

## **Impact of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace on the Work**

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Women constitute about half the population of India. But, no efforts were made to elevate the status of women till independence. It was only after we achieved freedom that efforts were made to remove their social and economic disabilities by providing those opportunities to develop and legal protection. As a result women in India are getting gainful employment outside the home. It will be agreed that the levels of economic equality and independence are the true indicators to determine the status of women. Employment of women, therefore, is a necessary corollary to achieve gender equality and gender justice. The constitution of India grants equality to women and the Government of India has brought out specific legislations to protect and safeguard their rights and interests. The Government of India has further proposed to strengthen the process of empowerment of women in the 10th Five – Year Plan. As at present, millions of women are engaged for employment in the agriculture, industry and services. They are found in both organized and unorganized sectors of Indian economy. The women employed in

organized sector have some, though not enough, legal protection to safeguard their rights and interests. However, those working in unorganized sector are exposed to a number of problems related to their employment and working conditions. Seniors 2 among these problems faced by women at workplace is that of harassment in general and sexual harassment in particular. Sexual harassment is the main problem, now a day, being faced by a substantially large number of women at work place. The origin of this problem dates back to the entry of women in the field of employment, however, this problem is reported and caught attention of the public and the government only recently. Even today this problem is not being seriously taken by the social scientists, the employers and the policymakers and no effective measures have been adopted to prevent or at least reduce the incidence of sexual harassment at work-place

Sexual harassment in the workplace is one of the many difficulties that employees face. It negatively affects people of both genders, though prominently females. This study will work towards extending on existing studies by taking into consideration both the male and female employees and delve into understanding the affects sexual harassment in the workplace has on their mental health and working performance of those affected. In addition, the study aims to further our understanding of the various forms of sexual harassment that occur in the workplace, and to explore both the factors that may lead to its increased occurrence and measures that could help prevent it from occurring. For this purpose, a study of literature review will be carried out. The study will provide an understanding of how sexual harassment in workplace impacts both physical and mental health of employees, and preventive measures against it. Hence, it may help in attaining knowledge that may help

develop the programs against workplace sexual harassment. It believe and hope that by increasing the knowledge in this field of study would contribute towards increased awareness and development of programs that could help against workplace related sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a recurring problem around the globe. Different nations have taken measures to deal with the consequences of such a problem. Continuous development of policies is observed. Nations or companies are dealing with the topic by either reacting or pro-acting to the salient situations. Lebanon is not different than other countries. Sexual harassment occurs in the workplace, but unfortunately there are no public records of the cases.

### **Objectives of study**

1. To study the nature, extent and incidence of sexual harassment of women at work-place.’
2. To study the impact of sexual harassment on the work, productivity and morale of the working women.

**Methodology** -The Interview Schedule was the principal instrument used for collection of primary. It was designed as a semi-structured tool with combination of diffused and open-ended questions. The following tools and techniques were used Interview Schedules for Working Women.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 “No woman shall be subjected to harassment at any workplace, whether public or private, whether the aggrieved woman is employed there or not.” Defines sexual harassment

as per (S. 3 (2) of the Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013

1. Implied or explicit a. promise of preferential treatment in employment; b. threat of preferential treatment in employment; c. threat about her present or future employment status

2. Interference with her work or creating an intimidating or offensive or hostile work environment for her; 3. Humiliating treatment likely to affect her health or safety. Workplace defined as per S. 2(o) of this Act:

1. A Government department/institution; 2. A private sector organization/institution; 3. Hospitals/Nursing homes; 4. Sports complexes; 5. Places visited by an employee during the course of the employment including transportation provided by the employer

Complaints Committee: As per this law, every employer employing 10 or more persons is mandated to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee to handle complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace (S. 4, SHA) . Failure to constitute this committee or act per the recommendations of the committee shall result be punished with a fine which may extend to Rs. 50,000/- (1st time), double the fine or cancellation of license to carry out business the 2nd time. (S. 26, SHA)

The employer is also under an obligation to initiate action under the Indian Penal Code against the perpetrator and to provide assistance to the aggrieved woman if she chooses to initiate action under the Indian Penal Code herself (S. 19, SHA). If an internal complaints committee has not been constituted, the woman can file a complaint with the Local Complaints Committee set up by the District Office (S. 5, SHA) To register a Complaint under this Act: A woman can make a report of sexual harassment within 3 months of the incident with the internal/local complaints committee (S.9, SHA). If the woman is unable to make the

complaint herself, owing to mental/physical incapacity or death, her legal heir may also make the complaint. Transfer during the Inquiry: 1. The aggrieved woman or the respondent may be transferred; 2. she may be granted leave up to 3 months; 3. other reliefs may also be prescribed by the Government. Results of the Inquiry: The internal/local complaints committee may recommend after its inquiry that the employer within 60 days (S. 13, SHA) take action against the respondent for sexual harassment as a misconduct as per the service rules or government prescriptions; or deduct adequate sums from the respondent's salary/wages; The aggrieved woman can also appeal from this inquiry in the court/tribunal as designated by the government. This appeal should be made within 90 days from the recommendations.

Stress at work is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon affecting all categories of workers, all workplaces and all countries. Women who are sexually harassed at work place become the victims of stress, which can have harmful consequences for physical, mental and social well being of women workers. It was therefore, that the employers' opinion was sought on the impact of sexual harassment on the morale, trust and productivity of women workers.

Sexual harassment at work place is not just a private problem between harasser and victim; it is an issue, which has implications for all employees and management at the work place. Sexual Harassment at workplace covers a wide diversity of behaviors ranging from fluting, verbal remarks to physical contact and sexual advances. Women workers faced with highest risk of sexual harassment at work place are those working in care giving institutions, working at night, working alone, and working as industrial and agricultural labour, shop workers and domestic workers. Sexual harassment at workplace can take the form of a power display, intimidation or abuse from a superior or co-

workers. The contemned segregation of women in low-paid, low status and precarious jobs contributes to this problem. Moreover the perception in different contexts and cultures of what constitutes sexual harassment at work place is extremely diverse. In general, the orientation of a culture or shared beliefs within a sub cultural helps define the limits of tolerable behavior. To the extent a society does tolerate unwelcome sexual conduct of male members; the values of individuals within that society will develop accordingly. Attitudes of gender inequality are deeply embaded in many cultures and sexual harassment of women at work place can be viewed as a violent expression of the cultural norm. Discrimination against women and gender stereotypes carried in workplace tend to perpetuate sexual harassment of women at work place. It is, however, observed that only 14 per cent of the respondents either objected or resisted the first unwelcome sexual behavior of the perpetrators. The study, examined the physical, psychological, economic and social impact of sexual harassment of women at work place on personal, family and social life of the respondents. Everyone loses when sexual harassment occurs at work place. It lowers morale and productivity and it can result in heavy losses of revenue to the organizations.

**Conclusion and Implications** -Sexual harassment is considered one of the most important issues that might negatively affect an organizational environment; consequently, this research has been carried out in an attempt to minimize, if not eradicate, this effect. This paper explores sexual harassment in the workplace. The sexual harassment of women at work place is observed as a slow poisoning process. It starts from simple actions through body language and if not arrested at that point reaches to the stages of sexual advances, physical contacts and demand for sexual

favors. Negligence or tolerance of the first attempt of sexual harassment encourages the perpetrators to go ahead till he reaches the target. Objection to and resistance of the first attempt of harassment may demoralize the perpetrators. It is important to enhance the awareness of employers and employees on the existence of forms of sexual harassment at the workplace, preventive measures, and legal framework on preventing and addressing sexual harassment. Dissemination and awareness raising activities should be regularly conducted and evaluated in order to improve best practice on how to address sexual harassment in the workplace, and also to forewarn and inform of forms of sexual harassment to enable potential victims to avoid them.

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