



Sexual Harassment at Workplace and its Impact on Working Women in Multan City (Pakistan)

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Abstract

The research aims to investigate impact of sexual harassment on working women at workplace in Multan city. Working women not only have to face official problems as well as facing domestic matters also. Women constitute an important component of the labor force in Pakistan. But at the workplace, they have to face a problem of harassment during their job. This piece of work centered on the primary source of data gathered by author. Data has been collected from (N=150 respondents) from Multan city categorized in the following manners: 50 women were from education department (from Baha Uddin Zakariya University and women university) 30 women doctors were from Nishtar hospital, 20 Nurses from Nishtar hospital, 30 women from different banks and 20 women employees (sale representatives) from different cellular-organizations. The subjects of study were nominated by random sampling method and the age of respondents was 21-60 years. Data was collected through a semi-structural random sampling method through a questionnaire. In this article for collecting information from respondents both qualitative and quantitative data have been used and has been scrutinized through SPSS version-21(Statistical Package for Social Sciences) in simple form of frequency and percentage. The study concludes that harassment is a ground reality and working women face different problems at their workplaces in Multan city. So here is a need for government, educational department and civil society to introduce such policies which are in favor of working women, individual transport systems, women complaint centers must be established in every city of Pakistan.

Keywords: Sexual Harassment, working women, work place, problems, Multan city

1. Introduction

Harassment and sexual harassment are being perceived like a type of difference based on gender, and subsequently in opposition to the standard of behavioral equity among men and women (Numhauser-Hunning & Laulom, 2012). Harassment is one of the most serious irrational and shameful demeanors which are continuously practiced at diverse organizations. Nevertheless, it is quite an ugly fact to be understood, yet it is a mirrored image of the contemporary nation of running ladies within the globe. Because recently women participation has been increased in the territory of workforce, and still confronting various hurdles. Sexual harassment is one of those hurdles. The change in the global world and liberalization has caused in the enlarged contribution of workforce which backup domestic revenue and kill the inflation. But regrettably, in such type of societies, there are some people having negative approaches that promote violence towards women and create disturbance for women in the society. It effects their social and financial life as well. Such sort of violence highlights the restriction imposed for women at their working place (Sadruddin, 2013).

Although the concept of sexual harassment is deep-rooted, in recent times it was acknowledged as a social and legal phenomenon (Naveed & Alwani, 2010). The history of sexual harassment started from the mid-1970s in north-America, whereas in UK it started or we can say that first successful case become when sexual harassment was contended to be a kind of sex discrimination in 1986, following the Employment Protection Act (Aeberhard, 2001). There is no generally concurred meaning of sexual harassment; a large number of definitions incorporate similar components, e.g. explaining annoying conduct that is considered of being aggressive, offensive, and sometimes abusive also (McDonald, 2012). United Nations characterizes bullying which postpone an aggressive attitude at workplace (United Nations, 2016). Widely recognized sorts of intimidation is sexual harassment that is characterized the immoral set of principles by which a female discovers compromising of aggressive (Goonesekere, 2004).

As mentioned by Sigal, sexual harassment is an unwanted lewd gesture, call for fleshly favors and different verbal or bodily behavior of sexual nature set up sexual harassment while this lead expressly or absolutely impacts a person's commercial enterprise, nonsensically meddles with someone's work execution, or makes a horrifying unfriendly or a success workplace (Sigal,2006). This unwelcome behavior and hiding occurrences is the essential element of all occupations and industries (Hunt, Davidson, Fielden & Hoel, 2007). It can be observed in the form of gender discrimination either its verbal/nonverbal behavior; it considered as an unethical act for getting fame or attention (Fitzgerald, Gelfand & Drasgow. 1995).

Considering the referenced definition, the prior referenced situation was a characteristic of intimidation. The masculine members of the staff tried to get physical contact with the opposite sex immediately. Somehow, everyone kept salient and tried to avoid such undesirable deed. According to researchers that females are having such occurrences they struggle to overlook it.

Sexual harassment has been observed all over the world as mentioned by different organizations as well as International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Committee at the Elimination of Discrimination in opposition to Women (UNCEDAW), and the European Union. To challenge the policies and steps taken by such organizations have taken steps for provided a suitable routes by making process to tackle the hurdles in handling the issues of filling sexual harassment (McCann, 2005).

It is also a fact that Pakistan is a country based upon cultural and traditional background. The society is mainly portrayed by male-centric (Awan, 2012) and gender isolation (Yasin at al.2010). Both Islam and the 1973 Constitution are very much in the favor of providing safety, measures and identical rights for women. Several amendments were made brought to the Pakistani constitution to decorate the socio-political and financial fame of women but due to the strict values like females have to abide by chadar and char deewari (bounded in the four walls of the house). But when females try to support their family financially against social norms their lives

become more difficult. Although sexual harassment is referred to as a hidden issue like other countries, in Pakistan it is also not absolutely defined, it accompanies different violent acts against women. As women has to face different issues like honor killing, acid throwing, bride-burning, domestic violence, denial of property, rape, female trafficking and child marriages (Nosheen, 2011). According to an estimated survey which was conducted in 2010, seven out of ten females confront such intimidation. Due to current and past incidents, the Government of Pakistan surpassed “The Protection in opposition to Harassment of Women at Workplace Bill in 2010” with a view to providing a secure society system for women. Developing a law was a superb initiation but regrettably, this law did not come into practice. It was supposed that men would contemplate billion and zillion times before hassling females yet this law failed. Although Pakistan signatory to a few global documents ladies proper at every forum but their implementation are absent (Sadruddin, 2013)

2. Literature Review

The present section reviews some related studies. Although a bulk of research has been conducted on women’s labor participation few studies relate to the problem discussed up to some context.

According to Gutek & Barbar A., (1985) sexual harassment is more likely to happen in an organization where all types of sexual harassment are common and it surely helps such acts. Sexual harassment appears to be greater commonplace, firstly in job or occupation wherein males are dominated over the females and secondly the terror of losing the job upon filing a complaint.

Gelfand, Fitzgerald, and Drasgow (1995) three categories of sexual harassment; (1)“Gender Harassment” which consist upon different aggressive attitudes towards women by making them feel shame and low at workplace just to make them uncomfortable, (2)“Unwanted sexual attention” is a category related to behavior which ask them in indulge themselves in a situation where they present themselves as sex toy for male’s satisfaction (3)“Sexual coercion” is highly attached with both sexual bribery (sex for a favor) and sexual threats the victim just to satisfy themselves.

Pakistan National Report (1995) discovered that mostly sexual harassment occurs in the administrative center in all types of work place either private or government organizations. In extra severe forms, female sufferers stated that their rights, benefits, and promotions, and process safety had been contingent on whether or not they achieved sexual favors.

Islam (1997) has indicated that working women have to face many problems not only at their workplace but also at their houses. The main problems come to their siblings. Females have to get consent to their men to do any sort of work. They do not have many options related to job. At their workplace females are treated distinctively. Females are not backup by their male coworkers; it is considered that females lack in skills. Their co-workers consider females inferior in decision making power as well as in business politics. Females could not work in late hours or off days, that is why such gesture assume as unsatisfactory. Besides all such issues, separate washroom, separate prayer room, or taking rest during their break time.

Wilson and Thompson (2001) argue that usually male member try to impose power over women at the workplace and in society, they become easy victims of harassment. Whereas, Willness, Steel & Lee (2007) consider intimidation has a very bad impact on work excellence. Regardless the novelty employees have to face harassment which automatically affect the job performance in Pakistan.

Ali (2010) analyzed the issue pertaining to reporting the incident of sexual harassment in Pakistan. He said that Pakistani women commonly go through three specific problems as far as the sexual harassment is concerned. At First, women endeavor to cover sexual harassment because of Islamic modestly and cultural norms/taboo. Whereas the net point is about that once they decide to do so there's a loss of redress at the organizational and authorities level and eventually, after they highlight it, sometimes they have to face different situation which could cause issues for them.

3. Objective of the Study:

Assess sexual harassment at place of work and its influence on working women in Multan city.

4. Research Questions:

- I. Is sexual harassment practiced at workplace in Multan city?
- II. Whether or not working women familiar about the term of sexual harassment?
- III. Whether or not working women familiar about their rights?
- IV. What is the positive and negative impact/effect of sexual harassment on working women?

5. Universe of the Study:

The universe and major focus of this study is only about Multan city. It is situated at the eastern side of the Chenab River, it has special importance in the geographic center of the country and its distance is approximately 966 km from Karachi. According to district census report 1998 of Multan city comprising Municipal Corporation and Cantonment, is ranked sixth amongst the big cities of Pakistan with an estimated population of 5 million and its total area is 3,721 km. It upholds 2.8% of the city population of the country and 6% of the urban inhabitants of Punjab province. In which 637,911% are male and 559,473% are female. The annual Average population growth rate is about 2.93% and average household size is about 7.47. In term of education rates Multan is ranked 20th out of the 36 district of Punjab, and has grown rapidly and becomes populated in Punjab (PSLMs 2010-11). Multan is becoming the important manufacturing, marketable, monetary and service centers of Pakistan. Recently city infrastructure has become a problem and is being a significant subject of city conflict. But according to the same sources, 50% of the populace of Multan city is dwelling to be highly vulnerable as this location is eminent for milestone cases in sexual harassment against working women at their work places (District Census Report of Multan, 1998).

6. Methodology

6.1. Sampling Techniques and Tools of Data Collection:

There is no research existing of employed females' issues in Multan city. Data has been gathered by both qualitative and quantitative methods by using exploratory research type. SPSS version-21(Statistical Package for Social Sciences) has been used to analyze data to get mean, frequency and percentages. Data was collected through semi-structural random sampling method through questionnaire. It comprised two parts, the first part was related to demographic information (socio-economic status of respondents) such as age, education, marital status and working experience, per month salary and second part employed a scale of intimidation at organizations and its impact on employed females. Each question required a five point likert-type response ranging from (1) Never (2) Once (3) Sometimes (4) Often (5) Most of the time. The data has been collected from (N=150 respondents) from Multan city categorized in the following manners: 50 women were from education department (from Baha uddin Zakariya University and Women University Multan) 30 women doctors were from Nishtar hospital, 20 Nurses were from Nishtar hospital, 30 women were from different banks and 20 women employees (sale representatives) were from various cellular companies. The age of respondents was 21-60 years. Questionnaire were distributed to the respondents after taking their consent to participate in the survey, to fill up the questionnaire approximately 30 minutes were given to the participants.

6.2. Reliability of the Scale:

The study used 5 points a Likert scale based on 14 items, therefore, Cronbach's Alpha was assessed to check the reliability. As a result, the scale was found at adequate level with Cronbach's Alpha value .932 shown in table 1.

Table 1: Reliability of the Scale

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.932	.932	14

6.3. Estimation Procedure of Harassment

As the study has mentioned that a 5 points Likert scale was used for the assessment of harassment level in Multan. The scale based on 14 items; therefore, it has 70 maximum score which was divided into five equal parts to know the level of harassment in the study area. The detail is given in table 2.

Table 2: Level of Harassment

Sr. No.	Score	Level
1	1 – 14	Very Low
2	15 – 28	Low
3	29 – 42	Medium
4	43 – 56	High
5	57 – 70	Very High

7. Results and Discussion

7.1. Socio-economic Profile of Respondents:

Socio-economic background plays a decisive role in the interpretation of field data. This section starts with the description of respondent's socio-economic information including age, education, marital status and working experience and per month salary. According to the below appendix A, Age of the respondents, majority of them were in between the ages of 21-30 years (46.7%) while other women were between the age of 30-40 years (33.3%) and 40-50 years were (13.3%). respectively. The rest were 50-60 years (6.6%). Majority of the respondents were single (49.3%) and about (25.3%) were married and (15.3%) were divorced and (10%) were widow. In term of educational attainment, the findings indicated that most of the respondents (50%) had master's degree;

while others (24.7%) were M.phil and (23.3%) were bachelors and rest of (2%) were PhD. In term of job experience, majority of the respondents (42%) had 3-5 years' experience; while others (30%) had 1-3 years' experience and (21.3%) had 5-10 years' experience and rest of (6.6%) had 10 or more years' experience. In case of per month salary, majority of the respondents (46.7%) earned Rs 20-40000 salary per month and about (23.3%) earned Rs 40-80000 per month and (20%) earned Rs 20000 per month and remaining (6.7%) and (3.3%) earned Rs 80-1,00,000 Rs 1,00,000 or more respectively.

Appendix B narrates the distribution of the respondents according to their personal experience about sexual harassment and its impact on their psychological and physical health, economic condition, and organizational development. That is why intimidation has been sexual understood disturbing as well as shocking for everyone. The table demonstrates that majority (89%) of the respondents accepted that their boss/colleague/subordinate mostly admired their dresses or make up. Majority (83.3%) of the respondents stated that their boss/colleague/subordinate mostly tried to took interest in their private life that they could start responding to him. Majority (82%) of the respondents have reported that their boss/colleague/subordinate mostly assured them of promotion in the job if they could fulfill his immoral demand. Majority (80%) of the respondents have reported that their colleague/subordinate mostly tried to delay your work so you may visit him time and again concerning that work. Majority (79.3%) of the respondents have agreed that their boss/colleague/subordinate mostly offered them to sit in his car. Majority (76.6%) of the respondents have agreed that their boss/colleague/subordinate mostly invited them for outing or going to restaurant for taking lunch or dinner. Majority (70%) of the respondents accepted that they have ever experience of sexual harassment. Majority (70%) of the respondents have reported that their boss/colleague/subordinate mostly told a dirty or offensive jokes or remarks to them. Majority (61.3%) of the respondents stated that their boss/colleague/subordinate mostly tried to touch their hands while giving them something that caused made them to feel awkward. Majority (59.3%) of the respondents have agreed that their boss/colleague/subordinate mostly threatened them that they

are fired (dismiss from your job) if they did not develop romantic ties or physical/sexual relation with him. Majority (53.3%) of the respondents have reported that their boss/colleague/subordinate mostly tried to put his hand on their shoulders or their back while praising their work.

Majority (43.3%) of the respondents stated that their boss/colleague/subordinate mostly forced them to fulfill his immoral demand. Majority (33%) of the respondents stated that their boss/colleague/subordinate mostly called them darling or sweet heart etc. Majority (20%) of the respondents have agreed that their boss/colleague/subordinate mostly tried to talk about his sexual life. Research has revealed that it is the sexual harassment that prevents women's entry in the job market, because mostly it takes place in form of verbal abuse, mental torture and threats which creates anxiety and agitation among women (Kundi & Mdimba, 2011).

8. Harassment

The study found that 8.70% of the respondents faced Low level, 28.70% Medium level, 42% High level and 20.70% Very High-level Harassment in the study area. Therefore, it can be said that the working women facing very tough conditions in the study area, and they have to face high level harassment during their jobs.

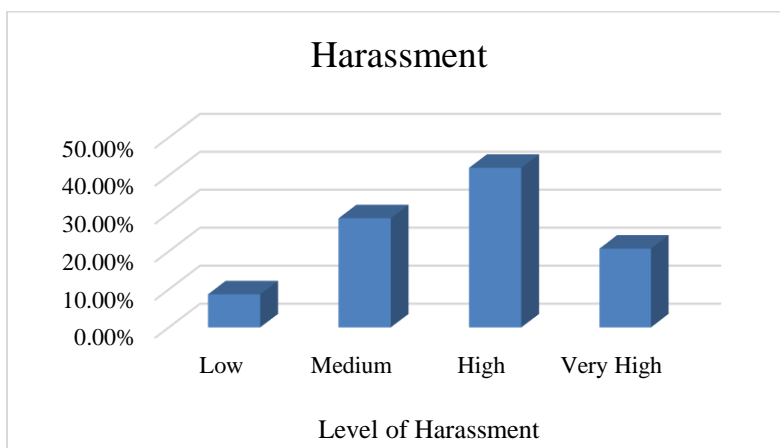


Figure 1: Harassment faced by the Respondents

9. Conclusion

The study concludes that sexual harassment is a ground reality and a complicated issue which requires an urgent solution with appropriated actions. Despite the fact that Pakistani women and especially women in Multan city are not willing to expose such issues related to intimidation, anyhow such dealings could not decrease the ratio of harassment issues. Through this research, problematic situations of employed women were highlighted by researcher. So here is a need of collective and rigorous efforts by the government, educational department, civil society, organizations related to female rights should make strict rules to deal the sexual harassment cases for employed females and introduce such polices which are in favour of working women like individual transport system, women complaint centers must be establish in every city of Pakistan. If such polices are put into practice then our society can easily be freed from sexual harassment; through this an healthy organizational atmosphere will be seen which also boost up mental as well as physical strength of employees. It would have positive effect on service excellence, organizational quality outcome especially employee satisfaction which ultimately impact on country's development.

Appendix A: Demographic of the Respondents

Characteristics	Classification	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Age	21-30	70	46.7%	46.7
	30-40	50	33.3%	80
	40-50	20	13.3%	93.3
	50-60	10	6.7%	100
Marital Status	Single	74	49.3%	49.3
	Married	38	25.3%	74.7
	Divorced	23	15.3%	80.0
	Widow	15	10.0%	100
Education	Bachelors	35	23.3%	23.3
	Masters	75	50.0%	73.3
	M.Pill	37	24.7%	98.0
	PhD	03	2.0%	100
Job Experience	1-3 years	45	30%	30
	3-5 years	63	42%	72
	5-10 years	32	21.3%	93.3

	10 or more years	10	6.6%	100
Salary per month	<Rs 20000	35	23.3%	23.3
	Rs 20-40000	70	46.7%	70.0
	Rs 40-80000	30	20.0%	90.0
	Rs 80-1,00,000	10	6.7%	96.7
	Rs 1,00,000 or more	05	3.3%	100

Source: Field Data

Appendix B: Sexual harassment at Workplace and its Impact on Working Women

Item No	Sexual Harassment Experience Questionnaire	Never	Once	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time	Mean	Cumulative Percentage	P-Value
1	.... admire your dress or make up	11 7.3 %	06 4.0 %	35 23. 3%	37 24. 7%	61 40. 7%	3. 8 7	88. 7%	.0 0 0
2	.... told a dirty or offensive jokes or remarks to you	20 13. 3%	12 8.0 %	28 18. 7%	23 15. 3%	67 44. 7%	3. 7 0	78. 7%	.0 0 0
3	....invite you for outing or going to restaurant for taking lunch or dinner	17 11. 3%	28 18. 7%	30 20 %	41 27. 3%	34 22. 7%	3. 3 1	70 %	.0 8 4
4	.....offered you to sit in his car	15 10 %	16 10. 7%	38 25. 3%	51 34 %	30 20 %	3. 4 3	79. 3%	.0 0 0

5.	....tried to give you a card	33 22 %	19 12. 7%	30 20 %	40 26. 7%	28 18. 7%	3. 0 7	65. 4%	.0 0 0
6.	...tried to delayed your work so that you might go to him again and again regarding that work	18 12 %	23 15. 3%	38 25. 3%	43 28. 7%	28 18. 7%	3. 2 7	72. 7%	.0 0 0
7.	.....tried to took interest in your personal life that you might start responding him	16 10. 7%	15 10 %	41 27. 3%	36 24 %	42 28 %	3. 4 9	79. 3%	.0 0 8
8.	....assured you of promotion in the job if you could fulfill his immoral demand	11 7.3 %	16 10. 7%	31 20. 7%	33 22 %	59 39. 3%	3. 7 5	82 %	.0 0 0
9.	....tried to touch your hand while giving you something that made you feel uncomfortable	20 13. 3%	30 20 %	44 29. 3%	38 25. 3%	18 12 %	3. 0 3	67 %	.0 0 0
10.	....called you darling or sweet heart etc.	39 26 %	44 22 %	20 13. 3%	37 24. 7%	20 13. 3%	2. 7 7	51. 3%	.0 0 1

11	....threatened you are fired (dismiss from your job) if you did not develop romantic ties or physical/sexual relation with him	22 14. 7%	22 14. 7%	29 19. 3%	45 30 %	32 21. 3%	3. 2 9	70. 6%	.0 0 0
12	....forced you to fulfill his immoral demand	33 22 %	35 23. 3%	20 13. 3%	33 22 %	29 19. 3%	2. 9 3	54. 6%	.3 7 3
13	....tried to put his hand on your shoulders while praising your work	19 12. 7%	32 21. 3%	48 32 %	34 22. 7%	17 11. 3%	2. 9 9	66 %	.0 0 1
14	.... ever have experience of sexual harassment	22 %	22 %	22 %	22 %	22 %	1 0 5	70 %	.0 0 0
15tried to talk about you or his sexual life	22 %	22 %	22 %	22 %	22 %	3 0	20 %	.0 0 0

Source: Field Data

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