

# A Study on Sexual Harassment for Women at Workplace and Preventing Measures

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**Abstract:- Sexual harassment is one of the significant issues in majority of organizations. Sexual harassment at workplace is an unwelcoming behavior indulged to employees by their senior authorities or even colleagues. Such inappropriate behavior makes an employee feel uncomfortable and disturbed. It leads the employee to experience an awful, inadequate air at the working environment. It is most commonly seen in case of women's and the number of cases filed is higher compared to males. It is not specified to any sector of employment or to subjective level, women of every job post gets harassed and which shows the level of security available for women in their working organizations. Any kind of harassment is wrong, but sexually harassing in particular is against women's right to work. As it makes the working environment more hostile and uncertain, which makes women less likely to take the lead and curbs their ability to be financially independent and strive for all-around development. This results in various negative impacts in both organizational and personal development such as decreased job satisfaction, depression, loss of motivation, diminished sense of self worth, etc. Therefore this paper studies about various methods of sexual harassment experienced by the victims and the consequences face by them under different traits. It is important to create a sense of security in working organizations for efficient performance. It is important to insure that the emphasis is on prevention rather than corrective action. Thus it also speaks about the effective recommendations to prevent sexual harassment at workplace.**

**Keywords:- Sexual Harassment, Workplace, Women, Sexual Behavior, Organization.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is a major issue in all types of organization. While properly defining it, sexual harassment is an unwelcoming sexual behavior by words or actions that make an individual feel uncomfortable and disturbed. When it done in workplace it is mostly constituted by the senior authorities. While defining it as in workplace it doesn't mean only the working cabin or office rather it also includes all areas where the work is carried out. Though sexual harassment is common and experienced by both males and females, various study concludes that it is higher in case when it comes to women. It is not surprising to know that there have been allegations of sexual harassment of women

employees by senior persons within institutions working on human rights.

Many researchers like have analyzed and provided data on the women participation on workforce and according to 2011 census it clear that nearly 96% of women employees work under informal sector. When sexual harassment was first spoken it was framed that uneducated men, blue color jobs carry on such behavior. But on research it is predominantly said that harasser's demographic and social characteristics is not clearly concluded. But it is true that certain specified specimens have more cases compared to other. And it could also be said that sexual harassment occurs to all occupational levels, social strata and ages. It is also inferred that there is an average of 77 sexual harassments per day, but actually is more than 300. This inaccurate reports is just because only four out of one have courage to speak about sexual harassment. Victims hesitate to open up due to various reasons like threat from the harasser, fear of losing job and loved ones, compulsion to retain the job for finance, etc. On studying about the barriers for women in effectively taking part in the organization in India researchers like advocate Devika Singh, Poulomi Pal and Anita Abraham have identified that sexual harassment is the major reason. Therefore it is essential to implement policies and regulate the organizations to safe working environment.

### ➤ Objectives

- To study the different ways of sexual harassments at workplace.
- To find out the various consequences faced by the victims and their reason for reporting or not reporting the case.
- To suggest few recommendations to tackle the issue of sexual harassment for safe and secure working environment.

## II. WAYS OF SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

Sexual harassment has been identified as a violation of women's dignity. Sexual harassment when it is taken place at working organization it is considered as a violation of women's right to work. Many women workers may face sexual harassment at their work but may not have enough idea about it and about their rights to speak. They need to be aware that they can take necessary action against it. In order

to teach them about their rights, it is mandatory to first make them aware of what is sexual harassment and the ways of harassment in detail. Proper training sessions should be provided for employees at regular intervals to educate them about this.

➤ *Verbal*

Verbal statements that might be illegal harassment can include, but are not limited to, the following comments:

Sexual propositions, asking questions about an employee's sex life, calling by crude sexual names, asking personal or intimate questions, bragging about sexual prowess, making negative, sexual comments about women, compelling for dates, affection, attention, or touching, making fun of a co-worker in a sexual way, requesting sexual favors, etc.

➤ *Physical*

Offensive, illegal physical conduct can include, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

Touching, jostling, bumping or blocking a person's physical movement, kissing, hugging, patting, stroking, rubbing, brushing up against another person, etc.

➤ *Non Verbal – Visual*

Leering or staring, facial expression of a sexual nature, indecent exposure, groaning, sighing, or, offering sexual thoughts, whistling, jeering, hooting, etc.

➤ *Cyber Sexual Harassment*

Sending sexually explicit videos, images or links, inappropriate sexual texts, messages, spreading malicious rumors, passing or posting sexually offensive materials, sexually abusive comments on person's social media, pinging up at untimed for unnecessary talks, etc.

➤ *Sexual Assault*

Sexual assault is in deeper sense of harassment where the victims are compelled to engage in sex activities.

➤ *Consequences Faced by Workplace Harassment:*

Sexual harassments affects both the organization and the individual, but the personal trait is disturbed at greater impact. The consequences vary for every individuals depending upon the various factors like duration of harassment, method of harassment, etc. it can be mild to severe impact on both professional and personal traits. Here are some of the negative impacts of sexual harassment in psychological, physiological and sociological factors.

➤ *Professional:*

Decreased work performance, increased absenteeism, loss of pay, loss of promotional opportunities, difficulty in concentrating, fear of gossip and scrutiny at work, being objectified, becoming publicly sexualized, defamation, being ostracized, having to relocate, job and career consequences, weakened support network.

➤ *Personal:*

• *Psychological*

Depression, anxiety, panic attacks, traumatic stress, sleeplessness, feeling angry or violent towards the respondent, problems with intimacy.

• *Physiological*

Headache, fever due to fear of threatens, eating disorders (weight loss or gain), increased blood pressure, dehydration.

• *Sociological*

Shame, guilt, self-blame, loss of motivation, personal difficulties with time, feeling betrayed and/or violated, feeling powerless, loss of confidence and self esteem, withdrawal and isolation.

### III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Barbara A. Gutek (2012)** the author had made a study on various reports on the frequency of sexual harassment. It shows the comparison analyze in the research conducted by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board's study, in a Seattle, Washington study of city employees, Dunwoody-Miller and Gutek, etc. they stated that when research is conducted at required intervals the frequency report remained the same. He also provided a detailed report on the evolution of its history where the human behavior that was largely invisible is now out for light.

**DEVIKAA SINGH, (2017)**, is an advocate in Bar council of India draws a line on the sexual harassment for women at workplace. She is conducting various researches on implementing preventable measures to stop sexual harassment. In her article she has mentioned the census rate of 2011 about the percentage analysis of women workforce in regulated and unregulated institutions. It provides detailed record of the analysis in both rural and urban sectors.

### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

➤ *Limitations of the Study*

- The survey for this study was conducted only in Tamil Nadu.
- The data collected for this study was done within the short time period
- Sample size was short as data is collected within limited period.
- Many of them were not interested to fill out the questionnaires and the information given by the respondents might be biased.

➤ *Population*

The population of this study is the women who have faced sexual harassment at their workplace.

➤ *Sample Size*

The sample size is an important feature for any empirical study which the goal is to make interferences about a population from a sample. The sample size used in this study is 50 samples.

➤ *Sample Techniques*

The sampling techniques are the strategies applied by the researches during the statistical sampling process. The process is done when the experimenter aims to draw conclusions for the entire population after conducting a study on a sample taken from the same population. Here, in this study Simple Random Sampling technique is used.

➤ *Data Collection Method*

The real task for the researcher begins very soon after identifying the research problem. Therefore to collect valuable information, researchers are intended to collect two types of data viz. primary data and secondary data.

➤ *Primary Data*

The primary data is the original research that is obtained through first-hand investigation. For the purpose of this study primary, data was collected from women who

have been sexually harassed at their working institutions. An advantage of using primary data is that experimenters are collecting information for the specific purposes of their study. In substance, the questions the experimenters ask are acclimatized to evoke the data that will help them with their study. The primary data was collected from the respondents of Tamil Nadu through the questionnaire designed for a sample of 50 respondents by using simple random sampling method.

➤ *Secondary Data*

Secondary data refers to the data that's collected by someone other than the stoner. Common sourced of secondary data that is required for this study was collected from literatures, articles based on research topic, journals and web search etc.

➤ *Data Analysis and Interpretation*

Data analysis and interpretation is the process of assigning meaning to the collected information and determining the conclusions, significance, and implication of the findings. Based on the response of the respondent's following analysis was executed.

Table 1 Type of Harassment

S. No	Type of Information	Responses
1.	Verbal	15.0%
2.	Nonverbal	22.2%
3.	Physical	33.6%
4.	Cyber sexual harassment	24.5%
5.	Sexual assault	5.0%

• *Interpretation:*

From the data inferred among the various types of harassment experienced, majority of the cases (33.6%) is complained for physical harassment and cyber sexual harassments are also joining the competition at very less difference.

• *Interpretation:*

From the chart it depicts that majority of respondents (55.6%) have experienced harassment not more than once and still (11.1%) of respondents get harassed.

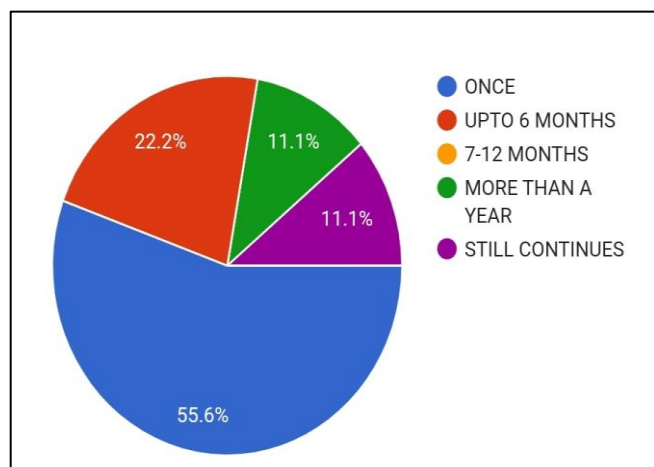


Fig 1 Duration of Harrasment

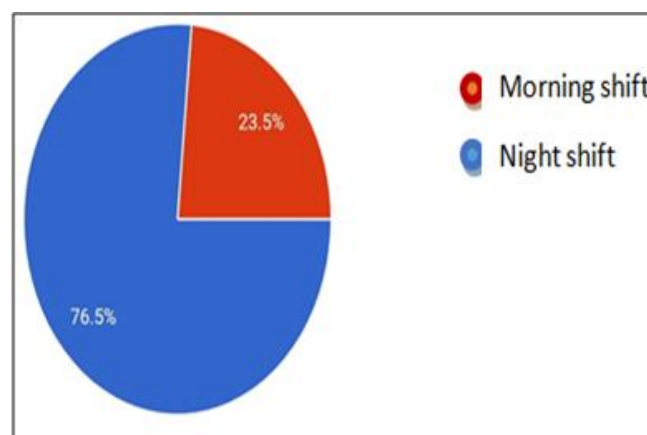


Fig 2 Cases Comparison with Working Shifts

• *Interpretation:*

From the chart, it is illustrated that large number of victims (76.5%) of sexual harassment are working at night shift.

Table 2 Harrased During

S. No	Type of Information	Responses
1.	Way to office	3.7%
2.	Office working hours	61.1%
3.	Break hours lunch break	9.2%
4.	After office hours at workplace	16.7%
5.	At residence on non office hours	3.7%
6.	Business travel	4.6%
7.	Others-----	1.0%

• Interpretation:

From the above table, it is interpreted that about majority of respondents (61.1%) have been harassed during their working hours and still there are (3.7%) of cases are harassed at their non working.

Table 3 Consequences Faced by Harassment in Proffesional Development

S. No	Type of Information	Responses
1.	Loss of Job, income and career	11.1%
2.	Loss of references /recommendations	12.9%
3.	Having forced to relocate to another city, job, or accept transfer	18%
4.	Decreased work performance	33%
5.	Increased absenteeism to avoid harassment	25%

• Interpretation:

The above table illustrates the consequences faced by harassment in victim’s professional development. Among that (33%) of respondents experience decreased work performance and (25%) of respondents have increased their count for absenteeism to avoid getting harassed.

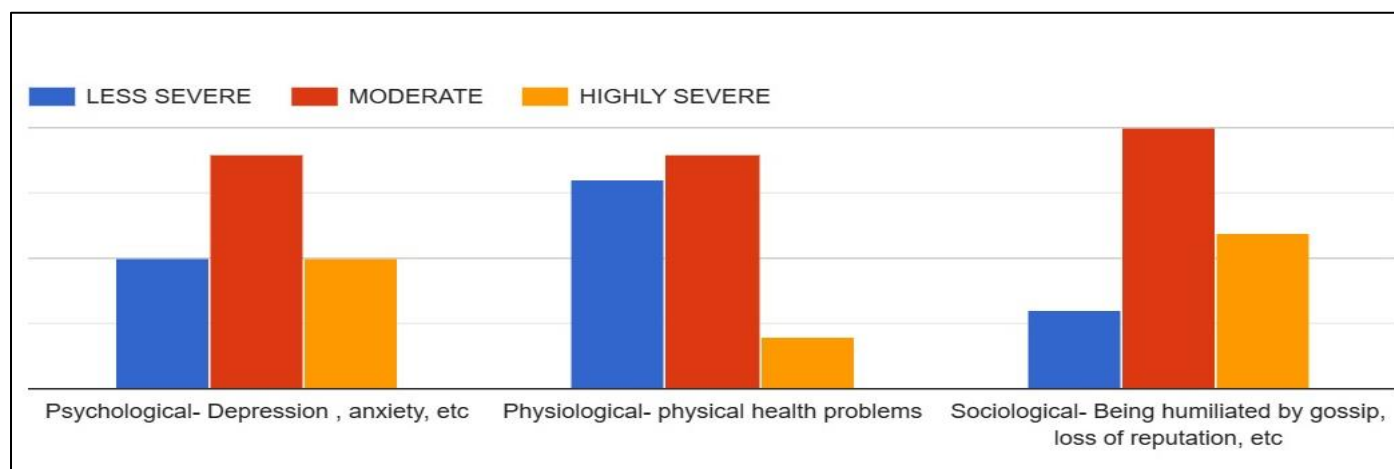


Fig 3 Consequences Faced by Harassment in Personal Development

• Interpretation:

This table infers the details about the level of consequences faced under each personal trait which is further divided into psychological, physiological and sociological consequences. Among that, at an average rate every personal trait is being harassed equally.

Table 4 Threatens Faced by Harassment

S. No	Type of Information	Responses
1.	Termination	22.2%
2.	Curbing promotional activities	44.4%
3.	Imposing huge work load	22.3%
4.	No incentives or bonus	27.8%
5.	Removal of Welfare measures like PF	5.6%

• Interpretation:

The above table illustrates the various types of threatens faced by the victims. It is said that (44.4%) of respondents are threatened by curbing their promotional activities.

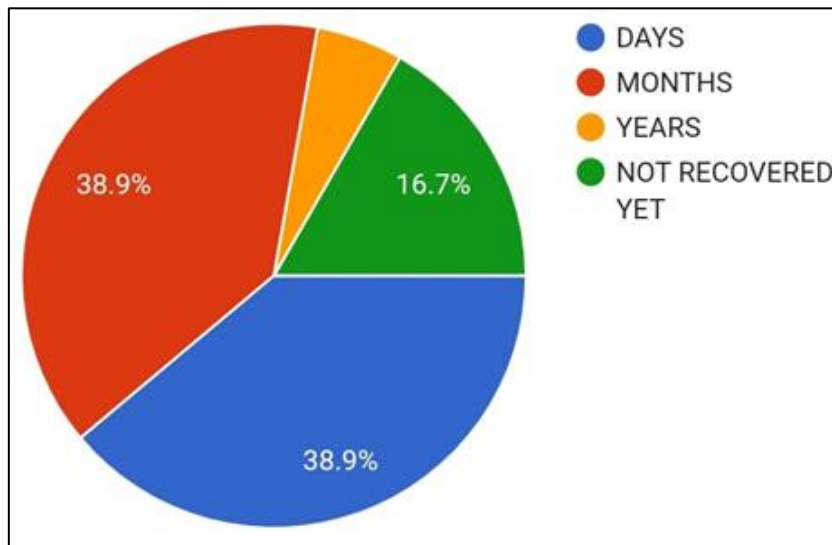


Fig 4 Time Taken to Overcome Harassment

**• Interpretation:**

The above chart illustrates that majority of respondents take days or months to come out of these harassment and still (16.7%) of respondents are not yet recovered.

Table 5 Reason for Reporting Harassment Cases

S. No	Type of Information	Responses
1.	Feeling of humiliation	75.0%
2.	Possibility and fear of difficulties in arranging marriage.	12.5%
3.	Husband and other family members may doubt the victims' character	10.0%
4.	Others	2.5%

**➤ Interpretation:**

This table infers that majority of victims (75%) report their harassment due to fear of being humiliated by others.

Table 6 Reason for Not Reporting the Harassment Cases

S. No	Type of Information	Responses
1.	Fear of loss of job	29.4%
2.	Lack of support from others	35%
3.	Don't want to approach police station or court	5.9%
4.	Lack of belief in Criminal Justice System	11.8%
5.	Possibility of dominance	17.9%

**• Interpretation:**

The above table depicts the reason for not reporting the harassment and it is inferred that it is majorly due to lack of support from others (35%) and also due to fear of losing their jobs (29.4%).

psychological, physiological and sociological traits are equally affected to the victims.

- It is also inferred that many respondents (44.4%) are being threatened for harassing by stating to curb their promotional activities.
- On interpreting data about the time taken to overcome these harassments, many victims take days or month to recover where still (16.7%) of victims have not yet recovered.
- The data collected from the reasons for reporting and not reporting the case of harassment, majority of victims (75%) report their case due to fear of being humiliated and while (35%) of others do not report due to lack of supportive system in their environment.

**V. FINDINGS**

- As inferred from the data collected, it can be concluded that majority of respondents (33.6%) are physically harassed and cyber sexual harassments like texting, chatting have also comparatively equal competition.
- It is good to know that (55.6%) of victims have faced harassment only once where there are still (11.1%) respondents who face them even now.
- From the data inferred from the consequences faced by harassment, in professional development it is majorly affects the working efficiency of the victims (33%) and in personal development almost every aspects such as

## VI. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMANDATIONS

### ➤ *Prevention Measures*

As earlier mentioned, it is important as well to ensure that the emphasis is on prevention rather than punitive action.

As per study many organizations have implemented the regulations and policies in preventing the sexual harassment cases, but they aren't effective as they lead much misuse of policies. Therefore implanting more policies has no result in decreasing the count rather technology innovative should be implanted to have better results

In Artificial Intelligence driven world it is necessary to give a touch of the tech in all crisis of world today. It is better to use technologies to enable the victims to raise their complaints without disclosing their identity. Features like anonymous text, etc which doesn't reveal the person identity to the receiver shall be implemented in every organization. This reduces the awkwardness and the fear of the victims to open up about their issues. Only by introducing such technical driven software's we could get accurate rate of sexual harassment cases and for necessary actions. It is also important to make this software cheaper so that every sector of organizations could afford to it. It proves that technologies could also be used in more useful ways for betterment of the society.

Further, to make the policies established feel effective, following necessary actions should be taken to prevent sexual harassment at workplace. They are

- Provide proper training to the employees in using the policies
- Create an open door for employees to open up about their harassments so that they remove their fear of humiliation, loss of reputation and other reason.
- Create awareness about the correct information about the policies so that it is not confused in its usage. This further prevents chaos in inappropriate complaints so that quick actions are taken
- Take immediate action against the harasser details and impose heavy penalties and even termination.
- Ensure that the victims are offered necessary support system and resources so that they come out safer from the threatens faced.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Sexual harassment being the major issue of many organizations. Though every organization tries different methods to solve this crisis, it is mandatory to introduce severe punishments to the harassers. As this study is conducted to check if the report of increases in number of cases of sexual harassment from the year 2022 to 2023, it is inferred that in today's world the actual sexual harassment comparatively decreased as there are strict guidelines to punish the harasser. Therefore the data stating in increase in case may not necessarily be due to actual increase in case it

might also be because of the courage of victims to open about it. Where victims hesitated to speak about their harassment due to various reasons, not as they are aware of the regulations and policies they have started to voice out their problems. Despite of these records as earlier mentioned technology should be used to protect the privacy of the victims so that they feel confident to report their cases which lead to accurate rate of reports.

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