

# ISSUES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN INDUSTRY: AN OVERVIEW

Ajit Kumar Singh, Tejinder Singh, Shubham Chauhan, Pema

Associate Professor, <sup>2,3,4,6</sup>th Semester B.Sc. HHM Students  
UITHM Chandigarh University

**Abstract:** Sexual harassment is more than a social issue, as it impacts on worker productivity, employee communication and organizational morale. These are direct costs to industry, combined with indirect costs such as worker discontent, absenteeism and stress. It includes requests for sexual favors, sexual advances or other sexual conduct when submission is either explicitly or implicitly a condition affecting academic or employment decisions, the behavior is sufficiently severe or pervasive as to create an intimidating hostile or repugnant environment or the behavior persists despite objection by the person to whom the conduct is directed. Due to the inherent characteristics, service organizations are a prime breeding ground for such harassment. This study reviews and analyzed full-length articles published in refereed academic journals related to issues and challenges of sexual harassment in different industries. At the end of the database search and the reading of the articles, a total of 19 published studies were determined to be relevant and were included in the analysis. Paper also proposed a theoretical model on the basis of literature review which lay the foundation for further research in this area.

**Keywords:** Empowerment, Industry, Sexual, Harassment, Female, Employees.

## INTRODUCTION:

Sexual harassment at workplace becomes one of the major issues across the globe especially in the case of women. Quick J C , 2007 in his article "Sexual harassment : Have we made any progress ?" states that women face more challenges and adverse effects than men after experiencing sexual harassment . It includes depression, anxiety, eating disorders, drug and alcohol abuse, post traumatic stress and a decreased level of overall happiness. Sexual harassment at workplace includes both physical and non physical harassment. Non physical harassment includes suggestive remarks and gestures or request for sexual favors. Physical harassment includes hugs, touches and coerced sex acts. In India this issue was not considered as specific offence till the time the Supreme Court gave its landmark judgment in Vishaka vs State of Rajasthan case. It lay down specific guidelines and giving directions to the employees to have Sexual harassment policy in the workplace and consider as a serious offence. Before 1997, it was dealt under section 509 and 354 of the Indian Penal Code. However these sections were not strong enough and didn't specifically define the act, words or gestures which comes under sexual harassment. As per section 2 (n) of the Sexual harassment act 2013, Sexual harassment includes anyone or more of the acts or behavior, physical contact and advances, a demand or request for sexual favors, making sexually colored remarks, any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non verbal conduct of sexual nature. This act comprises wide range of behavior and gestures which can make women uncomfortable and creates a holistic work environment for women and undermine the potential of a person to work and perform well at the workplace. Sexual harassment also violates the principles of Article 19 (1) g of the Indian Constitution. This paper tries to investigate Sexual harassment issues that women employees faced in workplace and how this indirectly leads to job dissatisfaction.

## LITERATURE REVIEW:

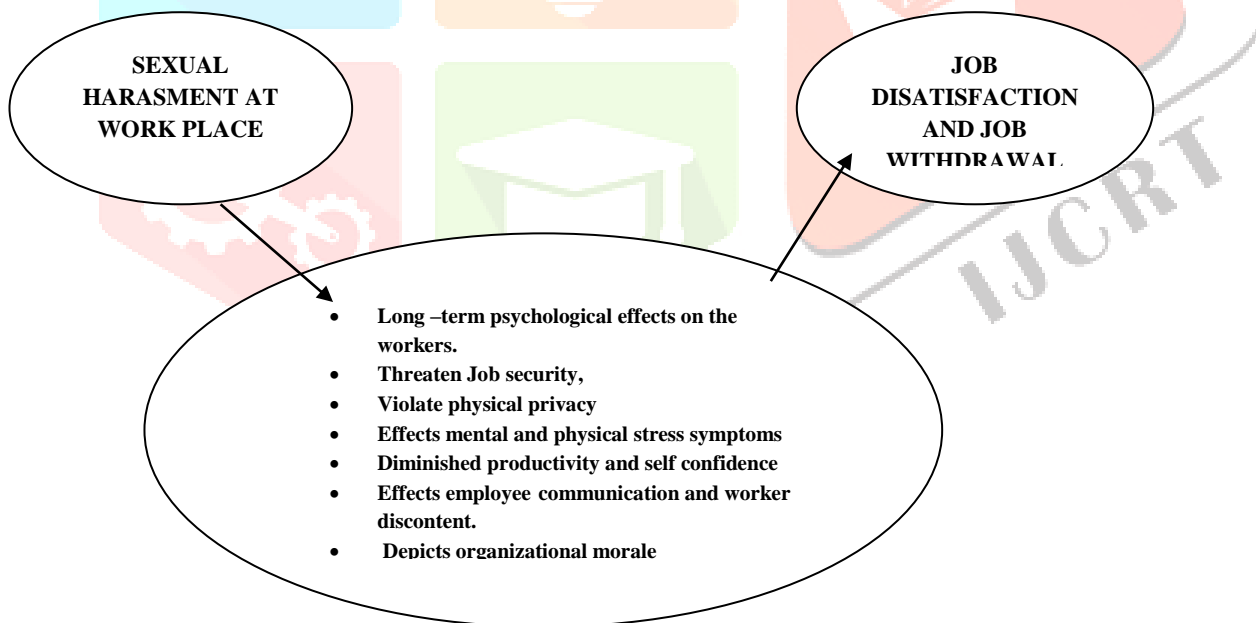
According to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature in the workplace or learning environment. A study conducted by Earnshaw, J. Davidson in 1994 reveals that sexual harassment cause long – term psychological effects on the victims. Davidson & Earnshaw (1990) recommends legal actions for this un lawful act. Crull, P. in 1982 conducted a study on 262 women, and found some of the common patterns of harassment behavior and reaction to it. The study further concludes that incidents of sexual harassment typically threaten a woman's job security and violate her physical privacy. It also affects mental and physical stress symptoms, as well as diminished productivity and self confidence. Another research conducted by Fitzgeralds, L.F in 1993 reveals that sexual harassment becomes one of the common cause of workplace. As per the study approximately 1 of every 2 women will be harassed at some point during their academic or working lives. Munson, Hulin, Bergman and Drasgow in 1999 done a case study which indicates that sexual harassment influences both proximal and distal work-related variables (e.g., job satisfaction, work withdrawal, job withdrawal) and psychological outcomes (e.g., life satisfaction, psychological well-being, distress). A study conducted by Grauerholz in 1989 on student teacher relationship. The study concludes the sexual harassment of women professor by the students. Similar kind of study conducted by Adams. J. W., Kottke, J. L., & Padgitt, J. S. in 1983 on 372 undergraduate and graduate males and females. Over 90% of both sexes indicated that explicit sexual propositions, physical advances, and sexual bribery constituted harassment, whereas significant sex differences were apparent in ratings of more ambiguous categories of behavior such as undue attention and comments. Another study on sexual harassment in academia is conducted by Kalof, K. Eby, L. Matheson, Kroska in year 2011 on 525 undergraduates students. Study reveals that 40 percent of the women and 28.7 percent of the men had been sexually harassed by a college professor or instructor. Most incidents were

gender harassment. While women reported significantly more gender harassment than did men, there were no gender differences in the frequency of unwanted sexual attention or sexual coercion. Study conducted by Fjeldstad in 1995, reveals that due to the inherent characteristics ,service organizations are a prime breeding ground for sexual harassment. A study conducted by E. Gruber, Bjorn in 1982 found that black, unmarried, or young (under 25) women, or those with low job status, or who worked in an area where women were a sizable minority were more likely to be the targets of frequent harassment. A study conducted by Barton, Eichelberger (1994) reveals that sexual harassment impacts on worker productivity, employee communication and organizational morale. These are direct costs to industry, combined with indirect cost such as worker discontent, absenteeism and stress. Fitzgerald,J. Gelfand & Drasgow, in 2010 states three dimensional model of sexual harassment i.e. gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. Gutek, (1993) in his study found three groups affected by sexual harassment: the target of harassment, the alleged harasser, and the employing organization. Dr. Sandra, S. Tangri Martha R. Burt Leanor B. Johnson in 1982 , explores three models of sexual harassment , the Natural/Biological Model, the Organizational Model, and the Socio cultural Model. A study conducted by Barling, Dekker, A. Loughlin, Kelloway, Fullagar, Johnson in 1996 reveals that sexual harassment leads to workplace negative mood which, in turn impacts turnover intentions and job dissatisfaction. Study conducted by C. Head, F. Sorensen Jr., and B. Pincus in 1995, Fitzgerald Louise, F. Drasgow Fritz in 1995, Barling, Dekker et al., in 1996, J. Aalberts, H, Seidman in 1996, Dr. Barbara, A. Gutek , Morasch in 1982 also reveals the sexual harassment is a major issue in workplace.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

In March 2018, publications related to concerns of sexual harassment in industry were gathered from Google Scholar and Science Direct. Two most preferred database. To achieve the objective of the study the keywords challenges, issues, problems were used to search for published articles in the field of hospitality and tourism industry. Moreover, references cited in published articles were traced. Each identified article was carefully read through by three researchers to determine its inclusion for analysis. The decision to include an article to the analysis was primarily based on the theme of the study. This study only analyzed full-length articles published in refereed academic journals, mainly in the tourism and hospitality fields. At the end of the database search and the reading of the articles, a total of 18 published studies were determined to be relevant and were included in the analysis. A theoretical model is proposed by the researcher on the basis of literature review which is shown below in exhibit 1:-

**EXHIBIT 1: Theoretical model based on literature review**



**CONCLUSION:-**

Paper reveals that Sexual harassment leads to many issues which directly or indirectly effects job satisfaction. Sexual harassment leads to long term psychological effects on the workers, threaten job security, violates physical privacy, effects mental and physical stress symptoms, diminished productivity and self confidence, effects employee communication and worker discontent and depicts organizational morale. These issues are the common issues that are identified by the many authors in different industries. Thus, it is imperative that organizations need to be proactive for the issue related to sexual harassment, raising employee awareness, implementing policies inside the organization related to sexual harassment, establishing reporting procedures and educating employees about these policies. More research is needed to identify the antecedents to harassment that will help employees and managers identify and respond appropriately. Paper also proposed a theoretical model on the basis of literature review which lay foundation for further research in this area.

**REFERENCES**

- Adams, J. W., Kottke, J. L., & Padgitt, J. S. (1983). Sexual harassment of university students. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 24(6), 484-490.
- Crull, P. (1982). Stress effects of sexual harassment on the job: Implications for counseling. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 52(3), 539-544.
- Dr. Sandra S. Tangri Martha R. Burt Johnson, *Sexual Harassment at Work: Three Explanatory Models* Volume38, Issue4 Winter 1982 Pages 33-54.
- Dr. Barbara A. Gutek Bruce Morasch, *Sex-Ratios, Sex-Role Spillover, and Sexual Harassment of Women at Work* Volume38, Issue4, Winter 1982 Pages 55-74
- Elizabeth Grauerholz, *Sexual harassment of women professors by students: Exploring the dynamics of power, authority, gender in a university setting*, Plenum Publishing Corporation, 1989, Vol 21, 789-797.
- Fitzgerald, L. F. (1993). Sexual harassment: Violence against women in the workplace. *American Psychologist*, 48(10), 1070-1076
- Gutek, B.A. (1993), "Sexual harassment: rights and responsibilities", *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, Vol. 6 No 4, pp. 325-40.
- Gelfand Michelle J.Fitzgerald Louise F.Dragow Fritz, *The Structure of Sexual Harassment: A Confirmatory Analysis across Cultures and Settings*, Volume 47, Issue 2, October 1995, Pages 164-177.
- Ingrid H. Fjeldstad, *On Duty — Off Guard: Cultural Norms and Sexual Harassment in Service Organizations*, Volume: 16 issue: 2, page(s): 299-313 Issue published: March 1, 1995.
- JC Quick, MA MCFadyen, (2017), *J Occup Health Psychol*, 2017, July 22 (3), 286-298
- Jill Earnshaw, Marilyn J. Davidson, (1994) "Remedying Sexual Harassment via Industrial Tribunal Claims: An Investigation of the Legal and Psychosocial Process", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 23
- Julian Barling, Inez Dekker, Catherine A. Loughlin, E. Kevin Kelloway, Clive Fullagar, Deborah Johnson, (1996) "Prediction and replication of the organizational and personal consequences of workplace sexual harassment", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 11 Issue: 5, pp.4-25
- JAMES E. GRUBER, LARS BJORN *Blue-Collar Blues The Sexual Harassment of Women Autoworkers*, Volume: 9 issue: 3, page(s): 271-298 Issue published: August 1, 1982
- Laurence Barton, Jeffrey Eichelberger, (1994) "Sexual Harassment: Assessing the Need for Corporate Policies in the Workplace", *Executive Development*, Vol. 7 Issue: 1, pp.24-28,
- M.,Munson, Liberty J.,Hulin, Charles L.,Bergman, Mindy E.,Dragow, Fritz *Structural equation models of sexual harassment: Longitudinal explorations and cross-sectional generalizations*. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol 84(1), Feb 1999, 14-28
- Linda Kalof, Kimberly K Eby, Jennifer L Matheson, Rob J. Kroska (2001), *The influence of race and gender on student self-reports of sexual harassment by college professor*, volume: 15 issue: 2, page(s): 282-302 Issue published: April 1, 2001.
- Marilyn J. Davidson, Jill Earnshaw, (1990) "Policies, Practices and Attitudes towards Sexual Harassment in UK Organisations", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 19 Issue: 3, pp.23-27,
- Thomas C. Head, Peter F. Sorensen Jr., Laura B. Pincus, (1995) "Sexual Harassment in the Eye of the Beholder: But What Focuses that Eye?", *American Journal of Business*, Vol. 10 Issue: 1.