INTRODUCTION
“The key to growth is the introduction of higher dimensions of consciousness into our awareness.”

-Lao Tzu
“Whatever women do they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good. Luckily, this is not difficult.”

--Charlotte Whitton.

The Natural/Biological origin of sexual harassment is based on the good old fashion idea of attraction between two people. Men are possessed with the bigger sex drives which cause men to aggressively approach women with sexual comments or intentions. Women in today's society are becoming more work force oriented creating more opportunities and assertiveness for them to get job and take over companies. The problem with this is, some men see this very frustrating which can cause anger, confusion, miscommunication and misconduct. This miscommunication can cause men to use power to harass the female on the job. During childhood we see the media and society reinforce the idea that men are dominant in our society. Indirectly this is embedding sex-role stereotypes into children all over the world. This says men are more aggressive and independent. Women are portrayed as passive and dependent in children's literature and television.
As long as males have employed females, sexual harassment—whether a sniggering grab or outright sex-for-salary extortion—has been a fact of countless women's working lives. Yet as the proportion of women in the work force increased sharply in the past decade, so did the reports of on-the-job intimidation. According to the Center for Women Policy Studies, a Washington-based research group, as many as 18 million American females were harassed sexually while at work during 1979 and 1980 (Schlafly, 1981).

Something imperative to discuss is the issue of parenting and what are our parents teaching us and are not teaching us during adolescents. At a young age we see parents warning their daughters about sexual and aggressive activity, but not talking about these same types of issues with their boys. It is seen as the girls job to protect herself, while boys let their emotions and behaviors come naturally to them (Brandenberg, 1997).

1.1 Definition of sexual harassment

A definition of sexual harassment according to the Vishaka Judgement (1998) is that it includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour (whether directly or by implication) as:-

- Physical contact and advances;
➢ a demand or request for sexual favours;

➢ sexually coloured remarks;

➢ showing pornography;

➢ Or any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

The conduct of the harasser must either be severe or it must be pervasive to be sexual harassment. A single incident is probably not sexual harassment unless it is severe. For example, a single incident of rape or attempted rape would probably be sexual harassment (it would also violate criminal laws).

Although a single unwanted request for a date or one sexually suggestive comment might offend you and/or be inappropriate, it may not be sexual harassment. However, a number of relatively minor separate incidents may add up to sexual harassment if the incidents affect your work environment. Some questions you can ask yourself to determine whether the conduct is pervasive are: How many times did the incidents occur? How long has the harassment been going on? How many other people were also sexually harassed? (ERA, 2009).

To create a sexually hostile environment, unwelcome conduct based on
gender must meet two additional requirements: (1) it must be subjectively abusive to the person(s) affected, and (2) it must be objectively severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment, that a reasonable person would find abusive. To determine whether behavior is severe or pervasive enough to create a hostile environment, the finder of fact (a court or jury) considers these factors:

- The frequency of the unwelcome discriminatory conduct;
- The severity of the conduct;
- Whether the conduct was physically threatening or humiliating, or a mere offensive utterance;
- Whether the conduct unreasonably interfered with work performance;
- The effect on the employee’s psychological well-being; and
- Whether the harasser was a superior in the organization.

Each factor is relevant – no single factor is required to establish that there is a hostile environment. Relatively trivial, isolated incidents generally do not create a hostile work environment. Hostile environment sexual harassment also was not found where women were asked for a couple of dates by co-workers, subjected to three offensive incidents over
18 months, or subjected to only occasional teasing or isolated crude jokes or sexual remarks.

Sexual harassment was found, on the other hand, where women were touched in a sexually offensive manner while in confined workspace, subjected to a long pattern of ridicule and abuse on the basis of gender, or forced to endure repeated unwelcome sexual advances (Kadue, 2000).

1.2. Operational definitions

1.2.1. Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment according to the present study refers to not only the guidelines offered by the Vishaka judgement, but also to any unwanted sexual approach that affects the general well being and the self efficacy of the victim.

1.2.2. Victims: The victims of this study includes those working women in the Thoothukudi district who have undergone some form of sexual harassment in their work place and have come forward to accept its prevalence.

1.2.3. Positive Therapy: Positive therapy is a psychological intervention developed by Dr. Hemalatha Natesan, Professor and Head, Department of Psychology, Avinashilingam Deemed University. The therapy includes both
the eastern techniques of relaxation and the western cognitive and RET techniques to help the victims cope up with the victimization.

1.2.4. General well being: General well being of the victim refers to the overall wellness of the victim both in physical and mental status. This includes a good coping behaviour pattern in the workplace and also with the family and friends.

1.2.5. Self efficacy: Self efficacy of the victims in the study refers to the ability of the victim to perform effectively in the workplace and carry out all tasks without faults. This also includes their personal adjustment at home and with friends.

1.2.6. Anxiety: Anxiety in the victims of sexual harassment refers to the feelings of apprehension the victim experiences towards the harasser and also towards the workplace in general as a result of sexual harassment.

1.2.7. Stress: Stress in the victims is caused due to the strain they experience as a result of sexual harassment. This results in the bundled up feeling that greatly affects their work performance.

1.2.8. Work place: Webster defined workplace as "the environment (as place, tools, social connections, physical well being) enabling work to be
done”. This broader definition, will lead workplace development to include
the determination of:

- Where work will be done (such as in an office, at home, in a
  plane or car, in an office, or at a conference, all of the above,
  etc.),
- what processes (such as transaction processing, innovating,
  communicating, learning, etc) will define the work to be done,
- How technology will enable those processes to be carried out
  (such as data access, groupware, mobileware, etc.)
- What physical environment will support the work (such as
  office design and layout, furniture, equipment, temperature,
  light, etc.)
- When and where people interact to exchange knowledge and
  information (Webster, 2010).

1.3. Types of Sexual Harassment

1.3.1. Gender Harassment: Generalized sexist statements and behavior
that convey insulting or degrading attitudes about women. Examples
include insulting remarks, offensive graffiti, obscene jokes or humor about
sex or women in general.
1.3.2. **Seductive Behavior:** Unwanted, inappropriate and offensive sexual advances. Examples include repeated unwanted sexual invitations, insistent requests for dinner, drinks or dates, persistent letters, phone calls and other invitations.

1.3.3. **Sexual Bribery:** Solicitation of sexual activity or other sex-linked behavior by promise of reward; the proposition may be either overt or subtle.

1.3.4. **Sexual Coercion:** Coercion of sexual activity or other sex-linked behavior by threat of punishment; examples include negative performance evaluations, withholding of promotions, threat of termination.

1.3.5. **Sexual Imposition:** Gross sexual imposition (such as forceful touching, feeling, grabbing) or sexual assault (TWU, 2007).

1.4. **Types of victims**

Women of all ages are harassed - physically attractive or plain, sexily or soberly dressed. A woman's high rank or status in the organization, her age or her race, is no insurance or shield: a man may regard her as a special challenge. If she succumbs, he will feel more powerful, or say "after all, she is still just a woman".
Women who are particularly vulnerable include:

- Women heads-of-household, who need their jobs badly.
- Divorcées or widows are often psychologically vulnerable because of loneliness and personal loss - and they can't "plead virginity".
- Women who are timid or insecure about their abilities, and lack self-confidence and career-related education; who have limited potential for advancement and are easy to replace.
- Women who are eager to be accepted and liked, and may find it difficult to be assertive and say "No". Their friendliness and helpfulness is often misread as an invitation.
- Saleswomen may be pressured by clients to meet sexual demands in exchange for their business. To make matters worse, their employers may urge them to comply (Prekel, 2005).

1.5. **Major factors leading to sexual harassment** according to Prekel (2005) are:

1.5.1. **Socialization**: The way in which men and women were brought up to see themselves and others strongly influences their behaviour. In a culture
where it is, or was until recently, men who were brought up with macho beliefs like "real men pinch bottoms", "girls were made to hug and kiss", "the more, the merrier", easily carry these social values into the workplace, and treat their female colleagues accordingly. Such men often even think that women take their harassment as a compliment. Many women have been brought up to believe women's highest calling is to please men, that popularity with men equals success, or that "real women look sexy". This can give the impression - usually unintended - that they invite sexual advances at work. Some women who see sexuality as their only power base, play along. Although research has proven them to be a small minority, their behaviour can also encourage harassment of other women. If women see themselves as dependent on, or of lesser value than men, or are unassertive, they find it difficult to handle harassers or to complain. Often women who are breadwinners are vulnerable and fear victimization or even job loss, if they reject advances or complain.

1.5.2. Power games: Social and political changes in recent years have changed power relationships. Some men feel threatened by the career advancement of women and other men who have recently gained positions of power may also try to prove themselves by harassing women subordinates. Some men even regard it as a "fringe benefit" to which their
position, their power and their sex entitle them. In tough times of uncertainty, fear, limited promotion opportunities, retrenchments, personal stress and pressure on performance, there is a real danger that sexual harassment and trading of sexual favors will form part of the power games played.

1.5.3. Moral values, divorce and cultural differences: In times of moral laxity, when extramarital affairs and "one-night stands" are broadly accepted, when some people equate monogamy with monotony, it is relatively easy for people to indulge in office flirtations, whether one-sided or mutual. The person who tries, and doesn’t accept rejection or sees the unwilling colleague as a challenge, easily becomes a harasser, or may victimize the reluctant colleague. The prevalence of marital stress and divorce in our society means that some men and women come to work in a state of emotional distress that could make them vulnerable to sexual harassment. Some confusion results from cultural differences about what is, or isn’t, acceptable in our rapidly-changing society.

1.5.4. Credibility and victim-blaming: The credibility of the victim is often called into question, as it is usually her word against that of the harasser/s. The large majority of decent men, who treat women with respect and would never dream of taking such liberties, usually find it difficult to
believe that respected colleagues would abuse their position in this way. Management may take the word of a senior person rather than that of a subordinate as they are likely to have known the senior longer, and a manager usually has more credibility in a dispute than a subordinate. Particularly if the managers concerned are all men, they may not understand the seriousness of the problem, or may "stick together" out of gender loyalty. If the person deciding whether to take action or not, has himself been guilty of harassment, he is likely to go along with a cover-up, or at least give his "buddy" the benefit of the doubt. The harassed may be a high-level or highly-skilled person who is difficult to replace, while the victim is likely to be on a lower level, and thus more expendable.

1.5.5. Lack of company policy: Many companies don't have clear policies and complaint and disciplinary procedures to deal with harassment - or if they have them, they do not implement them. Women often resign rather than complain, since they do not know where to go, or if they do complain, it is either treated as a joke, or no action is taken by management. If management condones such behaviour or if victims end up being blamed, the perpetrator is encouraged to continue the pattern of harassment, affecting more and more women.
1.6. Impact of sexual harassment

It has been a decade of the famous Vishakha Judgement. Bhanwari Devi a Saathin of a development program run by the state government of Rajasthan, fighting against child and multiple marriages in villages, tried to stop child marriage of Ramkaran Gujjar's infant daughter who was less than one year old. The marriage took place nevertheless, and Bhanwari earned the ire of the Gujjar family. Gujjar family got infuriated by her interference, and on September 1992 five men including Ramkaran Gujjar, gang raped Bhanwari. Unable to get justice, women groups had filled a petition in the supreme court of India, under the name of 'Vishakha', asking the court to give certain directions regarding the sexual harassment that women face at the workplace. The result is the Supreme Court judgment, which came on the 13th august 1997, and gave the Vishakha guidelines.

This was the case, which bought sexual harassment at workplace into public glare. The petitioners wanted assistance in suitable methods for realization of the true concept of “gender equality”; and to prevent sexual harassment of working women in all workplaces through judicial process and to fill the vacuum in existing legislation. The Supreme Court held that, “each incidence of sexual harassment of women at workplace results in violation of the fundamental rights,” “gender equality” and the "right to life.
and liberty." It was a clear violation of the articles 1, 15 and 21 of the constitution. Gender equality includes protection from sexual harassment and right to work with dignity, which is universally, recognized Human Right. From the viewpoint of the Supreme Court it took this case quite seriously as it understood the gravity of the situation. The Supreme Court took assistance from the then solicitor general of India to formulate certain guidelines and norms to help working women against sexual harassment. These guidelines were formulated since the then civil and penal laws in India did not adequately provide for specific protection of women from sexual harassment in workplace and that enactment of such legislation would take considerable time (Aswathi, 2008).

1.6.1. Anxiety due to sexual harassment

Being subjected to sexual harassment can have a negative impact on one's emotional, social, and physical sense of well-being. In one study, adolescent females who had been sexually harassed reported "feelings similar to those identified by rape victims". "Decreased feelings of competence and confidence and increased feelings of anger, frustration, depression, and anxiety all can result from harassment," according to Riger. A sense of self-blame, especially among women with traditional sex-role
beliefs, is also common. These emotions in turn can leave in their wake a decreased ability to concentrate and a sense of listlessness.

Studies also indicate that absenteeism tends to increase among employees who are sexually harassed, work attitudes are adversely affected, and productivity drops. And when students are the target, sexual harassment can rob them of their right to an equal education by interfering with "learning, attendance, course choices, grades, and therefore economic potential"

In addition to the impact of the harassment itself, those who have been harassed often contend with anxiety and ambivalence about whether to report, and they harbor fears about possible retaliation if they decide to file a complaint (Lumsden, 1992).

1.6.2. Stress due to sexual harassment

The effects of sexual harassment vary from person to person, and are contingent on the severity, and duration, of the harassment. However, sexual harassment is a type of sexual assault, and victims of severe or chronic sexual harassment can suffer the same psychological effects as rape victims. Aggravating factors can exist, such as their becoming the target of retaliation or backlash after complaining or filing a grievance.
Moreover, people who have experienced sexual harassment occupy a place in our society that is similar to where rape victims were placed in the past, and they can be abused further by the system that is supposed to help and protect them.

Indeed, the treatment of the complainant during an investigation or litigation can be brutal, and add further damage to their life, health, and psyche. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, a sexual harassment victim can experience anything from mild annoyance to extreme psychological damage like extreme stress upon relationships with significant others, sometimes resulting in divorce; extreme stress on peer relationships, or relationships with colleagues and traumatic stress; post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (SHS, 2006).

1.6.3. Diminished General well being due to sexual harassment

Sexual harassment negatively affects a woman’s psychological and or physical well being and or leads to negative job or academic environment-related consequences for her. In the occupational environment, the phenomenon which normally affects girls and women more than boys and men, has a potential to erode the future of many females who are mostly the victims but do not have access to any counseling or channels for

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redress. Professor Morley, Director of the Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research at Sussex and lead research, said sexual harassment was not limited to Africa. “It’s a global issue,” she told Times Higher Education. “It’s about power and the abuse of power.” Professor Morley, who hopes to research the issue further, said the interview showed that sexual harassment had become “normalized” (Rebecca, 2010).

1.6.4. Diminished self efficacy due to sexual harassment

The sexual victimization of adolescent females is a major public health problem in the US. The prevalence of sexual molestation, defined as sexual touching between children or adolescents under age 18 and persons who either force or coerce them, or are 5 years older or more, is approximately one in three females. It was found that 38% of her community sample had experienced either rape or molestation prior to age 18 and 33% of a college sample indicated sexual molestation before 18. Health maintenance organization sample indicated 30% childhood molestation. Sexual molestation most often begins at preadolescence, between ages 10 and 12. Rape before age 18 includes penile penetration either by force or when the female is 5 years or younger than the male. Studies estimate that 13% to 24% of all women over 18 have been raped. Of women reporting rape, 62% (8% of all women) had been raped prior to
age 18. Similar or higher rates of rape before 18 have been found elsewhere. Women who have been sexually victimized prior to age 18, either by rape or molestation, are at increased risk of being victimized again in adulthood. All this leads to lowered self efficacy and work performance in the sample (Walsh and Foshee, 2000).

1.7. Magnitude of the problem

As more and more instances of sexual harassment become public, the issue of sexual harassment at the workplace is gaining visibility and the campaign against it, a definite momentum. The guidelines passed by the Supreme Court of India in the matter of Vishaka vs. State of Rajasthan, in August 1997, represented the first time that the issue was explicitly acknowledged in a legal forum (Dannenbaum, Jayaram, 2007).

In 1997, the Supreme Court of India, for the first time, recognised sexual harassment at the workplace as a violation of human rights. The landmark Vishaka judgement outlined a set of guidelines (Guidelines on Sexual Harassment at the Workplace) for the prevention and redress of complaints by women of sexual harassment in the workplace. The guidelines place the responsibility on employers to provide a safe work environment to their women employees and include both preventive and
remedial measures to make the work environment safe for women employees. While a significant number of women are in the workforce, little is known about the extent to which, subsequent to the Vishaka judgement, sexual harassment persists in the workplace, the kinds of actions that are taken when it occurs and whether working women are even aware of this judgment. The small amount of available evidence suggests that sexual harassment in the workplace continues to be a common occurrence, typically perpetrated by a person in a position of authority; the majority of women do not take action or lodge an official complaint for fear of being dismissed, losing their reputation or facing hostility or social stigma in the workplace.

Moreover, while the Vishaka judgment came into effect almost a decade ago, efforts to implement the guidelines have been limited. Mechanisms for redress do not always function impartially and few women are effectively able to translate the guidelines to make the workplace safer and gender equitable. Indeed, many public and private organizations have not even set up complaints committees or amended the service rules, as mandated by the guidelines (Sanhita, 2006).

The Supreme Court Guidelines on Sexual Harassment at the Workplace,
issued in 1997, recognize that sexual harassment is not just a personal injury to the affected woman but violates a woman’s right to equality in the workplace. The guidelines mandate that appropriate working conditions should be provided to ensure that women do not face a hostile environment in the workplace and no woman employee should have reasonable grounds to believe that she is disadvantaged or placed in a sexually vulnerable position as a result of her employment. The guidelines shift the onus for ensuring employees’ safety and gender equality to the employer and institutions, whether in the government or the private sector, making them responsible for implementing both preventive and remedial measures to make the workplace safe for women.

Among preventive measures, the guidelines suggest that organizations make public in appropriate ways an express prohibition of sexual harassment in the workplace, amend conduct service rules to include sexual harassment as an offence, and raise awareness of appropriate disciplinary measures that will be taken against the offender. A range of remedial measures are indicated. The guidelines make it mandatory for employers to set up a complaints committee headed by a woman, and for at least half its members to be women. To ensure impartiality, the committee is to include a third-party representative from
a non-governmental organization or any other person familiar with issues of sexual harassment. The employers’ liability for third-party harassment — that is, by a person who is not an employee but who perpetrates harassment within the workplace of the employee — is also recognized. According to the guidelines, it is the duty of the employer or person in charge to prevent sexual harassment by a third party and to take preventive action and provide support against such harassment (Chaudhuri P., 2004).

But however, notwithstanding the Vishaka judgment, sexual harassment continues to characterize the working conditions of many women, and argues that while the judgment was a necessary condition, it is not sufficient to reduce sexual harassment of women in the workplace. What is required, at the same time, are appropriate implementation mechanisms that recognize the obstacles posed by power imbalances and gender norms in empowering women to make a formal complaint on the one hand and in receiving appropriate redress on the other.

1.8. Need for the study

Thoothukudi is a district that is fast developing with its varied industries and job offers open to both men and women. Since it is only a
developing district, the attitude of women going to work and the way they are treated in their work place is not often noticeably good, although we have to accept the exceptions. Hence this study helped throw light on many aspects that have been so long ignored and paid very little attention.

The awareness of sexual harassment as a crime is also very poor. Many women try to justify it as the common male mentality while others feel it as a part of the work load. All this leads to a drastic increase in the rate of occurrence of the crime and very low record of the crime. Women feel ashamed to report the crime to their authorities since they feel that they are also partly responsible for its occurrence. Also most women do not know about the Vishaka Judgement or other legal help that they could sought. So they just try to accept it and become silent victims of the crime or, if possible just shift their jobs and move away.

Thoothukudi has on the whole 14 major industries and 2370 registered small scale industries. In many industries, women were usually paid lesser than men and were not treated well. But, due to the societal background, many women are seeking jobs to be of help to their families and are unable to quit the job easily. It is thus clear that sexual harassment is prevailing almost inevitably in every workplace, affecting the health of the victims both physically and psychologically. But, the awareness
regarding the crime is very poor. This is because most women want to keep it a secret for fear of stigmatization by others. So in most cases, the crime goes unnoticed and uncomplained. This as a result, encourages the harassers and puts the victims into deeper stress and strain.

Hence the following study was undertaken as an attempt to identify the victims and help them come out of its effects and face life with a more positive and courageous attitude. The psychological intervention called Positive Therapy was selected to help the victims since it had components to enhance both physical and mental health. The intervention greatly helped the victims since they certainly needed an outlet to cope up with life.

1.9. Objectives of the study

The present action research was conducted with the following objectives:

- Analyzing the prevalence of sexual harassment in Thoothukudi district.
- Identifying the victims of sexual harassment in the Thoothukudi district so that they can be helped
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- Assessing the high levels of anxiety and stress that these victims suffer from as a result of sexual harassment.
- Assessing the low levels of general well being and self efficacy that these victims possess as an after effect of the harassment.
- Administering Positive Therapy to the selected victims so as to reduce their anxiety and stress and enhance their self efficacy and general well being.
- Helping the women work force that is dramatically increasing with every passing day to obtain a healthy personality and to fight against their problems effectively and assertively.