

"Female harassment at workplace exposes deeper social fault lines"

Outline

1) Introduction

Thesis statement: Harassment of females at workplaces has become an alarming issue, which causes females choosing not to work despite years of studying. Gender biased approach of certain people can become the cause of harassment at workplaces. However, promoting co-education can somehow limit harassment.

2) Relationship between harassment at workplaces and social fault lines.

3) How females harassed at workplaces uncovers social fault lines

- Reveals gender biased approach of individuals
- Exposes how men still objectify women
- Shows persistence of harmful cultural norms and gender stereotypes
- Harassment at workplace unveils failure in accountability mechanisms
- Highlight power dynamics in workplace through which ~~per~~ females are mistreated or intimidated.
- Helps in understanding that men in society have no regard for the dignity of women
- Shows the narrow-mindedness of people in society

4) The implications of harassment on the life of females

- Can lead to increased level of anxiety and depression
- Severe or prolonged harassment can result in PTSD causing flashbacks and nightmares

- c) Workplace harassment can hinder career advancement
 - d) Harassment can lead to loss of income and financial stability
 - e) Victims withdraws from social activities and relationships
 - f) Chronic stress from harassment can cause physical health problems
- 5) How harassment at workplace can be limited by working on social fault lines
- a) Promoting co-education can help both genders learn to work together from start
 - b) Proper interpretation of religion can highlight the importance of women at workplace
 - c) Implement a strict zero-tolerance policy at workplace harassment
 - d) Conduct regular diversity and inclusion training sessions to raise awareness about different cultures
- 6) Conclusion

"We need to turn the question around to look at the harasser, not the target. We need to be sure that we can go out and look at anyone who is a victim of harassment in the eye and say "You do not have to remain silent anymore" (Anita Hill). This shows that when a female is harassed people often question the female as if she instigated the harassment. This needs to be ended and a female should feel safe everywhere. Females that are harassed at workplace exposes

Our social fault lines in such a way that it reveals the gender biased approach of individuals, and exposes how men still objectify women. Moreover, harassment at workplace unveils failure in accountability mechanisms. This harassment has implications on the life of women such as it leads to depression and anxiety and prolonged harassment results in PTSD causing flashbacks and ~~the~~ nightmares. Similarly, it can hinder career growth and lead to loss of income and financial stability. However, harassment at workplace can be limited if co-education is promoted and if proper interpretation of religion is done showing the importance of women at workplace. Harassment of females at workplace has become an alarming issue, which causes females choosing not to work despite years of studying. Gender biased approach of people mainly becomes the cause of harassment at workplace. However, promoting co-education can somehow limit harassment.

Females ~~the~~ get harassed everywhere they do and harassment can be in a form of physical, mental, verbal or even sexual. ~~the~~ Workplace harassment has increased due to the fact that many people are still not open to the idea of females working. Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment (FOSPAAH) show that the complaint rate for sexual harassment in the workplace has increased from 432 in 2019, to 535 in 2020. FOSPAAH annual report 2022 outlined the following figures; the total nu-

number of complaints between 2018 to 2022 were 2169, in the government sector there were 582 lodged by women and in the private sector there were 994 complaints from women. This shows that whether it is a government sector or a private one harassment is faced by females almost everywhere.

Females harassed at workplace uncovers social fault lines in such a way that it reveals the gender biased approach of individuals. Gender biasness means to preferring the male gender over the females, and by doing this employers at workplace give less work to women at workplace and often verbally harass them. According to World Economic Forum (WEF) Gender Gap Report 2023, there has been no improvement since a decade in biasness against women, with almost nine out of ten men and women across the world still embracing such misogynistic notions. This shows that gender biasness still exists causing females being underlooked in workplaces. Hence, gender biasness leads to harassment of women at workplace.

Additionally, it also exposes how men in our society still objectify women. The reason is that in Pakistan women are seen by men as 'sex objects' and they are combating against, when asked to change their views. This kind of approach causes harassment, and not just at workplaces but everywhere. A research by Wesleyan University in 2021 found that on average, across

the whole continent, around 51.8 percent of individuals think of women as sex objects. This shows that despite so much modernity and open minds, people still think of women as objects. Therefore, female harassed at workplaces exposes how men still objectify women.

Moreover, females being harassed at workplaces shows persistence of harmful cultural norms and gender stereotypes. The culture in Pakistan is mostly against the idea of women working. They think work should only be done by men and only the men has the right to earn and women should stay at home. This results in harassment in workplaces as mostly people do not support the idea. For example it is in our culture that a man should be the sole bread earner of the family and a female should be confined at home looking after the kids. This causes less participation of women at work and those women who work mostly face harassment. Hence, harassment at workplace unveils our cultural norms.

In addition to the above, harassment at workplace shows the failure of our accountability mechanisms. In Pakistan mostly no one is held accountable for the harm they cause to society and many men harass women thinking that they won't be held accountable or punished. Mostly men who are caught get bail from the court very easily and they then threaten that woman and her family. This can best be explained by the case study of

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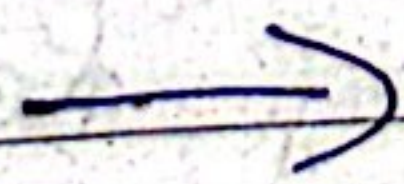
Mukhtaran Mai whose convicts were all caught by the police, but later onwards the fellow tribemen who raped her were released by the Pakistan Supreme court. They were arrested in first place only because this case got popularity through media otherwise they would have never been caught. Hence, our accountability mechanism's failure makes harassment very easy.

Furthermore, females harassed at workplace highlights the power dynamics. This happens because mostly men are at the top ^{executive} places and they harass women verbally and mentally. They start to give more work to females and even ~~ask~~ ask out of the box favours from them, which are totally unnecessary. Once a female refuses to do those favours they threaten them that often results in ^{they} losing ^{their} jobs. The power dynamic theory by A.F.K Organiski explains that, some men may use harassment as means to exert control over women, maintaining gender hierarchies and mostly men are able to do this because men are in the top executive positions. Hence, females harassed at workplace explains the power dynamics of workplace.

Similarly, females being harassed at workplace also shows that men in our society have no regard for the dignity of women. This leads to harassment at workplace because men in our society do not give women the same respect

to the men that are working. They see the women that work as unnecessary humans that should not work and this narrow-minded approach results in harassment. For example women working in a society are considered to be too modern and many men in our society say that women are harassed because they themselves attract other men towards them whereas in Islam a woman can go out of her home to work and her dignity is to be protected and taken care of. Hence, the social fault line helps in understanding workplace harassment.

Additionally, females are harassed at workplaces due to the narrow-mindedness of people in our society. Unfortunately, being a modern country there are still few individuals in our society that are extremely narrow-minded and they are completely against women who work. In order to stop females from working outside their homes, they harass them and make their life extremely difficult. "A society like those exist in Pakistan becomes the main cause of female being harassed and this because most of the population is uneducated and narrow-minded" (M. Varkia, Workplace bullying, Sept 2021). Therefore harassment at workplace takes place due to the narrow-minded approach of people.



However, harassment of females at workplace has implications on the life of females. Harassment often results in increased level of anxiety and depression. Anxiety and depression is caused because those who are harassed have done nothing wrong and working to earn is their basic human right. When this right is violated and a female is confined to stay at home despite years of studying causes anxiety and depression. In government sector, out of 97 sexually or mentally harassed respondents, the majority (42.30%) were depressed at moderate levels and (47.40%) were anxious at the same level. In the private sector out of 138 respondents (56.50%) of females were depressed and had severe anxiety" (Nig-hat Yasmin, Workplace Harassment: Psychological aspects, Jan 2020) Hence, female that are harassed are often in depression and anxiety which causes problems in life.

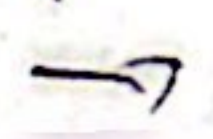
Moreover, severe or prolonged harassment can result in PTSD causing flashbacks and nightmares. Harassment, in most cases results in a trauma, which often causes nightmares. The continuous exposure to distressing events or situations can overwhelm an individual's ability to cope and prolonged harassment involves ongoing psychological trauma which can lead to persistent feelings of fear, helplessness, and terror. Research shows that harassment can cause symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and in another review examining

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mental health of females found experiencing harassment to be the strongest predictor of developing PTSD Symptoms" (Nicole Arze, Victim of Long Term Harassment July 2023). Hence, prolong harassment can result in PTSD causing flashbacks and nightmares.

Another implication of workplace harassment is that it can cause problems in career advancement. It hinders career advancement in such a way that the victim gets afraid to work again and does not look for other opportunities. Once experienced harassment causes trauma which makes it difficult to concentrate on work and also results in low productivity. This low productivity leads to less chances of promotion and causes decline in career. "Employees who experience harassment often find it challenging to concentrate on tasks and be productive. This reduced productivity affects their job performance, and subsequently, their chances for career advancement" (Cortina Magley, Raising Voice, Raising Retaliation, Aug 2020). Hence, harassment at work leads to low productivity which further causes decline in professional growth.

Furthermore, harassment can lead to loss in income and financial stability. Income and financial stability is lost in such a way that the victim after harassment often blames herself and resigns from the job. Once resigned the salary that comes in every month gets ended and this results in financial instability. "1 in 2 women quit jobs after facing sexual harassment in the workplace and 1 in 4 changed career paths" (Nabila Awang, Harassment at workplace, Dec 2021)



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This shows that mostly females quit their job after being harassed. Therefore, resigning from job results in loss of income and generates financial instability.

In addition to the above, females who face harassment withdraw from social activities and relationships. A victim of harassment faces severe trauma and anxiety which makes her to spend her time alone and avoid any social interactions. This withdrawal often deteriorates their existing relation with others. For example, a female who had been harassed at work will not interact with other people because she would not like anyone to know about it and that too because she thinks that other people might judge her. Therefore, mostly victims who end up suffering from this often limit their social activity and this is a serious implication of being harassed.

Moreover, chronic stress from harassment can cause physical health problems. The stress taken from harassment can cause headaches, fever, loss of diet and even sleep and all of this attracts more diseases as your immune system also gets weak because of taking stress.

"According to a study conducted by American Institute of Psychology in 2022, explains that every 3 out of 4 women experience a range of physical symptoms, including stress, anxiety, depression and sleep disorders." This shows that the stress taken by the victim can severely affect the health

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and cause even more serious problems.

However, harassment at workplace can be limited by working on social fault lines as through co-education can help both genders to learn to work together. Working together would reduce the uneasiness of both genders when working together in a professional life. Moreover, through co-education all young people through social interactions would normalize the idea of women working and this will reduce harassment. "Co-education can promote a culture of gender equality and when students learn together, they are more likely to view each other as equals, which can foster mutual respect and reduce the likelihood of harassment" (Phinney Jason, Co-education in a Multicultural Context, Sept 2018) Therefore co-education can help reduce work harassment.

Additionally, proper interpretation of religion can highlight the importance of women at work place. This has the ability to reduce harassment because mostly due to the backward approach and false interpretation of religion these incidents take place. Women, according to Islam are allowed to work and earn living for themselves and their families. Hazrat Khadija (R.A), the first wife of the Holy prophet (P.b.u.h) used to work and was a very successful women of her time. When a female like Hazrat Khadija (R.A) can work, it shows that women in Islam are allowed to work. Hence, the pro-

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per understanding of religion can reduce harassment at workplaces.

Moreover, a strict zero-tolerance policy against harassment at workplaces can reduce harassment. Zero-tolerance policy means that strict action taken against those who harass. This would not only help to get rid of those predators but also prevent further cases of harassment. According to a research conducted by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2021, shows that zero-tolerance policy against harassment at workplaces has caused a decline of 60% cases of workplace harassment. Hence, strict zero-tolerance policy at workplace can diminish future cases of harassment.

furthermore, ^{the} conduct of regular diversity and inclusion training sessions to raise awareness about different cultures can limit work-place harassment. Regular diversity and inclusion training increases the acceptance level of females in the workplace even if they are from a different culture. For example through these trainings activities are conducted among employees through which they work together for ~~an~~ numerous times which develops a sense of respect towards each other which makes harassment chances quite low. Therefore inclusion and diversity training reduces harassment at workplaces.

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Conclusively one may say that females harassed at workplaces does uncover social fault lines as it reveals the gender biased approach of narrow minded people and it shows how women in a society are still objectified. Similarly, it exposes harmful cultural norms and gender stereotypes. The harassment at workplaces has a serious impact on the life of women as it can increase the level of anxiety and depression. A prolonged harassment can result in PTSD and most of the times harassment at workplaces destroys the career of females. However, harassment at workplace can be limited by promoting the idea of co-education and through the proper interpretation of religion. The current picture of harassment at workplaces points a bleak future for females; however, by acting out the suggested remedies this can easily be reduced and overcome.