PREFACE

More and more Indian women are entering the workforce in the 21st century. Many of them have been successful in their endeavours in being educated and competing to get a good job. However, even after being in good positions in their professions, they do have some problems. Sexual harassment in the workplace is one of them. Power inequality facilitates sexual harassment, and sexual harassment reinforces power inequality. Victims often question themselves on several spheres like-what they have done wrong, what part of the problem they own, what they have done to contribute to sexual harassment, what they have wrongly observed and to what they may have silently given consent to. Sexual harassment often occurs, where in the perspective of male colleagues, the woman's sexual role overshadows her role as an employee. It is against this backdrop of women's history that sexual harassment, has not been reported for years and continues to pose a problem. Harassment is caused by people who hold or are perceived as holding powerful positions. MacKinnon related the problem of sexual harassment to the inferior status women held, in the workforce, in general. She explained that this power dynamics, in which women were dependent on male authority in the workplace in terms of hiring, promoting and receiving raises, etc made women, vulnerable to sexual harassment.

Patriarchal culture prevails in the Indian workplace. Instead of the harasser to be punished, the harassed is stigmatized. Culture has a huge impact on an individual’s personality because not only are individuals born into the human community; they grow up and learn the culture, customs and values that are accepted among their people. There are different forms of socialization that exist, which have a spillover effect in the workplace. In many cases, complaints by the victims in the workplace, are either laughed over or make the victim responsible for arousing the harasser. The victim of harassment is stigmatized, resulting in double dilemma. Even, the families of the victims rarely support them. Many of the victims leave the organization and seek for employment elsewhere or remain within the organization and face whatever consequences that may arise. Due to the economic recession in the market, nowadays, most of the victims of harassment tend to stay back in their organizations, but this action has a lot of implications on them psychologically, emotionally and on their level of productivity at large. There has been shrinkage of
alternatives in the job market, due to recession. Uncertainty or confusion has risen in the minds of women workers regarding which Company will retain them, during the recession period. Transfer could also be a threat for the woman employee. This is very harmful not only to the victim but also the organization.

Harassment comes not exclusively because of sex but is a matter of power and is done mostly by a person who has an advantage over the other. Trivialization of sexual harassment has been a major means, through which its invisibility has been enforced. Humour regarding sexual harassment, can reflect unconscious hostility.

The International bodies and the Government of India are taking steps to prevent sexual harassment as a crime. Recently, the new law, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, has been an important landmark after the Vishaka Guidelines, by the Supreme Court.

The present Study undertaken provides a picture of the level of sexual harassment in the bureaucracy and the Information Technology sectors. A comparison has been made among the three cities of Kolkata, Delhi and Bengaluru, regarding, sexual harassment in the workplace, in the two professions. Attempt has been done to study the socio-economic background of the respondents and whether there is any relationship between the socio-economic background and sexual harassment in the workplace.

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