

Essay

Date 20
M T W T F S S

Workplace Harassment: causes and way forward outline

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Essay

Workplace harassment is one of the most serious problems faced in today's professional world. It includes any unwanted behavior like physical, verbal, sexual or emotional that hurts a person's dignity and ~~creates~~ creates fear or affects their work. Even with progress in gender equality and new labour laws, harassment still exists in both public and private sectors. It can happen to anyone, regardless of gender or social class. The main causes include abuse of power, weak implementation of laws, lack of awareness and cultural attitudes that tolerate or ignore inappropriate behavior. In many workplaces, hierarchical structures and patriarchal norms allow superiors to exploit their authority, while victims often remain silent due to fear of retaliation or social stigma. Additionally, poor internal complaint systems and limited training programs further worsen the situation. Therefore, a strong

and ~~fast~~ practical way forward is essential. The solution lies in building safer workplaces through strict legal enforcement, independent complaint mechanisms and regular awareness sessions for all employees. Organizations must promote a culture of respect, equality and accountability where every worker feels valued and protected. This essay will explain that workplace harassment arises from power misuse, weak institutional frameworks and cultural taboos and it can only be eliminated through strong legal enforcement, effective complaint systems and a respectful, inclusive workplace culture.

One of the leading causes of workplace harassment is the existing of deep power imbalances and rigid hierarchical structures within organizations. In many workplaces, especially in developing countries like Pakistan, authority is often concentrated in the hands of a few individuals who exercise significant control over their subordinates' promotions,

assignments and job security. This imbalance of power creates an environment where harassment can easily occur, where victims do not speak because of fear of ~~not~~ losing job opportunities and damage to their reputation. Supervisors or managers may exploit their authority by demanding personal favours, making inappropriate comments or intimidating employees into silence. For example, The 2018 #MeToo movement in Pakistan also ~~set~~ revealed how power dynamics in workplaces - from universities to entertainment industries - enable senior individuals to harass or exploit their juniors without accountability. Such an unhealthy power culture not only suppresses victims but also erodes organizational ethics and trust. Therefore, it is evident that unchecked power imbalances and rigid hierarchies lead toward increase workplace harassment.

Another ~~causes~~ major cause of workplace

harassment is the weakness of organisational policies and the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms. Many organisations either do not have a clear anti-harassment code of conduct or fail to properly implement. Employees are often unaware of the rules and procedures for filing complaints and in some cases, there are no formal systems at all. Even where policies exist, inquiry committees are biased, slow or influenced by senior management, which discourages victims from coming forward. For instance, in several public sectors in Pakistan, internal committees are either non-functional or dominated by senior officials, which undermines the fairness of investigations. Moreover, the absence of transparent reporting systems and accountability ~~measures~~ measures deepens mistrust and promotes a culture of silence. Hence, when organisational policies are weak and enforcement is inconsistent, workplaces become unsafe and damaging employee institutional credibility.

To address these causes of workplace harassment, there must be strong policies or solutions. In the next paragraphs, solutions will be discussed. Firstly, Implementation of legal standards and strong institutional mechanisms that ensure speed redress is a key step toward eliminating workplace harassment. Although Pakistan introduced the Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010, its implementation has been inconsistent. Many organizations either lack proper complaint strengthening this framework by defining strict timelines for investigation, protecting complainants from retaliation and imposing penalties for non-compliance can make the law truly effective. Institution must also be empowered and independent. There should be regular monitoring to ensure accountability. For example, companies like Unilever and Jazz Telecom have introduced digital reporting platforms and anonymous complaint options, significantly

improving response times and employee confidence. Moreover, awareness and training are essential to strengthen policy effectiveness. In a nutshell, a transparent, legally robust and time-bound system of inquiry supported by independent oversight and awareness programs can build safer workplaces.