sexual harassment will not be tolerated; that complaints will be taken seriously; and that the Complainant, Respondent(s), or their witnesses are not to be victimized in any way. Any act of retaliation against the aggrieved individual or the Respondent or any witness by any Employee is not acceptable under the Policy.

## **5. THE INTERNAL COMMITTEE**

### **5.1 Composition**

- 5.1.1 The Internal Committee is intended to be an independent, objective and unbiased fact-finding body set up to investigate complaints of sexual harassment at workplace in a fair, reasonable and time-bound manner in a neutral environment. Pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Act and the Rules, an IC has been constituted at Hachette to prevent sexual harassment and to receive and effectively deal with complaints pertaining to the same.
- 5.1.2 Any investigation into a complaint of sexual harassment at the workplace, shall be conducted by at least three (03) members of the IC including the Presiding Officer.

Refer **Annexure-1** for a list of IC Members.

### **5.2 Proceedings of the Internal Committee**

The IC shall broadly be governed by the following principles in conducting its proceedings:

- 5.2.1 The IC shall give reasonable opportunity to the Complainant and the Respondent, for putting forward and defending their respective cases and ensure that the Complainant and the Respondent have full opportunity to present their claims, witnesses and evidence, if any, which may establish or substantiate their claims.
- 5.2.2 The Complainant, the Respondent, their witnesses and/or any other persons that the IC meets or interacts with, for the purpose of an inquiry into any complaint of sexual harassment at the workplace, shall be bound by strict confidentiality obligations; such parties shall not be permitted to discuss the proceedings of the IC with any other person. Any failure to comply with this obligation shall attract strict disciplinary action against such a person, where the wrongdoer is an Employee.
- 5.2.3 The IC shall complete the conciliation process/enquiry (as applicable) in a time-bound manner, prepare a report on the complaint and share its recommendations to the Employer.

## **6. COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

### **6.1 Raising of complaint:**

- 6.1.1 This is a gender-neutral Policy and any Employee or a Third Party can initiate a complaint of sexual harassment at workplace against an Employee e.g. Hachette's customers, employees of Hachette's service partners can also initiate a complaint of

sexual harassment at workplace, against an Employee, if such an Employee has indulged in a misconduct amounting to sexual harassment at workplace with respect to such Third Party.

- 6.1.2 To raise a complainant of sexual harassment at workplace, the Complainant shall make a written complaint against the alleged offender i.e. the Respondent (Employee) either to any of the IC members in terms of this Policy or through an email at the IC email address i.e., [posh.ic@hachetteindia.com](mailto:posh.ic@hachetteindia.com) within the timelines set forth below.
- 6.1.3 The Complainant shall make in writing, a complaint of sexual harassment within a period of three (03) months from the date of incident and in case of series of incidents, within a period of three (03) months from the date of last incident. Complaints arising out of incidents which are more than three (03) months old shall not be accepted.
- 6.1.4 However, the IC may, for reasons to be recorded in writing, extend such time limit of filing complaint up to further three (03) months, if it is satisfied that bonafide circumstances prevented the Aggrieved Individual from filing complaint within the time limit mentioned in point (iii) above. The complaint should clearly mention the name and other available details (such as date, time, place of the alleged incident or incidents, any witnesses present at the time of incident, etc.) of both the Aggrieved Individual and the Respondent. **Anonymous complaints will not be investigated.**
- 6.1.5 Where the Aggrieved Individual is unable to make the complaint on account of their physical or mental incapacity or death or otherwise, their representative, as more fully described under Rule 6 of the said Rules, may make a complaint.

## 7. REDRESSAL PROCESS

### 7.1 Impartiality:

- 7.1.1 Complaints relating to sexual harassment shall be handled impartially and all investigations will be conducted under the principles of natural justice, basis of fundamental fairness, in an impartial and confidential manner.
- 7.1.2 All efforts shall be taken to ensure objectivity and meticulousness throughout the process of investigation.

### 7.2 Interim Relief:

During pendency of an investigation, on a written request made by the Complainant, the IC may recommend to the Employer to grant interim relief to the Complainant as provided below:

- 7.2.1 Transfer the Aggrieved Individual or the Respondent to any other workplace;
- 7.2.2 Grant leave to the Aggrieved Individual of maximum of three (03) months, in addition to the leave otherwise entitled; or
- 7.2.3 Restraint the Respondent from reporting on the work performance of the Aggrieved Individual.

### **7.3 Conciliation:**

- 7.3.1 Before the IC initiates an inquiry, the Complainant may request the IC in writing to take steps to resolve the matter through conciliation, provided no monetary settlement shall be made as a basis of conciliation.
- 7.3.2 Where settlement has been arrived at between the Complainant and the Respondent, the IC will record the settlement so arrived and forward the same to the Complainant, the Respondent and the Employer.
- 7.3.3 Where a settlement has been made in accordance with this provision of the Policy, no further inquiry shall be conducted by the IC.

### **7.4 Inquiry:**

- 7.4.1 It is not obligatory for a Complainant to invoke the conciliatory procedure mentioned above. The Complainant may invoke the procedure for inquiry without resorting to the conciliatory procedure.
- 7.4.2 Thus, in a case where a settlement is not requested by the Complainant or could not be arrived at through conciliation (mentioned before), the IC will conduct an inquiry into the complaint. Additionally, an inquiry may also be initiated if the Aggrieved Individual informs the IC that any terms of settlement have not been complied with by the Respondent.
- 7.4.3 The IC shall, within seven (07) working days of receiving the complaint, forward one copy thereof to the Respondent for obtaining a response.
- 7.4.4 The Respondent shall, within ten (10) working days of receiving a copy of the complaint, file their reply along with a list of supporting documents, evidence and names of witnesses, etc.
- 7.4.5 Neither the Complainant nor the Respondent shall be allowed to bring any legal practitioner to represent them at any stage of the proceedings before the IC. The IC shall hear both the Complainant and the Respondent on date(s) intimated to them in advance and the principles of natural justice will be followed accordingly.
- 7.4.6 The investigation may include interviewing the Complainant, the Respondent, any witnesses, as well as considering any other potentially relevant information.
- 7.4.7 In the event of failure to attend personal hearings (whether physical or virtual) before IC by the Complainant or the Respondent on three consecutive dates (intimated in advance), the IC shall terminate the inquiry proceedings or give an ex-parte decision. However, the IC shall serve a notice in writing to the relevant party fifteen (15) days in advance, before issuing such termination or the ex-parte order.
- 7.4.8 The inquiry process shall be completed maximum within the period of ninety (90) days from the date of receipt of the complaint.
- 7.4.9 The IC shall, within ten (10) days from the date of completion of an inquiry, provide a report of its findings to the Employer along with its recommendations and a copy of such a report shall also be forthwith made available to the Complainant and Respondent.

7.4.10 This Policy envisages appropriate disciplinary action to be initiated against any employee who indulges in or abets (a) the activities of sexual harassment at workplace or (b) the acts of victimization or retaliation against the Complainant or the Respondent or their witnesses, involved in the process of investigation by the IC.

Refer **Annexure-2** for a summary of the Grievance Redressal Procedure.

## **7.5 Disciplinary Action**

7.5.1 Where the result of an inquiry holds the alleged offender Employee guilty of an act of sexual harassment at the workplace, Hachette shall take immediate and appropriate disciplinary action against such an Employee.

7.5.2 The disciplinary action may include:

- Verbal warning and counselling;
- Written warning letter;
- Withholding of increment and/or promotion and/or other benefits (if any);
- Reduction in grade and/or demotion;
- Revocation of allowances, deduction of salary etc.;
- Termination of service; and/or
- Any other action deemed fit by the Internal Committee.

## **7.6 Implementation of recommendations of the Internal Committee**

7.6.1 The Employer shall implement the recommended action contained in the report sent by the IC within sixty (60) days of the submission of the report by the IC.

7.6.2 Where the Complainant chooses to file a complaint in relation to the offence under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (45 of 2023) or any other law for the time being in force, it shall be the duty of Employer to provide assistance to the Complainant. Any such action or proceedings initiated shall be in addition to the proceedings initiated and/or any actions taken under this Policy.

## **8. PROHIBITION ON DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION**

8.1 All allegations of sexual harassment at the workplace will be investigated promptly and in a confidential manner, to the extent reasonably possible, for an effective investigation. The intention is to create flexibility with a balance between sensitivity and fairness in the proceedings.

8.2 While it is important to maintain full confidentiality regarding a sexual harassment complaint throughout the investigation/enquiry, the Respondent would be provided with (i) relevant details of the complaint made against them, and (ii) a reasonable opportunity to respond and present their defence.

8.3 Information about complaints and their disposal is considered confidential and will be shared only on a need-to-know basis or in case of any statutory or other enquiries initiated by any competent authorities.

- 8.4 Further, this Policy and the Act prohibits any person including the IC members from publishing, communicating or making known to the public, press and media in any manner, contents of the complaint, the identity and addresses of the Aggrieved Individual, Respondent and witnesses, any information relating to conciliation and inquiry proceedings, or recommendations of the IC during the proceedings under the provisions of the Act.
- 8.5 Any violation thereto shall also be subject to applicable disciplinary action. Further the employer shall impose sanctions as per provisions of the Act and Rules.

## **9. PROTECTION TO COMPLAINANT/ RESPONDENT**

- 9.1 Hachette is committed to ensuring that no employee who brings forward a harassment concern is subject to any form of reprisal. Any retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action. Complainant/Respondent or their witnesses shall not be victimized or discriminated against, while dealing with the complaints of sexual harassment as per this Policy.
- 9.2 This Policy, however, shall not be used to bring frivolous or malicious complaints (for example by falsely levelling an allegation knowing it to be untrue and/or producing any forged or misleading document) against any Employee. If it comes to the attention of the IC that a complaint has been made in bad faith by the Complainant (and where such a Complainant is an employee), suitable disciplinary action shall be taken against such a person for bringing about the malicious complaint.
- 9.3 This Policy also ensures that the career interests of both the parties i.e. the Complainant and the Respondent, will not be adversely affected merely on account of receipt of a complaint by the IC.

## **10. APPEAL**

- 10.1 Any person aggrieved by the recommendation of IC may prefer an appeal under the relevant provisions of the Act and Rules.

## **11. MISCONDUCT**

- 11.1 Hachette shall treat commission of any act amounting to sexual harassment at workplace by an employee as a serious misconduct. Victimization or retaliatory conduct against the Complainant for bringing a complaint of sexual harassment at workplace in good faith shall also be treated as a serious misconduct. The misuse of this Policy (i.e., false, fabricated, and malicious complaints) by an Employee, shall attract stringent disciplinary action which may include termination of employment of such an employee.

## **12. HARASSMENT BY THIRD PARTY**

- 12.1 Hachette also stands committed to supporting its employees in case of an event involving sexual harassment of its Employees by Third Parties. Where sexual harassment at workplace occurs as a result of an act by such Third Parties or outsiders, Hachette would take appropriate corrective or remedial action to assist and support its Employees, including providing

assistance to the Complainant, if she chooses, to file a complaint in relation to the offence under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (45 of 2023) or any other law for the time being in force.

12.2 However, it would be necessary for the Employee to promptly report such harassment to the IC to enable Hachette to take appropriate action. Unless an Employee reports the harassment to the IC, Hachette shall in no case be responsible or liable in this regard.

### **13. MODIFICATION AND AMENDMENT OF THE POLICY**

13.1 Hachette reserves the right to modify and/or review and/or amend and/or replace the provisions of the Policy from time to time, with a view to comply with the applicable legal requirements/internal policies to the extent deemed necessary by Hachette. Any such changes or modifications communicated by Hachette shall apply to and be adhered to by all Employees.

### **14. LAW**

14.1 This Policy shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of India.

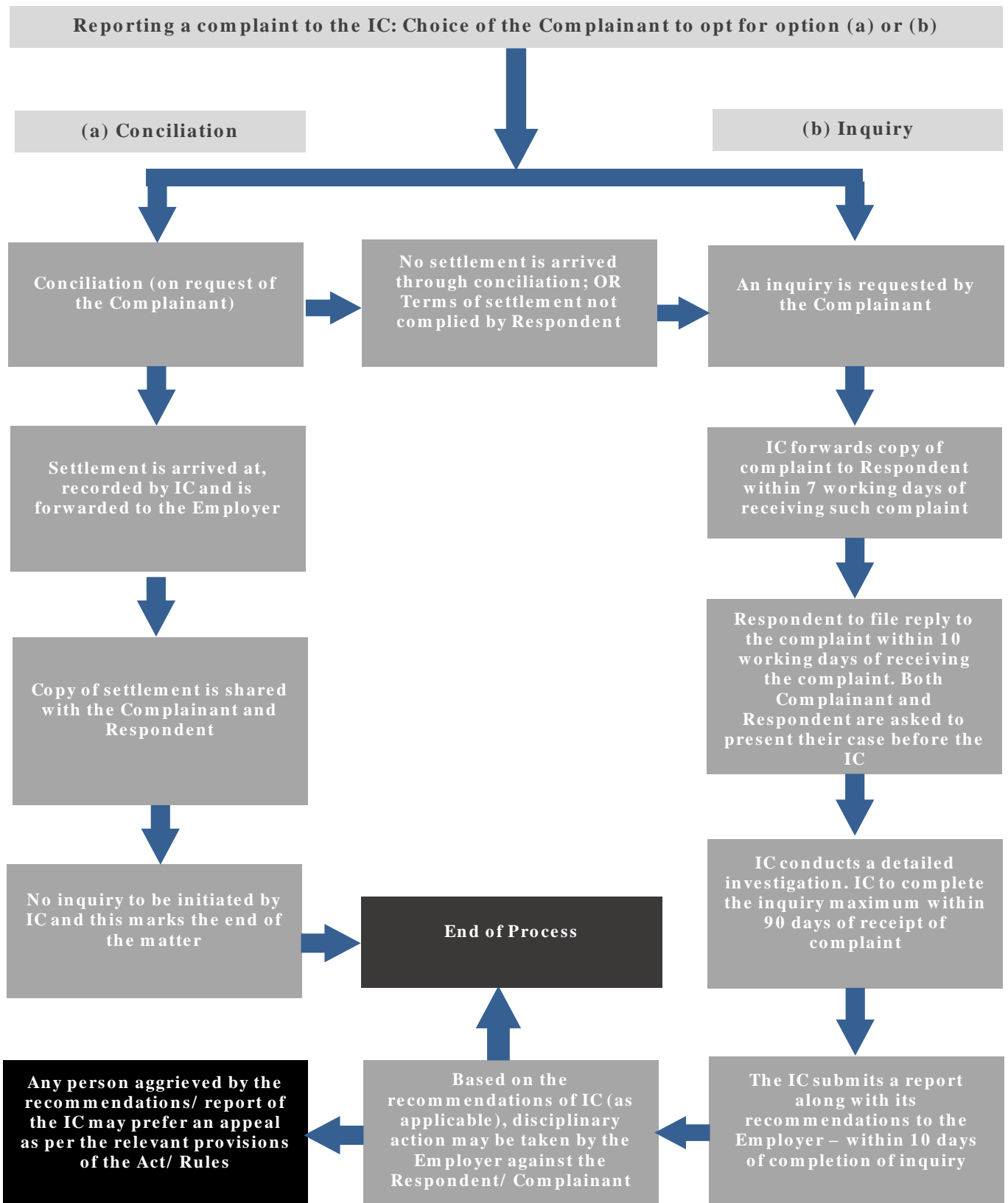
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**Annexure-1****List of Members of the Internal Committee**

| S. No. | Name                | Designation       | Email ID   | Contact No.    |
|--------|---------------------|-------------------|--|----------------|
| 1      | Ms. Anupama Manral  | Presiding Officer | <a href="mailto:anupama.manral@hachetteindia.com">anupama.manral@hachetteindia.com</a>         | +91-9891994041 |
| 2      | Ms. Radhika Chauhan | Member            | <a href="mailto:radhika.chauhan@hachetteindia.com">radhika.chauhan@hachetteindia.com</a>       | +91-9742477370 |
| 3      | Mr. Anirban Sarkar  | Member            | <a href="mailto:anirban.sarkar@hachetteindia.com">anirban.sarkar@hachetteindia.com</a>         | +91-9836940815 |
| 4      | Adv. Jayant Bakshi  | External Member   | <a href="mailto:jayantbakshi@solvingcomplexities.com">jayantbakshi@solvingcomplexities.com</a> | +91-9873040148 |

**Annexure-2**

**Grievance Redressal Procedure**



**DOCUMENT VERSION CONTROL**

| Document Release Notice |  |
|-------------------------|--|
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