

A Study On Organisational Policies On Sexual Harassment Prevalent In The Hotel Industry In Chennai

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Abstract: The biggest assets of any organisation are its employees. The workforce and management, basically the employees are essentially the raw resources running it. Good workplace health practice for their employees is always a big concern for all companies, no matter what industry they are in. Because a workplace that is safe and gives importance to health does not just gain healthier employees but they actually gain more. This paper focuses on analyzing the organisational policies like women cell and sensitivity training. Also, how well these policies are catering to the purpose of the target group and the awareness level among women workforce regarding this consequential area. Since this issue is sensitive purposive and snowball sampling is adopted. The respondents include only women employees who were willing to share their experiences. From the below research it is understood that all the 60 women respondents has underwent at least one form of Sexual Harassment. The study revealed that all the respondents accepted that the sexual harassment is vivid in their organization and the major source of sexual violation is the managers. The major limitation in conducting the this original research work is getting a formal authorization from the concerned hotel revealing that this workplace issue is still considered to be trivial and a part of women employed in the hotel industry leading to high attrition in this industry.

Keywords: Hotel industry, Sexual harassment, women workforce, Gender bias, Organisational Policies.

I. INTRODUCTION

Any form of 'unwelcome' behavior towards the opposite or the same sex is labeled as Sexual Harassment. The key term here is Unwelcome and it is colored by sexual remarks and action. Many companies still doesn't have any clear policies and complaint and disciplinary procedures to deal with harassment - or if they have them, they do not implement them. The organizations simply try to sweep it under the rug as if the issue is highlighted, it tarnishes the reputation of the brand.

In a research 76% of the women respondents said they had been harassed at work where the companies had relevant policies. Women often end up resigning rather than complain, since they do not know where to go or if they do complain, it is either treated as a joke or no action is taken up by the management. If management condones such behaviour or in most cases if victims end up being blamed, the perpetrator or the harasser is encouraged to continue the pattern of harassment affecting more and more employees.

Sexual Harassment at work is an extension of violence in everyday life and is discriminatory, exploitative, thriving in atmosphere of threat, terror and reprisal. The issue is of concern for both women and the employers as studies show that sexual harassment touches lives of nearly 40-60% of working women

The alarming issue is that there is a growing trend of men filing claims of harassment in the workplace. According to a report by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission there was a record amount of harassment complaints filed by men in 2006. The figures given in the report state that of the 12,025 sexual harassment. EEOC claims the Sexual Harassment cases filed in 2006, 15.4 percent of these claims came from men. This shows a significant increase of male harassment cases made in the last ten years.

II. SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN HOTEL INDUSTRY

Several research studies has already indicated that sexual harassment ia a major factor in the decline of employees in the

hotel industry. It is also noted that sexual harassment has indeed contributed to the incidence of depression, severe anxiety, and discrimination and productivity leading to high attrition rate. Scholars suggest there is a need to develop insights regarding the social context of sexual harassment by which the factors affecting perception and tolerance of sexual harassment can be assessed effectively. Based on which the interventions and modules can be created for the prevention of SH and which is more relevant to the hospitality industry since sexual harassment as a social issue but at the same time it is unique to each industry or population.

Woods and Kavanaugh (1994) found that more than 80% of men and women perceive gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace as an ongoing problem. Through their 49 - question survey to 1,550 hospitality managers, all of whom had earned a bachelor or master's degree from hospitality management programs within the preceding seven years where 58% of the respondents were women, they found that in many cases the reasons why most women graduates left the hospitality industry was due to gender discrimination or sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is the creation of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Repeatedly staring provocatively and colour jokes or remarks are also considered as sexual harassment

The Human Rights Commission in New Zealand's first study of sexual harassment in the hospitality industry conducted by researchers Neil Lunt and Carl Davidson of No Doubt Research for the HRC. "One of the consequences of considering harassment a part of working in hospitality is that some staff normalise harassment behaviour and dealing with it becomes their responsibility," Mr Lunt says.

A study on hotel industry workers in New Zealand, *the Human Rights commission* concluded that:

- ✓ 31% of New Zealand women report that they have been sexually harassed
- ✓ 13% of New Zealand men report that they have been sexually harassed.
- ✓ And that 19% of sexual harassment complaints received by the Human

Rights Commission were from workers in the hospitality industry

According to another study by *Cornell Quarterly*, February 1994, reports that 64% of female managers in the hospitality industry state they have been sexually harassed at work. Ninety percent report that sex discrimination and harassment occurs on a frequent basis. Over 30% (30.9%) of the female respondents stated they have been sexually harassed by a customer, manager or co-worker 42.4%.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

In India, every 26 minutes a woman is molested, every 34 minutes a rape takes place, and every 43 minutes a woman is kidnapped, according to the *Home Ministry's National Crime Records Bureau*. And sexual harassment in the workplaces is a well-known issue that thousands of women and men encounter on a daily basis.

- ✓ 31% of the female workers claimed to have been harassed at work.

- ✓ 7% of the male workers claimed to have been harassed at work.
- ✓ 62% of targets took no action.
- ✓ 100% of women claimed the harasser was a man.
- ✓ 59% of men claimed the harasser was a woman.
- ✓ 41% of men claimed the harasser was another man.

OF THE EMPLOYEE WHO HAD BEEN HARASSED

- ✓ 43% were harassed by a supervisor
- ✓ 27% were harassed by an employee senior to them
- ✓ 19% were harassed by a coworker at their level
- ✓ 8% were harassed by a junior employee
- ✓ Studies suggest between 40-70% of women and 10-20% of men have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

Sexual harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances. The harasser can be anyone, such as a client, a co-worker, a teacher or professor, a student, a friend or a stranger. The victim necessarily does not have to be the person directly harassed but can be anyone who finds the behavior offensive and is affected by it. The victim and the harasser can be any gender and age.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To understand the women employees awareness on the organizational policies on sexual harassment.
- ✓ To ascertain the effectiveness of organizational measures taken to curb the sexual harassment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study's focus is to confirm with the awareness and prevalence of sexual harassment in the hotel industry (Chennai) that affects the women employees working in this sector.

PILOT STUDY

After the discussion with the industry experts a small scale preliminary study was undertaken to check the feasibility and to improve the design and nature of the research.

UNIVERSE AND SAMPLE SIZE

As regard to the actual size of the universe, due to the practical constraints sufficient and complete data on the women employees employed by them was not given. Instead they permitted to collect the data from 60 women employees whoever is available free and are willing to fill in the questionnaire. Thus adopting *purposive sampling and snowball* method the researcher collected the data from 60 respondents. The tool used for analysis is SPSS.

TOOL USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

The tool used for the data collection by the researcher is ‘Questionnaire’. The method questionnaire was used because of the following two reasons:

- ✓ All the respondents are well educated.
- ✓ The topic is a sensitive one and only questionnaire will be an apt tool.

RESEARCH DESIGN

For the purpose of the present study the researcher has adopted Descriptive and Diagnostic design. The descriptive and diagnostic design is used in the cases of confirming with the prevalence of any issue in the given context and to identify the factors that influence occurrence of such an issue. In this present study since the researcher is interested in the issue of sexual harassment prevailing in the hotel industry, it is decided to adopt this particular design.

The 4 simple frequency tables below indicate the frequency and percentage of women respondents feel that their organisation policy’s is presence and its effectiveness. The below tables also indicates the awareness level of the women employees regarding the Sexual harassment policy present in the organisation.

SL.NO	Any SH policies in your organisation	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	47	78.3
2	No	13	21.7
Total		60	100.0

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents based on the awareness about the presence of Sexual Harassment policies in the organisation

As regard to the above (Table No.1) around 78.3% of the respondents responded affirmatively to the presence of sexual harassment policies in their organisation and 21.7% responded negatively to the presence of such policies

SL.NO	If yes, are you informed the policies	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	50	83.3
2	No	10	16.7
Total		60	100.0

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents abased on the information regarding the sexual harassment policies

As to the above (Table No 2) it is clearly inferred that 83.3% of the respondents are informed about the sexual harassment policies present in the organisation and only 16.7% of the respondents aren’t informed about the policies

SL.NO	Are they effective	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	36	60.0
2	No	24	40.0
Total		60	100.0

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents based on the opinion about the effectiveness about the sexual harassment policies and programs of the organisation

The above (Table No 3) indicates that 60% of the respondents believe in the effectiveness of the policies and programs followed by the organisation to curb the sexual harassment and 40% replied negatively to policies effectiveness

SL.NO	Policies and programs adopted by the organisation	Frequency	Percent
1	women cell	20	33.3
2	sensitivity programme	40	66.7
Total		60	100.0

Table 4: Distribution of the respondents according to the Policies and programs adopted by the organisation

The (Table No 4) 66.7% of the women respondents responds that they have been given sensitivity program regarding sexual harassment and 33.3% responded that there is a women cell operating where the issues of sexual harassment is dealt with

IV. CONCLUSION

It is management's responsibility to observe, to listen, to reassure the employee, and to act as soon as possible and also helping the victim both physically and emotionally overcome the incident. The traditional approach of training only managers is no longer sufficient. There is need for direct training of non-supervisory employees regarding sexual harassment. It is important to understand restaurant employees their perceptions of sexual harassment which will help managers to prepare appropriate sexual harassment policies for and know the areas of difficulty.

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