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Awareness on sexual harassment act among women employees

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Abstract

Sexual harassment is a health issue that has serious effects on employee's self-respect, physical and mental health, and dignity. Those who have a high level of sexual harassment awareness are prepared to deal with such circumstances skilfully and bravely. This study was out to evaluate the level of sexual harassment awareness among women employees. The present study used descriptive research design to assess the study objective. Self-structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Simple random sampling was used in the present study to select the participants. A total population of 540 (68 women employees) respondents were selected for sampling from Schneider Electric private limited company, Poonamallee. The results of the current study show that the majority of the employees were aware regarding sexual harassment.

Keywords: sexual harassment, awareness level, women employees (Permeant & Contract)

Introduction

Workplace harassment affects women in every walk of life, in every level of employment. The purpose of this study is to elucidate the awareness among working women regarding sexual harassment law procedure provided to them in the constitution. Moreover, efforts to implement the guidelines are also limited. Mechanisms to redress do not always function impartially and a few women are effectively able to translate the guidelines to make the workplace safer and gender equitable. Only few women seek redress and few receive swift action responses have included non-action even victimization of the complainant women. Most of the women don't complain because they fear of being blamed for provoking the incident or the loss of their reputation. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 defines sexual harassment as any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviour (whether directly or by implication) namely:

1. Making Physical contact and advances
2. Demand or request for sexual favour
3. Making sexually coloured remarks
4. Showing pornography
5. Other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature

In recent, the issue of violence against women has been a prime focus of attention and concern in India. Usually, harassment occurs at anyplace and it may occur in any different social setting which includes workplace, home, school or religious institutions. Sexual harassment by an employer is an illegal employment discrimination and injustice. Researcher planned to study on provisions and how women employees are aware about those provisions for the safety and security of women employees. Sexual harassment is a serious concern now a days in working place. Researcher planned to study the women's psychological mindset, approach, and knowledge towards the provisions of sexual harassments.

Review of Literature

Rizwana Yousaf, Rudi Schmiede (2016) ^[9] did a study on "Harassment Act Implementation in Higher Education Institutions" at Pakistan. This study intended to explore implementation of the harassment Act (2010) in universities. Quantitative, qualitative and observational method was used to investigate the phenomena. In this study selected departments of all the women at the age of 16 - 21 were the part of the sample. Criteria of the universe (universities) remained same in the qualitative phase as data has been collected from four universities. At phase 1 initially researchers collected data via mail from university students and at Phase 2 they collected data through interview method. In this study there were 30 qualitative and 30 quantitative method was conducted from large public, small public, public-private and private university. In this research result except one female and 3 male heads, none of others knew about Harassment Act (2010).

Binish Nauman and Abdus Sattar Abbasi (2014) ^[6], did a study on "Sexual Harassment at Workplace". This research was carried out in the banking sector of Lahore. Sexual Harassment is a topic of concern throughout the world. This study investigates various elements leading to sexual harassment experience of females at workplace The study was undertaken in a banking sector using sample of 250 females working in different branches of banks located in Lahore (Pakistan), drawn by employing three stage sampling technique comprising stratified random sampling, random sampling and criterion sampling. Data was collected through survey questionnaire which was statistically tested and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results indicate that attractiveness, privacy in office setup and work ethics are significant predictors while organizational policy is marginally significant in aggravating or limiting the level of sexual harassment at workplace.

Keerthi Mohanan, Sandhya Gupta, Rajesh Sagar (2017) ^[5], conducted a study on "Awareness of undergraduate girl students about avoidance strategies for sexual harassment" at new Delhi. Young female adults are most vulnerable to harassment and violence towards them. These strategies could be learned either from circumstances surrounding young female adults or by some organized training. A descriptive, cross sectional survey design on 200 female undergraduate students from the University of Delhi, and it was undertaken using convenient sampling technique. The main finding of the study was semi structured interview and a structured awareness questionnaire developed by researcher was used. Most of the subjects feared for facing sexual harassment of self whenever they went out alone. Most of the subjects reported high level of alertness from strangers and identified dark, isolated, lonely streets as most probable place for sexual harassment. More than half of the subjects were unaware about legal provisions and two fifth of the subjects never complained to any higher authority or police official. Nearly half of the subjects had fair level of awareness about avoidance strategies for sexual harassment.

Anju Thomas (2015) ^[8], did a study on "Incidents of Sexual Harassment at Educational Institutions in India". The purpose of this study is to understand the role of Human Resource Department while handling sexual harassment at workplace (SHW) incidents in educational institutions. To conduct the study, researcher selected 110 female participants from various higher education institutions in India who were willing to share their experience and opinion on sexual

harassment issues at colleges and universities. Sample size of 10 institutions was selected initially, but to ensure adequate representation of institutions the researcher increased the sample size to 14. The research was carried out through personal interviews. Interview questions mainly focused on the attitude of participants towards sexual harassment at workplace. The main finding and observation of the study is women are directly and indirectly subjected to sexual harassment in institutions due to their higher level of tolerance for injustice and due to their lack of confidence to fight against the situation. And 85% of educational institutions do not have a policy framed to deal with sexual harassment complaints despite the legal mandate for having the same.

Significance of the problem

The significance of this study includes the awareness on provisions for safety of women employees. In recent days women started to become business owners, consultancy owners, entrepreneur and many more. However, the majority of women are working in all types of industries, companies and consultancies. They are concentrating more in their employment than safety because even after if any woman employee subjected to harassments, they are opening up the issue and putting them into the light these hesitant and reluctances shows that they are more concentrated on their jobs and employment due to economic dependency. In most companies and industries, they are assuring such a safe and comfortable working place for women employees, but some provisions are unknown to women employees. Internal committee, grievance committee is working proactively, but the actual and utmost provisions are unknown to them. The Importance of this study is to find how well women employees are knowledgeable of about provisions like POSH and many more.

Aim of the Study

To study about awareness level on sexual harassment act among women employees

Objectives

- To understand the perception of women in organization towards sexual harassment issues.
- To know about awareness level on sexual harassment among women employee.
- To know how the organization has implemented the POSH policy effectively.
- To get knowledge on how workplace concerns women employees' safety and security.
- To get to know how Internal committee and various grievance redressal committees working for women.
- To learn about the impacts of POSH facilities.

Research Design

Descriptive research is used to describe characteristic of a population or phenomenon. The research design defines the scope of the project and provides a framework for organizing and interpreting the results.

Universe and Sampling

The researcher chosen Schneider Electric India Private Limited as a universe. The total population of the industry consists of 1200 employees. The researcher selected only the contract and permanent employees which constituted 540

women employees. Simple random technique was adopted and 8% of the population from the contract and permanent employees were taken for study. This result in 68 employees selected as sampling from contract and permanent.

Tool for data collection

This tool is including the following dimensions; Level of awareness on Sexual harassment, Source of knowledge about sexual harassment, Individual factors, Preventive measure, Availability, Overall Awareness on Sexual Harassment Act among Women Employees.

Analysis & Interpretation

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents based on Level of Awareness of Sexual Harassment

Level of awareness on Sexual harassment	Frequency	Percentage
Low	37	54.4
High	31	45.6
Total	68	100.0

From the given table states that more than half (54.4%) of the respondents have low level of awareness on sexual harassment and less than half (45.6%) of the respondents have high level of awareness on sexual harassment. This clearly shows more than half of the respondents have low level of awareness on POSH Act 2013.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents based on Source of Knowledge about Sexual Harassment

knowledge about sexual harassment	Frequency	Percentage
Low	39	57.4
High	29	42.6
Total	68	100.0

From the presented table states that less than majority (57.4%) of the respondents have low knowledge about sexual harassment and more than two fifth (42.6%) have high knowledge about sexual harassment. This show employees have low level of knowledge on Prevention of sexual harassment Act 2013.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents based on Individual Factors

Individual Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Low	34	50.0
High	34	50.0
Total	68	100.0

From the given table it shows that half (50%) of the respondents have low individual factor and half (50%) of the respondents have high individual factor. From the above table evident that half of the respondents have high and low individual factor.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents based on Preventive Measure

Preventive Measure	Frequency	Percentage
Low	50	73.5
High	18	26.5
Total	68	100.0

From the given table shows that less than three fourth (73.5%) of the respondents have Low level of awareness on preventive measures and more than one-fourth (26.5%) of the respondents have high level of awareness on preventive measures. This shows that almost three fourth of the respondents have low level of awareness on preventive measures.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents based on Availability

Availability	Frequency	Percentage
Low	44	64.7
High	24	35.3
Total	68	100.0

From the given table shows that more than majority (64.7%) of the respondents have low awareness on availabilities and more than one third (35.3%) of the respondents have high awareness on availabilities. This shows that more than majority of the respondents have low awareness on availabilities in the organization.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents based on Overall Factors

Overall Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Low	34	50.0
High	34	50.0
Total	68	100.0

From the given table it shows that half (50%) of the respondents have low level of awareness on prevention of sexual harassment act and half (50%) of the respondents have high awareness on prevention on sexual harassment act. This shows that half of the respondents have high and low level on the sexual harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act.2013.

Suggestions

Employee training sessions should be conducted once in every six months. It's crucial to have frequent training sessions for employees to explain sexual harassment, how to report incidences, and how the business responds to complaints. And company should establish a formal, written policy that states that sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Create internal guidelines, announcements, and posters to promote the company's efforts to prevent sexual harassment and address it. Employees should be encouraged to quickly notify management or HR of any instances of sexual harassment. Make sure the reporting method is private and that the business will act right away to look into and resolve the problem. Company should Provide a precise definition of "Sexual Harassment" so that nobody can claim ignorance on the types of inappropriate behaviour that qualify as sexual harassment. Take all reports of sexual misconduct seriously, conduct a full investigation, and impose the proper punishments on offenders. Establish "quid pro quo" and "hostile work environment" as two separate types of sexual harassment in the policy. Establish a culture that values respect and has no place for sexual harassment. Make sure that every employee understands the value of acting respectfully and professionally at workplace.

Conclusion

A gender-sensitive workplace that can accommodate its

employees' requirements, particularly the needs of women, is crucial in the modern world. While people are still unaware of workplace harassment, many organizations still do not have gender-sensitive policies. Under this situation, it is imperative to build abilities and begin a personal thought process. Laws, regulations, and rules are always in place, but they must be enacted and put into effect, and understanding of this fact is required. A secure and healthy workplace environment for women will be ensured by the sexual harassment act's adoption. The correct growth of our society requires equal legal protection for men and women. Women in our Indian society view appearing in court as a last choice since they don't want to add any more stress to an already precarious situation. They are afraid to respond to society as well as to organizations and to people in general. It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure a safe working environment for everyone, including women. Companies should take their obligations seriously, and they should provide every woman with a workplace that is free from harassment.

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