



Equal opportunity, Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion Policy & Procedure

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Equal opportunity, Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Promoting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Digital Health and Telemedicine

1. Title: This Policy shall be known as the Anti-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity and Inclusion (ADEI) Policy.

2. Commencement

This Policy guidelines shall come into effect from the date of approval by the Telemedicine Society of India Executive Committee (TSI EC) and General Body.

3. Preamble

TSI believes the value of Diversity and Inclusion, as per this value TSI is committed to maintain a work environment and provide equal opportunities to every stakeholder of the society and its associates (be it members, office bearers, employees, consultants, vendors, service providers, institution, organization etc.). TSI shall not discriminate any individuals based on nationality, race, colour, religion, caste, gender, identity/expression, sexual orientation, disability, HIV positive status, membership, pregnancy, social origin or status, indigenous status, political orientation, age, marital status, or any other personal characteristic or status. TSI shall strive to create an environment of mutual trust, respect and enables every individual and stakeholders' part of society, to perform their duty to best of their potential in absence of intimidation, oppression, exploitation, discrimination or harassment of any kind.

This Equal opportunity, Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion Policy are internal to TSI and is meant to provide a safe, diverse and comfortable workplace.

4. Purpose

The ADEI Policy affirms TSI's commitment to:

4.1 Prevent discrimination, harassment, and exclusion

4.2 Ensure equal opportunity in all professional, academic, and digital engagements

4.3 . Individuals and groups within TSI work in an environment where all decisions are free of discrimination, where they have equal opportunity based on relevant abilities and merit.

4.4 Promote diversity and inclusive participation across TSI's ecosystems

4.5 Foster ethical and equitable workspace within the Society.

5. Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all

5.1 Stakeholders

- 5.1.1 Members (individual, institutional, student etc)
- 5.1.2 Executive Committee (EC), Office Bearers, Advisory Board
- 5.1.3 Staff, consultants, interns, volunteers
- 5.1.4 Faculty, speakers, mentors, reviewers
- 5.1.5 Vendors, sponsors, and partners
- 5.1.6 Visitors, Customers etc

5.2 Activities

- 5.2.1 Conferences (e.g., Telemedicon), workshops, hackathons
- 5.2.2 Webinars, teleconsultation demonstrations, digital platforms
- 5.2.3 Research, publications, and collaborations
- 5.2.4 Internship and mentorship programs

6. Legal Compliance

This policy is in accordance to Indian laws

Article 14,15, 16, 17 of Indian Constitution of India, The Right of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, Transgender Persons (Protection of rights) Act 2019, Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (Prevention and control) Act 2017, (HIV/AIDS Act), Code on Wages, 2019, Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.

7. Policy Statement

TSI shall not show any form of discrimination either direct or indirect, or show any undue bias towards any one based on Age, Gender, Religion, Caste, Ethnicity / nationality, Disability / medical history, Marriage / civil partnership, Pregnancy / maternity/ paternity, Gender identity / sexual orientation (LGBTQAI+++), Political affiliations, Community, Social status etc.

Everyone shall be provided equal opportunity in any activities of TSI based on the existing TSI Bye-laws (amended time-to-time)

Any person who believes they have been subjected to adverse discrimination on the basis of the Discrimination Characteristics is encouraged to bring the matter to the attention of the Internal Complaint Committee of TSI at the earliest practical opportunity. No person will be punished, retaliated against, or limited in employment or other opportunity for exercising anything set out in this Policy, or for filing a complaint, furnishing information for, or participating in an investigation, or any other activity related to the administration of this Policy.

Any adverse discrimination or other action or behaviour that constitutes a violation of law will be reported to the police.

8. Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, the following terms shall have the meanings assigned to them below:

- 8.1 **“Anti-Discrimination”**- The principle and practice of prohibiting any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on protected characteristics that has the purpose or effect of impairing equal participation, access, or opportunity.
- 8.2 **“Equal Opportunity”**- The principle of ensuring that all individuals have fair and unbiased access to opportunities in membership, employment, leadership, training, research, and participation, based solely on merit, competence, and relevant criteria.
- 8.3 **“Inclusion”**- The practice of creating an environment where all individuals feel respected, valued, and able to participate fully and meaningfully, regardless of their background or identity.
- 8.4 **“Diversity”** -The presence and representation of individuals from different backgrounds, identities, experiences, disciplines, and geographies, including but not limited to gender, caste, ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic status.
- 8.5 **“Discrimination”**-Any act, policy, or practice that results in unfair or unequal treatment of an individual or group based on protected characteristics.
- 8.6 **“Harassment”**-Any unwelcome conduct (verbal, non-verbal, physical, or digital) that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment.

8.7 Protected Characteristics

Attributes on the basis of which discrimination is prohibited, including but not limited to:

- 8.7.1 Gender and sex
- 8.7.2 Gender identity and expression
- 8.7.3 Sexual orientation
- 8.7.4 Caste and social origin
- 8.7.5 Religion and belief
- 8.7.6 Ethnicity and nationality
- 8.7.7 Disability (physical, mental, intellectual, sensory)
- 8.7.8 Age
- 8.7.9 Marital status
- 8.7.10 Language and geographic location
- 8.7.11 Socio-economic status
- 8.7.12 Educational Status

8.8 Workplace (Extended Definition for TSI)

Includes both physical and virtual environments, such as:

- 8.8.1 Offices and event venues
- 8.8.2 Conferences, workshops, and training programs

- 8.8.3 Telemedicine platforms and digital applications
 - 8.8.4 Online meetings, webinars, and communication channels
- 9. Core Principles
 - 9.1 Equity and Fair Access
 - 9.2 Diversity and Representation
 - 9.3 Inclusion and Participation
 - 9.4 Dignity and Respect
 - 9.5 Transparency and Accountability
 - 9.6 Zero Retaliation
- 10. Prohibited Conduct (TSI-Specific)**
 - 10.1 Discrimination in speaker selection, publications, or awards
 - 10.2 Bias in research collaborations or funding opportunities
 - 10.3 Exclusion due to digital divide (language, connectivity)
 - 10.4 Harassment during conferences, webinars, or online discussions including WhatsApp group discussions.
 - 10.5 Retaliation against complainants
- 11. Complaint process and procedures:**
 - 11.1 A person wishing to make a complaint of discrimination can file a complaint with the Internal Complaint Committee. The complaint should be made in writing and addressed to chairperson of the committee within 5 working days of any such incident of discrimination.
 - 11.2 Once a complaint has been filed an investigation will be undertaken immediately.
 - 11.3 In instances where there is an alleged respondent, the respondent will be notified immediately. The complainant and the respondent will both be interviewed along with any individuals who may be able to provide relevant information.
 - 11.4 Where the alleged discrimination is an organizational practice or procedure, that practice or procedure will be investigated immediately. Where the investigation finds systemic discrimination within the organization, that practice or procedure will be changed promptly
 - 11.5 Timeline
 - 11.5.1 Acknowledgment: 3 working days
 - 11.5.2 Investigation: 30 days
 - 11.5.3 Decision: 10 days
- 12. Disciplinary Actions**
 - 12.1 Warning or reprimand
 - 12.2 Removal from event/panel
 - 12.3 Suspension of membership
 - 12.4 Termination of association
 - 12.5 Blacklisting (vendors/partners)
- 13. Appeal Process**

- 13.1 Within 10 days from the result of first round of investigation, either the complainant or the respondent may make a written request that an investigation be reviewed stating which aspect of the investigation is inadequate.
- 13.2 The request must be submitted to The President/Secretary, who will determine if the investigation is to be re-opened in order to address the concerns raised.
- 13.3 In case the appeal is taken up, then the investigation shall be completed within 15 working days by the same committee with the inclusion of an independent member. The result of the appeal shall be binding on the complainant for all purposes.

ANNEXURE A: SOP FLOW (TSI-SPECIFIC)

1. Complaint received (email/portal/event desk)
2. Acknowledgment (3 days)
3. Categorization (Discrimination / POSH / Digital issue)
4. Committee assigned (EOEC / ICC / Technical panel)
5. Investigation (30 days)
6. Hearing (virtual/physical)
7. Report submission
8. Decision (10 days)
9. Action implementation
10. Closure and documentation

(Details of ICC provided in Harassment policy document)