



Violence Against Working Women

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally men are seen as the bread winner and women as the house-keepers, child bearers and rearers. This typecast role model continues to put obstacles before the working women. Her tasks and challenges have increased and hardened manifold now when she is super multi-tasking; juggling between career, travelling, kitchen, kids, husband, house, society, personal health, passion and desires. Balancing between so many duties and obligations, a woman faces numerous challenges and problems every day, every time, and may be every minute or second. Most of the problems that beset working women are in reality rooted in the social perspective of the position of women. The government can set up special courts for handling complaints of working women against their employers and legislate laws to curb inequalities.

KEYWORDS :

"Violence against Women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace."

INTRODUCTION

It is an open truth that working women have to face problems just by virtue of their being women. Working women here are referred to those who are in paid employment. Social attitude to the role of women lags much behind the law. This attitude which considers women fit for certain jobs and not others colors those who recruit employees. Thus women find employment easily as nurses, doctors, teachers the caring and nurturing sectors, secretaries or in assembling jobs-the routine submissive sectors. But even if well qualified women engineers or managers or geologists are available, preference will be given to a male of equal qualification. A gender bias creates an obstacle at the recruitment stage itself. When it comes to remuneration the law proclaims equality but it is seldom put into practice. The inbuilt conviction that women are capable of less work than men or less efficient than men governs this injustice of unequal salaries and wages for the same job. The age old belief of male superiority over women creates several hurdles for women at their place of work. Women on the way up the corporate ladder discover that they must be much better than their male colleagues to reach the top. She has to almost always shoulder the burden of household chores as well. A woman could still bear up with these problems if she had control over the money she earns. But in most families even now her salary is handed over to father, husband or in-laws. So the basic motive for seeking employment of getting independence is nullified in many women's case. Problems of gender bias beset women in the industrial sector.

Need for the study

Technological advancement results in retrenchment of women employees. No one thinks of upgrading their skills. Maternity leave is seldom given. It is much easier to terminate the woman's employment and hire someone else. Trade Unions do little to ameliorate the lot of women workers. Women's issues do not occur on the priority list of most of the trade unions. Women going to work are often subject to sexual harassment. Public transport system is over crowded and men take advantage of the circumstances to physically harass women. Colleagues offer unwanted attention which can still be shaken off but a woman is placed in a difficult situation if the higher officer demands sexual favours. If refused the boss can easily take it out on the woman in other ways to make life miserable for her. There have been several cases of sexual harassment recently involving even the senior women officials. On the other hand if a woman is praised for her work or promoted on merit, her colleagues do not hesitate to attribute it to sexual favours. The psychological pressure of all this can easily lead to a woman quitting her job. Most of the problems that beset working women are in reality rooted in the social perspective of the position of women.. A fundamental change is required in the attitudes

of the employers, policy makers, family members and other relatives and the public at large. Her tasks and challenges have increased and hardened manifold now when she is super multi-tasking; juggling between career, travelling, kitchen, kids, husband, house, society, personal health, passion and desires. Balancing between so many duties and obligations, a woman faces numerous challenges and problems.

Problems faced by the working women

Discrimination at Work. Discrimination starts at the very level of recruitment and interview, where recruiters/interviewers see women incompetent for challenging roles and ask questions like whether you would be able to continue after marriage ?

Challenges to Safety, Life and Dignity. Sexual harassment, theft, molestation, eve-teasing, etc. are some of the forms of challenges working women face to their safety, life and dignity.

Non-acceptance of Talent, Offered Disrespect: A woman going out to work in many societies is seen very lowly and questioned about her character/moral. A working woman who is beautiful or well-maintained or presentable or is friendly with everyone and is progressing in her career instead of being complimented is disrespected and disgusted; is questioned/remarked on her dignity and morals.

Family Duties : In today's modern era, even after working in the corporate world and after taking up challenging roles of executives/directors/marketing professional/IT professionals, etc.; the age old image of a woman of being a home-maker is not much changed.

Insufficient Maternity Leaves:

maternity leave is another major issue that is faced by a working mother. This not only affects the performance of women employees at work, but is also detrimental to their personal lives.

Juggling Between Work, Home, Relationships and Personal Life:

Amid all the dilemma and stretch of balancing the job responsibilities, following her passion, going ahead with her aspirations and looking after her family-kids-husband; a woman handles and balances a big lot of stress, which deprives her of peace, rest, sleep, independent though and luxury to be herself.

Ego of Male Counterpart: One of the most tough to handle challenges is to manage and cope with the ego of your male counterpart as wife/partner. Males do support women to go out and work, but somewhere they find it hard to accept the progress and achievement of women whether she is his colleague or life partner.

Inequality as in Provision of Opportunities in Terms of Job Responsibilities, Projects and Organizational Advancement: One of the most unfortunate challenges for women that they are

subject to undergo at work despite all their qualifications, skills, talent, hard work and performance; is to be overlooked and low rated in comparison to their male colleagues. This is one reason, why many women have to settle down at less challenging jobs than their capabilities/talent, or get stuck at an irrelevant job/field or get stuck at one point of career with no opportunities for further growth, etc.

Low Dignity and No Ownership of Her Own Earning: Mostly women are not seen as independent earners, who command respect and dignity. Instead is seen as a small back-wheel of a heavy vehicle and thus, her role and contribution is mostly over looked. In most of the families, especially middle class, upper middle class and lower middle class; it's seen that the income of the woman either goes in the hands of her father or husband, rather than in her hands.

Poor Security: It is another major issue that women face in the workplaces. Women working in BPO sector mostly fall victim of various crimes at workplace and this is due to lack of security provided to the employees. There are many cases that has been registered where women working at BPO sector have become victims of sexual abuses and rapes while going back home and this is due to lack of proper security.

Sexual Harassment: Every single day a woman when steps out, stays out whole day working while travelling, in office, in field, in canteen, in outdoor meetings...; directly/indirectly she is subjected to a lot of sexual abuses and harassment. It's not always with hands she is hurt, but she is attacked and hurt with eyes, with tongue, with gestures and of course unfortunately physically. A few women wave off, ignore and move on; some disgust them to the very soul, out there is no way out so with tears or suppressed anger they move on; while some root off their dignity and even existence. To some women have to compromise, to some escape routes, while some compel them to revolt or break down. And it's no less than a part of the working women, directly or indirectly, to a small and ignorant to large scale.

Steps to face violence at work:

- Learn how to stay safe. Ask the supervisor about any safety policies and trainings.
- Carrying self protective things such as pepper spray in the handbag.

- Make sure that one should know how to get help in a violent situation. Find out what security services are available, such as a security escort to the car.
- Talk to the supervisor about adding safety tools. These can include panic alarms, closed circuit TV cameras, better lighting, and signs saying that only small amounts of cash are available.
- Report any incidents that worry or upset, tell the supervisor about physical or verbal abuse. Also report worrisome behaviors of co-workers, clients, or customers. This can include sexual comments or advances that make her feel uncomfortable. Provide a written report, and keep a copy.
- She can ask that the report be kept confidential. Remember that she deserves to feel safe at work and her employer has a responsibility to help keep her safe.

A couple of steps the government can take to improving working women's lives are:

- Legislate strict laws against sexual harassment in offices
- Setup special courts for handling complaints of working women against their employers
- Legislate leeway for special leaves needed by working women
- Legislate laws to curb inequalities.

Conclusion:

In short we need revamp in all round corners with respect to working women's lives. We need to help each other, join together in chorus to raise our issues, put them in a proposal to government for new legislations angled at improving working women's lives. Women on the way up the corporate ladder discover that they must be much better than their male colleagues to reach the top. A fundamental change is required in the attitudes of the employers, policy makers, family members and other relatives and the public at large.

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