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English Essay

Test-2

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1- Workplace Harassment: Causes and Way Forward

Outline

1. Introduction

a- Defining workplace harassment as unwelcome conduct that creates a hostile or intimidating environment.

b- Presenting global and national prevalence despite awareness campaigns and legal frameworks.

c- Highlighting the significance of safe workplaces in promoting equality, justice and productivity.

d- Thesis statement: Workplace harassment persists due to patriarchal attitudes, power imbalances, weak institutional accountability, and lack of awareness.

To combat workplace harassment and ensure dignity, safety and equality at work, robust legal enforcement, gender-sensitive mechanisms, education, and cultural transformation are needed.

II- Understanding Workplace Harassment

- a- Identifying forms of harassment: verbal, physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual.
- b- Recognizing victims: both genders affected, but women disproportionately targeted.
- c- Stating examples from Pakistan: DKT International case, government officers, and private organizations.
- d- Framing harassment as a violation of fundamental human and labor rights.

III- Root Causes of workplace Harassment

- a- Perpetuating Patriarchal Mindset and Gender Inequality
- b- Exploiting Power Imbalance and Authority
- c- Neglecting Organizational Accountability
- d- Weakening Legal Implementation
- e- Normalizing Cultural Stigma and Victim-Blaming.

IV - Impact of workplace Harassment

- a- Inflicting Psychological and Emotional Distress.
- b- Damaging Professional Growth and Motivation.
- c- Undermining organizational Credibility
- d- Reinforcing Social Inequality

V- Legal and Institutional Framework in Pakistan

- a- Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 and its 2022 amendment.
- b- Establishment of inquiry committees and ombudpersons at federal and provincial levels.
- c- Role of the Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Prevention of Sexual Harassment (Fos PATH).
- d- Judicial interventions - Supreme Court and High Court precedents.

c- Gaps between policy and implementation

VI- Learning from Case Studies and Global Movements

a- DKT International case (2023) : Ignored complaints, weak inquiry, foreign NGO negligence.

b- Supreme Court Ruling (2025) : Emphasized gender-sensitive inquiries and fair procedures.

c- #Me Too Movement : Global awareness and solidarity empowering victims.

d- Learning key lessons : Promoting ~~and~~ accountability, confidentiality, and institutional sensitivity

VII- The Way Forward

a- Enforcing workplace laws Effectively

b- Gender-Sensitive and Trauma-Informed workplace Reforms

c- Promoting Awareness and Capacity Building

d- Transforming Culture through Education and Media

e- Empowering victims through Protection and Support

VIII- ConclusionIntroduction and three body paragraphs

Workplace harassment has emerged as a critical challenge in Pakistan's professional landscape, threatening both human dignity and institutional ethics. It includes verbal, physical, psychological, and sexual misconduct that creates hostile and unsafe work environments. Despite legal safeguards such as the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 and its 2022 amendment, enforcement remains weak. According to a 2020 Ministry of Human Rights Survey, 68% of working women in Pakistan have experienced some form of workplace harassment, while over 90% of cases go unreported due to fear of stigma or job loss. Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah's judgement (2025) further emphasized that harassment is less about sexual desire and more about 'control and domination', reflecting entrenched gender hierarchies. workplace

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harassment in Pakistan persists due to patriarchal mindsets, power imbalances, weak institutional accountability, and lack of awareness. Robust legal enforcement, gender-sensitive mechanisms, education, and cultural transformation are necessary to combat workplace harassment and ensure dignity, safety, and equality at work.

To understand why workplace harassment persists, it is essential first to grasp what constitutes harassment and how it operates in professional spaces.

Workplace harassment manifests in various forms, verbal abuse, unwanted physical contact, psychological intimidation, and sexual advances, all designed to humiliate or dominate the victim. While it affects both genders, the majority of victims are female, particularly in male-dominated fields where gender hierarchies are rigid. In Pakistan, cases such as the **DKT International scandal** reveal how senior officials exploit authority through coercion, verbal assault, and unethical behavior. Similarly, numerous reports from government and private institutions reflect the same culture of

impunity. Research indicates that only 35% of organizations have functional anti-harassment committees as mandated by the 2010 Act, leaving most employees unprotected. The problem is not isolated misconduct; it represents a systematic violation of human and labor rights, undermining equality, workplace morale, and the very idea of professional integrity.

Having understood its forms and prevalence, it becomes crucial to explore the deeper causes that allow workplace harassment to thrive.

The roots of workplace harassment lie in a blend of societal attitudes, institutional weaknesses and cultural stigma. First, Pakistan's patriarchal mindset fuels gender inequality, viewing women as subordinates. Stereotypes about women's role at home and tolerance for sexist humor normalize inappropriate conduct. Second, the misuse of authority sustains abuse. Supervisors exploit professional dependency while subordinates fear retaliation, creating an imbalance that discourages complaints. Third, organizational apathy is widespread. Many

Institutions either fail to form inquiry committees or conduct biased investigations lacking gender sensitivity. Weak implementation of the law compounds the problem; inquiries are delayed and outcomes rarely enforced. Moreover, limited awareness of ombudsperson offices means many victims remain unaware of redressal options.

Finally, cultural stigma and victim-blaming reinforce silence.

As studies suggest, over 90% of victims never report harassment, fearing defamation, societal backlash, or career loss.

These intertwined causes maintain a culture of impunity that normalizes harassment as an unfortunate "part of the job".

Understanding the causes of harassment leads naturally to examining its consequences, not only for individuals but for organizations and society at large.

The consequences of workplace harassment extend far beyond the immediate act, inflicting personal, professional, and institutional damage.

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Psychologically, victims suffer from anxiety, depression, and even post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); data show they face a 40-60% higher risk of stress-related disorders than unaffected colleagues.

Professionally, morale and productivity decline, often leading to forced resignations or transfers, as seen in the DKT International case. Organizationally, harassment erodes trust and damages reputation.

It also affects financial performance by increasing turnover and legal liabilities.

Conversely, companies that implemented anti-harassment training saw a 20%

drop in reported incidents and a 15% rise in employee satisfaction,

illustrating that prevention strengthens both ethics and efficiency. Socially,

the issue perpetuates gender inequality by discouraging women's participation in the workforce.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah's observation that harassment serves as a "tool to police and punish women who disrupt male-dominated spaces" underscores that its impact is not individual but structural, one that hinders social justice and national development.

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