

WORK PLACE VIOLENCE - A VITAL LOUD & SOUND VOICE.

Dr. B. Aiswarya, and Dr. G. Ramasundaram***

Abstract: *Work place is an essential part of an individual's existence. In this pretext, the violence perpetuated at the workplace deprives the individual of one's basic human rights. Violence against a major section of the society the women is the ultimate focus of this paper. A simple research has been carried out with employed women to decode the opinion and thoughts they have against work place violence of women. This research article powerfully addresses the issues of work place violence against women, in organisations and the society at large. It envisages the causative factors like power, attitude, personality and behaviour, and its consequences which are categorised as individual oriented and organisation oriented. The moderators have been identified with its direct impact on the dangerous outcomes. The suggestions identified from the research as well as few general suggestions have stated.*

Keywords: *Employed women, violence, safety, work place, legislations.*

1. INTRODUCTION

India, the largest democracy in the world, is the origin of the great civilisation, the Vedas placing the highest form of respect for women. Today, we find women are being treated brutally in the country of Gandhi who stood for nonviolence. The country is facing a severe challenge in protecting its women population from violence – physical, sexual, psychological in public and private territories. The safety and security is at a great risk. Violence is a tool that men use legitimately against women. Violence is a phenomenon which includes a wide range of violations like trafficking in women, rape, abuse and harmful practices. Women safety must be the priority in the country, after all half the population of the country constitute women.

Cultural and social factors that patriarchal men undergo make men take up stereo typed dominated gender roles whereas women take up

* Associate Professor. Loyola Institute of Business Administration (LIBA)
Chennai. Tamil Nadu, India E.mail : aiswaryagr@yahoo.com.

** Associate Professor - Department of Management Studies St. Joseph's College of Engineering,
Chennai Tamil Nadu, India E mail : ramasundaramgr@yahoo.co.in

dependence and concealed wellbeing, mainly she is directed and grown up in a need of protection mode.

Work place violence includes visual, verbal, written physical, use of power, threats and force over women colleagues and subordinates which is deemed to be illegal in all cases particularly, when women are employed in low ranking positions, and are dependent on the approval and good will of male bosses for hiring, retention and career advancement. Economic empowerment of Indian women who have joined the workforce in the past decade. For years, women's rights activists have been saying that gender inequality is at the heart of the pervasive violence against women. The challenge of making India safe for women is arguably the most difficult for any government, and the country's patriarchal society makes the work even more difficult.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

In the Vedic period, women enjoyed a comfortable and respectable position. After that it was only downward trend. Slowly the freedom with respect to their movement, dress, marriage came to be curtailed various restrictions and regulations were prescribed for women in law. Her salvation revolve around her father, husband and then her son. In the medieval period, the purdah system was instated, sati, child marriage, infanticide, polygamy, forced marriage, dowry system took roots in the society. Today 65year independent India is facing as evere damage in the society. May be History repeats.

Violence against women can be defined as "Any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women including threats, coercion, deprivation of ones rights".

According to one study estimate there are about thirty specific forms of violence being committee against women reported in newspaper and other media.

Specifically speaking to harassment at work place include hostile work environment harassment (Dugar, Jayashree and Deora, Yaswant, 2011). It has been historically well kept secret practiced by men, suffered by women, condoned by management and spoken by none. Such cases are alarmingly increasing because of poor status of women, increasing number of working women, poor knowledge of human relations, poor law and order positions in the society and no provision to deal with it effectively.

Harassment of women in public places is one of the biggest problems in the country of 1.2 billion, as policing remains a concern. In any case women face a daily ordeal while traveling in city transports.

2.1 Statistical overview

At least one out of three women has been beaten abused during her life time. More than 60 million women worldwide are considered missing as a result of selective abortions and infanticide. The world health organisation has reported that upto 70 % of female murder victims are killed by their male partners. Interpersonal violence is 10th leading cause of death among women.

According to National crime records bureau (NCRB) Crime clock, 1 crime committed against women every three minutes.1 molestation case every 30 minutes.1 harassment case every 53 minutes. 1 kidnaping every 23 minutes. 1 rape case ever 29 minutes. Four out of 10 women in India have experienced violence at homes.45 % of women have suffered physical and psychological violence. 26% moderate form of physical violence. NCRB states approximately 6000 women are killed in India every year because of dowry. Unofficial estimates 15,000 deaths a year. Which means 16-40 women die every day of dowry.

A national survey statistics states in India states 8% of married women have been subjected to sexual violence , 31% married women less severe slapping , punching, 10% suffered domestic violence like burning or attack. 12 % reported, injury sprains, dislocation, burns, wounds, broken bones. With regard to emotional abuse 14 % of Indian women experienced at some point of time in their lives. These figures are astonishing, but actually they may be gross under estimation.

2.2 Recent instances:

Protests against rape and molestation of women have swept the country after the heinous rape of a 23-year-old girl in New Delhi on December 16, 2012. There have been marches, candlelight vigils and demonstrations. Industry association FICCI set up a taskforce on safety for women which will work towards developing a National Safety Policy for Women to be adopted by the industry. Yet, a few days after the horrific incident, an office cab of a prominent management company carrying four women was stranded in a dark alley in Noida.

2.3 Review of literature

As per Census 2011, the work participation rate for women is 25.51 percent as compared to 25.63 per cent in 2001. The work participation rate for women

in rural areas is 30.02 per cent as compared to 15.44 per cent in the urban areas.

In so far as the organised sector is concerned, in March, 2011 women workers constituted 20.5 percent of total employment in organised sector in the country which is higher by 0.1 percent as compared to the preceding year. As per the last Employment Review by Directorate General of Employment & Training (DGE&T), on 31st March, 2011, about 59.54 lakh women workers were employed in the organised sector (Public and Private Sector).

According to the Assocham Social Development Foundation (ASDF), an assessment was carried out revealing that 48% of women who are engaged in the small-scale sector are extremely worried about their safety and nearly 26% in the medium sector and 23% in the large-scale establishments are scared to step out after the sun sets. .

- 34% women in the low skilled category are worried about their wellbeing, 29% in the moderately skilled section and 8% among high skilled workforce.
- The fast growing BPO/ ITeS, hospitality, civil aviation industry has generated parallel employment for cab drivers who have often been responsible for rash driving, accidents, eve teasing, rape and even murder.
- 86% women on night shifts face commuting problems because of lack of adequate transport arrangements by employers.
- In Bangalore, 75,000-95,000 women work in night shifts. In Bangalore, around 56% women respondents in a survey carried out amongst women working in night shifts in the IT, aviation, hospitals and BPO sector feel unsafe. Delhi topped the list with 65% of women followed by 35% in Hyderabad, 28% in Chennai and 26 % in Mumbai.
- BPO/ITeS is not the only sector with post-sunset shifts. Women nurses have been doing night rounds as also those working in media, airlines, hotels and other service industries.

3. CASES

Kiran said that she was harassed everyday by a man in her neighborhood, who bothers her with lewd gestures and remarks. Instead of informing the police, the 30-year-old has decided to move out. "He has influence over the police so they won't harm him. Only I will get into trouble," she said.

Aparna Mudi, who has worked with organizations in the social sector and is now in the media, said: "There are safety procedures in the dossiers, but those need to be implemented." She said that while many companies reimburse expenses on cabs, they often do not provide safe services on their own.

She recounted that in her last organization one of her juniors was harassed by a client and instead of taking action against the prized client, the girl was asked to leave the job.

Sana Arora, who works at a call center in the city, said that her office has always ensured the safety of all women members. However, she feels that there is a feeling of danger lurking, especially among working women.

A doctor, working in a well-known private hospital, said that doctors, too, have very odd working hours and getting back home late at night is a big security issue. "While I drive back, many of my juniors and colleagues do not have their own conveyance. And even driving back on my own late at night does raise a big question of safety," she says. She added that no hospital in the city has provisions to drop doctors and nurses after duty hours, even late at night.

3.1 List of protective provisions for women employees

As per the women's human rights principle, dignity, universality, equality and non-discrimination, indivisibility, interconnectedness, government and private responsibility are ensured.

In the pre independence era few laws pertaining to crimes mainly rape, assault, abduction, and kidnapping were in vogue. In the post-independence a barrage of enactments criminal, civil, social as a result of equality , non-discrimination and protection to women.

- Section 66(1)(b) of the Factories Act, 1948 states that no woman shall be required or allowed to work in any factory except between the hours of 6 a.m. and 7 p.m.
- Section 25 of the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 stipulates that no woman shall be required or allowed to work in any industrial premise except between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m.

In the Indian Penal code, Homicide for dowry death (Sec 302/304 B IPC), Sexual Harassment (sec 509 IPC), importation of girls (Sec 366 - B IPC), rape section 376 IPC), kidnapping and abduction (Section 363 373 IPC).

Some of the gender special gender specific laws are immoral traffic act 1956, indecent representation of women act 1986, Commission of Sati Act 1987.

A report states 24,000 cases related torape and harassment are lying pending in various courts including SupremeCourt. 21 fast track courts have been setup for speedy trial of pending cases.

4. CONSEQUENCES

Violence against women does has serious impact on the economic development. A combination of legal, judicial, educational, health and other necessary actions can significantly reduce this act and its delirious consequences. These negative experiences have negative and serious repercussions for the women and the organisation. The psychological wellbeing, physical health, and job related attitudes is affected. Further violence leads to reduction in the ability to perform the job, resignation, transfer, demotion, loss of job, decree job satisfaction, depressed morale, damage to interpersonal relations, and several economic losses.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Suggestions

Despite various constitutional safe guards to the dignity of women, there is no possibility where a victim could make a complaint against the incident safely. Police stations with officers are personified as uniformed criminals and women consider the most unsafe place for a women to approach.

Violence against women in India is becoming more frequent and increasing. The biggest responsibility will lie on the women itself. Attitudinal change in society is required if women are to live as free human beings in this world without fear. All men are not responsible for violence against women and all me have to take responsibility to end it (Mishra, 2006).

Management of violence at workplace, necessitates nurturing a value system and ad vocation norms of behavior, developing a culture of mutual respect, ensuring a safe and healthy work environment emphasizing ethical behavior and code of conduct.

This may serve preventive measures against work place violence and harassment. Reactive measures, which includes complaint and reporting channels, behavior monitoring and occurrence of work place hostility and compulsive punishment of proven harassment offenders.

Raja pointed out that no money has been expensed from about \$170m (Rs 1,000 crore) Nirbhaya Fund, which was created for the empowerment of women after the New Delhi gang rape.

Meenakshi Ganguly, head of Human Rights Watch in South Asia, suggested that Modi should ensure that all institutional barriers to women approaching the police should be removed.

Ranjana Kumari, director of the Delhi-based Centre for Social Research, suggested that Modi's first move should be to set up one-step crisis intervention centers in every district of the country. Each center, Kumari said, would offer mental, psychological and legal services as well as compensation. "Bangladesh has done this," she said. "So the woman doesn't have to run from pillar to post looking for justice and relief."

Ruchira Gupta, head of Delhi-based Apnea Aap women Worldwide, an organization that combats sex trafficking, said that the government needed to ensure increased recruitment of women all government departments, and ensure that they were equally represented in the top jobs.

But women's rights activist are concerned that the implementation of law to protect women against sexual offenses, and dowry deaths will be inadequate unless the incoming government pursues long pending police and judicial reforms, which include increasing the manpower, recruiting more female judges and police, and unfolding an intensive gender sensitization programme.

5.2 Objectives of the study

- The study aims to assess the different modes of and the extent of violence happening against women in work place.
- To identify the dimensions of work place violence against women.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out among women employees in various organisations. The sample was selected on convenience basis, requesting 75 women employees and assured anonymity of their identity and responses.

A tested questionnaire was developed comprising 30 statements applicable to Indian context, were assessed and statistically analysed. The study proclaims women being harassed in the work place in some form or the other. The questions were pertaining to power and control, personality, behaviour moderating factors and its consequences.

Power and control: Bosses may impose power and authority over female subordinates.

Personality: The personality and one's appearance plays a key role in violent advancements towards women.

Types of behaviour: Behaviour includes gender related insults, gestures, and a spectrum of behavioural patterns, like verbal comments, dirty jokes, placing demands, and physical assault.

7. FINDINGS

Demographic profile: Respondents of age between 25 to 45 yrs. and all levels of management state a similar opinion on the prevalence of violence in the work place.

7.1 From the study

Women employees are encouraged to report the behavior immediately through formal channels for necessary actions.

The personality of the individual have been found to affect the work place culture, hence ensuring appropriate dress code, and demonstrating mutual respect in language and behaviour can be enforced.

Provide ethical moral training, coaching, empowering employees implementing effective policies, will certainly emphasize zero tolerance of violence and misconduct against women in work place. Respondents believe that the occurrence of sexually suggestive behaviour take place in the work place in some form or the other. Such behaviour have contributed to the hostile working environment, and proved illegal. A higher percentage of respondents have reported untoward behaviour. Harassment is viewed as a behavioural consequence that differ in the minds of men and women. (Buss and Neil 1996).

- Companies to have an internal code to ensure security of women employees and to take measures to ensure they discharge their job in a secure atmosphere
- Governments to make it mandatory for companies to install Global Positioning System (GPS) in cabs, not only in call centres and BPO's but all industries which engage women in night shifts
- Other measures that can be taken include providing self-defence training to women; installing safety devices at the work place; undertaking police

verification of cab drivers, security guards and peons who are deputed on night shifts and setting up efficient complaint redressal systems

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) and FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO) have decided to set up an Industry Task Force on Safety of Women.

The fear is palpable. Working women not just in the capital but across the country are jittery as violence against them is on the rise and doesn't seem to differentiate between the young and the old.

While offices, especially those that keep odd hours like BPOs, take precautions such as drop facilities, many women still feel vulnerable.

A young media person working in the city said the recent rape has prompted her employer to provide a drop-off facility at her office for women employees who work late.

8. CONCLUSION

Work place violence is merging as a local state and national issue. Safe working environment is very much essential for exercising ones fundamental right to practice any profession. It is imperative that rights of women have to be safeguarded by the legal system itself. A submissive approach to the violence against women does not hold good for the growth and empowerment of women, but a will to overcome, the barriers imposed by the society will be the only solution for violence against women. Thus this study focus on the inherent defects in the society and country at large which is actually nurturing violence against women and lack of effective implementation of the laws and effective mechanisms to curb its menace.

References

- Buss, D.M. , & Neil, M. (1996). *Sex power conflict- Evolutionary and feminist perspective.* USA: Oxford University press.
- Mishra, R.C., 2006. *Towards Gender Equality.* Author press.
- Unesco, 1993, United nations: *Violence against women*, 2012.
- World Health Organization, 2012: *Violence against women*, 2013.
- Dugar, Jayashree and Deora, Yashwant, 2011. *Sexual harassment at work place in India.* 2012.
- Bhasin, Alok., 2008. *Sexual harassment at work*, New Delhi: Eastern Book Company.
- Work place violence Statistics, 2010. *Statistics on work place violence*, 2012.

