

# SAFER WORKPLACE FOR TEACHER IN HIGHER EDUCATION - INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE

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Every human has got some rights in every sphere needed to lead human activities in day today life. Higher educational institution is a place of teaching-learning where teachers come to teach and learners come to learn. Teaching and learning are reciprocating act and when performed under appropriate environment it results behavioural changes. Congenial environment of HEI is the pre requisite for carrying out such higher order activities. Non-congenial environment, the burning problem, is not only responsible for deterioration of professional ethics and commitment to the service but also the cause of physical and mental trauma of the victim. At least a handful of measures may be taken against that parasite who facilitates physical, mental, emotional hazards to female teacher that affects her professional, personal as well as social life. Otherwise value erosion would be the common phenomenon within higher education institution which may be malignant to the society at large. The pathogen should be treated appropriately so that he must not be fatal to benign. The present article is perception of a teacher who being the victim observes various malpractices without proper treatment. The objective of the present work is to find out the causes of misuse of power against the aggrieved individual, unwelcome behaviour, causal agent and environmental stressors. The finding reveals that it is difficult to maintain congenial work environment without taking appropriate measures against the pathogen who is the carrier of non-congenial work environment by abusing power within the academic institution. Workplace must rise to promote gender equality.

Key words – Congenial environment, Professional ethics, Environmental stressors.

## INTRODUCTION

Biologically all male and female human beings may be described as an individual with all anatomical and physiological features needed for living protoplasm and chromosomal constituent XY/XX. Individual cannot live in isolation or without society as man is a social being. A girl child becomes adult through different stages of development. After attaining certain maturity level a teacher enters to a service which may be in organised, inorganised sector or any kind else depending upon nature of work, organisation, education, remuneration etc. Through a long stage of developmental hustle and bustle where environmental and genetical factors play a vital role to mould a child to adult by inculcating certain values. A teacher should demonstrate or be dependable, honest, compassionate, empathetic, dedicated, energetic, creative, tactful, collegial, enthusiastic, passionate, introspective, mature, confident, flexible, optimistic, respectful, courageous, resilient, nurturing, integrity, responsible. Generally workplace means the place where individual works for a definite period to earn. At the entry level teacher must know his duties, responsibilities and code of conduct otherwise she, the transmitter of knowledge, would be unable to familiarize within the working environment and will be a causal agent of value erosion. As a result total higher education system will be directly or indirectly collapsed. Higher education institutions are often referred to as professional organizations driven by values and norms associated with academia. In a higher education institutions - most prominently universities – a teacher has certain definite functions. In addition to teaching, these may be any innovative work that has certain contributing effect to society at large. A teacher in higher education institution should be well acquainted with the values, professional ethics while discharging her responsibilities. Equality, dignity and the ability to live,

work and study without fear of harassment are intrinsic ingredients to work with optimum ability within academic sphere.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Report of 'Learning: The Treasure Within', International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century chaired by Jacques Delors, submitted to UNESCO in 1996 argued that education throughout life was based on four pillars: i) Learning to know - acquiring a body of knowledge and learning how to learn, so as to benefit from the opportunities education provides throughout life; ii) Learning to do - acquiring not only an occupational skill but also the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams, and a package of skills that enables one to deal with the various challenges of working life; iii) Learning to live together – developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace; and iv) Learning to be - developing one's personality and being able to act with autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility, while ensuring that education does not disregard any aspect of the potential of a person :memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacities and communication skills.

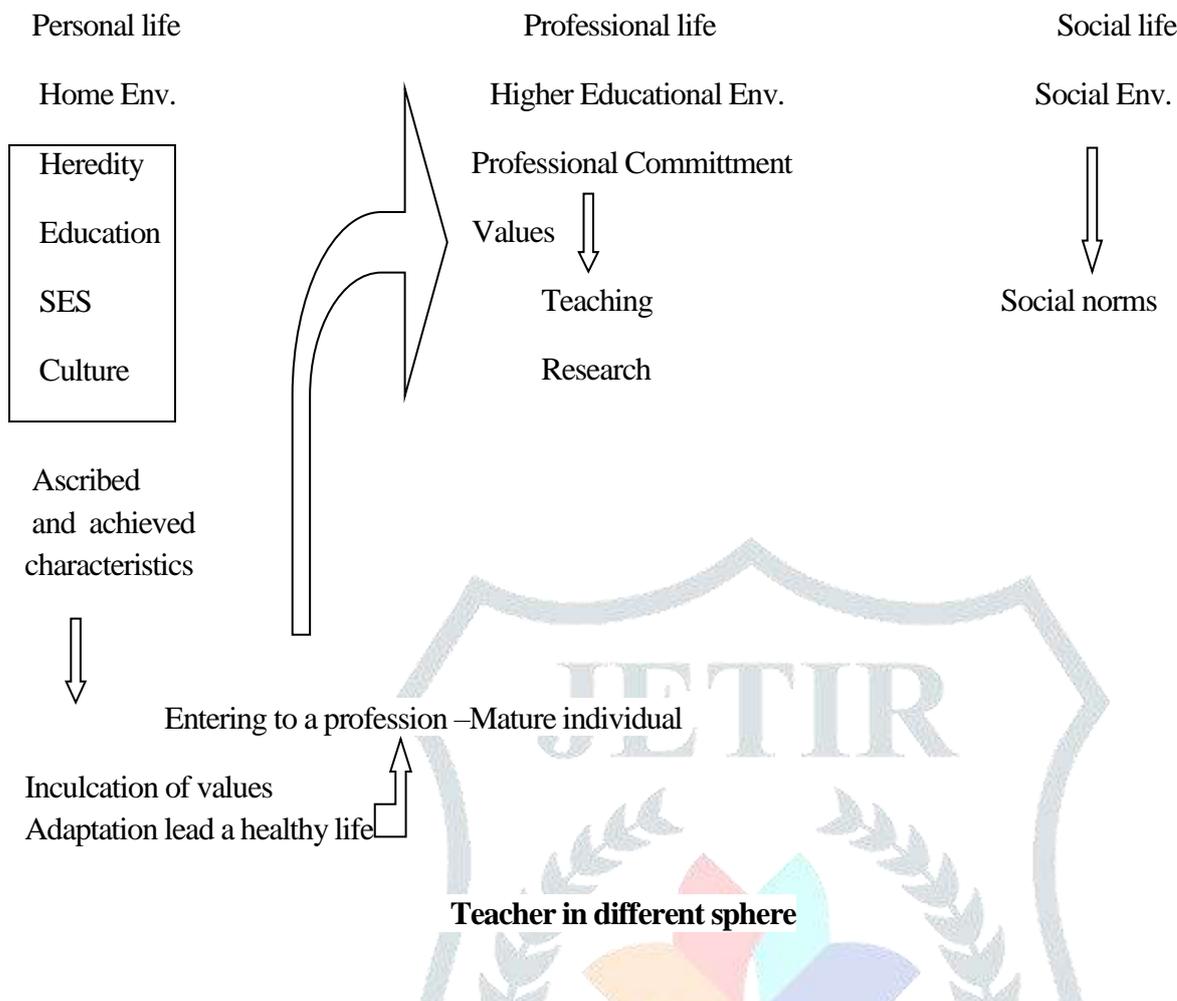
## **GLOBAL CONTEXT**

Workplace/occupational injuries are increasingly becoming a public health concern in all developing countries as they cause insecurity, poverty, and sickness. Occupational injuries alone account for disability-adjusted life globally .On the other hand, quantifying the global burden of disability due to occupational injury and illness is difficult because of the fragmented and often anecdotal nature of the data from developing countries(Emmett,2005) . ILO estimates death of 2.3 million workers as a result of occupational accidents and work-related diseases. 337 million occupational accidents and 160 million occupational diseases occur each year globally. Financial losses of occupational health related death, injuries and diseases could rise even up to 10 - 15% of the country's national product if all the factors are taken into account. Conservative estimates show that occupational risk factors are responsible for fatal unintentional occupational injuries globally which creates global burden of mortality. Developing countries' population bear more than 80 percent of the global burden of occupational disease and injury and less than 10 percent of the working populations in these countries are covered by occupational safety and health standards at workplace .

## **NATIONAL CONTEXT**

**The Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, approved the national policy on safety, health and environment at workplaces in February 2009. It provides guidelines for developing and maintaining safety culture and environment at workplaces for all stakeholders. It also deals with provision of a statutory framework, administrative and technical support services, providing incentives (both financial and non-financial) to employers and employees, developing research and development capabilities, prevention strategies and their monitoring and providing required technical manpower and inclusion of safety, health and environment improvement in other national policies.**

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



After birth a child goes to different kind of social institutions namely school, college, university and as a social being she has to attain certain social functions due to social obligations. She with all ascribed and acquired characteristics always tries to adjust with the academic or nonacademic surroundings. She somehow shows the role of a daughter, student or a social being in due course of time. Nobody teach her the lesson to cope up with the different situation. After completing her education she with certain potentialities and values enter to a whole new world i.e service life where she has to adjust not only with animate but also with overall surroundings which comprises of animate and inanimate objects. As a teacher with professional commitment and professional ethics her behaviour must be manifested accordingly to cope up with the very professional life to maintain equilibrium needed for sound mind in sound body. Any deviation of academic sphere may be fatal to her physical and mental health which is measurable subjectively.

## WORK PLACE HARASSMENT

Work place is a place where a person goes everyday to earn legally for maintaining his/her families daily expenses. Broadly it may be academic or non-academic. In academic sphere human being has to apply certain cognitive abilities i.e certain higher order thinking skills as he/she possesses well developed brain to perform regular activities. The individual must take precautions to maintain his/her code of conduct in the particular place. Man is a social being so in a work place he must work after knowing what is right or wrong, good or bad, or within or beyond his domain. Any kind of activities which is socially undesirable within campus must be identified by the worker himself and rectified by himself. Otherwise he is not only parasite to the workplace but also facilitator of all misconduct.

Workplace harassment is any kind of undesirable conduct that shows hostility or an aversion of one worker toward another to make the other uncomfortable. It takes place irrespective of class, caste, race, sex, age, religion. Harassment may be broadly classified as verbal harassment, nonverbal harassment, physical harassment, sexual harassment.

## KEY ELEMENT OF WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

To enable prevention of sexual harassment at the workplace, it is critical to recognize and differentiate between welcome and unwelcome sexual behaviour. Following behaviour may be treated as unwelcome behaviour as experienced by the subject.

Effect – Feeling bad and powerless, one-sided, power based, illegal, demanding, invading, sadness.

## AGGRIEVED WOMEN AND WORK PLACE

Workplace covers both organised and unorganised sector where any woman goes during her course of service to discharge duty.

The right of every woman is to be safe and secure work environment irrespective of her age, employment and work status. The right of all working women is protected under the respective Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal Act 2013. Without following the act if any detrimental situation arises and the woman is the worst victim of the situation then the woman may be called as aggrieved woman.

## IMPACT OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

The impact of sexual harassment at the work place is far-reaching and is a harm to equal right to women. Besides its personal effect it has a direct bearing on the workplace productivity as well as the development of society.

PROFESSIONAL	PERSONAL
Decrease work performance	Depression
Increased absenteeism, loss of pay	Anxiety, panic attack, traumatic stress
Loss of promotional opportunity	Sleeplessness
Retaliation from the respondent or colleagues, friends of the respondent	Shame, guilt, self-blame, difficulty in concentrating, headaches
Subjected to gossip and security at work	Fatigue, loss of motivation
Being objectified	Personal difficulty with time
Defamation	Feeling angry or violent towards the respondent
Being ostracized	Feeling powerless
Having to relocate	Loss of confidence and self esteem, overall loss of trust in people
Job and career consequences	Problems with intimacy
Weekend support network	Withdrawal and isolation

There are many causes of harassment but most important one is the culture and values system and the relative power and status of women in our society. The way in which men and women are brought up in our society strongly influences their behaviour in an organization. Women often lack of self confidence because of the way they have been socialized and are customized to suffer in silence.

Whereas men are brought up with macho beliefs, who consider females a mere toy to play with and easily carry these concept of values into the workplace. Such patriarchal viewpoints create an atmosphere that allows men the freedom of harassment in the workplace, while women remain vulnerable.

Women are vulnerable to harassment because they more often lack of power and often work in an insecure positions. Due to the fear factor women often resign to their fate rather than raise their voice against harassment. Since they do not aware of the fact that how their complain would be treated so they often keep quiet and suffer in ignominy.

Some times harassment is also seen as a power game, where man insists for favours in exchange of benefits he can dispense with due to his prevailed position. The 'casting couch' is probably the best-known example of such power game.

One of the major reason that harassment goes on unabated because the organization in order to safeguard its image do not entertain complaint and disciplinary procedures to deal with causal agent.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS**

Environmental stressors at the workplace can create an unpleasant atmosphere, poor work performance, absenteeism and possibly even physical injuries.

Any external event in a natural physical environment that causes an individual stress or anxiety is known as an environmental stressor. It can be a force caused by nature or humans and can be done without intent. Those affected by these stressors don't necessarily change their routines, but their behaviour can be severely affected. In the workplace, environmental stressors include a variety of hazards, stress, strains and inconveniences.

There are various stressors as erogamic, physical, chemical, biological. But to maintain a good health for woman in service the stressor should be find out and appropriate measures can be taken to protect physical as well as mental health of the victim. Otherwise it would be detrimental or fatal. Physical stressor is most commonly affect a female teacher in HEI.

### **PHYSICAL STRESSORS**

Environmental stressors in the workplace that force our body to compensate for conditions that are outside of the norm are known as physical stressors. These include:

- **Temperature:** Prolonged exposure to excessive heat or cold
- **Lighting:** Lighting that is too bright or too dim
- **Vibration:** Excessive vibrations placed upon the body such as in jack-hammering
- **Indoor Air Quality:** Diffusion of any mal air creates hazard for individuals. Any individual with contaminated diseases who come to work can permeate the environment.
- **Noise:** Excessively loud laughter, yelling, talking and other workplace sounds may harm an individual.
- **Crowding:** Over crowding in one place at the same time.

### **PSYCHOSOCIAL STRESSORS**

Psychosocial risks arise from poor work organisation as well as a poor social context of work which may result in negative psychological, physical and social outcomes such as work-related stress, burnout or depression. Some examples of working conditions leading to psychosocial risks are:

- Excessive workloads
- Conflicting demands and lack of role clarity
- Lack of involvement in making decisions that affect the worker and lack of influence over the way the job is done
- Poorly managed organisational change, job insecurity
- Ineffective communication, lack of support from management or colleagues
- Psychological and sexual harassment, third party violence

### **STRESS MANAGEMENT AT WORKPLACE**

There are many ways to control stress at work, including environmental stressors. An administrator must be sure that each worker must have all proper equipment needed to perform their jobs comfortably and properly. Men and women should be included in building a culture which no longer tolerates workplace harassment. There are certain ways which can be adopted to control situational stressors

- Offer benefits that allow workers to take time off when they are ill or want to take a vacation

- Have open lines of communication so employees can share ideas or information about what stresses them out at work
- Provide a place where employees can take a break or relieve some of the stress built up throughout the workday
- Have the workplace properly cleaned on a regular basis
- Offer working and sanitary equipment where and when needed
- Ensure employees are properly trained for their jobs
- Having well ventilated work place

#### Remedies

Arrive to work about 10 to 15 minutes earlier each day to avoid rushing

- Make sure of the availability of the right equipment needed for job as per work schedule
- Need for allotted breaks throughout the day, as well as vacation time throughout the year
- Proper assistance for help if needed
- Being a sufferer of communicable diseases it is better to leave away from the workplace for a while
- Help keep restrooms and break rooms tidy by cleaning up
- Keep work place clean as we know cleanliness is next to Godliness.
- Maintain a low level of noise which is the need of the hour of HEI

Generally academic environment composed of integration of animate and inanimate objects controlled by certain rules. Every work environment as its own status is going to have some type of stressors which may be environmental or man made. Teacher should be treated equally to each other as it is a prerequisite of the profession. He being the transmitter of progressive behaviour should be acquainted himself with the basic norms of teaching profession, his behaviour may be modified accordingly. In contrary as per the academic situation demands professional ethics is buried and as an outcome self-actualization fails. He, a parasite, is unable to be friend, philosopher and guide of learners where lies the misery. Here the question comes that devoid of self evaluation how it becomes possible for a teacher to proceed to his profession successfully. As a female teacher, the key learning is how to control personal pace to cope up with the stressors which help her to minimize stressful atmosphere. Every one handles traumatic situation in her own way but it may cause symptoms afterwards. Traumatic stress has a broad range of effects on brain function and structure, as well as on neuropsychological components of memory. Thinking centre and emotion regulation centre is under activated, fear centre is over activated due to prolonged trauma. Female teacher should reduce various types of environmental stressors in the workplace to create a more productive and positive atmosphere. As an awareness of workplace harassment is a punishable offense so no longer it can be continued and the manmade stressor is parasite not only to the educational institution but also to the society at large.

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