

# Female Harassment at Workplace Exposes Deeper Social Faultlines

## 1. Introduction

Female's security and protection are inscribed in constitution of every state as basic fundamental right. However, the increasing incidents shows link of female harassment towards societal differences. The issue needs broader societal and institutional reforms.

2. Female Harassment have multiple causes however, all have similar origin - differences in sociological behaviours, ideologies and attitudes towards male and females.

## 3. Social Causes of female harassment at workplace.

- i- Gender inequality
- ii Traditional mindset of society towards females
- iii. Lack of knowledge about female's protection laws
- iv. Prejudice and stereotypes
- v. Limitations in cultural norms for women.
- vi. Power imbalance at work place.

## 4. Consequences of female harassment due to social differences

- i- Psychological and emotional impacts to women
- ii. Decline in ratio of working women in male dominating organisations
- iii. Impact on reputation of an institution.
- iv. Overall impacts on reputation of state.
- v. Increased absenteeism and lack of motivation among female workers.
- vi. Impact on career growth of females.

## 5. Way forward to improve social differences leading female harassment.

- i- Increase awareness about punishment of harassing females.
- ii. Strick laws and policies regarding females.

- iii. Facilitation in reporting harassment incidents
- iv. Educational efforts to inculcate gender equality at grass root level.
- v. Role of effective leadership in fostering culture of respect and inclusivity for women.

#### 6. Conclusion

Addressing workplace harassment not only involves implementing policies, but also a culture of respect, inclusivity and gender equality.



(Please identify which one is better.)

### (Attention Grabber 1)

History is full of inspirational women that played their part in changing the world dynamics: Queen Cleopatra of Egypt, Afro-American Rosa Park, Dr. Ruth Pfao, Mother Teresa etc. They became inspiration for females all around the world that women can do anything and everything for welfare of state. As a result, world has witnessed a significant rise in number of females in all different professions. However, with every good aspect comes a challenging aspect which sounds true in case of working females. While playing their contribution towards the welfare of state, they have to face harassment in different forms.

### (Attention Grabber 1)

Every rose has thorns; every coin has the other side; every garden has weeds and with every good perspective there comes a challenging aspect. That sounds true in case of working female, while playing their role towards welfare of state, she has to face harassment in different forms. Though the history is full of inspirational women that became source of motivation for other females to serve humanity, Queen Cleopatra of Egypt, Afro-American Rosa Park, Dr. Ruth Pfao, Mother Teresa are some of the widely known. Following their footprints, many of women joined different professions however, they have to face harassment.



Gender based social fault-lines creates imbalance among men and women in the certain place. An organisation is an inclusive place where both genders work together. However, in some societies women roles are rigidly defined and women are considered subordinate. Men try to exert control and dominance over females at workplace, if he is at higher position in terms of education, salary and status. As per survey of Pew Research Center, about four in ten working women face discrimination on job because of their gender. Many females prefer to remain silent keeping in view the status of abuser. It is because of the ill mindset drawn by the society in which the abuser has brought in.

Gender inequality is resulted from traditional mindset. In the past, females were restricted to homes and had no rights. After the second wave of feminism the women's rights movement was officially started however, it is still not prevailed in certain cultures and norms. Rebecca Solnit in her book

"Men Explain Things to Me" mentions the mindset of patriarchal individuals who contribute to silencing women. When these men become the part of an organisation, use the same mindset there and often harass females.

Harassment often results when a female doesnot know about the laws for the protection and securing the safety of females. Though the state have enacted laws, even the educated women, do not know enough about them. According to World Bank, more than a billion girls lack legal protection including those outside the home as well as inside the home. If the educated females are less aware, how come the primary pass or less educated could know about the legal protection rights.

Furthermore, prejudice and stereotype can contribute significantly to female harassment in several ways.

Objectification and dehumanization of female - reducing them to mere objects rather than individuals. Another way of prejudice is blaming the victim for the way she dresses invited the unwanted attention. All such points can lead to normalization of harassment and create barriers for women seeking justice and protection against such behaviour. According to survey conducted by Statista Research Department, certain ~~com~~ stereotypes about women seem to be widespread in 97 countries i.e. 26% of respondents believed that women will be better ~~as~~ <sup>at home</sup> ~~a mother~~ rather than a professional lady.

Cultural norms are one of reasons that put limitations on movement of females in the society. Those cultural values put a series of duties on women which are considered as non-interchangeable. Growing in normative society set the beliefs and mindset of those living in; as a result, they would not accept the superiority of females in either profession or <sup>at</sup> any other level. Growing and experiencing <sup>in a</sup> specified cultural values drafted a mindset of males in the society that becomes <sup>one of the</sup> ~~the~~ reasons for female harassment at workplace.

Apart from issues at grassroot level, ~~pre~~ working environment also plays its part. The power imbalance between a male dominating boss and his sub-ordinating female colleagues usually makes the females more vulnerable to harassment. ~~He~~ is forced to hear hateful remarks about her - sometimes more than that. <sup>This power</sup> Abuse provides ~~the~~ opportunity to the abuser to take advantage of situation as often females do not report such incidents in the matter of losing dignity or job. So, power imbalance contributes to social evil of harassment of females in the working environment.

~~Due to increase~~

Female harassment is an unwelcomed behaviour and serious issue that can have psychological and emotional impacts. Verbal, ~~or~~ physical abuse or any kind of environment which makes a woman uncomfortable traumatized her. Usually, it is seen that females prefer not to talk about it ~~rather~~ <sup>rather</sup> ~~concern~~ <sup>concern</sup> a psychologist for emotional healing. According to National Library of Medicine's Article "The Impact of Harassment on Depressive Symptoms During Early Occupational Career", harassment is associated with increased risk of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. As a result, her mental health begins to deteriorate ~~she is unable~~

The impacts of female harassment are not limited to mental health, but also cause decline in number of females at male dominating workplaces. Females usually adopt such careers which have equal representation of females or they leave career entirely. Report "End Poverty in South Asia" by World Bank reports that women's representation in the work ~~place~~ <sup>force</sup> remains low - around 10% for over 20 years in Pakistan - females struggled to enter and stay in the work force. Such incidents restrict the females not to enter in any streamline which is mostly male dominated cause decline ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> number of females at such work place.

Incidents of harassment also impact the reputation of an organization. It takes a way long to make <sup>an</sup> image in the society with a lot of struggles, but incidents of harassment tarnished the image of an institute. It will result into decrease in productivity. Often competitors in the market take advantage of such situations to corner their opponent institute to intensify their production. Drop in one's company reputation has multiple consequences including a significant reduction in sales and

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Incidents of female harassment are linked with the reputation of country. Increasing number of harassment issues at workplace makes the country most dangerous place to live in. As per Women's Danger Index, South Africa, Russia, Brazil and Mexico are the four most dangerous countries for women as per 2023. These rankings affect the global view of a country makes him least desirable for tourism, jobs, FDI (Foreign Direct Investments) etc.

Workplace bullying often leads to absenteeism of females staff results in low productivity. It includes high ratio of those females who are working due to their needs and cannot leave the job. As a result, they prefer to take a break from job work in case of harassment - in case of seeing no support from institution or from colleagues. Taking a break means negligence of work which will result into low productivity.

The harassed female might find these distractions decrease their work performance and affect their career growth in the long run. Under some circumstances, females prefer to continue their job but with a lack of motivation. A 2019 survey by AAUW (American Association of University Women) showed that 38% of women who had been harassed left job by mistaking the factor of harassing, while 37% said that it affected their career advancement. With lack of motivation and distractions they are unable to achieve the desired goals.

The impacts of harassment of females are not limited; to avoid that it is important to raise awareness about it and punishments regarding to it. Most of the females are not aware of <sup>existing</sup> laws and regulations about this issue. Increase awareness through social media, seminars and electronic media will be helpful. Sexual harassment <sup>awareness</sup> training should be part of an organization's onboarding program for new



women and <sup>female</sup> employees at all levels of organization.

Strict laws and policies in case of violation of female's dignity should be part of every institution and state. It is responsibility of an organization to ensure the safe environment for working females, both at formal and informal places. For Example, The Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace (Amendment) Bill 2022, in Pakistan also encompasses both formal and informal places; The legislation includes domestic workers who are often isolated and can be at greater risk of women place violence and harassment. Enactment of <sup>state</sup> laws at institutes will provide a safe place to females to work in.

Another important factor to consider is on-time reporting of harassment incidents. Usually, such incidents are repressed due to complexity of reporting process. Moreover, irrelevant questions by concerned authorities further make the situation more complicated. So, there should be facilitated reporting system that should encourage the victims to report incidents in a simple process. E-reporting could be a better and feasible option in such issues.

To improve the social evil of harassment from grass root level, state needs to improve education system by inculcation of moral values. The concept of gender equality should be taught and practiced in educational institutions. Very often, practice gives better results than theoretical knowledge; it is better to encourage role of female students at school levels to formulate a better mindset of growing youths. Moreover, seminars should be conducted on annual parents-teachers meeting to provide awareness about importance and role of females in society building. It is a long way to go, but the process will start at educational level.



**4 Broad  
Areas of  
Assessment**

**Content**

**Language**

**Structure**

**Coherence**