

Women Harassment at Workplace: A Study of Pakistani Television Channels

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Abstract

The present study explores the contemporary status of women harassment in Pakistani media industry taking alongside theoretical consideration of liberal feminism theory. An empirical method was adopted and in-depth interviews were conducted with media employees of both genders at television channels of the country. The study examined six core dimensions of harassment including working environment of the organization, male dominance, women harassment at workplaces, stereotype thinking patterns about women, offensive remarks on appearance of female colleagues and reporting of harassment issues to explore the current situation of women harassment in television channels of high repute.

Findings of the study revealed that regardless of their ample role in thriving Pakistani media, women journalists are facing harassment at their workplaces but majority of them lesser likely to report harassment issues. Existence of stereotype thinking patterns about women and offensive remarks about appearance of women point towards severity of situation about women harassment at Pakistani media industry. Interestingly, despite male domination in media industry, general environment of media organizations is reported as satisfactory at large, whereas research concludes with highlighting areas for people working within and outside media organizations to eradicate harassment at workplaces.

Keywords: *Women harassment, male dominance, stereotype thinking patterns, Pakistani media, reporting of harassment.*

Introduction

It is an established fact that woman is equally important to build the economy of a country as man. Realizing this fact the working culture of women was initially developed and promoted in European countries. Gradually this trend flourished throughout the developed world and today women with notable proportion from world population are contributing towards the economy. Although Pakistan is a male dominating society but women are working in almost every field of life. The ratio of working women is gradually increasing in the country due to the positive changes in social system of Pakistan and emergence of various female friendly occupations and workplaces which have attracted large number of women to work outside the home and contribute to their country's economy. Media particularly private electronic media is one of these rapidly growing industries of Pakistan.

Pakistani media has emerged as large-scale industry with great potential and unfurled several opportunities for women to explore their capabilities with suitable working conditions. Consequently women are acting swiftly to become the part of this successful market and working at different positions including news caster, anchors, writers, producers, reporters, editor, etc. But the conventional societal structure with male dominance has raised concerns for physical, psychological and emotional securities of women within their working cultures. Uncertain

circumstances and unsecure environs accelerate risk regarding women harassment at workplaces as it is disclosed in a report of “Alliance Against Sexual Harassment” (AASHA) that about 93% females face harassment at their respective private or public sector organizations (as cited in SPDC, 2009).

Present study has taken into account this apprehensive situation and analyzed the issue based on ground realities. Women harassment with regard to electronic media in Pakistan has been sporadically explored by researches; however less attention has been paid towards the severity of situation. Harassment issues can be one of the biggest hurdles for working women in media organizations, which keep them away from productive work and accordingly impede them from effective contributions towards poverty alleviation, however several initiatives by organizations have not lucratively eradicated gender and racial gaps (Schmader, 2010).

This piece of research establishes the realization of much needed awareness among media personals about harassment issue so that women journalists can create awareness for public because it is observed that ‘all major news topics are as male-oriented’ and gender issues are generally ignored in media or taken as of low newsworthiness (Van Dijk, 1995).

Objectives

The core purpose of this study was to probe the women harassment issues in Pakistani media industry; however considering the wide range capacity for exploration more explicit objectives were to explore:

- the current status of working women’s harassment at Pakistani television channels
- suggest some recommendations for the improvement of the situation.

An overview of empirical literature focusing women harassment with diverse outlooks assisted this research in bringing novelty to this study along with knowledge augmentation of topic under discussion. Various studies (Barling, J., Rogers, A. G., & Kelloway, E. K., 2001; Berdahl, J. L., & Moore, C., 2006; Dekker, I., & Barling, J., 1998; Ellis, S., Barak, A., & Pinto, A., 1991; Fitzgerald, L. F., Shullman, S. L., Bailey, N., Richards, M., Swecker, J., Gold, Y., Ormerod, M., & Weitzman, L., 1988; Schneider, K.T., Swan, S., & Fitzgerald, L. F., 1997) have been carried out considering women harassment at workplace as their focal point, as some of them have focused psychological impacts of harassment on women and some explored its causes along with prevention strategies.

Rydell, R. J., and Boucher, K. L. (2009) have investigated and explored those situations where negative stereotypes expose their power to influence others along with that role of self-esteem in exclusion of impacts of negative stereotypes. SPDC (2009) conducted a survey on workplace violence and sexual harassment in Pakistan from 310 Pakistani working women and result shows that 26% confronted different forms of violence such as threats, beating, exposure to dangerous materials, and lifting of heavy objects’, however ‘40% reported that they encountered harassment while 36% said that they knew of cases where either their friend or colleague experienced sexual harassment. It also concluded that harassment ratio is higher in private sector as compared to public.

Fairchild, K., and Rudman, L. A. (2008) have taken into account women harassment with reference to their daily public life regardless indicating workplaces and found stranger harassment as daily experience of a woman’s life. Moreover while considering stranger harassment as discrimination it stated that daily harassment can cause depression and eating disorders, increased fear of rape and restriction of movement among women.

Malamuth, N. M., and Briere, J. (1986) have conducted research on analyzing indirect effects of sexual violence in media against women and found that sometimes few features, which usually provoke violence against women, turn to cause sexual harassment and other nonviolent acts. Vijayasiri, G. (2008) studied sexual harassment reporting with regard to explore influence of organizational cultures and trust in complaining about harassment cases and concluded that ‘married or separated women are more likely to report harassment than never married, divorced, or widowed women’.

Schultz, V. (2003) mentioned that despite presence of laws to prevent sexual harassment aided in averting the situation but ‘larger institutional and cultural forces’ make vivid difference in this regard because these two actually practice laws in daily life. Tracey, J. B., Tannenbaum, S. I., and Kavanagh, M. J., (1995) in their study found strong impacts of workplace environment on newly trained employees. Several studies (Bell, S. E., & Braun, Y. A., 2010; Castilla, E. J., 2011; Dencker, J. C., 2008; Denissen, A. M., 2010; Rhoton, L. A., 2011; Ely, & Meyerson, D. E., 2000) have empirically focused on gender issues including gender inequalities with reference to professional work places. Pakistani media as being the fourth pillar of the state has appeared as a magnificent industry with great potential for working women. However, while working in this field, women also face unpleasant behaviors from their male colleagues.

To investigate the situation following aspects were monitored at the television channels:

- working environment of the organization;
- male dominance;
- women harassment issues;
- stereotype thinking patterns about women;
- offensive remarks on appearance of female colleagues and
- reporting of harassment issues.

The selection of the above-mentioned factors is based on the conclusion, after reviewing the relevant literature. In Pakistani society women harassment issues intermittently appear in media and even more erratically in researches. The raising cases of harassment also indicate towards wide gap of coverage and research. Considering the massive negative impact of harassment acts against women and negligible coverage along research in this area the present study focused to explore women harassment issue with regard to Pakistani media. Thus this piece of research can be considered one among few initial contributions from Pakistan about women harassment in media.

This study can significantly assist in decreasing women harassment by creating awareness equally among media personals and other working women. Several non-governmental-organizations including ‘Alliance Against Sexual Harassment at Workplace’ (AASHA) along with others are functioning in Pakistan for eradicating women harassment at workplaces by designing campaigns, conducting seminars, distributing brochures, public service messages on print and electronic media etc. Findings of this study can serve these organizations by enlightening them regarding contemporary status of women harassment at workplaces. Moreover, present study can motivate female journalists for openly starting debates on this issue and eventually they can stimulate Government of Pakistan for implementing the protection against harassment of women at the workplace Act in more practical manner.

Initially, there were some sections in Pakistan Penal Code who attempt to address harassment to a certain extent, called as ‘The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2009’. On 09 March 2010, President of Pakistan signed the ‘The Protection against Harassment of Women at

the Workplace Act 2010' which was unanimously passed by the National Assembly of Pakistan on 21 Jan 2010 and by the Senate of Pakistan on 26 Feb 2010. The Act aims at providing safe working environment to women and all governments, public / private sector organizations & educational institutions are legally bound to implement it.

Theoretical Framework

This research paper empirically focused on working environment for women in Pakistani media organizations, as well as working relationship between males and females at workplaces have also been explored in order to determine gender predisposition and male dominance in media industry. Theoretically, liberal feminism theory has addressed this issue and typically asserts the equality of men and women through political and legal reforms, moreover 'general theme of liberal feminism is equality of rights or the extension of men's rights to women' (Dickerson, M.O., Flanagan T., & O'Neill, B., 2009: 199-200).

Liberal feminism theory indicates that personal and positive communications between men and women can work as preliminary point for transforming societal structure with regard to gender equality. This research has also examined workplace interactions between male and female staff. Liberal feminism generally speaks for elimination of gender based favoritism or prejudice at workplaces and for creation and implementation of better laws. This approach can be characterized for creating awareness among females against exploitation of their rights. Present research is also aimed at creating awareness among Pakistani women working in media organizations that they are not inferior to men, thus liberal feminism provides theoretical orientations for this research.

Methodology

Prime objective of the study was to observe current situation of women harassment in Pakistani media thus an empirical method was adopted and in-depth interviews were conducted with media employees including both men and women. Generally, 'in-depth interview provides understanding [and allows] the researcher to move in different directions, take time to see that all approaches, theories/ideas have been explored. It also allows interviewees to tell their stories as they see them; the text is their story' (Hocking, Stacks & McDermott 2003, p.211). Another advantage of the in-depth interview is that 'the researcher not only collects detailed information from their interviewees, but also poses follow-up questions on the topic and importantly, uses interview time to obtain even 'unexpected' information that other types of research methods might not be able to discover'.

In qualitative research, as Lindlof (1998) explains, most sampling techniques depend not on principles of random probability but on purposeful selection that is intentionally slanted toward information-rich cases. This study has used a non-probability (purposive) sampling strategy, 'snowball sampling technique', in selecting the potential respondents and collecting the relevant information to accomplish the research objectives. 'Snowball sampling uses a person, usually an informant, as a source for locating other persons from whom a type of data can be generated, who then refer the researcher to other persons, and so on' (Lindlof, 1998). One asset of snowball sampling is its efficiency in finding persons whose attributes are fundamental to the research problem. In total, 30 interviews (including fourteen men and sixteen women) were analyzed in equal quotas of 6 each from a group of five television channels including Geo News, Dunya News, Express News, PTV News, and City 42. These channels were selected on the basis

of noticeable viewership and of high reputation channels of Pakistan. Several observations determine these channels as famous and have large number of women employees.

Harassment refers to several types of threats aimed at disturbing someone in various manners but to operationalize this study specification of the term was much needed, thus the research has mainly considered harassment as an act of psychologically scaring women at work place, where male and female employees both work together. Therefore any act of pushing working women into emotional and mental panic at selected channels, has been considered as women harassment at workplace for further carrying out this research. Initially, a checklist was designed to collect data. The in-depth interviews used both closed-ended and open questions about all the factors including working environment of the organization; women harassment issues; male dominance; stereotype thinking patterns about women; offensive remarks on appearance of female colleagues and reporting of harassment issues.

Findings and Results

The findings show that the respondents were satisfied with the environment of the respective media organization and 87% of the interviewees, in which 46% were women and 56% were male respondents, admired their office settings and working conditions. 13%, with equal proportion of male and females as 50%, mentioned that they are not satisfied with working environment and general atmosphere of their organizations.

Another indicator which led this research towards determining women harassment at workplaces was response regarding women harassment at their media organizations. 53% of the total respondents, consisting 25% males and 75% females, admitted that various types of women harassments exist in their offices. However, 47% of respondents, with 71% of males and 29% of females, denied any harassment case in their media organizations. Interestingly, a large majority 47% refused existence of harassment in their workplaces, and admitted that women harassment exist in other workplaces except in those media organizations they work.

Situation regarding male dominance in media industry was also explored and 53% of the respondents including 25% men and 75% women, confessed male or gender based supremacy in their organizations. But 47% of respondents as 86% and 14% of men and women respectively refused male dominance in their workplaces.

According to the large majority of respondents, in Pakistani media industry male proportion is quite high as compare to ratio of female employees as just one five or 20% of total media employees. However percentage of male workforce dominates with 80% of male staff.

Stereotype thinking patterns about women was particularly questioned by respondents and majority of them as 53% including 25% men and 75% women mentioned that stereotype, conventional and rather conservative approaches exist in institutions they work. Rest of 47% interviewed media employees with 43% of males and 57% females rejected any stereotype thinking within their office settings, but majority among those 47% respondents stated that conservative thinking patterns regarding women subsist in other occupational structures.

Questions about making offensive remarks about appearance of female by the male colleagues were asked as core indicator for exploring women harassment at their workplaces. According to responses, 60% interviewees with 44% of men and 56% of women mentioned that male colleagues make offensive remarks about appearance of their female counterparts. Along with that 40% including equal proportion of both male and female respondents as 50% asserted that men do not make offensive remarks about appearance of female at their media organizations but generally it happens in other offices and workplaces.

Reporting harassment can significantly assist in coping with frequently getting worse situation about women harassment at their workplaces and regarding reporting of any case about women harassment with regard to their workplaces was also asked by respondents. But majority as 60% respondents including 56% and 44% of men and women accordingly said that any female employee did not reported any harassment issue in their organizations and women employees generally don't report in other media organizations.

However, 40% containing 33% of men and 67% of women respondents commented that women working in media industry were confident enough to report any harassment issue if they themselves or other women working in media would experience it during their jobs.

Discussion

Fundamental focus of this study was to probe existing situation of women harassment in Pakistani media. The responses have been composed in six primary parameters, discussed below, which facilitated in establishing vivid picture of women harassment at television channels.

Working Environment at Television Channels

Atmosphere of any workplace essentially determines productivity grid of its employees and poor work settings can plunge the situation into disarray. Harassment at workplace has been vitally associated with environment of the organization, as it causes and prevalence can be understood with an extensive examination of workplace environment. It is endorsed that 'organizational culture is key to understanding how and why sexual harassment occurs in some organizations and not in others', moreover, overlooking behaviors of office administration regarding any offensive or harassment issue may trigger numbers of these issues in those working structures (Hunt, C., et al., 2007). Dekker, I., and Barling, J. (1998) have also discussed that adequate organizational standpoints can assist in coping with sexual harassment issues from reduction to prevention.

Respondents of present study were also questioned about environment of their respective media office and majority of three-fourth (87%) interviewees ranked their workplaces as positive and suitable for productive output. A negligible number of interviewees as only 13%, with equal proportion of male and female, mentioned that they are not satisfied with their working environment and general atmosphere of their organization. It is also interesting to understand that office 'climate and culture' profoundly influence working behaviors of newly joined employees and consequently observing any type of harassment from office member can possibly indulge or attract those appointed recruits into harassment related activity (Tracey, J. B., Tannenbaum, S. I., & Kavanagh, M. J., 1995).

All the respondents from metropolitan channel (City 42) marked their working experience as excellent because they are provided with professional working environment, despite majority of respondents started their career from that channel. However some of the respondents from that channel criticized congested building structure located in packed area but they acknowledged discipline of the channel.

A female respondent from 'PTV News' declared her office environment as very secured and supportive for her creativity enhancement. Another female respondent with seven years of experience in media industry admitted that Pakistani media environment towards women is not friendly and proportion of women is very less as compare to number of men in most of Pakistani media organizations. Majority of female respondents mentioned that women are being respected but they have not been appointed on managerial positions rather they are welcomed for working in front of camera for attracting more viewers to their channels. A female respondent among

those 13% respondents who were not satisfied with working atmosphere of their offices indicated that work conditions often become so stifling at times, with men staring and making cheap comments.

However wrapping up all responses takes the study to the statement that generally the environment for women employees in Pakistani media organizations is quite accommodating and encouraging but situation cannot be declared as spick and span as there are some issues need to be seriously addressed.

Male Domination in Channels

Harassment at workplace typically takes place due to gender imbalance in organizations as Hunt (2007) considered 'gendered composition of the occupation' as essentially significant. Hong (2003) while discussing causes of gender stereotyping mentioned that 'centuries of a male-dominated life style' have largely affected cultural and societal structures, where women have been placed 'in a subordinate role'. In addition Malamuth, N. M., and Briere, J. (1986) confessed the existence of harassment and particularly harassment acts and involvement of majority of men into that act. Statement of a female respondent of present study has been mentioned before that in Pakistani media women have not been posted on executive positions and Dencker, J. C. (2008) approved this inequality by considering female proportion as underrepresentation caused by reforms in corporate sector.

Inadequate gender ratio particularly at administrative posts is also making work conditions worse for female as Castilla (2011) has described that managerial positions principally influence structures of their respective organizations including percentage of gender in offices and other matters related to gender. Rhoton (2011) has provided another picture of women working in a media organization which explains that several women evolve a cap around themselves made of societal norms and etc. In present study respondents were also asked questions about male supremacy in media organizations and more than half of interviewees as 53%, comprising 75% or three-fourth of the women, admitted prevalence of gender bias in their offices. A male respondent from those 53% argument that domination is in nature of men and they cannot avoid it, along with that some of female respondents were found giving justifications for male supremacy as at managerial positions men cannot overlook their dominancy in order to determine their ownership and status.

A young female respondent stated that despite female ratio is raised in Pakistani media male still remained dominant. Another female respondent expressed her views that as male employees are more reliable for authorities to perform difficult task and overlooking female employees, administration give tricky assignments to male employees and prolong male supremacy in their organizations.

A male respondent of this study described that working women face and experience male dominancy even from society regardless specifying any occupation or organization. Some of other female respondents discussed that women journalists have not been given significant assignments but a male interviewee explained male primacy in his words that men are biologically powerful and male dominancy don't take place in our society but in whole world because it is natural ability of men.

However, 47% of the interviewees dominantly including men as 86% rejected the notion of male dominancy in workplaces and this percentage demonstrates gender bias in responses where male interviewees did not believe vivid fact but a female respondent validate male

dominancy by asserting that in tough times male staff cooperate with us and female employees take benefits of their counterpart's superiority.

Women Harassment at Workplaces

This study has critically explored women harassment at workplaces focusing Pakistani media, but certain observations and literature available determine its generic existence as 'Alliance Against Sexual Harassment' (AASHA) has revealed that almost 93% of women confront different forms of sexual harassment in the workplace in both private and public sector organizations (as cited in SPDC, 2009). Along with that mutually understood definition of sexual harassment consider it an unwanted act, sexual in its nature, often physical, verbal or non-verbal and disgracing recipients within their working organizations (SPDC, 2009).

Hunt (2007) have described certain characteristics of harassing and being harassed individuals as earlier ones are often male, competitive, hard-driving and with low levels of self-monitoring behaviour and later ones are usually female, young, single or divorced and with relatively low levels of education, moreover women harassment at workplaces takes place 'where there is an unequal sex ratio; where there are large power differentials between women and men'.

Keeping in view the exploration regarding existence of women harassment in Pakistani media organization, this study asked questions from respondents to attain objectives of this study and result shows clear majority of 53% respondents accepting women harassment at their media offices. However, among those 53% there were large majority of female respondents as 75% who accepted existence of women harassment in their offices and indirectly this acceptance can be taken as female respondent's personal experiences which they were possibly reluctant to state with their own references.

A female respondent told that harassment is not only confined to any physical attempt but it is extended to staring at women in disgusting manner, using them as sex symbol and passing remarks about their appearances, all these activities can eventually disturb them psychologically and can affect the productivity of work. Another female respondent gave her opinion that at workplaces women should be very vigilant to ensure their security from harassment acts. A woman respondent accepted harassment in her organization as so many tactics have been used by her male counterpart to harass female office members. Another female respondent told her personal experience of being harassed by a male on a managerial position.

However, 47% of respondents with large majority of male respondents rejected any harassment act within their organization but they accepted its presence in society at large. A woman interviewee considered harassment as uninvited comments but harassment acts have become so lesser to observe in large organization because of increased awareness among women, but a male respondent contradicted with previous statement that women always have to face harassment at their jobs however it does not happen in his channel.

A male respondent expressed that only sexual harassment should be considered as harassment and other acts as gazing women have been accepted as normal act in our society, but that respondent denied any evidence of harassment in his channel. Identifying harassment in society and rejecting it in own organizations indicate respondent's hesitancy towards existence of harassment in their office, in order to avoid associating bad label with their organizations.

Stereotyped Thinking Patterns about Women

It can be observed that members of society consciously or unconsciously attach certain stigmas to those things which appear to be against normative or rather conventional structure of society

and those things can be particular deeds performed by some members of society, as for some time in Pakistan working women have been stigmatized and various stereotypes were developed and associated to scold women, present study has also taken this point in order to examine women harassment at their workplaces. Rydell and Boucher (2009) have expressed consequences of stereotype thinking that ‘negative stereotypes and stigma affect the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of underprivileged group members’. Furthermore, Schmader (2010) has described some other impacts of stereotype thinking as it can demoralize the targeted one by underestimating abilities of that person and as a result ‘it also makes one vigilant for any evidence that one could be confirming the stereotype’. While asserting core causes of gender based stereotypes, Hong (2003) have mentioned that male-dominated society and culture significantly contribute in developing stereotype thinking patterns with regard to gender.

Responses of present research regarding stereotype thinking patterns about women working at media offices confirmed its existence as more than half of respondents or 53% including three fourth of female respondents or 75%, admitted that either they have experienced or seen stereotyped behaviors, statements, etc from their male office members. As an experienced female respondent told researcher that sometimes men mistreat women; they marginalize the capacity and capabilities of women by thinking that a woman cannot do certain tasks and consider that women can only do cultural reporting, showbiz beat, women or children pages and women are unable to do stiff or tough beats as commerce, political, international politics, diplomatic reporting etc.

Another interviewee stated that men have stereotype thinking patterns about women in their minds and they always take women as sex symbol. Indicating towards dark situation another female claimed that at workplaces men disrespect women because of their gender and male office members even of below positions mistreat women and never take them seriously most probably because of their conventional mindset that women cannot do hard hitting things well.

However 47% refused the stereotype thinking patterns in their offices but according to them its existence in other workplaces cannot be ignored, as a male respondent said that female colleague is just a female colleague for him and don’t have any stereotyped thoughts about them. Majority of respondents as 53% mentioned that typical thinking patterns about women can be clearly observed in their offices and majority of those who rejected its existence in their workplaces, accepted it as reality of society thus it can be said that stereotype thinking patterns exist in media organizations.

Offensive Remarks about Appearance of Female Colleagues

Along with above mentioned parameters for determining women harassment at workplaces this research also worked about offensive remarks faced by women employees of media organizations and large majority of interviewees as 60% mentioned that male colleagues make offensive remarks about appearance of female office workers. A female respondent said that sometimes men make offensive remarks to them and some comments appear to be bearable in office settings but psychologically these offensive messages disturb them and indirectly affect productivity of their work.

Another female interviewee said “indeed men make offensive remarks about appearance, on dressing of female colleagues in offices”. She also asserted that making offensive remarks about female colleagues is not specific to TV channels, but it happens in radio channels as well and almost all other medium of mass communication, interestingly, she considered news room of

media organization as “the gossip room” where men gossip a lot about women. A woman respondent quoted some sentences which she often experience from male colleagues in office that “you look spark in that dress why don’t you dress that way”. Another female claimed that male office members avoid discussing their female colleagues in front of them however they do so outside the work settings e.g. smoking area, etc.

Additionally 40% interviewees mentioned that making offensive remarks about female colleagues is not practiced in their offices but usually men do that in other occupational settings as it is something related to man’s instinct. Majority of responses about accepting making or experiencing offensive remarks about women determine its existence.

Reporting of Harassment

Harassment at workplace itself is curse for bearer but bitter reality is that media personals themselves don’t discuss these issues and this makes the situation worse. However reporting harassment is largely hesitated due to several threats in victim’s mind. According to Gill and Febbraro (n.d.) word file after harassment women have been threatened for losing job, societal disrespect and disturbing court proceedings, in addition ‘a common outcome of women reporting sexual harassment is blaming the victim’ which generally keep women away from reporting harassment.

SPDC (2009) has described causes for not reporting harassment cases by women and mentioned that majority of women have accepted the socio-cultural settings by sustaining the status quo, along with that unavailability to legal assistance, fear of being defame and chances of harassed again are core causes for refraining them from reported harassment cases. If women experience harassment then most of them ‘use passive, non-assertive coping strategies’ as response to harassment (Fairchild, & Rudman, 2008) and they don’t ‘formally complain about sexual harassment because they fear negative consequences’ of reporting harassment case (Vijayasiri, 2008: 47).

When respondents of present study were questioned about ratio and status of reporting harassment, majority of interviewees as 60% accepted the gap in reporting harassment issues as working women avoid reporting harassment because it can attach dishonor and stigma to them for rest of life. A female respondent told that women don’t report harassment issues because of family pressure and if they speak against these issues then society blame them for their bad character. Another female respondent said that women avoid talking about these issues because it is a social taboo. Along with that a woman interviewee made her point that if a girl talk about harassment issue then society declares her as bold and rude and people start doing gossip about that girl.

Moreover, 40% respondents were found claiming that in their organization any colleague can report harassment case by pointing culprit and among those 40% respondents a male employee of media organization said that in his office there is no evidence of harassment reports from any female colleague but if it happens then his organization have a policy to tackle these issues.

The Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010

It is observed that existence of any law boost morale of people for raising their voices against bad injustice, thus around the globe several ‘governments have recently deemed it necessary to take steps to protect women from public harassment by men’ (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008: 339). Various research studies have indicated towards ‘legislative gap’ in Pakistan with regard to

women harassment at workplaces (SPDC, 2009), however, passing ‘The Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010’ by National Assembly of Pakistan have raised many hopes for better change in society.

Respondents of the study were also asked about this Act and majority (87%) of respondents, including 46% male and 54% female, were found already aware of this Act. It would be significant to note that among those 87% who know this Act, 67% of men and 28% of women have just heard the name of this Act and never reviewed it. However, most of the media employees suggested that education is the only solution to create awareness and social change within the society and a large number of interviewees seemed to be disappointed with the situation regarding implementation of law in Pakistan. A male respondent said that laws are not the solution of these problems as they are not effective in Pakistan, another female respondent agreed with this notion and emphasized that practicing law is rather more important than just making laws.

Suggestions for Eradicating Harassment

Respondents were also asked about their suggestions for eradicating harassment cases from society and particularly from workplaces and in response a female interviewee discussed about social change that individuals should positively revolutionize themselves otherwise one cannot defeat the problem of harassment. Moreover, she also suggested that if a woman faces harassment then she should report it and raise her voice and her act definitely will bring constructive changes in society.

Another female respondent mentioned gender sensitization workshops as a good step, along with immediate promulgation of a code of conduct for all organizations, including educational institutions. A male respondent said that social status and low economic conditions are the main causes of these problems and efforts for raising economic and social status are need of the time to overcome these problems.

Conclusion

This research has empirically explored the status of women harassment in Pakistani media industry and findings of this study show that women are being harassed in media. Researcher interviewed 25 media employees including male and female and according to the indicators developed for aligning results, each interviewee directly or indirectly admitted that women are being harassed at their media offices. Majority of respondents’ rated general environment of their media organization for women as satisfactory but most them admitted male domination in their offices where glass ceiling theory is really prevailing as women cannot approach key positions in media organizations.

Alongside, 80% males and only 20 % females are working in TV channels and majority of respondents confessed existence of women harassment at their workplaces with its lesser reporting, along with that offensive remarks have been made and stereotype thinking patterns also exist according to the large majority of respondents. These findings of the study approve hypothetical statement suggested by researcher that Pakistani women face harassment in media organizations.

The investigation of women harassment in Pakistani media industry was another objective of this research and according to the responses of female interviewees at lower level harassment refers to staring at female colleagues during office timings, touching their fingers while giving files, papers or telephone receiver, commenting on their physical appearance, patting on shoulder, trying to shake hand with women colleagues, offering for date and trying to

touch women working on computer and giving impression that they are instructing women about something very important. More over staring is the simplest form of harassment mostly practiced in media offices and sexual abuse in media organizations as a type of harassment only happen in rare but rather serious situations.

Recommendations

Findings of this study have proved that Pakistani women have been harassed at media organizations. It is generally believed that comfortable working environment is required for best creative work and at majority workplaces women harassment issues take place but gradual increase in ratio of these cases has alarmed several sects of society for stepping up vigorously to eradicate this problem. However, the study has proposed some recommendations for government, media organizations and for general public by keeping in view interviewees' suggestions.

Some of the recommendations are for the government for coping up women harassment issues at workplaces including a step forward to strictly implement the protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010 and immediate promulgate code of conduct in all public and private sector institutions. However, if any harassment case appears then government should take notice and should go for formation of committees to inspect the whole situation in spite of ignoring it.

This research has also suggested few recommendations for media organizations to bring positive change at their respective work place. They should make efforts for changing stereotypical thinking patterns about working women and should create awareness through organizing workshops for gender sensitization. Media organizations should rigorously take steps to put code of conduct into practice.

Moreover, all the stakeholders should make efforts to raise economic, social and educational status of society which are core cause of women harassment in Pakistan. The general public should focus on character development of people from their initial upbringing till joining professional careers, as it can significantly work for constructive change in society with regard to women harassment in society.

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