

HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE: A QUALITATIVE SURVEY FROM RAWALPINDI AND ISLAMABAD

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine how woman are being harassed and teased in organizations. Sexual harassment and pestering in organizations whether it is public or private organizations are a very sensitive and complicated issue. In the context of Pakistan, our society is male dominant. Whether it is household or any organizations male dominance is the culture of our country. The negative effects and stress faced by the victim is also equally important to counter. The organization should help the victims to overcome the pressure by removing the negative effects raised from sexual harassment. The victims of sexual harassment often face lack of confidence. This has been a serious issue since the joining of women as a work force. Every working women should stand up now for her right and fight against the unwilling demands of sexuality and this cruelty.

Keywords: Sexual harassment, victims, working women, young, unmarried.

Introduction

Sexual harassment as unwanted sexual demand, sexual favors, or any act involving demand for verbal and physical sexual intercourse. When this type of demands restricts one performance at work, or creates hostile, intimidating work environment and severely affects one's performance at work place meant to sexual harassment. When such harassment is acted by some employer who retains a position of influence then such harassment shall be treated a abuse or misuse of power (World Health Organization, 2001). Sexual harassment is still under debate in literature, strategies

and procedures. Sexual harassment must point out that sexual harassment arises between people who have unequal power and in maximum cases the person subordinate is abused. Sexual harassment involves the exploitation of a power relationship and that it is a socio culturally determined behavior. It acknowledges that the problem occurs within the social context. Some researchers describe sexual harassment as an abuse of power, a tactic to diminish women's role in the workplace (Tangri, *et. al.*,1982).

Women of dark complexion envisage different forms of sexual harassment, meanwhile gender and race discrimination is a part of their victimization (Buchanan and Ormerod, 2002). In pursuance of recent cases on discriminatory behavior filed with Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC) revealed that women of black complexion experienced more discrimination in appointment, advancement on jobs (Ortiz and Roscigno, 2009). Sexual harassment at work place studied and reached the conclusion that sexual harassment is a legalized term generated for the purpose of eradicating sexual harassment and thereby discrimination against females at work place. The sexual harassment after certain level of studies goes through the stage of re-definition leading to extension of sexual harassment at work place and educational institutions. Unwanted sexual demands, sexual pestering at work place, physical and vocal sexual demeanor leads to hostile, intimidating work environment and severely affects one's performance at work place (Mackinnon, 1979). The arguments over sexual harassment existence at work place have been shushed, as the major faction believe that it certainly exists at work place. The abuse faced and are facing by women at work places are not tolerable. This means of abasements should be discouraged. The irony is irrespective of the said cases publicity most of the cases are still hidden and the victims do not raise voice against it in our society (Hotelling, 1991).

Notwithstanding the wider problem, there are numbers of misapprehension and variances of opinions regarding a situation or behavior that constitutes sexual harassment. The overall concept is the harasser must be a male and the victim must be a female even though the term itself does not limit the definition in such way. Moreover, sexual harassment occurs in many ways and in many places but the most focused one is the sexual harassment at work place (Konard and Gutek, 1986). Sexual

harassment is not only linked to female harassment it sometimes affects male too in women dominated organizations. Kohlman found sexual harassment more predominant in jobs where either male or female are holding dominating position. It is not necessary that the males always harass females. Around dozens are cases reported by females of sexual harassment in organizations where dominating positions are holding by women. In contrast it is also a reality that men who are employed at an organization where females are in large numbers often reported sexual harassment (Kohlman, 2004).

Feminist Jane Gallop defines the progression of sexual harassment definition as fragmentation between two groups. One is which she called “power feminists” who are “intend to sex” and second is “victim feminists” who are not intend to sex. She described and held responsible the two groups for distortion in meaning of sexual harassment. It is used to be about sexism but has come to be about anything that is sexual (Gallop, 1997). The understanding about what constitutes sexual harassment is different among and within societies. It depends on how women and male are ranked in a certain society, existence of gender stereophonic types and set ideas that most exist in the workplace (Haspel, *et.al.*, 1996). Sexual harassment constitutes vast range of actions like such as unsolicited developments, Sexual favoritism, unrequited attention even sometime unnecessary attention and other physical or verbal acts. In addition, on rejection of these unwelcomed demands faced rejection than leads to extra pressure and hostile working relationship at an organization or at any work place (Anderson, 2006). Sexual harassment as sex-bases harassment defined and focused on behaviors that actually degrades ones victim of sexual harassment. S

he argued that sex-based harassment is actually not a harassment of sexual desires; rather it is a motivation to avoid social standing against sexual harassment. In consequence, men’s status is endangering to derail from victims women of sexual harassment. Berdahl commented women with mature personalities like dominant, assertive, confident and aggressive are less sexually harassed than women with more feminine personalities. The author argues that male dominates because of their masculinity and they harassed women because of their derogatory thinking of women as mean of ending their sexual desires (Berdahl, 2007). The frequency of sexual

harassment at developed organizations is much larger than small organizations. In larger organizations sexual abuse and threatening is more common. Even though large organizations have formal policies to counter cases of sexual harassment along with legal implications laid by the Government to cope sexual harassment incidents (Chamberlain and colleagues, 2008).

Objectives:

The present study examined the sexual harassment at workplace in twin cities Islamabad and Rawalpindi with the following objectives:

1. To study the socio-economic characteristics of respondents.
2. To explore the factors of sexual harassment.
3. To suggest suitable measures to eradicate the problem.

Review Of Literature

Berkowitz and Alan (1992) argue that after women's aversion to be companion at different levels of Jobs, feminists believed that pornography is the main reason behind sexual harassment at work place. Pornography depicts woman as the mean and tool for men sexual desire. That is the view that is supported by their research. Media is portraying females as sex object which led to increase in shamed sexual harassment. It increases the violence and atrocities against women. Television and media often send messages that violence and hard behavior amuse women and it works.

William (1997) laid down his study and described sexual harassment with the roles which are assigned to male and females in any organization or in any social or economic place, which not with the male but effects the women at labor market in male oriented society. Women that employed at positions are considered as women's work position like secretary or receptionist are often facing derogatory remarks and meaningless names at these positions. Women at these certain positions are led to believe that certain sexism is normal and it is the demand of such position at work place. This attitude and idea prevails the concept that women workers are of little importance at work place. More the women posted in positions at some male dominating work situations like in construction, accounts, and banking often suffer and intimidating with sever sexual harassment aiming them to forced departure.

Stockdale, *et. al.*, (1999) described his study as women in male oriented or male related professions are more vulnerable to sexual harassment because they can't do

that job without male counterpart. Women in these specific male oriented jobs are treated differently and not treated as co-worker. Furthermore, women in non-traditional jobs like in banking, police and in sales are often treated as defamed and subject to increased harassment and insult. DeCoster and colleagues (1999) describes the position difference and in relation sexual harassment at these specific positions hold by females. Both females carrying Managerial position or non-managerial position believed the fact that sexual harassment is a serious problem. However, a woman who carries great occupancy, senior position, and age experience of Job knows better the problem of sexual harassment. According to the ILO, (2001) the working body for Labor Rights, Specifies that Sexual harassment or sexual pestering is clearly gender based discrimination, exhibition of inadequate power relations between male and females. However, it is pertinent to mention here that the problem of sexual pestering does not relate so much to the actual biotic differences between males and females rather it relates to the social traits and circumstances attributed to men and women in social and economic life. The perceptions prevailing about male and female sexuality in society that leads to deranged male-female power relationships. Martin (2001) also have the same views and she argued that men prefer “assemble masculinities” in order to eliminate women. She mentioned that men assembling masculinities intimidate women as a group if even they do not prone to do so.

Quinn (2002) performed his research on the sense and authority of “girl watching” is ground breaking in see-through how maleness dominates in an organization and what steps should be taken to organize gender based organizations. Based on Quinn interviews with office employees she found that men keep appraising women in negative way. Like in companies or in organizations men appraise women with hidden verbal gestures and comments about their physical beauty actually are an expression of their sexual behavior and thinking. In many instances, girl watching or staring is common mean of harassing women and is a way to express their frustration. The most embarrassing is the thoughts of men where they would believe that staring women is a way to evaluate women’s sexuality. Kim and Bailey (2003) in there research described sexual harassment as legitimized as “standard” in many workplaces. USAID, United States agency for International Development, in their

studies and research focused and analyzed unjustified gender related biased in third world countries. They mentioned in their findings that problem of sexual harassment is common in societies where male-female discrimination or in other term gender based discrimination is prevailing. This also includes the prevailing culture, attitudes, beliefs and religion restrictions especially in societies where male are dominating because of economic inequality means men are responsible to earn household. Further political chaos and conflict among groups and certain faction also leads to anarchy.

Ridgeway and Correll (2004) mentioned the discrimination prevailing in occupations where females should hold positions rather than men. Men holding designations female related professions often find leadership positions. Women in same stance find it difficult to get the same position. According to Hill (2005) coping with sexual pestering in an organization is inevitable. It is necessary to guarantee a benign, productive and amiable working environment for all staff. Marin (2006) thus is of the view that Girls staring and assemble masculinities are two forms of sexual harassment. According to Gomez (2009) the incident of sexual harassment in organizations are manifold reported these days. The consequences of sexual harassment made victims life miserable. Sexual harassment support program laid down the fact that victims of sexual harassment confronting the same humiliation and stress as faced by victims of rape. Developed countries like United States of America take strict actions against reported cases of sexual harassment while in underworld countries like Malaysia these cases are dealt with carelessness.

Statistics data revealed that only 775 cases of sexual harassment were reported in Malaysia though the numbers of cases are much higher in reality. It means that most of the victims don't dare to report cases of sexual harassment. The necessity is to implement policies and laid down rules and regulations to eradicate sexual harassment incidents in organizations. Barbara (2010) explains the direct relationship between the sexual harassment and its consequences. A co-worker might fire from job on declining the offer of sexual demands of supervisor. The reason of being fired by an organization or an individual immediate manager may be in some different context but the underlying reason is crystal clear. Sometimes the reason might be technically different but the behind or underlying reason must be sexual

harassment. If an organization degrades an employee or fires him/her because of sexual harassment and if employee raise voice against this degradation this is the serious injustice faced by an employee.

Regina and Woodard (2010) explained the consequences of workplace pestering and its effect. They pointed out that not only the person involved in sexual harassment is affected in fact everyone by some means effected by this harassment. For instance, if sexual harassment happens to some specific employees other co-workers and friends of that employee might quit job of the fact that same would be happened to them. These types of incidents prevails hostile and unpleasant working environment. This not only makes life of victims miserable it also cast adverse effects on company's goodwill. The public reputation of the company badly affected by such incidents and worse when company protected or gives relief to those who harass. Because the company is not only related to employees it also relates to sellers, clients, other creditors, financial institutions and if it is public limited company then to the public in general. Female employees being the most vulnerable and sensitive of all the staff would be the first one to leave or quit the job because of in safety. Besides all above the main affected of all this is the victim of sexual harassment. Apart from the antagonistic working environment, the victim can also experience self-related issues. Self-esteem, specialized growth, stress, health, and even mental health issues may occur in the aftermath.

Materials And Methods

The material and methods of this research are being described in this section.

Study Locale

The study was conducted in twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The population of the present research was working women and employed with public and private organization of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Sampling and Sampling Technique

The study of vast population was not possible; therefore, researchers took sample of 100 females' respondents. Convenient sampling method was used for the present study. One hundred respondents were selected from the research area. The present study focused on the problems faced by women at work place regarding their

harassment.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

It was the significant element of the research. The data was collected through well-designed interview schedule. The researchers analyzed the data manually to draw the conclusion.

Limitations of Study

- Sexually harassment is a very sensitive issue for women to tell about it due to that reason female workers hesitate to respond the researchers.
- It was difficult to manage the interviews.
- Women were unwilling to answer, they were feeling fear in responding.
- Due to our social structure, it is very difficult to women to respond according to researcher subject.

Results And Discussion

According to table No. 1 data shows that one hundred female were taken as respondents in the survey working in different kind of jobs. The respondents were equally taken from twin cities (Islamabad and Rawalpindi). Fifty percent (50 percent) respondents were taken from Islamabad and the other 50 percent from Rawalpindi. According to the gender, all the respondents were female workers as per demand of the topic to the study. According to the religion 94 percent, respondents were Muslim while 6 percent respondents were non-Muslim. Education play an important role in working environment, the respondents taken from field hold different kind of certificates. It is founded that the educational level of 67 percent respondents were graduation, which is founded highest among the respondents. Only the two respondents were illiterate working in lower class of setup, like sweeper. Eighteen respondents were hold the Masters, and M Phil level degrees. The level of education also encourages the likelihood of being harassed. The results show that less educated women had higher incidents of harassment as compared to their more educated colleagues. Moreover, Age factor is another important factor in term of harassment, most of the respondents were the aged between 20 to 30 years (67 percent), 24 percent were the aged 31 to 40 and in age group "between" 41 to 50, the ratio of respondents were 9 percent. It revealed that the majority of the young girls were sexually harassed.

In Pakistan, caste system is most considerable aspect. According to the results, 27 respondents were Maliks, 9 respondents were Arrayen, 6 were Jutts, 18 respondents were Chudary, Both the Gujjar and Gondal caste respondents were 2, 8 respondents were Rajput, 4 were Bhattis and 24 respondents were Mughals.

The data reveals the occupation of respondent that are divided in to nine different categories, among them highest frequency 42 percent was belonged to teacher. 13 percent women were working in banking sector, 11 percent women belong to medical sector like doctor, 8 percent from marketing sector, 4 percent are nurses, two (2) percent are women police, 10 percent sweeper, 6 percent security supervisor, along with 2 percent of psychologist.

The respondents were also dividend on the category of family system. Female respondents from joint family were 69 percent while 31 percent respondents were living in nuclear family system. Marital status is also an important factor in this research. The larger number of respondents of the sample were unmarried girls working in any organization because it is believe that the category of these girls may be target easily (Zandonda, 2010). Single women in the private organization had the highest number of those harassed; while in public sector organizations, married women were the majority of those harassed.

Suther land (1995) founded that men find young women as highly eye-catching dates. These men utilize their Prestige and ability to pay to attract young women. Here is thus a culture where young, attractive and educated women are exploited as prestigious acquirement and even a property of rich supervisor or boss. The results revealed that 57 percent women of the sample were verbally harassed while 29 percent female faced non-verbally harassment; eight (8) percent of the respondents feel the harassment physically and 6 percent explained the other ways of being harassed. European commission (2006) explained that sexually harassment or sexual pestering could be exploitation of power that was exceeded by these with power usually enjoyed by male supervisors over low ranked employees, usually women. It was the matter of concern that 30 percent of incident involving sexual harassment perpetrated by supervisor or senior colleague. When a question was asked from the female respondents about the dirty jokes told by a boss, they said 12 percent very frequently happened it, 20 percent said it happened frequently,

31 percent told some time only 10 percent had the opinion that occasionally happened and 27 percent said this problem never happened.

The researchers asked the question from the respondents about the appreciation for their body figure by the boss. 31 percent female worker said they faced this problem, 27 percent told that it was very frequently happened with them, 12 percent answered that it happened some time while eight (8) percent said occasionally. Only 22 percent of the respondents said that it never happened with them. In response to another question about the boss staring attitude with dirty looks in working hour, most of the respondents (34 percent) replied yes very frequently this happens at workplace. Thirty-one percent respondents told that it happens frequently at workplaces; only 6 percent female respondent said that they never faced this kind of problem. It means that the problem of staring with dirty looks highly founded at workplace in working hours. It was mostly seen that female worker offered by the co-workers or by boss for an informal dinner or lunch at restaurant. 61 percent respondents told that they face rarely this type of happened. On the other hand, 16 percent female worker exposed that they their offered by for lunch or dinner, 13 percent respondents had to face the problem not regularly but sometime, 8 percent occasionally offered and only 2 percent respondents were offered very frequently by their boss or worker.

In interview, a question was asked from the female employees that ever their boss tried to flirt with them; the 40 percent respondents answered that it was very frequently. Only 20 percent told their answer as never while 10 percent respondents replied frequently happened, 18 percent said some time and 12 percent said it happened occasionally.

A question was included regarding the offer of lift by the boss to female employees, 55 percent respondents said this never happens, but 19 percent respondent said yes frequently this happens. Only 2 percent answered very frequently happened, 16 percent said some time and only eight (8) percent said it happened occasionally. We can conclude from the ratio that on average this really does not happens. Playing filthy songs in the presence of female employee, most of the female worker said yes this frequently happens at workplace, number of respondents with very frequent were 20 percent, 30 percent were said frequently happened, 11 percent said it

happened some time, 15 percent said occasionally happened, and only 24 percent said never. “Habitually tells suggestive stories or offensive sexually remarks, either publicly or to you privately” was Graded third higher, with 13 percent (Zandonda, 2010).

Delay in office timing so that they offer you for going with him, when asked from the respondents, 56 percent respondents said this never happens, 8 percent said very frequently 19 percent said frequent, and 8percent said sometime happened it, 9 percent said it happened occasionally. According to the results, 14 percent respondents of the sample said female workers promoted unethically and very frequently, the opinion of 21 percent respondents were that female workers frequently promoted when they fulfill the immortal demands of boss. 6percent said sometime it can be happened, 11 percent favor for occasionally and 48percent responded that female never face this kind of problem. 9percent reported males who "implied faster promotions, reward or special treatment" if they Stood sexually cooperative. This form of 'quid pro quo' harassment is considered “Particularly reprehensible, since it represents a breach of trust and an abuse of power by those in a position to ‘give or take away employment benefit” (Zandonda, 2010).

Major Findings

The following are the main findings from this research.

- It is founded that the educational level of 67 percent respondents were graduate; the same number of respondents was of the aged group between 20 to 30 years (67 percent) while 24 percent were the aged between 31 to 40 years.
- Among the respondents, the highest frequency (42 percent) belonged to teaching profession.
- 21 percent of respondents gave the opinion that female workers were frequently promoted when they fulfill the immortal demands of boss or owners.
- 19 percent of the respondents agreed that boss or colleague tried to give them a lift for home after they finished their work.
- 40 percent respondents were strongly agree that their boss or coworkers tried to flirt with them.
- Almost 50 percent respondent said that in their presence boss or coworkers play filthy songs.

- 88 percent respondents were disagreed that in office duration boss tried to show them pornographic material.
- More than 50 percent respondents said that boss or coworkers stare them with dirty looks.
- Almost 50 percent female workers faced problem of collided while passing by boss or coworker
- 50 percent respondents faced the problem about the appreciation for their body figure by the boss or coworkers
- 20 percent workers threats to fired out from the job because they did not fulfill boss immortal demands.
- When the question was asked about the steps that should be taken by a female employee at workplace to secure themselves from getting harassed, the female respondents 44 percent replied that maintaining a distance from your boss or coworker is a good way to get secure from their coworkers/ boss.
- Most of the respondents suggest that government should reduce the problem of harassment at work place through taking different actions like 46percent respondents suggested that female should under the female supervision, 26percent said that women harassment law should be implemented, 24percent said government ensured to protect the women law.

Conclusion

A major impediment for women in Pakistan who wish to join the national public or private organization is the sexual harassment at the workplace. In male dominant society, first it seemed awkward if female get any job suppose if she get it based on her intelligence of strong academic carrier she used to get harassed rather than appraising. Thus makes it very difficult for the women to even talk or report about any sexual harassment or anyway easement from any co-worker. In Pakistan, most of the reported cases of sexual harassment faced by women. Proper policies, rules, regulations, enactments, and laws should be promulgated to avert this type of sexual harassment. By curtailing this proper, conducive, productive, and fruitful environment can be establish. Women constitute a large proportion of our population and it is not possible to avoid female in work force. By establishing

intimidating free environment from sexual harassment, they can be properly used in the development and productivity of our country.

Key Recommendations

In Pakistan, Sexual Harassment at workplace is undoubtedly a collective or social challenge that deserves consideration.

- Public encouragement is required to elevate cognizance regarding the subject matter and to pulled out victims from this quagmire experts and social activists paly there role at different levels to eradicate this evil deed and provide safety and shield to its victims of Sexual Harassment at workplace.
- Active participants are not only need to identify at organizational level, but also at the state level.
- The responsibility being the social problem not only rest on some faction but every individual is also responsible in assisting to establish a broad mindedness environment where sexual harassment is unacceptable at the workplace. Whether it involves assistance to victims of sexual harassment or aiding in raising voice against this unsocial deed.
- The government responsibility is of core importance in eradicating this vindictiveness. The recent incidents of the rape in the private educational institutes show the carelessness of the government.

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Table No. 1:

Distribution on the basics of religion		
Religion	Frequency	Percent
Muslim	94	94.0
non-Muslim	6	6.0
Distribution on the basics of education		
Illiterate	2	2.0
Matric	4	4.0
Secondary	9	9.0
Graduation	67	67.0
MSc. and Above	18	18.0
Distribution by age (in years)		
20 to 30	67	67.0
31 to 40	24	24.0
41 to 50	9	9.0

Table No. 2

Distribution of Respondents by their Caste		
Malik	27	27.0

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Arrayen	9	9.0
Jatt	6	6.0
Chaudary	18	18.0
Gujjar	2	2.0
Gondal	2	2.0
Rajput	8	8.0
Bhatti	4	4.0
Mughal	24	24.0
Distribution by Profession		
Teacher	42	42.0
Banking	13	13.0
Medical Sector	11	11.0
Marketing	8	8.0
Nurse	4	4.0
Women Police	2	2.0
Sweeper	10	10.0
Security Supervisors	6	6.0
Psychologist	4	4.0
Distribution on the basis of family system		
Nuclear	69	69.0
Joint	31	31.0