



How To Enhance Women Empowerment in the Workplace by Eradicating Sexual Harassment-A Syndrome of Discrimination

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ABSTRACT

The problem of sexual harassment in the workplace is part of a whole syndrome of discrimination. Companies frame policies but fail practise. This study aims to identify the effective practices the same that the companies may implement. This study presents hypotheses about showcase actions to make progress in workplaces by ensuring gender equality.

To test the hypotheses, data were collected from employees working in the private sector. A structured questionnaire used to conduct in – depth interviews. The questionnaire consisted of twenty five nominal scale questions. The data were analyzed with Correlation.. The conclusion of the study is based on the results of hypotheses testing. The high-level task forces in the company to identify priority areas establish benchmarks and monitor company progress assure eradication of sexual harassment. The company can ensure gender equality by conducting surveys among employees to seek opinions. The surveys elicited the views of women employees towards the companies policies on equal opportunity, inclusion, nondiscrimination and retention. Publishing company's policies of zero tolerance to sexual harassment that has an impact on making advances to women. Organising mentoring programmes helps to achieve to progress in ensuring gender equality.

KEYWORDS : Sexual harassment, Policies of companies, Women empowerment, Discrimination

Introduction to the study

Sexual harassment in the workplace is a matter of deep concern with the national and international levels. It is universally agreed that sexual harassment is a form of gender discrimination and is recognized as a violation of human rights. The sexual harassment can happen to any worker at any workplace—offices, factories, plantations and farms, small and large enterprises. Sexualized environments bring decreased productivity. It has professional, academic, financial, and social consequences for victims. Sexual harassment in the workplace is one of the most talked about issues today in the context of organizations and their internal policies, as well as amongst lawyers and judges in the courts of law across the world.

Hypotheses set for the study are

- Establishing a high – level task force is effective in ensuring gender equality in the workplace
- The companies can ensure gender equality by conducting surveys among employees to seek opinions
- Publishing company's policies of zero tolerance to sexual harassment that has an impact on making advances to women
- The periodical arrangement of mentor programmes makes progress towards gender equality

Relevance of the study

Sexual harassment is one of the most pervasive and insidious forms of gender discrimination in the work which largely affects women employees. However, sexual harassment cannot be seen in isolation of gender discrimination; it has its roots in the unequal power structures that exist in the society and are perpetuated in the workplace. It can be a cause for extreme humiliation and degradation resulting in loss of self-respect and dignity of the individual concerned and has become one of the critical issues related to gender discrimination within the workplace

Research Methodology

A study was conducted among employees working in various private organizations. The sample size was considered as hundred. Sample unit was fifty each from married women employees and unmarried women employees. Organizations were selected were situated in Kollam District, Kerala State. A structured questionnaire was used to conduct in – depth interviews. The questionnaire consisted of twenty five nominal scale questions. Correlation was used to test the hypotheses

Data Interpretation and Analysis

Data analysis Analysis of data is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of highlighting useful

information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision making according to Adèr, H.J. (2008). In order to analyze and interpret the data, SPSS statistical software package was used. This study mainly focused on discussing gender equality in work place and sexual harassment. Different statistical tools such as Frequency analysis and Pearson Correlation coefficient procedures were used to represent the distribution of responses.

Statistical Analysis

Hypothesis 1

Null Hypothesis: Establishing high – level task force is not effective in monitoring gender equality

Alternative Hypothesis: Establishing high – level task force is effective in monitoring gender equality

Between married groups

There is a strong positive and significant correlation existing between the two groups in terms of establishing high – level task force in monitoring gender equality. The Correlation (r value is .907) which is high and the p value is less than 5%. ($p = .034$). This rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that establishing high – level task force is effective in monitoring gender equality

Between Unmarried groups on establishing high – level task force in monitoring gender equality

Correlations

There is a strong positive and significant correlation exists between the two groups in terms of establishing high – level task force in monitoring gender equality. The Correlation (r value is .905) which is high and the p value is less than 5%. ($p = .034$). This rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that establishing high – level task force is ineffective in monitoring gender equality

Hypothesis 2

The companies can ensure gender equality by conducting surveys among employees to seek opinions

Null Hypothesis: Ensure gender equality by conducting surveys among employees to seek opinions

Alternative Hypothesis: Ensure gender equality by conducting surveys among employees to seek opinions

Married population

The correlation analysis explains the statistical significance of the

hypothesis among the married population on the significance of conducting survey among employees to seek opinions

There is a strong positive significant relationship between the two groups as the Pearson r value is .946 and the probability of the relation is not by chance is less than 5%. ($p=.015$). This reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that the companies ensure gender equality by conducting surveys among employees to seek opinions

Unmarried population Correlations

The analyzed values show that there is a strong significant positive relationship between the two groups in terms of conducting surveys. The Pearson (r) value is .882 and the p value is .048 which is less than the required significance of $p<.05$. This rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis

Hypothesis 3

Publishing company's policies of zero tolerance to sexual harassment that has an impact on making advances to women

Null Hypothesis: Publishing company's policies of zero tolerance to sexual harassment has no impact on making advances to women

Alternative Hypothesis: Publishing company's policies of zero tolerance to sexual harassment that has an impact on making advances to women

Among married population

Positive, strong and significant relationship between the two groups. This rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that publishing company's policies of zero tolerance to sexual harassment that has an impact on making advances to women

Publicity among unmarried population Correlations

There is a strong positive correlation between the two groups on publicizing company policies has an impact on Sexual harassment. The Pearson (r) value is .889 and the p value is .044. This reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that Publishing company's policies on sexual harassment that it should not be tolerated has an impact on advancing women

Hypothesis 4

The periodical arrangement of mentor programmes makes progress towards gender equality

Null Hypothesis: Mentor programmes do not makes progress towards gender equality

Alternative Hypothesis: Mentor programmes make progress towards gender equality

Regarding Mentor programmes make progress towards gender equality; a Pearson correlation coefficient procedure was performed to test whether there is any correlation between these two groups on mentor programs. The result is summarized below

Among Married population

Correlations

The result shows that there is a significant and positive correlation between the two groups. The r value is .956 and the probability (p) value is .011. This shows highly significant correlation between the two variables. This reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that Mentor programmes make progress towards gender equality.

Among unmarried population

This hypothesis is tested using a Pearson correlation.

Correlations

The Pearson correlation coefficient result shows that there is a positive and significant difference exists between the two groups among unmarried. The Pearson value is .906 and the p value is .034 which is less than the required significance of $p<.05$. There is a clear evidence that there is a significant difference exists between two groups. Therefore we reject the null hypothesis that Mentor programs do not makes progress towards gender equality in unmarried group and accept the alternative hypothesis

Conclusion

The harassment in the workplace is quite difficult to handle when no grievance procedure at the enterprise related to harassment has been established and understood by workers and employers and when the victims are hesitant to discuss their case. Therefore, it is necessary to encourage prevention and common action to avoid discriminative treatment in the workplace.

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