

Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplaces

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Abstract:

The impact of sexual harassment of women at workplaces (prevention, prohibition and redressal) Act 2013 seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their workplaces. The main objective of the paper is to know about the increasing rate of sexual harassment in society, impact of sexual harassment, awareness of polices against sexual harassment. Descriptive research method was followed by the researcher to carry out this research. Convenient sampling method was followed to collect 150 samples. The samples were collected from the respondents, in and around Chennai. The independent variables used were age and gender of the respondent. The dependent variables included in the study were the opinion on increase of sexual harassment, awareness of policy against sexual harassment and emotional and mental effect due to sexual harassment. The researcher has found that mean towards opinion on increase in sexual harassment is above 5 for all category of respondents. This could be due to allegations related to sexual harassment telecasted in media. These allegations would have created this sort of opinion towards sexual harassment at workplaces. The male respondents in the age category of 40 – 50 years may be working population due to which, they all had only less variation in their opinion. From the analysis of the study, it is found that there is an increasing rate of sexual harassment at workplaces which leads to emotional and mental affects for any women. The researcher concluded that even though various movements for sexual harassment playing its role, the existence of sexual harassment have not been reduced. The study can be extended to various parts of India and the prevalence of sexual harassment can be studied.

Keywords: Sexual harassment, workplaces, emotional effects, polices, hostile environment

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INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual behavior, which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. It can be physical, verbal or written. Sexual harassment is not consensual interaction, flirtation or friendship (Subramanian 2017). Sexual harassment is not behavior that is mutually agreed upon. Sexual harassment at workplace means when it happens: at work, at work-related events or where people are carrying out work-related functions, between people sharing the same workplace. A single incident is

enough to constitute sexual harassment – it doesn't have to be repeated (Evans et al. 2019). Men experience sexual harassment but it disproportionately affects women, especially in the workplace. The Australian Human Rights Commission reported that 1 in 5 women experience sexual harassment in the workplace at some time (York 1989).

The major government initiatives taken are The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 is

a legislative act in India that seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their place of work (Bonnes 2019).

There are various factors affecting the study such as, Homogenous Workforces: The risk of harassment increases where there is a lack of diversity in the workplace, i.e. a male-dominated office environment (Murrell, n.d.). Workplaces where some workers do not conform to workplace norms. Harassment is more likely to occur where a minority of workers does not conform to workplace norms based on societal stereotypes, i.e. a woman who challenges gender norms by being "tough enough" to do a job in a traditionally male-dominated environment. (Lublin 2016)

The current trends in sexual harassment, includes preventing sexual harassment became a dominant workplace issue (Dobbin and Kalev 2019). New anti-harassment legislation and heightened awareness for organizations to address more effectively and prevent sexual harassment, retaliation, unconscious bias and other forms of discrimination (Michele A. Paludi et al. 2015). As "Me Too" continues to spark conversations, in and out of the workplace

As per the provision in Australia for sexual harassment, includes that a person who sexually harasses someone else is primarily responsible for their behavior (Dacre 2019). However, in many cases the company also be held vicariously liable for sexual harassment. In Britain, subjected to sexual harassment at work are the sex discrimination act and the employment right act (Cossette and Craig 2019).

OBJECTIVES

- To know about the increasing rate of sexual harassment in society
- To analyze the impact of sexual harassment at workplaces

- To understand about the level of awareness towards policies related to sexual harassment

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is a widespread negative impact of sexual harassment on individuals, organizations and society as a whole. Yet, the tourism and hospitality literature largely ignores this issue, leaving the industry and higher education institutions without appropriate tools for understanding and addressing this phenomenon (Yale ram, 2017). Sexual harassment arose to provide a framework for legal and policy reform but that there is 'usefulness' in developing a range of concepts to mobilize for different purposes. This is 'the deliberate act of putting oneself into a place or situation where one is uninvited, with disruptive effect' (Vera-Gray, 2016). Women's experience of sexual harassment in the workplace from the perspective of frequency and type of sexual harassment in the workplace, ethic and cultural influence power fears of reprisal and reporting behavior (Sandra L fielden, 2013). Delhi based NGO, in a few major cities reported that 65 per cent of women lawyers interviewed were always or often subjected to, or had observed, verbal or physical sexual harassment from other lawyers. The harassment would take various forms according to the survey. They include use of stereotyped role characterization, sexual innuendo, devaluation of women's work, use of obscene or vulgar language, and comments on appearances and character (Sakshi, 2009). Sexual harassment might be seen as discrimination when regarding gender. In addition, it violates the dignity of the individual who receives the action, takes away the person right of having a workplaces where the health and balance can be assured (Dais, 2008). A standout amongst the most widely recognized forms of harassment is the one characterized as unethical behavior which a person finds debilitating or hostile. This unwelcome and unwanted conduct is part of all occupations and work environments, though kept as secret, making it a concealing phenomenon (Goonsekere, 2004). In a report, a

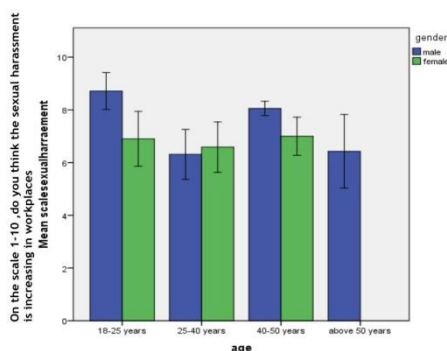
woman lawyer was openly punched by a male colleague in the High Court premises for refusing to join him for a cup of coffee. When she tried to report the incident, a senior member of the bar dissuaded the police from registering it, on the ground that “it would tarnish the reputation of the Bar”. Forty-eight per cent of the women lawyers surveyed also stated that they had heard or experienced remarks or jokes that were demeaning to women (Rameshan G, 1998).

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research method was followed by the researcher to carry out this research. Convenient sampling method was followed to collect 150 samples. The samples were collected from the respondents, in and around Chennai. The independent variables used were age and gender of the respondent. The dependent variables included in the study were the opinion on increase of sexual harassment, awareness of policy against sexual harassment and emotional and mental effect due to sexual harassment. The researcher used bar charts for analysis and discussion.

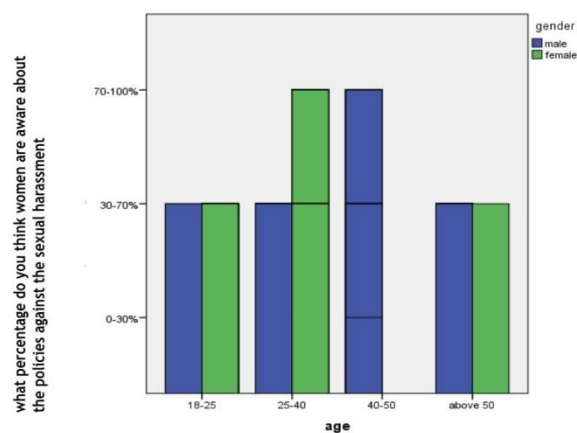
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1



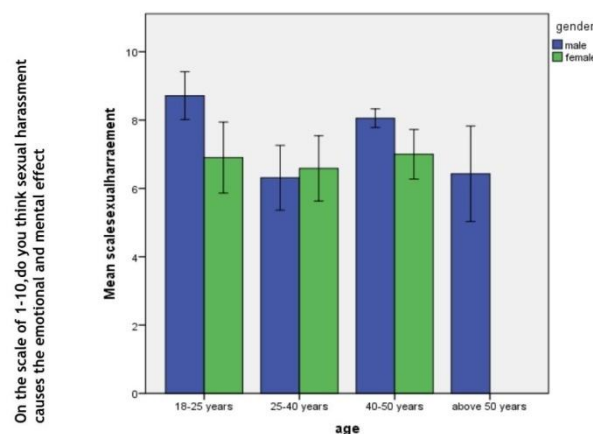
Legend: Bar chart (Fig. 1) shows the relationship between the opinion on increase of sexual harassment in the workplace among various age groups and gender of the respondent.

Figure 2



Legend: Bar chart (Fig. 2) shows the relationship between the opinion on awareness of policies against the sexual harassment among various age groups and gender of the respondent.

Figure 3



Legend: Bar chart (Fig. 3) shows the relationship between the opinion on emotional and mental effect caused due to the sexual harassment among various age groups and gender of the respondent.

Results

- It is observed that majority of the respondents responded that there is an increase in sexual harassment in workplaces. No female respondents found in the age category of above 50 years. Amongst the other age groups and gender, Male respondents belonging to the age category of 18 – 25 years have highest mean towards

their opinion on increase in sexual harassment at workplaces. The difference in opinion is very less among the male sample in the age category of 40 – 50 years. (Fig. 1)

- It is found that there were no responses from female respondents in the age category of 40-50 years towards awareness about policies against the sexual harassment. Majority of the respondents irrespective of their age and gender responded that women were aware about 30% to 70% regarding the policies against the sexual harassment. But the female respondents in the age category of 25 – 30 years and male respondents in the age category of 40 – 50 years responded that women were aware about 70% to 100% regarding the policies against sexual harassment. (Fig. 2)
- Bar chart (Fig. 3) shows that all the respondents responded above the mean of 6 for the opinion on emotional and mental effect caused due to sexual harassment at workplace. It also shows that there is no relationship between the opinion provided by the male respondents in the age category of 18 – 25 years and 25 – 40 years, and between 18 – 25 years and above 50 years of age.

Discussion

- It is found that mean towards opinion on increase in sexual harassment is above 5 for all category of respondents. This could be due to allegations related to sexual harassment telecasted in media. These allegations would have created this sort of opinion towards sexual harassment at workplaces. The male respondents in the age category of 40 – 50 years may be working population due to which, they all had only less variation in their opinion. (Fig. 1)
- It is observed that female respondents in the age category of 25 – 30 years have responded that women were aware about 70% to 100% regarding the policies against

sexual harassment. This could be due to that this age category would have been mostly affected by sexual harassment activity or would have heard more about it, so, for that purpose they would have gathered knowledge or information towards policies against sexual harassment. Even male respondents in the age category of 40 – 50 years responded that women were aware about 70% to 100% regarding the policies against sexual harassment. The reason behind this could be working population with more responsibility may fall under this age category. So they would have felt that mostly women were aware about the policies against the sexual harassment. (Fig. 2)

- It is found that irrespective of age and gender, all the respondents responded above the mean towards the opinion on emotional and mental effect caused due to sexual harassment. This is accepted by most of them because of the happenings and awareness towards consequences of sexual harassment. It is also found that there is no relationship between the opinions provided by the male respondents in the age category of 18 – 25 years and 25 – 40 years, and between 18 – 25 years and above 50 years of age. This variation in opinion may be due to generation gaps. (Fig. 3)

LIMITATIONS

Time period for the study is limited. The collection of data is restricted to certain areas. The study is analyzed based only on age and gender whereas other factors not considered. Some opinion given by the respondent may be biased.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of the study, the researcher found that mean towards opinion on increase in sexual harassment is above 5, due allegations shown in media, resulted in this sort of opinion towards sexual harassment at workplaces. The male

respondents in the age category of 40 – 50 years may be working population due to which, they all had only less variation in their opinion. All the respondents responded that women were 30% to 70% aware about the policies against sexual harassment. It has been found that irrespective of age and gender, all the respondents responded above the mean towards the opinion on emotional and mental effect caused due to sexual harassment. This is accepted by most of them because of the happenings and awareness towards consequences of sexual harassment. There is variation in opinion among the respondents may be due to generation gaps. It is found that there is an increasing rate of sexual harassment at workplaces which leads to emotional and mental affects for any women. The researcher concluded that even though various movements for sexual harassment playing its role, the existence of sexual harassment have not been reduced. The study can be extended to various parts of India and the prevalence of sexual harassment can be studied.

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