

English Essay

Work place harassment: Causes and Way Forward

Outline

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- 2- What is Workplace harassment
- 3- Thesis Statement

(B) Causes of Workplace harassment

- 1- Patriarchal mindset and gender stereotype normalize unequal treatment
 - a) Dismissal of Zainab Zahra Awan during maternity leaves
- 2- Weak enforcement of antiharassment laws fails to deter offenders: encourage harassment
 - a) Protection against harassment of Women Act (2010) fails to be executed
- 3- Conservative social norms discourage open discussion about harassment: reinforces greater harassment
 - a) Gulf countries flight attendants avoid reporting workplace harassment
- 4- Stereotyping Women as frail
 - a) Considering Women as unfit for leadership roles

5. Flawed male upbringing fosters lack of respect for women in workplaces
- a) Parents' role in reinforcing of normalization of male dominance

(C) Way Forward

- 1- Social reformation through family values and education
- 2- Strengthening reporting mechanisms
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The Essay

According to Aurat foundation 2023, more than 68% of working women in Pakistan have faced some form of harassment at their workplaces. This is an alarming figure that highlights the deep-rooted gender imbalance within the professional framework. Workplace harassment refers to any kind of harassment that cause verbal emotional, physical or

mental distress to an employee. Harassment could be verbal, physical, psychological intimidation or sexual violence. It disrupts the victim's sense of security, affects job performance and erodes the moral fabric of an organization. It can be various forms of unethical jokes, inappropriate gestures, offensive remarks, gender biasness, cutting women from leadership roles, undermining the capabilities of an employee and victim blaming. Work place harassment is caused due to patriarchal mindset and gender stereotyping that normalizes male dominance, weak enforcement of gender based laws potentially reinforce greater harassment, conservative social and cultural norms deter victims to openly discuss encourage gender biasness, stereotyping women as frail and considering them as unfit for leadership roles; last but not least; flawed male upbringing fosters lack of respect for women at workplaces. Certain long term and short-term solutions can be considered to address this deep rooted and horrendous issue of the society such as social reformation through family values and education, strengthening reporting mechanisms, encouraging women's representation in leadership roles, strict implementation of anti-harassment laws and

parenting education for raising respectful citizens.

One of the significant cause of workplace is patriarchal mindset and gender stereotyping that is deeply ingrained in society. Patriarchy is a sense of male dominance that is socially constructed by society. It considers female as subordinate and men view themselves more assertive and powerful. Gender stereotyping is also a socially construct concept in which society views women as less powerful and they should be confine to the four walls of a house. This power imbalance encourages workplace harassment and erodes respect of a women. Recent Zainab Zahra Awan case fairly justifies the patriarchal mindset and gender stereotyping; where she was subjected to harassment and fired during her maternity leaves; is a phenomenal example of considering women as subordinate and it tags women only for producing children and confine to the house. A lot more cases in our society justifies the ingrained patriarchal mindset. This social conditioning fosters a belief that women's presence in workplace is secondary or undeserved, making them easy targets of exclusion and harassment. Consequently, such biasness lead to

toxic behaviour where men misuses power and authority to assert control or dominance. This is a deep-rooted issue in our society which can only be addressed via long-term solution.

Another major cause of workplace harassment is the weak enforcement of laws and the institutional failure for its implementation. Laws and policies are formulated and passed but they remain only on paper, its execution and implementation remain ineffective in the real world.

Protection against harassment of Women Act (2010) is formulated in Pakistan, against harassment of Women at workplaces, but it remains largely ineffective due to weak enforcement, fragile institutional framework and lack of awareness among masses. People are mostly unaware of laws due to lack of proper education and weak publicity of punishment. ^{to} not obey these laws effectively. Also, many organizations lack formal committees or even if they exist, positions are filled with biased individuals that favour the perpetrator. Moreover, the executives of organization do not consider it a heinous crime and have lack of such policies in their framework. In addition, absence of surveillance, lack of monitoring and

involvement of executive branch in this crime deter the through investigation. Consequently, it embeds into the victim's mind that there would be no proper action against the perpetrator; in this way it encourages the perpetrators for greater harassment. Therefore, Without active enforcement, proper monitoring and independent oversight this issue can not be uprooted from the workplaces.

A deeply rooted cause of workplace harassment is flawed upbringing of males that foster lack of respect for women at the workplaces. Society often justifies the inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour of boys. From early childhood, boys are often excused for aggressive behaviour, under the common phrases "**boys will be boys**". While girls are taught Submissive behaviour, modesty, Silence, patience and reserveness. This imbalance in moral education fosters the sense of impunity among men and suppress confidence among women. This social stigma justifies their misapropriate behaviour and they claim to be held unaccountable for their mischievous acts. Families, institutions and society early emphasize emotional intelligence and

Sympathy in male children. This leads to lack of understanding and respect. Over time, these psychological conditions contribute to toxic masculinity, which later manifests in the form of harassment; majorly at workplaces. Thus, without reforming early socialization and parenting education programs, workplace harassment continues to resurface across generations and a vicious cycle of fostering such immoral and deprived from sense of morality norms inculcated into the minds of males that later would be reason of workplace harassment.