

An Exploratory Study of Religious and Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

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Abstract

This study examines the religious and sexual harassment at the workplace, highlighting the complexities and nuances of this experience. Discrimination against women in our country has existed for a long time and continues to do so in numerous types. Generally, cultural norms and traditions, religion, geography and other factors influence discriminations.

This research reveals the way in which religious identity intersects with gender to create unique vulnerabilities to harassment. The finding suggests that employees from minority religious groups are more likely to experiences are often compounded by stereotypes, biases, and power dynamics.

This study adds to the increasing number of studies on workplace harassment by emphasizing the need for more inclusive and nuanced strategies to deal with these problems. The finding has implications for

organizational policies practices and training programs aimed at promoting, diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace.

Keywords: Workplace harassment, sexual harassment, religious harassment, diversity, equity.

Introduction

Workplace harassment is a pervasive issue that affects employees well-being, productivity and job satisfaction. Religious and sexual harassment are two forms of workplace harassment that can have particularly devastating consequences for employees particularly those from minority religious groups or those who identify as LGBTQ, despite the growing body of research on workplace harassment.

Religious harassment refers to unwelcome or insulting behavior directed towards a person or group because of their religion or belief is known as religious harassment. It may involve verbal, physical, or psychological abuse can happen in a variety of context, including public places, workplace, school, colleges and online.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual overtures, requests for sexual favors, and other sexual verbal or physical behavior that violates someone's dignity or creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment, especially in public places, workplaces, or educational settings.

Any form of workplace harassment is unacceptable, but sexual harassment specifically violates fundamentals rights of women's, such as the freedom to work in a discrimination-free environment. Women are less likely to take the initiatives, become financially independent, and pursue overall development in the job because it is more unfriendly and unpredictable.

Kinds of sexual harassment many times reported are

- Bitch," "slut," or "cunt" are examples of hottest slurs.
- When someone intentionally touches you or brushes up against you in an unwanted sexual manner
- Someone making insulting, undesired, or frightening remarks like "hey baby, looking sexy, give me a smile."
- Someone honking, whistling, making kissy noises and steering aggressively at you.

Kinds of religious harassment in the workplace. here are few instances of workplace religious harassment.

-Verbal abuse can take the form of insulting remarks or insult directed at a worker because of their faith. A hostile work atmosphere may result from this kind of behavior, which may also make it challenging for the employee to carry out their obligations.

- Discrimination might include denying a worker a job or advancement due to their religious beliefs. The employees career may suffer as a result of this unlawful kind of discrimination.

- Cyberbullying can also occur when a management or coworker uses social media to abuse a worker due to their religious beliefs.

Objectives

1. To comprehend the different elements that contribute to workplace sexual harassment of women.
2. To understand the various countries' legislation regarding sexual harassment in the workplace.

Factors responsible for sexual harassment at a workplace

1] Inadequate instructions and directives

The lack of thorough policies and efficient training programs is a significant risk factor. Inappropriate behavior may continue in an environment when organizations lack anti-harassment measures. This problem is made worse by inadequate training. It's possible that staff members lack the information and abilities necessary to recognize, report, and handle sexual harassment. Strong regulations and frequent training aid in destroying the frameworks that let harassment to continue.

2] Organizational structure and power disparities

Sexual harassment is a problem for organizations that maintain power disparities. In order to maintain the accessibility of reporting methods, organizations need to resolve these disparities

3] A culture of tolerance in the workplace

When businesses allow inappropriate behavior, sexual harassment is also likely to occur. Organizations give tacit support for harassment to continue when they do not denounce it. An atmosphere where victims are unwilling to come forward is produced by a culture of silence. It will take a coordinated effort to eliminate this danger factor.

Policy regarding sexual harassment

Everyone who works for Central Depository Services (India) Limited ("CDSL") and its affiliates is covered by the policy. Its objective is to ensure that no female employee experiences sexual harassment. Any CDSL employee, whether they are full-time, temporary, on trial, part-time, consultants, volunteers, or hired through a contractor or agent, is referred to as a "employee" in this policy. when an outsider or third party engages in behavior that causes a female employee to be sexually harassed at work. Any claim of sexual harassment that occurred on CDSL property is covered by this policy, including any location an employee visited as part of their work or after being driven there by CDSL.

The primary legislation in India that addresses workplace sexual harassment of women is the "Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013".

The following are some of the Act's main provisions:

Definition of sexual harassment: According to the Act, any unwanted sexually determined behavior—such as physical contact, advances, or requests for sexual favors—that could compromise a woman's dignity and make her feel intimidated, aggressive, or offended is considered sexual harassment.

Coverage of the workplace: The Act applies to all types of workplaces, including non-governmental, commercial, and public ones.

Employer responsibilities: In order to handle allegations of sexual harassment, employers must establish an internal complaint commission (ICC). At least one external member who is knowledgeable about sexual harassment issues should be a part of the ICC.

Procedure for complaints: The Act requires that all workplaces have a system in place for both accepting and handling sexual harassment complaints. Workers who have been sexually harassed have the option to report the incident to the local police or the ICC.

Vishaka case background

It all started when Banwari Devi, a social worker working on a program to stop child marriages, stopped a child marriage in a wealthy Gujjar family. Banwari Devi worked excellently despite objections, but the Gujjars were eager to seek revenge. In front of her husband, she was brutally gang-raped by one Ramakant Gujjar and five of his guys. She then attempted to report it to the police, but for a considerable amount of time, they were uninterested. She experienced additional mistreatment and humiliation after her triumph. The trial court cleared the accused due to insufficient evidence, but Banwari Devi and a supporter petitioned the Supreme Court, which eventually rendered a historic ruling.

Vishaka case detail

Investigating the widespread gender inequality in Indian society, which manifests as violence against women (such as rape and sexual harassment at work), was the Supreme Court's responsibility. The Supreme Court had to decide if it was ready to create intricate regulations to deal with the issue while it was looking into it.

In an effort to stop sexual harassment in the workplace, the Court took the initiative and released a set of rules known as the Vishakha Guidelines.

- The court found that sexual harassment violates victims' fundamental rights under Articles 14, 19, and 21 and causes depravity in victims.
- The Court determined that a set of guidelines are required in order to resolve the issue in a meaningful manner. Through the Solicitor General, the Union of India also approved the recommendations and pledged to create a women's policy that would guarantee the protection of women's rights and give them a secure environment in which to thrive in a variety of spheres of life.

Preventive measure regarding sexual harassment

1. Create an extensive and transparent sexual harassment policy: - Establish a policy outlining the definition of sexual harassment, the reporting process and penalties for a violating it.
2. Conduct frequent training: - educate staff member, about sexual harassment, including what it is, how to spot it, and how to report it.
3. Establishing reporting protocols: - Ensure that Staff member are aware of where and how to report sexual harassment situation. Make certain that grievances are treated with respect and they are looked into quickly and fairly.
4. Promote a culture of respect at workplace: - Establish an environment where workers are at ease disclosing instances of sexual harassment and are assured that concern will be treated seriously.
5. Establish zero tolerance rule: - Spread the word that Sexual harassment will never be accepted.

Literature Review

Effects of sexual harassment at workplace evidence from the hotel industry. Nita Thomas, 2018.

This research study is to raise awareness of the problems that workers in the industry experience, including sexual harassment. There appears to be a serious problem with victims are both males and women. They have differing opinions about sexual harassment. The research also indicated that not every hotel provided a sexual harassment free environment but only through proper education and awareness can the employees protect themselves from the various form of sexual harassment. Employees play a major role in an organization success, without motivated and dedicated staff, no organization can prosper. Managing people and the workplace at the same time is growing more difficult these days. With technology supporting us and fresh knowledge at every level making it difficult to engage and maintain employee's morale.

Sexual harassment in the workplace: A comparison between the sector and governmental bureaucracy. Arundhati Bhattacharya.

According to this study that men are harassing women sexually. One way that power dynamics are expressed in the workplace is through sexual harassment. Due to their lack of authority vulnerability, lack of confidence or social conditioning to suffer in quiet, women are more likely to become victims. When women are perceived as varying for power they are equally susceptible to similar behavior.

Workplace rights for women: an examination of Indian institutions' reactions to sexual harassment. Suman bhavana, 2013.

The liberal rights outline can be used to analyze women rights in this research. It addresses the claim of equal rights and opportunities which illustrates the connection between liberalism and feminism and also projects what sally Alexander has called the plea for equality and assertion of sexual harassment. This sexual difference is the point of discussion as women seek equality with respect to their difference. Women have been involved in special task and right to equality conferred upon them should keep their varied roles into consideration.

Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to investigate experiences of sexual and religious harassment at work. Primary and secondary data gathering and analysis methods were combined in a mixed method approach.

Primary data collection

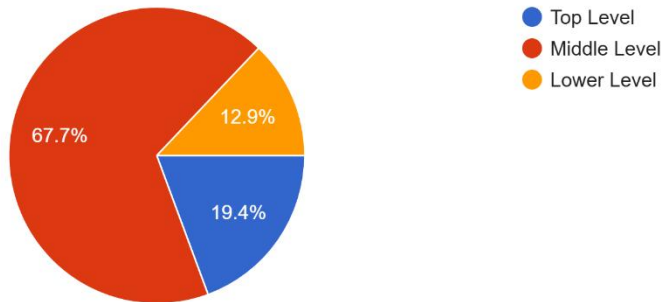
Survey: - A questionnaire was designed to collect data on employees and experiences of religious and sexual abuse in the workplace.

Secondary data collection: - A comprehensive review of existing literature on workplace harassment including religious and sexual harassment was conducted. This included academic articles, books, and reports from reputable organization.

Data Analysis:

What is your status at the company?

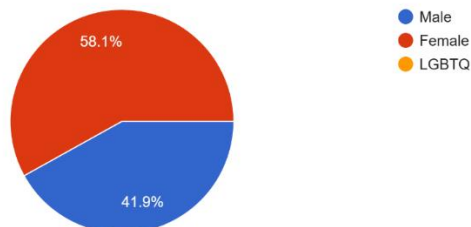
31 responses



The first question ask about what is your status at the company? the result reveal that the majority of the respondents 67.7% belongs to middle level of the organization, indicating that most employees occupy mid-tier positions. About 19.4% are in the top level, showing a smaller leadership group, while 12.9% are at a lower level, suggesting a relatively modest proportion of entry level staff. This distribution implies a typical hierarchical structure with broad middle management layer and fewer senior or junior roles.

What is your gender?

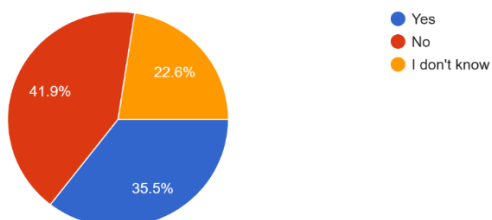
31 responses



This question focuses on what is your gender? among the respondent, 58.1% identify as female and 41.9% as male, with no response in LGBTQ category.

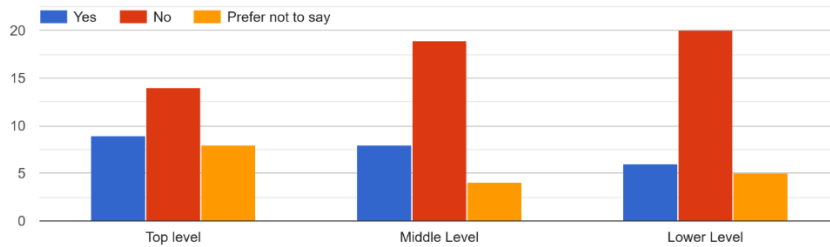
Does your organization have a formal policy or rules and regulations against sexual harassment

31 responses



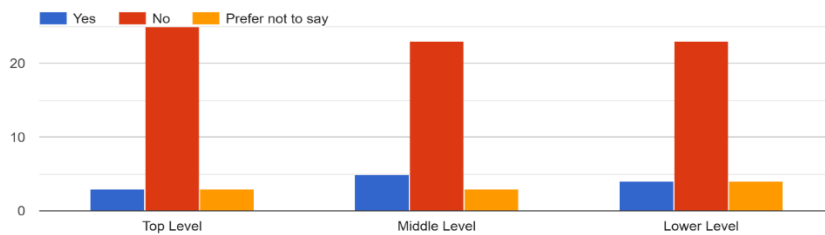
In this question 35.5% of respondents say their organization has a formal policy on rules and regulation against sexual harassment. 41.9% says their organization does not have such a policy and 22.6% of respondents don't know if their organization has a policy.

Have you ever experienced verbal or non-verbal harassment at this company?



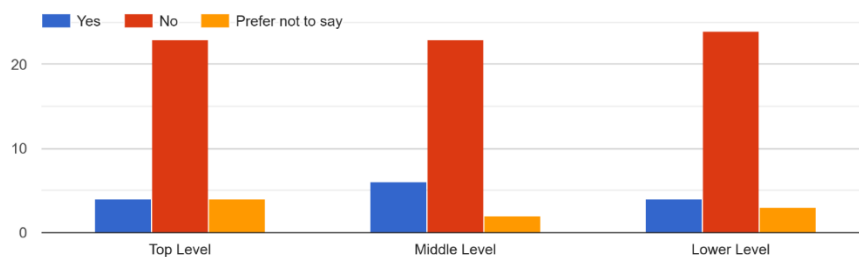
Across all levels, the vast majority of respondents reported No to experiencing verbal or non-verbal harassment. A small percentage of respondents of lower level reported Yes, some respondents chose prefer not to say.

Have you ever experienced physical harassment at this company?



Across all levels, the vast majority of respondents reported No to experiencing physical harassment. A small percentage of respondents of lower level reported Yes, some respondents chose prefer not to say.

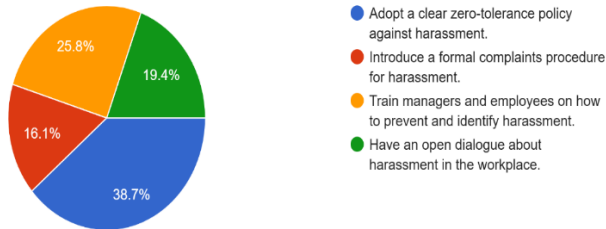
Have you ever experienced unwanted sexual contact or sexual assault while working at this company?



The bar graph shows the experiencing of unwanted sexual contact or sexual assault while working at the company categorized by employee’s top, middle and lower level. in all three levels the majority respondents say it represented by the red bars said NO to experiencing unwanted sexual contact or assault. A small number of respondents in the middle or lower level said YES, while few in middle and lower levels chose prefer not to say

What can the company do to eliminate or prevent harassment in the workplace?

31 responses



This chart shows 38.7% believe this most effective action is to adopt a clear zero tolerance policy against harassment this suggest that establishing an explicit, strict policy is seen as the primary step to set the tone for a safe work environment and signal various consequences for violations. The second largest group 25.8% recommends introducing a formal complaint procedure for harassments implementing an accessible reporting mechanism ensures that employees feel safe to voice concerns and that grievances are handled systematically and transparently. About 19.4% of participant’s advocate for having an open dialogue about harassment in the work place.

Conclusion

The present study highlights that workplace harassment—both religious and sexual—continues to be a serious challenge that undermines employee dignity, mental well-being, and organizational harmony. The findings reveal that employees, especially those belonging to minority religious groups and women in lower or middle levels of the organizational hierarchy, remain more vulnerable to various forms of harassment. While most respondents reported not experiencing harassment, the presence of even a small percentage of cases indicates that the issue persists and cannot be overlooked. The study further shows that many organizations lack clear policies, formal complaint mechanisms, or effective awareness programs, which weakens employees’ confidence in reporting harassment and prevents timely corrective action.

Overall, this exploratory study contributes to the ongoing discussion on workplace safety by demonstrating how gender, religious identity, and organizational structure intersect to shape employee experiences.

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