



DIFFICULTIES AND PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY WORKING WOMEN

Balasenthil Kumar¹, Dr. Nageshwara Rao²

¹Research Scholar, OPJS University, Churu Rajasthan

²Research Supervisor, OPJS University, Churu Rajasthan

ABSTRACT

The study's primary goal was to get an awareness of the challenges encountered by working women. Combining in-person interviews with focus groups. The research relied on primary data to identify strategies that might assist working women deal with issues they experience in the workplace. Putting in place suitable safety and security measures by parent organizations, receptive and supportive partners at home, effective child care regulations, and acceptable grievance redressal processes for women in the workplace are all possible answers to the issues that plague metropolitan working women.

KEYWORD: problems, workplace, harassment, sexual, women.

INTRODUCTION

When considering the place and value of women, it is important to note the concept's inherent fluidity throughout the course of history. Changes in women's status are many, stretching back to the Vedic era and continuing up to the present day. From the veneration and acclaim of the Vedic era to the denial and servitude of the post-Vedic era and, ultimately, the modern-day fight for equality, recognition, and survival, women all over the globe have experienced the whole range of human emotion. Through it all, though, women's oppression has been a constant. This inherent physical weakness of women in ancient times led to prejudice and violence against them in the home, the marriage bed, and the wider community. The feminine has also been seen as something to be admired or appreciated. She has never been given the respect due to a human being. Manusmriti argues that a woman should never be free, as long as she is under the protection of a guardian (the parents in childhood, the husband in young adulthood, and the sons in old age). The Hindu faith is not the only one where women have it so rough. Islam requires women to practice extreme *pardah*. Her spouse is the only recipient of her grace and beauty. No one should be able to smell her perfume, and nobody should be able to hear her jewelry clack.

The continuum of sexual assault against women should include sexual harassment. Sexual harassment has been around as long as women have been paid for their labor, but it wasn't until recently that women finally had a term to describe what they were going through. This issue has just been identified in the previous 30 years. A U.S. law professor conducted the most comprehensive analysis of sexual harassment by analyzing it in the context of sex discrimination and concluding that victims of sexual harassment should be afforded the same legal protections as victims of sex discrimination. She stressed that the behavior is unacceptable since it undermines the victim's self-worth and ability to lead a normal life. She appealed that the law to recognize the evil done to her and look into creating a legal remedy. India has ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was enacted in 1979 in Beijing and which also guarantees women the right to equality in the workplace. It emphasized that sexual harassment of women in the workplace is unacceptable and would not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment is an unpleasant part of everyday life for Indian women. Their daily fight is to keep their sacredness intact in all settings: at home, on the road, in school, and at work. One of the most recent polls by Nimbuzz, a mobile app that allows users to communicate with one other regardless of platform, found that Indian women do not feel comfortable in the workplace. "47% of women say their top concern at work is sexual harassment vis-à-vis disparity in pay and uneven chances," the Nimbuzz - Pulse of the Nation study reports. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, the number of reported incidents of sexual harassment in the workplace more than quadrupled between 2014 and 2015, from 57 to 119. In addition, the number of reported occurrences of sexual harassment outside of the workplace increased by 51% in 2015, from 469 the previous year to 714. A growing number of women are filing complaints with their employers, but many are discovering that their concerns are not being addressed. Unfortunately, many businesses either aren't aware of or have only partly implemented the law's requirements, and those that have established internal panels have poorly educated members at best. The Sexual Harassment of Women in the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013 states that every business or government agency with 10 or more workers must establish an internal complaints committee (ICC). The Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) conducted a survey in 2015 titled Fostering Safe Workplaces, which revealed that 36% of Indian enterprises and 25% of global corporations had not yet created their ICCs. About half of the more than 120 businesses that took part in the survey said that their ICC members lacked legal training.

Harassment of a sexual nature may take several forms. It's not only about demanding sexual favors and threatening to ruin someone's career if they don't give them. The burden of proof is not on the victim of sexual harassment to show that his or her refusal to engage in sexual behavior led to negative consequences, such as being passed over for a promotion, not being hired, or being fired.

The Indian constitution protects women's rights to equality before the law, and there seems to be growing institutional backing for women. While there are several regulations in place to protect workers in the organized sector, they are not always upheld, and employers often find ways to work around them. There are a number of causes for this, one of which is vague or ambiguous law that fails to specify issues like coverage, accountability, and enforcement. Furthermore, India's labor laws may be enacted on a regional, industrial, or statewide basis, with statewide laws often include revisions enacted at the federal level. In spite of the efforts of the Indian feminist movement and the positive effects of globalization and industrialization, progress toward eliminating gender inequality has been gradual. The first step in achieving gender parity in India is to get familiar with the legislative structure governing the organized sector of women in the workplace.

LITERATURE AND REVIEW

Sampurnaa Dutta (2017) From the beginning of time, females have been considered inferior to males. From how they should act in public to whether or not they should have children, patriarchal standards in a male-dominated culture have dictated the dos and don'ts to women. There have historically been fewer women than males who dared to test the waters of the professional world. Unfair treatment in the workplace may take many forms, including but not limited to: uneven compensation for equal labor, sexual harassment, a lack of sanitary facilities, dangerous roads and transportation, a lack of advancement opportunities, an insufficient work-life balance, and so on. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze and critique the problems that women face in the workplace. The article analyzes the worldwide legislative mechanisms now in place to safeguard women in the workplace, based on secondary sources. The importance of the Indian government in implementing the different sections of the Indian Constitution to ensure that women have access to equitable and safe working conditions is also highlighted. The study ends with several suggestions that, if adopted, would help tremendously in giving women the independence and self-assurance they need to succeed in the workplace.

Asha P Shetty et al (2017) The number of accusations alleging harassment in the workplace has skyrocketed in recent years. It comes under several labels, including "workplace abuse," "workplace maltreatment," and others. Harassment in the workplace, whether verbal or physical, may have serious repercussions for both the victim and the company. Despite this, there is a dearth of data on the prevalence of sexual harassment against women in the workplace. Moreover, women in the workplace often hesitant to report harassment for fear of retaliation, such as being demoted or fired. This research report aims to assess the prevalence of sexual harassment towards female workers. Methods: The quantitative methodology used

was a cross-sectional survey design that did not include any kind of controlled experimentation. Women between the ages of 20 and 60 who have been employed for at least six hours per week at a randomly chosen institution make up the sample population. The demographic instrument and the workplace harassment experience instrument were both constructed by the researcher and were proven to be valid and reliable, allowing for the collection of accurate data. Institutional review board permission and informed consent from all participants were acquired. The majority of the 69 women who responded to the survey (45.2%) were from nuclear families, 47.9% were single, 50% or more had more than three years of work experience, 45.2% were in temporary positions, 50% worked in the private sector, 45% had professional degrees, and their average monthly salary was over Rs.38,600. The findings showed that 52.1% of women in the workplace experienced sexual harassment at least sometimes, while 36.0% said they were never harassed. When broken down, the many forms of harassment experienced by female workers were found to be physical, psychological, occupational, verbal, and sexual. The results of the survey indicate that harassment of women in the workplace is pervasive. Harassment took many forms, including those described as physical, personal, psychological, occupational, and sexual. Female workers also made it clear that the lack of a "no harassment" policy doesn't mean there isn't harassment in the workplace; rather, it indicates that victims are too afraid to come forward for fear of retaliation. The findings of this study have important implications for reducing sexual harassment in the workplace, empowering women, and bolstering institutions' female workforces.

R. Akila et al (2022) Workplace sexual harassment is a long-standing issue in India that calls fundamental human rights to the fore. Sexual harassment in the workplace is a major barrier to women gaining economic independence. Every business should take measures to ensure that their workplace is a safe place for women and that sexual harassment of any kind is not tolerated. The government has enacted several Legal Acts, Anti-sexual-harassment rules, procedures, etc., all of which must be followed by the company in order to keep the workplace safe from any sort of poisoning. Public and corporate institutions alike have adopted this measure to prevent such disasters. The goals of this research were to learn how victims of sexual harassment cope with their experiences in the workplace, to better understand the nature, frequency, and severity of sexual harassment in the private sector, and to get the workers' perspective on the issue. There was an effort to provide strategies for reducing the prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace. According to official data from the government of Tamilnadu, women have a disproportionate number of jobs in the cities and towns of Chennai, Kancheepuram, Cuddalore, Madurai, Trichy, Thirunelveli, Trichy, Coimbatore, V. Nagar, Vellore, and Pondicherry. More women than males are working in the following industries: manufacturing; education; health and social work; real estate and construction; agriculture; and wholesale and retail. The private businesses operating in these fields were considered for the sample. Roughly a thousand businesses of varying sizes participated in the study. The sample size for each of the districts chosen from Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry was determined using a Stratified Random Sampling technique. SPSS was used to do statistical analysis on the gathered data. Hypothesis testing statistics include the z-test, chi-square test, and analysis of variance.

Stephanie T. Burns (2022) As well as lowering productivity, abuse of women in the workplace has been linked to a host of negative mental health outcomes, including increased rates of depression, anxiety, burnout, poor self-esteem, low life satisfaction, and psychological distress. In addition, witnesses and victims of workplace abuse are likely to quit their jobs. A systematic literature review (SLR) of materials published in the last 15 years was done to achieve the goal of recording the current best practices that might aid counselors working with and advocating for women in the United States who are suffering workplace maltreatment. Out of the 21 articles analyzed, two distinct topics emerged. The first subject was "Addressing Female Mistreatment in the Workplace," and it was broken down into three sections. Workplace Interventions was covered in four sources, Workplace Training in eight, and Workplace Mistreatment Reporting in three. Counseling Women Who Have Experienced Mistreatment in the Workplace is the second topic covered by the collected literature. Counselors can work with businesses to implement year-round initiatives to increase the recruitment, orientation, and inclusion of employees from diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as provide bystander training and develop an all-encompassing program to address and address concerns about mistreatment in the workplace. Counselors assisting women who are victims of workplace harassment should encourage their clients to engage in helpful mental processes, find emotional and social support, take action to stop the mistreatment, and learn to live with the consequences of their actions.

CeciliaÖsterman et al (2022) The maritime industry is stereotypically male-dominated and has a robust professional culture that places a premium on hands-on experience. Historically, young people were let aboard ships in order to acclimate them to the working and social norms of the maritime industry. Several characteristics of the marine business have been identified as risk factors for bullying and harassment in the workplace. These include long hours, conflicting roles, specialized terminology, and the inherent instability of the work environment. Bullying and harassment are common in hostile work situations, and they disproportionately affect women and members of minority groups. The International Safety Management Code and the Maritime Labour Convention both address these problems at the policy level by mandating that businesses take measures to detect and eliminate threats to workers' health and safety on the job. Research in this area has been limited, thus this study examines the breadth and depth of the scholarly literature on bullying and harassment in maritime workplaces and the suggestions made within. The findings reveal that bullying and harassment at work are serious issues in the marine sector. While there is an increasing body of work in this area, there is still a pressing need for more advanced studies using rigorous methodologies. Given the absence of any scientific intervention trials, this issue needs to be prioritized in future investigation. Furthermore, it is important to guarantee respectable employment and working circumstances at sea, as well as investigate the root causes of bullying and harassment in the workplace. Managers on land and officers at sea need to be given the time, money, and tools they need to be proactive in their job. Including this task in the safety management system is essential.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this exploratory research is to better understand the unique experiences of professional women in a variety of settings, including but not limited to government agencies, financial institutions, academic institutions, healthcare facilities, and private businesses. Data was gathered from 80 working women in the organized sector using a combination of in-person interviews and online Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

Data collection process

For the research, both qualitative and quantitative criteria were considered. Methods included a survey of working women in the target areas, as well as individual interviews and focus groups.

80 working women were surveyed, and 75 legitimate, full replies were received. All seventy-five of these ladies were met with and interviewed individually. Two focus groups consisting of eight women each were also performed alongside individual interviews. It was determined by a variety of means how many working women there were.

Sometime feel hesitant to work with male colleagues because they may sexually harass or underestimate women on the basis of gender

Table 1: Perception of prevalence of sexual harassment or underestimation on the basis of gender (in nos.)

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	40	47
No	35	53

Source: Primary data

53% of women agreed that they sometimes feel reluctant to work with male coworkers, and 47% indicated they are not comfortable working with male colleagues, based on the data shown above. It's possible that low self-esteem and a general suspicion of males in our culture that has been bolstered over time by a cascade of unpleasant events and heightened knowledge contribute to the large number of women who report feeling uncomfortable working with their male coworkers.

People draw conclusions about your character, reputation and attitude the way they like

Table 2: Regarding people drawing conclusions about working women's character without any reasons (in nos.)

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	67
No	10	13
Can't say	15	20

Source: Primary data

Sixty-seven percent of women agreed that others make judgments about character, reputation, and attitude in whichever manner they see fit, whereas thirteen percent said they didn't care or didn't have time to worry about others, and twenty percent claimed they had no clue what others thought about them.

Faced sexual abuse of any kind in workplace

Table 3: Experience of sexual abuse at workplace (in nos.)

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	12	16
No	63	84

Source: Primary data

From the data shown above, we can conclude that 84% of women have not experienced sexual abuse at work, whereas 16% of women have had such an experience.

the office authorities take any strict measures against the accused persons**Table 4 Response of the higher authority towards sexual harassment (in nos.)**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	8	11
No	22	29
Can't say	45	60

Source: Primary data

Considering that 60% of women are unaware of whether or not their company took action against the accused, this may indicate a lack of transparency or even insensitivity to women's issues in the workplace. Nearly one-third of female respondents believed that no severe steps were taken, while just a tiny percentage, 11%, felt that enough actions were done.

the office authorities will act in a fair manner if you face sexual harassment**Table 5: Perception of office authority's willingness to act against sexual abuse (in nos.)**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	26	34
No	20	27
Can't say	29	39

Source: Primary data

Based on the data shown above, 34% of women believe their organization will take appropriate action against sexual assault perpetrators, whereas 27% of women are certain that their company will not act. In spite of this, 39% of women replied "can't tell," implying they did not trust their employer to handle sexual harassment complaints properly.

Suffer from any health complications like mood swings, depression, concentration problems due to problems at workplace

Table 6: Women suffering from health-related issues due to problems in the workplace (in nos.)

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	60	80
No	15	20
Can't say	0	0

Source: Primary data

This data suggests that although 80% of women have health concerns such as headaches, depression, and attention issues, 20% of women have never had any of these issues.

Opinion is more convenient when faced with the situation of harassment based on gender discrimination

Table 7: perception of women to behave when faced with the situation of harassment based on gender discrimination in the workplace (in nos.)

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Suffer in silence	0	0
Quit job	39	52
Fight against injustice	33	44
Can't say	3	4

Source: Primary data

Based on the data shown above, working women are split down the middle on whether they should leave their employment in the face of prejudice because of their gender or battle it out.

Easier jobs at work as compared to male candidates

Table 8: Perception of women on being given easier jobs at work as compared to male candidates (in nos.)

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Yes	19	25
No	40	54
Can't say	16	21

Source: Primary data

The majority of working women agreed that there would be difficulties associated with being a working woman. Stress, both mental and physical, overall weakness, and overwork as a result of professional and personal obligations are all genuine threats to health. Occasionally the tension is so great that they consider quitting their careers, but they know that they need to push through it to become stronger. Men often have the false belief that women are incapable of doing quality work or making sound decisions. Working women also encounter sexual harassment in their personal lives. In addition to worrying about sexual assault from strangers, women frequently worry about assault from someone they know. They're terrified of being sexually abused (touching, staring, lewd comments etc.). These sexual assaults happen to them on public transportation on the way to and from work, and they don't have the money to negotiate a better bargain.

CONCLUSION

The home and the workplace are both settings where women are subjected to dominance and exploitation. In most cases, women just don't have the time to devote to their homes, children, and loved ones that they would want. Most working women experience sexual harassment, emotional stress, and physical danger on the job. Furthermore, women are notoriously critical of their female coworkers and eager to promote a female colleague whenever possible. Leaving children at home to go to work early in the morning is a challenge for many women. Women in the workforce constantly struggle with issues related to child care. People have preconceived notions about the personalities of career women. Women's new positions in society are met with resistance, leaving many of them feeling confused and upset. Rights to health, education, and a dignified existence, as well as the right to own property, must be guaranteed for all women. This kind of crime requires a targeted investigation by law enforcement and a firm hand to suppress. Women are held back from participating equally in public life by concerns about their safety. Therefore, the provision of safety or the discovery of solutions also requires respect for rights. Then and only then can women use their full range of citizenship rights.

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