CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

2.1 DEFINITIONS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Many attempts have been made to define the behaviours that constitute sexual harassment. Definitions of sexual harassment may be categorised as either descriptive or causal.

Descriptive definitions are primarily concerned with those behaviours that are considered to be sexual harassment. These types of very specific definitions provide guidelines as to the identification of harassment behaviours. However, they do not explain why these behaviours occur, nor do they suggest how to predict or prevent the occurrence of sexual harassment.

Causal definitions deal more directly with the causes of sexual harassment. A major influence on this group of definitions has been the feminist perspective, which views sexual harassment as the result of the unequal distribution of power between the sexes. According to this perspective, harassment behaviour may be seen as part of the "continuum of male-aggressive, female-passive patterns" (Medea and Thompson, 1974; Pryor, 1987; Vogel-Sine et al., 1979) that are part of the society.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1984)</td>
<td>“Sexual harassment is any unwanted or uninvited sexual behaviour, which is offensive, embarrassing, intimidating or humiliating. It has nothing to do with mutual attraction or friendship.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benson &amp; Thomson (1982)</td>
<td>“Any unwanted sexual leers, suggestions, comments or physical contact, which you find objectionable in the context of a teacher-student relationship.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boles (1995)</td>
<td>“Any of these elements may constitute sexual harassment or discrimination: physical contact, squeezing a worker's shoulder or putting a hand around his or her waist, gestures, puckering one's lips suggestively or making obscene signs with one's fingers or hands, telling off-colour jokes, ethnic or racial jokes, pictures, pin-ups, particularly those of scantily-clad individuals, comments, generalities that lump one group together and denigrate them, terms of endearment, calling a co-worker &quot;honey,&quot; &quot;dear,&quot; &quot;sweetheart,&quot; or some similar expression; questionable compliments.”</td>
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<td>Cohen (1983)</td>
<td>“Sexual harassment behaviours are the result of a communication problem between men and women.”</td>
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<td>Farley (1978)</td>
<td>“Unsolicited non-reciprocal male behaviour that asserts a woman's sex role over her function as a worker.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitzgerald (1990)</td>
<td>“Sexual harassment consists of the sexualization of an instrumental relationship through the introduction or imposition of sexist or sexual remarks, requests or requirements, in the context of a formal power differential. It also occurs when no such formal differential exists, if the behaviour is unwanted by or offensive to the woman.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gutek and Morasch (1982)</td>
<td>“Sexual harassment of women on the job is often the result of “sex-role spillover”. They define this spillover as the “carry-over into the workplace of gender-based expectations for behaviour that are irrelevant or inappropriate to work”.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>Definitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPC, Section 509</td>
<td>“Whoever, intending to outrage the modesty of a woman exposes his person indecently to her or uses obscene words intending that she hears them or exhibits to her obscene drawings, commits this offence.”</td>
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<td>Safran (1976)</td>
<td>“Sex that is one-sided, unwelcome or comes with strings attached.”</td>
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<td>Supreme Court, India (1999)</td>
<td>“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 and other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terpstra &amp; Baker (1986)</td>
<td>“Sexual harassment is simply the exhibition of conditioned behaviours that are in accord with societal sex-role stereotypes.”</td>
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<td>U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1980)</td>
<td>“Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, (a) submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's job, pay or career, or; (b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by a person is used as a basis for career or employment decisions affecting that person, or; (c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (1981; 1988; &amp; 1994)</td>
<td>“Deliberate or repeated unsolicited verbal comments, gestures, or physical contact of a sexual nature that is considered to be unwelcome by the recipient.”</td>
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<td>U.S. Office for Civil Rights (1997)</td>
<td>“Sexual harassing behaviour includes sexual advances, touching of a sexual nature, graffiti of a sexual nature, displaying or distributing of sexually explicit drawings, pictures and written materials, sexual gestures, sexual or &quot;dirty&quot; jokes, pressure for sexual favours, touching oneself sexually or talking about one's sexual activity in front of others, spreading rumours about or rating other students as to sexual activity or performance.”</td>
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Vaux (1993) “Sexual harassment is an instance of moral exclusion, whereby members of a relatively powerful group conduct their lives in their own interest, sometimes at the expense of a relatively less powerful group, in such a way that any harm is denied, diminished or justified ... To exploit this worldview, one need not be powerful, one simply needs to be a member of the powerful group.”

Zalk (1996) “Sexual harassment is one of many culturally ingrained and promoted expressions of woman's oppression, and serves to perpetuate that oppression.”

It is clear from these definitions that a rather wide range of behaviours can be viewed as sexual harassment. Although literature on sexual harassment is growing, there is no one universally accepted definition. While legal, psychological, and operational definitions have been posited, no one definition has been widely accepted as the explanation that is satisfactory across professional disciplines or across individuals’ experiences (Rubin et al., 1997). Roscoe et al. (1994) have aptly remarked that problems in understanding and addressing sexual harassment stem from the lack of a clear, concise, universally accepted definition of sexual harassment. The lack of agreement among researchers on what constitutes sexual harassment is reflective of the lack of agreement from one person to another in the general population (Foulis & McCabe, 1997). While extreme cases of sexual harassment are often agreed upon and defined as such, it is the more moderate forms of sexually harassing behaviour that produce differences in attitudes and conceptualisations (Rubin & Borgers, 1990). As sexual harassment has become more of a recognised problem, people (especially men) have changed their definitions of harassment to include a wider range of behaviours. Many women are also discovering that behaviours they have regarded as ‘normal’ and to be endured are in fact sexually harassing and create real discomforts (Popovich et al., 1986). Psychological definitions of sexual harassment expand behaviourally based legal definitions to include an understanding of sexual harassment as
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occurring in a professional relationship of unequal power, resulting in emotional distress, and perhaps, psychological trauma (Koss, 1990; Quina, 1990).

2.2 FORMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

To reduce and prevent sexual harassment, the concept of sexual harassment must first be understood. Till (1980), proposed a conceptual definition of sexual harassment which continues to have empirical validity and consistent with the current legal rulings. Based on a content analysis of descriptions of harassment experiences reported by a large sample of college women, he defined five forms of sexual harassment: gender harassment, sexual seduction, sexual bribery, sexual coercion, and sexual imposition. He recommended that these be thought of as a continuum of severity and argued that they constitute a comprehensive description that includes all possible types of sexual harassment. Whereas Till (1980) proposed five distinct levels of harassment, Tata (1993) failed to find significant differences in severity between sexual bribery and sexual coercion. Hence those two categories were combined into a single category, resulting in four rather than five levels of harassment in a study by Loredo et al. (1995). Fitzgerald et al. (1988) developed a survey instrument, the Sexual Experience Questionnaire (SEQ) based on Till’s categories.

Fitzgerald and Shullman (1985) proposed that Till’s five categories could be combined into three factors which would account for the majority of sexual harassment data: gender harassment (Till’s level 1), sexual harassment (Till’s level 2 and 5), and sexual coercion (Till’s level 3 and 4). They argued that these categories could be thought of as types rather than levels of harassment because of the existence of mild and severe instances within each category. Gelfand et al. (1995) further revised these types by proposing that “sexual harassment is a behavioural construct composed of three related, but conceptually distinct and non-overlapping
dimensions: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion”.

U.S. EEOC (1980, 1993) delineates two types of sexual harassment: *quid pro quo* (i.e., sexual conduct as a job/school requirement) and *hostile environment* (i.e., sexual or gender based conduct that is hostile, offending, or denigrating). According to the EEOC (1993), the dimensions of gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention offered by Gelfand et al. (1995) are both assumed under its category gender harassment, which is “verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion”. Gender harassment is among the behaviours, which establish hostile environment.

Sexual coercion involves the *quid pro quo*, which conditions some job related (or, for an educational setting, class or grade-related) benefit or cost on sexual cooperation. Sexual coercion and the behaviours it encompasses are the least frequently reported of the three dimensions. Gender harassment is the most frequently reported, with unwanted sexual attention in the middle (Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Terpstra & Baker, 1986; Terpstra & Baker, 1987).

Shepela and Levesque (1998) have given a model, which explains the evolution of conceptual definitions of sexual harassment. This model takes into account the typology of sexual harassment given by Till (1980), Fitzgerald and Shullman (1985), Gelfand et al. (1995), and EEOC (1993). Figure 1 shows this evolution of definitions of sexual harassment.
Fig. 1 Evolution of Conceptual Definitions of Sexual Harassment.

Mackinnon (1982) describes two types of sexual harassment and labels them quid pro quo and harassment as a continuing work condition, respectively. The first involves sexual compliance exchanged or proposed to be exchanged for an employment opportunity. The latter rarely involves outright sexual demands. It does, however, involve making a woman's work environment unpleasant, is condoned by superiors, and is seen as "normal" male behaviour.

Rotundo, Nguyen, & Sackett (2001) in a meta-analytical study reviewed 62 studies of gender differences in sexual harassment. They found that some of the existing category schemes are too broad and do not allow for the differentiation between some key social-sexual behaviours. They contended that using these broad categories to classify behaviours could potentially conceal important gender differences. Therefore, they combine some of the categories presented in prior research and subdivided others in an effort to classify as many as possible of the social-sexual behaviours examined in the harassment literature. Their resulting classification scheme included seven groups of behaviours as given in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Behavioural Examples</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Derogatory attitudes - impersonal</td>
<td>Behaviours that reflect derogatory attitudes about men or women in general.</td>
<td>Obscene gestures not directed at target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derogatory attitudes - personal</td>
<td>Behaviours that are directed at the target that reflect derogatory attitudes about the target’s gender.</td>
<td>Obscene phone calls. Belittling the target competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted dating pressure</td>
<td>Persistent requests for dates after the target has refused.</td>
<td>Repeated requests to go out after work or school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Propositions</td>
<td>Explicit requests for sexual encounters</td>
<td>Proposition for an affair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical sexual contact</td>
<td>Behaviours in which the harasser makes physical sexual contact with the target</td>
<td>Embarrassing the target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical nonsexual contact</td>
<td>Behaviours in which the harasser makes physical nonsexual contact with the target</td>
<td>Kissing the target. Congratulatory hug.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual coercion</td>
<td>Requests for sexual encounters or forced encounters that are made a condition of employment or promotion</td>
<td>Threatening punishment unless sexual favours are given. Sexual bribery.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Rotundo et al. (2001).
Coles (1986) identified eleven types of sexual harassment on the basis of 88 alleged sexual harassment complaints. These were: verbal, touch, pinching, comments about body, phone calls, sex magazines, obscene gestures, threats about job, physical and verbal persistent sexual advances, assault, and attempted rape.

Saxena (1995) has also reported different manifestations of sexual harassment which include: mild forms of ogling, whistling, passing comments loud enough for the women to hear, singing songs as a woman passes by, blowing kisses and making loud and obscene sounds at her; physical contact such as brushing past, pinching, pushing and rubbing; and brazen acts like dupatta snatching, back patting, and carrying blades to cut the dresses of girls.

Some researchers (Becker, 1993; Murphy et al, 1992) have found it useful to distinguish three forms of sexual abuse or offending: Non-contact abuse, which includes exhibitionism, voyeurism, and obscene phone calls; sexual molestation; and sexual assault, which covers rape or attempted rape.

The Gender Study Group – a voluntary organisation of the Delhi University – in 1996, identified some of the harassment as ogling, pinching and patting, hitting women on the breasts, thighs and buttocks, trying to pull them into cars, verbal taunts, and sexist comments.

2.3 FACTORS AFFECTING THE PERCEPTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

A number of researchers have examined factors influencing the perception of sexual harassment (Baker et al, 1990; Collins & Blodget, 1981; Foulis & McCabe, 1997; Gutek et al, 1980; Loredo, 1995; Popovich et al, 1986; Powell, 1983; Powell et al, 1981; Reilly et al, 1982; Weber-Burdin & Rossi, 1982). One of the most common variables examined in these studies has been the gender of the respondents. Loredo (1995) identified four factors that affect the perception of sexual harassment. These included: the
actual behaviour, the target’s reaction to that behaviour, the perpetrator’s intentions, and the relationship that exists between the two (perpetrator and victim). Some of the situational and personal factors, which affect the perception of sexual harassment are discussed below.

2.3.1 Situational Characteristics

These characteristics are those associated with the situation in which the behaviour occurs and include the actual behaviour and the status of the perpetrator relative to the victim. These are discussed as follows.

a. Behaviour in question

Behaviours that are considered as sexual harassment by one person may not be considered as sexual harassment by another. Powell (1983) found that working women differ on what they consider to be sexual harassment. The majority of his sample considered sexual propositions, touching, grabbing, and brushing past as harassment behaviours, but reactions to sexual relations, sexual remarks, and suggestive gestures were mixed. Staring and flirting were not considered by many to be harassment, although they were recognised as incidents of sexual attention. Research has shown that there is an inverse relationship between the severity of harassment and labelling a behaviour as sexual harassment (Barak et al. 1992; Ellis et al. 1991; Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Giuffre & Williams, 1994; Gruber & Smith, 1995). Pryor and Day (1988) observed that some behaviours because of their extremity (e.g., a professor’s demand for sexual favour under the explicit threat that, if refused, grade will be adversely affected) are considered sexual harassment by most people (Reilly et al. 1982; Weber-Burdin & Rossi, 1982). Other more ambiguous behaviours (e.g., a positive verbal comment about a student’s physical appearance), are interpreted to be sexually harassing by some people and not by others (Gutek et al., 1980). Loredo et al. (1995) have also observed that the differences in the perception of sexual harassment are more
marked at lower levels of harassment (e.g., gender harassment, seductive
behaviour).

Terpstra and Baker (1987) obtained significant differences between the
perception of working women and female students with respect to four
social-sexual behaviours (sexual propositions, unwanted physical contact,
off-colour jokes, and graffiti). The obtained results might be a function of
differing degrees of familiarity with sexual harassment. Working women
may have experienced more instances of sexual harassment than had
female students and, as a result, become more sensitised and less tolerant
of such behaviour. Moreover, college is viewed by some youth as an
opportunity for increased socialisation and interaction with the opposite
sex, and therefore, the attitudes and norms regarding social-sexual
behaviours held by college students may be somewhat different than those
held by working women. As people grow older, they come in contact with
more and more harassing behaviours, and experience the negative
outcomes of such behaviours, their perceptions may change (Konrad &
Gutek, 1986).

b. Status of the perpetrator

Another objective variable that influences whether respondents will label
behaviour as harassment is the status of the harasser. Offensive behaviours
exhibited by a superior are more likely to be perceived as sexual
harassment than the same behaviours exhibited by a co-worker (Collins
and Blodgett, 1981; Giuffre & Williams, 1994; Gutek et al., 1983;
Popovich et al., 1986; Reilly et al., 1982; Thacker & Gohmann, 1996). Collin
and Blodgett (1981) showed that harassment behaviours on the
part of a supervisor are considered to be more serious than the same
behaviours on the part of a co-worker. Popovich et al. (1986) reported that
position of the harasser is a factor in determining the degree to which the
behaviour is considered to be sexual harassment. Their study revealed that
participants considered the same behaviours as more definitely sexual
harassment when attributed to a supervisor, as opposed to a co-worker. Rotundo et al. (2001) in a meta analytic study found evidence suggesting that behaviours are more likely to be perceived as harassing by both sexes if they are engaged in by someone who has higher status or formal authority over the harasser. Pryor (1985) found that the social-sexual behaviours of a professor directed towards a student were viewed as more unexpected and more harassing than the same behaviours of a student directed toward a student. Findings by Pryor and Day (1988) replicated the results reported in Pryor (1985). Loredo et al. (1995) have observed that when incident depicted higher levels of harassment, such as sexual bribery, sexual coercion, and sexual assault, respondents did not discriminate on the basis of harasser status.

Some research has indicated that the marital status of the harasser may also contribute to the perception of sexual harassment (Pryor, 1985). A married person’s harassing behaviour towards a victim is perceived as more of a role violation and more harassing than the same behaviour from a single person (Jones et al., 1961).

2.3.2 Individual Characteristics

a. Gender Differences

Gender differences are one factor that impacts perceptions of friendly behaviour and harassment. In general, it has been found that men are more likely than women to attribute greater sexual desire to women and to perceive women as trying to behave in a sexy manner during friendly interactions (Osman, 2004). Research has indicated that women tend to be less tolerant than men of sexual harassment (Russell & Trigg, 2004). Women report harassment more often than men do, and women perceive a broader range of behaviours that comprise unacceptable social-sexual behaviour (Jones & Remland, 1992; Pryor, 1987; Rotundo et al., 2001; Wiener & Hurt, 2000). Women are more likely than men to perceive
sexual touching as a threat, whereas men may be likely to view sexual contact as a compliment (Gutek, 1985). Men are also more likely to attribute blame to victims regardless of gender (Rubin & Borgers, 1990).

Gender differences appear to narrow when sexual behaviours are toward the extreme ends of the harassment continuum (Russell & Trigg, 2004). Studies suggest that men and women concur most often when harassing behaviours are considered extreme (Gutek & O’Conner, 1995). Men and women tend to agree about quid pro quo situations, about behaviours that are so benign that they are not considered harassment, and about when the perpetrator is a man of higher status or formal authority over the woman harasssee (Bursik, 1992; Cleveland & Kerst, 1993; Gutek & O’Conner, 1995). However, perceptions of ambiguous behaviours (e.g., uninvited attention, sexual comments) continue to show gender differences (Wiener & Hurt, 2000).

b. Victim’s characteristics

Some research has also been done to probe the effect of attractiveness of the victim on the perception of sexual harassment. Pryor and Day (1988) in their study varied the attractiveness of the target using pre-scaled photographs of attractive, average, and unattractive women. They found that remarks made to an attractive woman were interpreted as no less harassing than those made to an average looking woman. However, remarks on physical appearance made to both attractive and average women were rated as more harassing than such remarks made to an unattractive woman. This pattern of results seems to reflect the assumption on the part of the subjects that sexual harassment is motivated by sexual interest. Quinn and Lees (1984) reported that the authorities often regard complaints of sexual harassment by unattractive women as incredulous.

Some victim characteristics may satisfy what Kelley (1973) calls a ‘multiple sufficient causal schema’ in the attribution of sexual harassment.
For example, if a target dresses in a particularly seductive manner, the target may be seen as having provoked sexual behaviour from the perpetrator. In this case, the target’s characteristics may provide a sufficient explanation for the behaviour, and no specific negative intentions or sexual harassment from the perpetrator may be inferred. Pryor and Day (1988) also argued that the way a woman dresses up or uses makeup may serve as a basis of inferring her sexual intentions. If she tends to provoke sexual interest, then a male’s social-sexual behaviour may be viewed as less sexually harassing even in situations where there are obvious power differences and a potential for sexual harassment.

c. **Victim’s reaction**

In their study on the perception of sexual harassment, Kanekar and Dhir (1993) reported that the victim is blamed more if she ignores the behaviour than when she does report the matter to the appropriate authority. Loredo *et al.* (1995) found that many of the students in their study used the victim’s reaction to the behaviour as a crucial factor for judgements of harassment. Harassment was said to have occurred if the victim was put in an uncomfortable situation, if he or she was embarrassed, felt ashamed, or was subject to an invasion of privacy. Some terms of endearment and questionable compliments even by someone close, if made in public, can make individuals feel uncomfortable or worse.

d. **Perpetrator’s intent**

Pryor (1985) reported that that people are more likely to judge a male’s sexual overtures toward a woman as sexually harassing if these behaviours are attributed to the male’s enduring negative intentions toward the female. Loredo *et al.* (1995) has also accounted the perpetrator’s intent as one of the criteria which influences the perception of sexual harassment.
2.4 CAUSES OF Sexual Harassment

Until recently, explanations for sexual harassment have centred on reasons why men in general engage in such behaviour. The single factor model suggests that sexual aggression and sexual harassment results from a single factor (e.g., hostility, power, etc.). Feminist theorists have argued that sexual harassment and coercion are used by men to maintain their power advantage over women in society (Bohner et al., 1993; Brownmiller, 1975; Farley, 1978). Some researchers (Tangri et al., 1982; Vaux, 1993) have stressed the general tendency for those in a superior position of organisational power (i.e., men) to exploit subordinates (i.e., women). Gutek and Morasch (1982) proposed that sexual harassment of women is often a product of sex-role spillover. Some of the models that have emerged as the attempts to provide an integrative explanation of sexual harassment since its inception as a serious area of psychological research are as follows.

Tangri et al. (1982) explored three models of sexual harassment derived from previous research, legal cases, and legal defences: the Natural/biological Model, the Organisational Model, and the Sociocultural model.

2.4.1 The Natural/Biological Model

The first model asserts that sexual harassment is simply natural sexual attraction between people. The model rests on a number of assumptions about sexual behaviour, all of which result in a denial that such sexual behaviour should be considered illegitimate and discriminatory. This model has two versions. The first maintains that sexually harassing behaviour is not meant as such, but is merely a natural expression of men's stronger sex drive. The second version posits no unequal sex drive, but stresses that any individual may be attracted to any other individual, and may pursue that attraction without intent to harass. This model both trivialises sexual harassment (it is normal, idiosyncratic, individual,
harmless) and aggrandises it until all remedies seem hopeless (if it's human nature, efforts to change must be futile). The natural model denies that sexual harassment has the intention or the effect of discriminating against women and reducing women's chances to compete successfully along with the men.

2.4.2 The Organisational model

The organisational model argues that sexual harassment is the result of certain opportunity structures created by organisational climate, hierarchy, and specific authority relations. In various versions, it may or may not take into account the differential distribution of men and women within the authority structure. Although typically males harass females, in principle it is possible for females to harass males. It is less likely only because women tend to be employed in occupations subordinate to men (Evans, 1978). Differential power is only one of several organisational characteristics that set the stage for sexual harassment. There are other principle factors like visibility and contact in sex-integrated jobs, the sex ratio, occupational norms, one's job function, and availability of grievance procedures and job alternatives (Martin, 1978; Martin and Fein, 1978). In sex-integrated jobs, some employees may work alone, in pairs, or in a group. Some have a work area which is exclusively theirs and others do not. Each working condition allows varying opportunities for sexual harassment. The ratio of males to females can facilitate or inhibit sexual harassment. Organisational norms vary from one occupation to another. As indicated by revealing waitress costumes and the terms “casting couch” and “sexcretary”, sexual harassment receives strong normative support in some occupations. Job requirements, such as overtime work and business trips, may call into play leisure norms that conflict with work norms. According to Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, and Magley (1997), organizational climate for sexual harassment and job gender context are critical antecedents of sexual harassment; harassment, in turn, influences work-related variables (e.g., job satisfaction); psychological states (e.g.,
anxiety and depression); and physical health. The employees who have access to informal or formal grievance procedures and/or alternative jobs are less likely to tolerate or encounter sexual harassment. In sum, the organisational model relates sexual harassment to aspects of the workplace infrastructure that provide opportunities for sexual aggression.

2.4.3 The Socio-cultural Model

The socio-cultural model argues that sexual harassment reflects the larger society's differential distribution of power and status between the sexes. It is also seen as a mechanism that functions specifically to maintain male dominance over women within the workplace and the economy in general. Various versions of this model posit the existence or absence of a conscious collaboration of men toward this end. According to this model, sexual harassment is one manifestation of the larger patriarchal system in which men rule and social beliefs legitimise their rule (Farley, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979; 1981). Male dominance is maintained by cultural patterns of male-female interaction as well as by economic and political super-ordinance. Society rewards males for aggressive and domineering sexual behaviours and females for passivity and acquiescence. Because women, more than men, are taught to seek their self-worth in the evaluation of others, particularly of men, they are predisposed to try to interpret male attention as flattery, making them less likely to define unwanted attention as harassment. Their training to be sexually attractive, to be social facilitators and avoid conflict, not to trust their own judgement about what happens to them, and to feel responsible for their own victimisation, contributes to their vulnerability to sexual harassment. According to this model, the function of sexual harassment is to manage ongoing male-female interactions according to accepted sex status norms, and to maintain male dominance occupationally and therefore economically, by intimidating, discouraging, or precipitating removal of women from work.
Tangri et al. (1982) in their exploratory work on the above mentioned three models found more support for the second and the third model than the first. They concluded that sexual harassment is not a unitary phenomenon. Some of it may indeed be clumsy or insensitive expressions of attraction, while some is the classic abuse of organisational power. Although, Tangri et al. (1982) found little support for a biological model, Studd and Gattiker (1991) have provided an extensive defense of the natural model based on the principles of evolutionary socio-biology.

2.4.4 The Sex-Role Spillover Model

Another major theoretical effort has been that of Gutek (Gutek, 1985; Gutek & Morasch, 1982; Konrad & Gutek, 1986) whose sex-role spillover model proposes that sexual harassment of women is often a product of sex-role spillover. They have defined the sex-role spillover as the carryover into the workplace of gender-based expectations for behaviour that are irrelevant or inappropriate to work. They argued that, when the sex ratio at work is skewed – in either direction – sex-role spillover occurs. Thus, women in male dominated work experience one kind of sex-role spillover. Sex-role spillover occurs, for example, when women are expected to be more nurturing, sympathetic, and loyal than men in the same work roles. Although disagreement exists concerning the theoretical framework on which this model rests (Fitzgerald & Ormerod, 1993), its major prediction – that gender-balanced work groups will experience less harassment – is well supported by the data and has important implications for interventions (Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993).

2.4.5 The Person-Environment Interaction Model

Pryor (1992) proposed a Person X Situation Model of sexual harassment. In this model sexual harassment is conceptualised as a social behaviour some people indulge in some of the time. This model has theoretical roots in Lewin’s (1951) analysis of behaviour as a function of the social
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environment and the person. Pryor and his colleagues (Pryor, 1987; Pryor et al., 1993; Pryor & Stoller, 1994) explored the situational and personal factors that give rise to sexually harassing behaviours. They have demonstrated that it is possible to identify circumstances under which sexual harassment is more likely to occur and the characteristics of men who are more likely to sexually harass. The situational factors include the local norms of the society. If local norms are more permissive with regard to sexual behaviour, sexual harassment is more likely to occur (Haavio-Mannila et al., 1988). If the law enforcing agencies are perceived as tolerating or condoning sexual harassment, it may be more likely to occur. According to this model, certain individuals may possess proclivities for sexual harassment. When these individuals with the proclivity for sexual harassment are placed in social situations that permit or accept this sort of behaviour, the behaviour is most likely to occur. Pryor et al. (1995) also developed a profile of men who are high on the likelihood to sexually harass (LSH) through an examination of several correlational studies of LSH and social cognitive measures, social behaviours, and self-report inventories. Pryor (1987) reported that men who are more likely to harass sexually tend to (a) hold adversarial sexual beliefs, (b) find it difficult to assume others' perspectives, (c) endorse traditional male sex role stereotypes, (d) be high on authoritarianism. The study by La Vite (1991) provided clear evidence for the Person X Situation interaction model suggested by Pryor (1992). This study by La Vite (1991) implied that sexual harassment is determined neither strictly by person, nor situational factors in isolation; rather, a confluence or combination of factors determines it.

2.4.6 An Interactive Model

Most of the research on the causes of sexual harassment of women has attempted to identify individual factors responsible for it. Sexual harassment is much too widespread to be completely accounted for by individual deviance explanations. The interactive model asserts that
multiple factors interact to produce sexual harassment. Bandura’s social learning theory of aggression (Bandura, 1973; 1978) and its various applications to sexual aggression (Earls, 1983; Malamuth, 1983, 1986; and Marshall & Barbaree, 1984) provide theoretical guidance as to why men sexually harass. Also providing theoretical guidance, is a model of the causes of child sexual abuse (Finkelhor, 1984; Finkelhor & Araji, 1983) and its extension by Russell (1984) to sexual harassment. These theories have several features in common. They emphasise that to understand the causes of sexual harassment, it is essential to consider the role of multiple factors, such as those creating the motivation to commit the act, those reducing the internal and external inhibitions that might prevent it from being carried out, and those providing the opportunity for the act to occur. Some of these multifactorial models propose additive (Earls, 1983) and others propose interactive (Bandura, 1978; Finkelhor, 1986; Malamuth, 1983) combinations of the causal factors. Fitzgerald and Ormerod (1993) also summarised some factors explaining sexual harassment in earlier studies, and noted that each factor has been studied in isolation, whereas in reality they occur simultaneously and in interaction with one another.

2.5 FINKELHOR’S FOUR-FACTOR MODEL

Finkelhor (1984) developed a four-factor model to help explain the occurrence of child sexual abuse. This model also provides an excellent framework for organising theories of sexual harassment (Russell, 1984). When applied to sexual harassment, this model suggests that there are four types of preconditions that allow harassment to occur:

Precondition I: factors creating a predisposition or desire to sexually harass;
Precondition II: factors reducing internal inhibitions against acting out this desire;
Precondition III: factors reducing social inhibitions against acting out this desire;
Precondition IV: factors reducing the potential victim’s ability to resist or avoid the harassment.
Most major theories explaining the causes of sexual harassment can be fitted quite easily within one of these four factors. Each of these preconditions would be considered in turn in the following section.

2.5.1 Factors creating a Predisposition to Sexually Harass

The Biological capacity to sexually harass:

Although men and women overlap on virtually every behavioural trait, there are, nonetheless, distinct mean differences in certain traits (Anastassi, 1985). Evidence suggests that men as compared to women are more aggressive and have a higher sexual drive (Daly & Wilson, 1979; Davison & Neale, 1982). More and more researchers in Psychology are acknowledging that innate factors interact with the socialisation process in some way (Bem, 1985; Cook, 1985; Gilligan, 1982). The essential idea of the 'diathesis-stressor paradigm' (Davison & Neale, 1990) is that all abnormal behaviour is the outcome of the interaction of personal vulnerability factors and external stressors (Hoghughi & Richardson, 1997). Personal vulnerability factors include genetic constitution, poor parenting, etc., and stressors encompass events that make a negative impact on the person – such as being angry or drunk.

There are several processes by which genetic differences between males and females lead to behavioural differences, but these processes are intimately tied to environment. Males push for intimacy in conversation (Davis, 1978), and initiate touching more frequently (Henley, 1977). When a female acts friendly, males are likely to interpret this as flirtatious and seductive (Abbey, 1982). Males have been found to fall in love more quickly (Rubin et al., 1981). Jealousy is somewhat higher among males (Daly & Wilson, 1979). Money and Ehrhardt (1972), and Ehrhardt and Baker (1974) have highlighted the role of hormonal factors in contributing to temperamental, attitudinal, and behavioural sex differences.
Genes influence responses to the environment through their effects on learning biases (Kenrick, 1987). Men have wider shoulders, longer arms, and legs and more upper body strength, as compared to women (Doyle, 1985). These features have direct effects on the environment, and indirect social stimulus value. There is evidence that adult human males and females differ in sensitivity to certain stimuli, including sexual pheromones (Doty, 1981). Rose et al. (1971; 1972) found that the administration of testosterone leads to an increase in antagonistic behaviours and a consequent rise in the dominance hierarchy.

Many researchers have proclaimed that sexual harassment is not about sex, but about dominance (Bargh et al., 1995; Brownmiller, 1975; DeAngelis, 1991). A series of studies by Pryor and his colleagues (Pryor, 1987; Pryor et al., 1993; Pryor & Stoller, 1994) have shown that the mental concepts of power and sex are associated in men who are likely to sexually harass women. Sexual harassment can be conceptualised as a case of the misuse or abuse of power (Bargh & Raymond, 1995).

Collins (1971) provides some theoretical argument consistent with such an emphasis on power differentials. He argues that at the root of gender inequalities are physical strength and sexual desire, agreeing with Freud that sexuality and aggression are biological universals. According to Gillespie et al. (1982), sexual harassment is just one of an array of possible behaviours that may serve hierarchy maintenance.

Krane et al. (2004) identified athletic involvement, particularly in revenue producing sports, as a predictor of sexual harassment. Major commercial sports (e.g., football, basketball) accept women only as spectators or cheerleaders, which is hardly compatible with women’s equality (Naison, 1972). The association between athletics and sexuality as outlets for aggression has been widespread for years (Naison, 1972). The study by Lackie and de Man (1997) failed to support this association between athletics and sexual aggression.
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The genetic and environmental interaction explains why only some men and not all men indulge in sexual harassment. Pryor et al. (1993) reported that those men who are not predisposed to sexually harass would not indulge in sexual harassment even when local norms condone this behaviour.

Male Sex-Role Socialisation

Even before children appear, there are differences in parents' preferences for and differential attitudes toward sons and daughters (Lewis & Weinraub, 1979). Immediately after a baby is born, parents—especially fathers describe and interpret their infants' behaviours along sex-stereotyped lines (Rubin et al., 1974). In light of differential attitudes toward and expectations regarding sons and daughters, it is not surprising to find sex differences in early parent-infant interaction. The effect of this differential behaviour can be seen as part of a general socialisation in which the parents pass along the current values of the society to their children from the moment of birth onwards.

Research has shown that attitudinal differences between males and females increase with age and may result from pressures to conform to traditional gender role expectations (Massad, 1981). Male adolescents are particularly susceptible to this pressure because a critical element in their self-development is the need to display traditionally masculine attitudes and behaviours (Galambos et al., 1990).

Males' rejection and devaluation of femininity may be seen in social institutions. In turn, these institutional arrangements promote the continual development of men's psychological motive to dominate women by perpetuating women's roles as lower than those of men. Stereotyping and power are mutually reinforcing because stereotyping itself exerts control, maintaining and justifying the status quo (Fiske, 1993). Fiske (1993) demonstrated that people, who are given positions of power, as well as
those who have strong ongoing needs for power and dominance, are more likely to resort to stereotypes. On the other hand, Bargh and Raymond (1995), show the explicit link between power and sexual harassment in their work. They argue that men who are predisposed to sexually harass have strong but not necessarily conscious associations between power and sex. Consequently, when these men are in a situation in which they have power over a woman, images of sexuality are automatically elicited, even if the setting itself is inappropriate for sexual themes (Bargh et al., 1995).

Men who possess an automatic power → sex association are more likely to prey on women, who appear submissive or vulnerable, because their submissive behaviour constantly activates the man’s power concept and thus thoughts and feelings related to sex (Bargh and Raymond, 1995).

Sexual harassment is not so much a deviant act as an over-conforming one. It is an extreme way of acting out of qualities that are regarded as masculine in the society – aggression, force, power, strength, toughness, dominance, competitiveness (Russell, 1984). Given these findings, we might view stereotypes, and in particular stereotypes of women that emphasise sexuality, as a mediating link between power and harassment.

The social world in which children grow up is everywhere pervasively gender typed. Children associate aggressiveness and independence with males, and dependency and passivity with females (Zammuner, 1987). Researches reveal (Bargh & Raymond, 1995; Bargh et al., 1995; Pryor & Stoller, 1994; Pryor et al., 1993) that the propensity to harass appears to be associated with social dominance which result from early socialisation experiences. Mead (1978) has attributed the problem of sexual harassment to the socialisation of males. In an article about sexual harassment of women, she says:

At home and at school we still bring up boys to respond to the presence of women in outmoded ways – to become men who cannot be trusted alone with a woman, who are angry and frustrated by having to treat women as an equal – either
Goodman (1978) has pointed out that sexual coercion is a product of a social history throughout which men have traditionally enjoyed the prerogative of sexual initiative, which leaves women vulnerable to sexual coercion. Pryor (1987) noted that the similarity between severe forms of sexual harassment and rape suggests that rapists and sexual harassers share some common characteristics. Some researchers have argued that, as with rape, power rather than sex is the key issue in sexual harassment (Kurth et al., 2000). Grayson (1984) maintains that the man who persists in clearly unwelcome sexual advances feels that his masculinity is on the line. He cannot accept the fact that he is being rejected, so he must believe something is wrong with the woman and thus deserving the retaliation from him (Grayson, 1984). Farley (1978) argues that sexual harassment is a mechanism used by men to keep women in a subordinate position. Silverman (1981) points out that women are frequently reminded that no matter what work they do, the most significant thing about them is that they are women and therefore sex objects.

According to Farley (1978), sexual harassment has been another method used by men to perpetuate job segregation, which ensures that female wages stay low; that female unemployment is high; and that female seniority is undermined. Because men are paid much more than women are, even when they have the same qualifications, it is an obvious conclusion that he can not leave his job to stay home for childcare. Although this is not true in the Government and Public sector in India, it is quite true in the private sector.

Ehrmann (1959) defined the ‘double standard’ as “one conduct for one sex and a different one for the other” and used this term to characterise findings showing less permissive attitudes toward women’s sexual behaviour than toward men’s sexual behaviour. Results of recent research
show that different standards still operate for men and women (Sheeran et al., 1996; Spears et al., 1991; Sprecher et al., 1987).

The crux of the feminist views is that sexually harassing behaviour is fundamentally male behaviour (Dale et al., 1986; MacLeod & Saraga, 1991). Male dominated society renders women powerless and portrays them as possible and desirable sexual victims. Boys grow up to see themselves as 'macho' and 'superior'. Research (Robbins et al., 1997; Schnuel & Schenker, 1998) points out that, sexual harassment is about the abuse of power and status rather than merely being about sex per se. The harassing behaviour of the perpetrator may be an attempt to overcome his own inferiority. Such behaviour by him may give him a sense of power and control over the victim (Araji, 1997). Thus, the perpetrator satisfies a deep emotional need to alleviate his feelings of inferiority and frustration by acting out these feelings on the victim.

In addition, the socialisation of the society is such that men have a greater tendency than women do to perceptually distort woman’s friendliness as being flirtatious. Stockdale (1993) has discussed the misperception theory within the context of existing theories of sexual harassment. She also found that the tendency to sexually misperceive is associated with traditional sex-role attitudes, tolerance for sexual harassing activities, and non-acceptance of feminists’ views about sexual harassment (Stockdale, 1993).

Many researchers hold that acts of misperception may trigger a series of events that can lead to sexual violence (Abbey, 1982; 1991; Muehlenhard, 1988; Shotland, 1989; 1992). Abbey (1982) demonstrated that men are more likely than women are, to perceive woman’s friendly behaviour as sexually motivated. Similar results have been found in other investigations of misinterpreting cues, such as women drinking alcohol (Abbey & Harnish, 1995; Abbey et al., 1987; George et al., 1988; Johnson et al.,
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1991; Shotland & Craig, 1988; Shea, 1993). Males tend to impute sexual interest to females when it is not intended.

Abbey (1982) argued that men perceive the world in more sexual terms than do women, and consequently tend to interpret ambiguous behaviour as being sexual. They not only define situations in sexual terms, but attribute sexual intent to females as well (Abbey, 1982). Sexual schemas are highly salient for men, and may act as generalised expectancies that colour their perceptions of other’s behaviour.

Clothing of the victim is another issue from which gender stereotypical interpretations emerge. Types of clothing, degrees of fit and particular fashions can be thought of as “texts” which may be “read” in gender-specific ways (Freitas et al., 1994), and these interpretations may extend to sexual interest (Haworth-Hoeppner, 1998). Males are likely to judge some clothing as indicative of sexual interest, while their female counterparts do not make the same inferences.

2.5.2 Factors reducing Internal Inhibitions against Sexual Harassment

Through social learning, one comes to abandon many kinds of behaviour that are regarded by one’s culture or society as disapproved and undesirable, and to substitute in their place alternative habits that are more socially acceptable. The standards that determine the society’s approval or disapproval are recognised by the individual and incorporated as internal standards that allow him to anticipate the probability that his own behaviour will meet with the collective approval. The internal sources of social control of the individual include the learned rewards and values, the desire to behave in socially desirable ways, and the operation of conscience.
Cultural values that Encourage Men’s Desire to Sexually Harass Women

The general attitude that the woman’s place is in the home is to a large extent responsible for the sexual harassment of women by men. Non traditional women and non-conforming women have been seen by men as fair game and have been particularly subject to sexual harassment (Mead, 1978).

Koss and Gaines (1993) viewed that sex role stereotyping, fraternity membership, athletic participation, hostility toward women, aggressive drive and attitude, alcohol use, and masculinity influence sexual aggression. Davis and Lee (1996), in their study on high school students, found that males were found to endorse sexual assault myths, to hold false stereotypes about sexual assault, and also held more restrictive attitudes toward women’s roles.

Driscoll et al. (1998), in their study on the identification of men who are more likely to harass, found that men who scored higher on Likelihood to Sexually Harass Scale (LSH) reported more traditional attitudes toward women’s roles, and a less feminine personality. The LSH scale developed by Pryor (1987) can predict sexually harassing behaviours by men high in LSH in situations that are permissive of such behaviours (Pryor et al., 1995). Moreover, this scale is related to several attitudes, gender-related personality traits, and constructs that one would expect to be associated with likelihood to harass (Barak & Kaplan, 1996; Pryor, 1987; Pryor et al., 1995; Pryor & Stoller, 1994). These researches show that LSH is correlated with scales assessing attitudes toward sexual violence and power/ dominance. Pryor’s research reveals that high LSH males, compared to low LSH men, hold more adversarial sexual beliefs, accepted more rape myths, were more accepting of interpersonal violence, had a higher likelihood to rape, had a greater difficulty taking on another person’s perspective, were high on authoritarianism, and were somewhat lower on social desirability.
High LSH men, compared to low LSH men, endorsed more traditional gender role stereotypes, held less positive attitude toward feminism, endorsed more traditional attitudes toward women's roles, and scored higher on socially desirable masculinity and preferred masculine over feminine personality attributes (Pryor, 1987; Pryor et al., 1995). Some other studies have also found that sexually aggressive men generally hold stereotypical beliefs about the role of women (Lackie & de Man, 1997; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; Siegelman et al., 1984). Men with such beliefs tend to have permissive attitudes toward rape (Garrett-Gooding & Senter, 1987; Lackie & de Man; 1997; Mosher & Tomkins, 1988), and may show sexual arousal patterns similar to those of identified rapists (Check & Malamuth, 1983). Whaley and Tucker (1998) also postulated that as men's attitude toward women become more traditional, men demonstrate more frequent and severe sexual harassment behaviour.

Research has also demonstrated that the two constructs of power/dominance and sexuality are strongly associated with high LSH, but not with low LSH men (Pryor et al., 1995). In Pryor and Stoller’s study (1994), words pertaining to dominance, sex, or neither construct (control words) were paired with each other with equal frequency. They found that high LSH men estimated a higher frequency of dominance and sex word pairing than low LSH. Other research using a cognitive priming paradigm has demonstrated that the link between power/dominance and sex is automatic and bi-directional – sex primes power or power primes sex (Bargh et al., 1995). Bargh et al. (1995) found that for high LSH men, latencies to pronounce words were facilitated when power/dominance words preceded words related to sexuality or when words related to sexuality preceded power/dominance words. No such facilitation in responding occurred for low LSH men.

A study by Rudman and Borgida (1995) gave an insight into how relationship between LSH and the various attitudes, gender-related personality traits, and power/dominance constructs, play out in the context
of social interaction. Thus, these findings suggest that the profile of a male who is likely to initiate severe sexually harassing behaviour is one that emphasises sexual and social male dominance.

Herbert (1991) has included some personality factors that are related to the sexually abusive behaviour of a person. These factors include extraversion/introversion, self esteem, internal/external locus of control, etc. Garrett-Gooding and Senter (1987) noted a moderate relation between fraternity membership and sexual aggression. Sanday (1990) found that many fraternity men wish to socially and sexually dominate women, and these men bond together in part to collectively achieve the domination to which they believe all men are entitled. Lackie and de Man (1997) identified physical aggression, sex role stereotyping, and fraternity affiliation as best predictors of sexual aggression.

While explaining children’s sexually abusive and aggressive behaviours, Cunningham and MacFarlane (1991; 1996) reported that many of these children come from families in which there are few role models exhibiting self-control. Thus, the development of appropriate moral values is impaired, and they lack empathy. Hoghughi & Richardson (1997) have highlighted two types of families that have been particularly found as conducive to sexual abusiveness. These are: (1) where the pattern of family interaction is rigid, with appropriately high parental expectations, severe punishments, poor communications, and excessively strict rules about sexuality; (2) chaotic family patterns, where boundary setting is inadequate, parents’ and children’s relationships are poorly defined, there are frequent crises and where feelings are inadequately discussed. Both these result in inadequate or deviant attachment patterns with serious consequences for the person’s ability to form intimate relationships (Loeber, 1990; Marshall et al., 1990; O’Brien & Bera, 1986).

To sum up, it can be said that men who sexually harass have inculcated in them, through the process of socialisation, various personality traits and
attitudes, which encourage them to act out their desire to sexually harass women. Further, a lack of adequate inculcation of moral values encourages them to indulge in sexually harassing behaviours.

**Alcohol Consumption and Sexual Harassment**

Alcohol use has been a correlate of sexual harassment, it reduces inhibitions against violence, including sexual violence (Barbaree et al., 1983), and it is an important predictor of the intensity of sexual aggression (Koss and Gaines, 1993). Muehlenhard and Linton (1987) reported that dates involving sexual aggression often involve alcohol consumption. Abbey & Ross (1992) found that those women who reported that their perpetrator had been drinking were more likely to report that the man had overestimated their sexual intentions.

Alcohol consumption and sexuality are often linked, especially for men (Abbey, 1991; Brown et al., 1987; Crowe & George, 1989). Alcohol enhances sexuality and men tend to expect greater sexual enhancement after drinking alcohol than do women (Crowe & George, 1989; Leigh, 1990).

**2.5.3 Factors reducing social inhibitions against acting out this desire**

Evidence for widespread sexual violence supports the feminist view that sexual harassment is sustained by social structures that regard such behaviour as normal. The social control model suggests that rape serves to maintain a power balance between males and females in a patriarchal society (Brownmiller, 1975). Sexual harassment is sanctioned by social myths and attitudes which obscure its violent and criminal nature (Leidig, 1992), and create a culture in which sexual harassment is seen as an extension of normal male-female interaction (Bridges, 1991). Sexual assault/harassment and rape myths are prejudicial, stereotyped and false beliefs about these offences, victims, and perpetrators, which serve to
downplay perpetrators’ responsibility and criminality while shifting blame towards the victim (Brownmiller, 1975; Sorenson & White, 1992).

**Family Influences**

Family is the primary socialising agent and has a powerful influence especially during the formative years. It is through the process of socialisation that boys and girls are encouraged to develop certain personality traits that are often referred to as masculine and feminine. These personality traits, in turn, have an impact on the roles that the individuals assume (Freeman, 1985). Gender role that is internalised by the individual when he or she is young has a significant impact upon the perspective of that individual and the additional roles he or she assumes in later life. Interaction with others enables children to constantly redefine roles and expectations.

Children actively attempt to define gender by using the occurrences they witness everyday (Ferree, 1990). In this process of defining gender, children not only base their expectations on what they have learnt through their interactions with others, they also associate gender identity with gender symbols (i.e., dolls and guns). Thus, feminine symbols become part of the female child’s identity and the masculine symbols become part of the male’s identity (Thorne, 1986). Consequently, girls and boys, alike, may come to see dolls and other symbols as the feminine norm.

Gender role socialisation begins even before birth through the way the parents talk to their unborn child, and the physical environment that is created prior to delivery. Quite often, these efforts represent traditional or stereotypical views of femininity and masculinity. For example, the toys and clothing purchased for the new infant reflect stereotypical patterns – girls’ clothes are frilly while boys’ clothes are made to handle their rough behaviour. Boys get hard, tough toys like trucks and guns while girls get soft, cuddly teddy bears and dolls with which they can practice and

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The family, too, often supports the traditional gender roles requiring girls to perform feminine chores such as setting the table and washing the dishes and boys performing masculine chores such as taking out the garbage and helping with washing cars. Moreover, traditional gender identity is frequently supported by family, teachers, and peers when they reward children for demonstrating appropriate gender behaviours (Fagot, 1984).

Parental factors also significantly influence children’s gender-role attitudes (Eccles et al., 1990). Educational and occupational level of the parents also has an effect on the gender-role development of the children (Ahrens and O’Brien, 1996; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). Additionally, mothers who held more feminist ideals had children who viewed themselves as more independent, active, aggressive, strong, unafraid, and less gender-role stereotyped (Bliss, 1988). Thus, the control of the internal inhibitions (first precondition) is also influenced by the external factors.

Parents also act as role models for the children. If the children see parents and other elders in their family with a particular attitude and behaviour, they are likely to acquire the same attitudes and behaviours for themselves too. The results of study by Antill (1987) suggest that parents with egalitarian or non-traditional views concerning the roles of men and women also believe that sex differences are due to social rather than biological factors, and that there are fewer differences between boys and girls. Logically, a belief that sex differences are biologically based and fundamental is more likely to result in the view that the roles of men and women should be segregated rather than the view that there should be no distinctions.

The social mores are such that the girls are trained to be submissive and males are taught to initiate all social and sexual encounters. These social mores may cause men to misperceive a woman’s true lack of sexual interest for mere shyness. Males are unable to distinguish females’ friendly
behaviour from their seductive behaviour because of the differential meaning that the relevant cues have for the two (Abbey, 1982).

Nearly all studies conclude that the family is an important source of influence in the development of adolescent sexual offenders (Monastersky & Smith, 1985). Bischof et al. (1992) found that adolescent sexual offenders perceived their families as significantly less cohesive than non-problem adolescents. Related research has found adolescent offenders’ families to be more emotionally disengaged than non-problem families (Strouse et al., 1994).

**Schools**

The type of school, i.e., sex-segregated or coeducational, an individual attends also plays an important role in the development of attitudes and values. It is argued that coeducation at the secondary school level is necessary to prepare children to take their places naturally in the world of men and women (Feather, 1974). It is contended that the social environment of the coeducational school is less artificial than that of the single-sex school and the adaptations learnt in an environment that more accurately mirrors that of the wider social context would equip children better to adjust to the adult world beyond the school.

Dale (1969, 1971) conducted an extensive research on the effect of coeducation on pupils, ex-pupils, and teachers. He found that the school atmosphere was thought to be more congenial in coeducational schools, and students saw their teachers as friendlier and more helpful. Single-sex schools were perceived to involve stricter discipline, and teachers in these schools were seen as more distant. He also noted that there was no evidence that the education of both sexes together resulted in lowering of academic standards.

Students from coeducational schools regard values relating to social approval and affiliation as more important for self than do the students
The above two studies suggest that the co-educational schools provide a better atmosphere for a healthy interaction amongst males and females, which helps them to have a better understanding and respect towards each other. The coeducational school provides opportunities for boys to interact with the girls and have a healthy relationship with them. On the other hand, the single-sex schools are not able to provide any such ground for boys and girls, and if the home environment is also strict, it is more likely to cause frustration in boys and their indulging in unhealthy behaviour such as eve teasing. In their study, Mohan and Priyadarshini (1996) reported that boys felt that the coeducational schools aid in the proper socialisation of boys and girls, and discourage the boys from indulging in improper behaviours as eve teasing.

A casual glance at the agony and help columns appearing in various magazines and newspapers, calls for a need for an intimate discussion with teenaged children. These columns are a fair index of the myths and
shocking ignorance surrounding sexuality among the Indian youth. Studies have shown that the child usually knows and trusts the child abuser, i.e., a relative or a domestic servant (Finkelhor, 1984; Russell, 1984). This makes sex education all the more essential. A study of school students and teachers, reported in the Times of India (29th July, 1995), found that 57 percent of the students felt that there should be a definite place for sex education in the school curriculum. Fifty three per cent of the principals also expressed a similar opinion. Imparting of sex education in schools plays an important role in helping young people to realise their sexuality in a positive and responsible manner. These programmes can be quite effective menace of sexual harassment.

**Pornographic Films**

The controversies concerning the proliferation of “pornographic” and violent depictions in the mass media have assumed national, political, and legal importance. Feminists, fundamentalists, religious groups, and champions of civil liberty keep debating whether these materials should be permitted to flourish in the society. Dworkin (1985) and MacKinnon (1985) are of the view that pornographic materials foster sex discrimination. According to Steinem (1980), the message in pornography “is violence, dominance, and conquest. It is sex being used to reinforce some inequality, or to create one, or to tell us that pain and humiliation … are really the same as pleasure”.

A number of experiments in which individuals have been predisposed to aggress and later exposed to non-aggressive pornography have produced increase in aggressive behaviour (Baron & Bill, 1977; Donnerstein et al., 1975; Malamuth et al., 1977; Meyer, 1972; Zillman, 1971; 1979). Zillman (1978; 1979; 1982; 1984) has argued that exposing subjects to highly arousing stimuli may cause them to behave more aggressively because of the transfer of arousal from one situation to the other. Bandura (1973) and Donnerstein (1983) have argued that if subjects are not inhibited about
aggression, any source of emotional arousal will tend to increase aggressive behaviour.

Zillman and Bryant (1982; 1984) conducted studies on long-term exposure to sexually explicit materials, which depicted women as sexual objects for exploitation. These researchers found that male and female subjects exposed to these depictions (1) became less supportive of statements about sexual equality; (2) became more tolerant of bizarre and violent forms of pornography; and (3) became more lenient in assigning punishment to a rapist.

Attitudinal changes are also expected under conditions of long-term exposure to images of women where they are portrayed as extremely promiscuous and permissive (Berkowitz, 1984; Berkowitz & Rogers, 1986; Wyer & Srull, 1980). Extensive exposure to this material significantly increased males' sexual callousness toward women (Linz et al., 1987; Check, 1985). Linz et al. (1987) have also discussed about the possibility of long term exposure to images of women that are not sexually explicit or pornographic but are sexually demeaning to women, producing negative attitude changes in male viewers.

Images of women eventually succumbing to sexual violence may suggest to the male viewers that even if a woman seems to be repelled by a pursuer, she eventually responds favourably to overpowering and aggressive advances (Brownmiller, 1975). Male consumers of pornography might come to possess such beliefs, thus reducing their inhibitions to engage in such behaviours themselves (Bandura, 1973). Now there is considerable evidence that exposure to aggressive pornography changes observers’ perceptions of the act of rape and of rape victims themselves. It tends to produce decreased sensitivity toward and identification with the victim, and increased acceptance of rape myths (Malamuth & Check, 1981; 1983).
Films and Television

Images of violence against women are not restricted to pornographic materials. Scenes of rape and violence also appear in much more readily accessible mass media – television serials, movies. Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986; 1994) suggests that children learn and model much from television. Values can be hard to sort out as children spend more time exposed to the mass media and less time exposed to the opinions of caring adults. Today’s children spend more time than any generation in front of the television. Vicarious thought verification through comparisons with distorted television versions of social reality can foster shared misconceptions of people, places, or things (Bandura, 1994; Hawkins & Pingree, 1982).

Malamuth and Check (1981) reported that viewing sexually aggressive films significantly increased male but not female acceptance of interpersonal violence and tended to increase acceptance of rape myths. Studies by Donnerstein & Linz (1986) and Malamuth & Check (1983) suggested that an important element accounting for effects of exposure to aggressive media was the violent nature of the depiction, and not exposure to explicit and arousing sexual behaviour. Both studies implied that sexual violence need not be portrayed in a pornographic fashion for greater acceptance of interpersonal violence and rape myths to result. Linz et al. (1984) found that extensive exposure to commercially released violent and sexually violent films (1) desensitised the viewers to violence, particularly against women; and influenced the viewers to assign greater responsibility to the victim of the assault.

Hindi movies and television serials also play a major role in encouraging the Indian boys to indulge in eve teasing. Both give boys the impression
that their indulgence in such behaviour is actually enjoyed by the victim but due to societal norms (e.g., Women are socialised and expected to say “no” to male advances, at least initially) she can not show it.

**Cartoons**

These days various TV channels also show cartoon movies, which are very popular with the children. Research has shown that females have been underrepresented on television programmes, including cartoons (Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995). Females usually appear in lower status occupations if they are depicted as holding a job, and appear less knowledgeable than male characters (Durkin, 1985a; 1985b; Milkie, 1994; Thompson & Zerbinos, 1997). How males and females are portrayed is important because of the concerns about the media’s role in the socialisation process for children and adults (Signorielli, 1990), in modelling gender-specific behaviour (Courtney & Whipple, 1983), in influencing the self-concepts of young women, and in creating sexist stereotypes (Signorielli, 1990; Williams, 1981).

Children start watching television at a very early age and cartoons are the preferred television format of young children. Thompson & Zerbinos (1995) content analysed television cartoons for their portrayals of male and female characters. The results indicated a great disparity in the presentation of male and female characters in children’s cartoons. Female characters were less numerous, needed to be rescued, caused trouble, talked less, worked in the home, and tended to fall in love at first sight (Barcus, 1983; Levinson, 1975; Streicher, 1974). Smith (1994) also found that advertising aired when children were likely to be watching exhibited stereotypical sex role behaviour and boys predominated in hose commercials.

McGhee and Frueh (1980) reported that, among children, heavy viewers of television have more stereotypical gender role conceptions than do light
viewers. Katz and Boswell (1986) found both peer and media influences on gender development to be stronger than parental influences. Durkin's studies (1985a; 1985b) support the assertion that children obtain information about gender roles from television and model their behaviour based on TV characters. He advocates looking at children as active rather than passive viewers.

**Video and Computer Games**

Video games, like other media forms, have impact on the personality of the children. Zimbardo (1982) remarked that video games are so addictive for young people that they may be socially isolating and may actually encourage violence between people. A majority of video games are violent in nature and feature death and destruction (Dominick, 1984; Loftus & Loftus, 1983). Dietz (1998) analysed 33 popular video games and found that traditional gender roles and violence are central to many games. As the popularity and accessibility of video games continues to increase the question of the effect of the portrayal of women in video games upon gender role expectations as well as upon the use of violence arises.

Concern has been raised that video games may have a more adverse effect than television because of the active involvement of the player (Bowman & Rotter, 1983; Greenfield, 1984; Griffiths, 1991). Like most research into television violence does demonstrate a relationship between the exposure to aggression and subsequently exhibited aggression, investigations regarding the effect of video game playing usually have produced a similar trend (Cooper & Mackie, 1986; Dominick, 1984; Scott, 1995).

Dietz (1998) illustrated that the video games that are being played by today's youth present an overwhelmingly traditional and negative portrayal of women and that the development of gender identities and expectations among youngsters may be affected by these portrayals. These games suggest, for example, that girls will continue to be victims and
needy and that their responsibilities include maintaining beauty and sexual appeal, while boys’ role is to protect and defend women and to possess them even through the use of violence (Dietz, 1998).

Dietz (1998) in her study reported “the most common portrayal of women was actually the complete absence of women at all” (30% of the 33 sample video games did not represent the female population at all). The second most common portrayal of woman was that of a helpless victim. In other instances, females are shown as cheerleaders supporting the male character, as visions of beauty wearing skimpy clothing. Women were also portrayed as evil or as obstacles to the goal of the game.

Goffman (1979) asserts that gender roles, when understood as pictures, are not viewed as unnatural, but as real. In conclusion, video games, like television and other forms of mass media, are the agents in the development of identities in children. As the child identifies with the traditional feminine or masculine role, he or she begins to expect certain behaviour from males and females in the society. These portrayals, then, have the propensity to negatively affect the attitudes of both males and females toward women.

Music Videos

Music videos also appear to have the potential to influence the attitudes of the adolescents with regard to sexual assault and coercion (Lintz & Malamuth, 1993; Strouse et al., 1994). A comprehensive study of mass media and sexuality (Strouse et al., 1994) found that the reported exposure to Music Television (MTV) among college females was the most powerful predictor of sexual permissiveness. Experimental research has shown that exposure to music videos is associated with the premarital sexual permissiveness (Calfin et al., 1993; Greeson & Williams, 1986; Wright & Anderson, 1989).

Exposure to music videos has also been shown to have a powerful influence on other attitudinal and behavioural domains, such as acceptance
of violence and antisocial behaviours (Hansen & Hansen, 1990). Television shapes viewers' conceptions of social reality such that their estimates of real world events become skewed toward television's portrayal of similar events (Gerbner et al., 1986). In other words, viewers' perceptions of normality take on a television slant (Strouse et al., 1994).

Content analyses have revealed that music videos contain more sex and violence than conventional television (Sommers-Flanagan et al., 1993). They tend to be very sexist and portray women as either sexual objects, always available and interested in sex, or as sexual predators (Sherman & Dominick, 1986). Cooper and Mackie (1986) concluded that there was a tendency to describe women in terms of physical attributes or as evil, as possessions of men, or as dependent on men. Some professionals have characterised music videos as representing escapist male fantasies.

Strouse et al. (1994) in their study reported a significant positive relationship between general television viewing frequency and acceptance of sexual harassment in males. These researchers also found those children from intact families and a low level of exposure to popular music videos had the least accepting attitudes toward sexual harassment. As either the family structure or level of exposure to music videos changed, attitudes toward sexual harassment became more accepting.

Advertisements

Among the visual media, print advertisements also have a particularly powerful impact on reinforcing our gender-role attitudes, values, perceptions, beliefs and behaviours. We are exposed to printed advertisements in magazines, newspapers, billboards and so forth. The nature of these advertisements and their consequences may make them particularly potent socialising tools in the development or reinforcement of gender roles (Merril et al., 1994). There is much evidence to suggest that exposure to gender-role stereotyping, common in advertisements,
associated with more gender-typed views of the world (Signorielli, 1990). In turn, this appears to be associated with heightened aggressive attitudes toward women, and with gender-role values (Lanis & Covell, 1995; Timson, 1995). Livingstone and Green (1986) propounded that modelling and identification with advertisement portrayals may reinforce existing negative attitudes and gender-role stereotypes.

Although over the years, there has been a reduction in the portrayal of women only in traditional homemaker and mother roles, nevertheless there has been a parallel increase in advertisements in which women are portrayed in purely decorative roles. Increasingly, women’s presence in advertisements has no substantial relation to the product; increasingly, the woman’s role is to be sexy and alluring (Downs & Harrison, 1985; Ferrante et al., 1988; Sullivan & O’Connor, 1988; Timson, 1995). It seems that as women are gaining ground in one area they are losing ground in another. The widespread overt depictions of women as sex objects have an impact on general beliefs and attitude (Lanis & Covell, 1995).

Recent research findings demonstrate the power of advertisement portrayals of women in influencing gender-role attitudes. Lanis and Covell (1995) and found that males who were shown magazine advertisements in which women were portrayed as sex objects, compared to males shown progressive role images of women in advertisements, were significantly more accepting of rape myths, gender-role stereotyping, interpersonal violence (particularly toward women) and held more adversarial sexual beliefs. Such portrayals typically have been shown to encourage rigid, authoritarian gender-roles and support male dominance (Lanis & Covell, 1995; MacKay & Covell, 1997; Mosher & Anderson, 1986; Walker et al., 1993). In addition, a link has been reported among males’ gender-stereotyped beliefs, their opposition to women’s equality, and their likelihood of violence against women (Mosher & Anderson, 1986; Walker et al., 1993).
Walker et al. (1993) suggested that the male who holds traditional stereotyped beliefs about women is also suspicious of and threatened by women's movement and willing to use force ... to impose his will on women. There is considerable evidence that highly traditional gender-role views are connected to patterns of marital violence, as well as to sexual aggression outside marriage (Finn, 1986; Malamuth, 1986; Mosher & Anderson, 1986; Szymanski et al., 1993; Walker et al., 1993). It is possible that continuous exposure to advertisements in which women are shown as sex objects may reinforce male attitudes supportive of sexual aggression and opposed to women's efforts to equality.

**Ineffectiveness of the Social Control**

Eve teasing is recognised as an offence in the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Section 509 of the IPC states:

> Whoever, intending to outrage the modesty of a woman exposes his person indecently to her or uses obscene words intending that she should hear them or exhibits to her obscene drawings, he commits an offence punishable with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both.

In the last couple of years, the media has played an important role in bringing about the awareness in girls about their legal rights. In spite of the legal sanction of the IPC mentioned above being available, and girls being aware of their rights, in most cases, the victims of eve teasing do not seek legal redress. A study reported in the *Times of India* (30th May, 1995) revealed that 80% of the crimes against women go unreported. A study by Mohan and Priyadarshini (1996) brought to light that less than three percent of the girls in the sample informed the matter to the Police.

Even where cases are reported to the Police and brought to the court, the victims avoid appearing as witnesses for fear of revenge and retaliation by the offender, and humiliation in the courtroom. In a study by Mohan and Priyadarshini (1998), it was found that the girls who had reported their
being harassed to the Police were not pleased with the outcome as no satisfactory action was taken. It was also found that nearly seventy eight per cent of the girls had experienced eve teasing at the hands of the Police personnel and felt disgusted because the very people who are supposed to help them are themselves indulging in harassing behaviour.

The negative social outcomes of taking legal or social redress discourage the girls from reporting the incidents of eve teasing to the Police. It was perhaps the first time in the history of sexual harassment cases, that judiciary gave a formal recognition and punishment for this offence in the famous Rupan Deol Bajaj vs. K.P.S. Gill case in 1998, even though after a long legal battle and ordeal of ten years. If it took ten long years for a senior bureaucrat to obtain justice, it would be all the more difficult for a girl in a lesser position and without any social and financial support.

2.5.4 Factors reducing the potential victim’s ability to resist or avoid the harassment

Socialisation of Women as Victims

Categorising others by their genders is a ubiquitous and largely automatic process (Deaux, 1995). Qualities of the victim, and the setting contribute to the salience of particular categories. Gender categorisation carries along with it culturally shared assumptions about personal traits and abilities of men and women, and the roles for which they are suited. Such stereotypic assumptions by men about women play a crucial role in eliciting or disinhibiting sexual harassment and other kinds of harassment.

Culturally shared social images of women are linked with sexual harassment. People have no single image of “woman” in the society, but a cluster of images or subtypes (Deaux, 1995), with distinctively different stereotypic content. The many subtypes of women form three distinct clusters – “sexy”, “non-traditional”, and “traditional” (Six and Eckes, 1991). “Sexy” women are characterised as being concerned with their own appearance, often desirous of attracting men. “Non-traditional” women are
viewed as demanding, ambitious, independent, and intelligent. "Traditional women are perceived as conforming, dependent, passive, uncritical, and stupid. These clusters are decisive for the man to behave towards each type. Fiske and Glick (1995) describe behaviours toward each type of woman as follows:

"Sexy women potentially arouse benevolent intimacy-seeking or hostile sexual motivations; non-traditional women threaten motives related to both competitive gender differentiation and paternalistic domination; and traditional women arouse protective paternalistic motives."

According to Fiske and Glick (1995), women who are perceived as falling into the first two categories may be, for completely different reasons, the most likely to be harassed, whereas women who are classified as traditional may be more likely to receive male protection, rather than sexual advances.

Research has demonstrated gender differences in children’s behaviour, attitudes, and personality (Huston, 1983). Many of these gender differences have been linked to the different socialisation that boys and girls experience in the family (Block, 1973; Fagot, 1982; Hoffman, 1977; Lytton & Romney, 1991). It has been suggested that boys and girls are treated differently by parents, that the roles each parent enacts are gender specific and thus lead to differences in self-concepts and behaviours that boys and girls take on, and that parents communicate overtly and covertly their own gender stereotyped attitudes which affect their children’s self-concepts, motivations, and behaviour (Hoffman & Kloska, 1995).

Gender stereotyped child rearing attitudes tend to discourage daughters’ independence and achievement but are neither dysfunctional nor advantageous for sons (Hoffman, 1972). Hoffman and Kloska (1995) found in their study that daughters, whose parents obtained less stereotyped scores had a more internal locus of control, showed a trend toward more independent coping skills. Kagan and Moss (1960) in a
longitudinal study concluded that aggression is reinforced in boys and
dependence behaviour in girls leading to significant differences between
girls and boys on these traits by the time they reach high school. Maccoby
(1963, 1966) has pointed out that girls are more conforming, suggestible,
and dependent upon the opinions of others. Hoffman (1972) found that the
girls as compared to boys have less encouragement for independence,
more parental protectiveness, less pressure to establish an identity separate
from the mother, they engage in less independent exploration of their
environments.

In our society, dependence behaviour is associated with women. A girl
learns to be helpless at a very young age, and this learnt helplessness and
differentiation continues rather smoothly into adulthood. As a result they
develop neither adequate abilities nor confidence but continue to be
dependent on others. If they are harassed, they suffer it as their destined
misfortune. Lerner (1966) has described three basic causes for suffering –
the low intrinsic worth of the sufferer; the sufferer’s prior behaviour; and
the chance. All the three causes seem to be valid in the context of the
Indian women.

Blaming the Victim

In a male dominated society, the female is often held responsible for
provoking sexually harassing behaviour towards her. The fact that she is
scared or helpless to retaliate is taken as a sign of encouragement to this
behaviour. There is a tendency to blame the innocent victims for their
undeserved fate as a means of maintaining one’s belief that the world is
fair and just (Lerner, 1966; Lerner & Mathews, 1967; Lerner & Simmons,
1966). Lerner’s “just world” theory posits that the intrinsic character of a
good person can not be faulted. Whenever there is an incident of eve
teasing, people tend to justify the offender’s behaviour instead of
condemning it. People often blame the victim for her own suffering. This
attitude of the people discourages the victims from reporting the matter to
the appropriate authorities, because, for the victim, her reputation is at stake. This in turn encourages the perpetrators of this crime to indulge in it all the more.

Survey research indicates that very few victims report their experiences of harassment to someone in authority (Cammaert, 1985; Tangri et al., 1982) for the fear that they would be held responsible. Despite increased societal awareness, negative reactions are still common experiences for women disclosing incidents of sexual harassment to social network members (Ullman, 1996). Valentine-French and Radtke (1989) reported that male subjects attributed less responsibility to the perpetrator in sexual harassment, as compared to the female subjects. Similar results have been reported by other researchers (Bridges & McGrail, 1989; Deitz et al., 1984; Jensen & Gutek, 1982; Kenig & Ryan, 1986; Luginbuhl & Mullin, 1981).

Research also indicates that people with traditional gender-role attitudes, tend to blame the victim for being harassed, view her as less respectable, and attribute less responsibility to the perpetrator (Acock & Ireland, 1983). Valentine-French and Radtke (1989) also found in their study that participants with less traditional attitudes attributed less responsibility to the victim than did participants with traditional attitudes.

A harassed woman is bitten twice – once by the act of harassment itself and again because of the negative attitude of the people who hold her responsible for the harassment. Symonds (1980) described this phenomenon as the “second injury” to victims, which refers to the lack of support from the community, society, family, and friends experienced by the victim.

Some psychologists and legal scholars suggest that previous sexual abuse or exposure to violence against women produces altered perceptions of current interactions and situations in those women. Stockdale, O'Connor,
Gutek, and Geer (2002) in an article examined whether individuals who have had prior sexual abuse experiences, including sexual harassment (SH) and child sexual abuse, are hypersensitive to potential sexual harassment related stimuli or overreact to social sexual experiences. The review of the existing empirical literature examining such relationships and the findings presented here in an interrelated set of 5 studies provide little general or consistent support for a relationship between prior abuse experiences and current perceptions about sexual harassment.

The society's notion of femininity is such that women are trained to be submissive, weak, and passive, which make them more subject to sexual harassment. This is not to say that an assertive woman is not harassed. On the contrary, Mohan and Priyadarshini (1998) found that assertive girls reported experiencing more eve teasing than the submissive girls. Nevertheless, conformity to traditional notions of femininity often makes women more vulnerable to sexual harassment. On the other hand, women who reject traditional notions of femininity are more likely to take risks that result in their vulnerability to be harassed – for example, going to pubs and discos without a male escort. The price of more freedom for women is an even higher risk of being harassed or raped. Krahe (1988) found that the tendency to blame the victim is more when the victim is engaged in a non-traditional behaviour prior to the harassment.

**Victim and Drinking**

Traditional gender role stereotypes convey a double standard regarding alcohol consumption too – drinking men tend to be viewed more positively than drinking women (Crowe & George, 1989; Richardson & Campbell, 1982). Women who drink alcohol are often perceived as being sexually promiscuous (Corcoran & Thomas, 1991; George et al., 1988). Women who visit such places as pubs and discos are seen by men as being available, “asking for it”, and “bad” women (Russell, 1984).
2.6 RESPONSES OF VICTIMS TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT

A number of strategies for the classification of responses to sexual harassment have been suggested (Gruber, 1989; Maypole, 1986; Terpstra & Baker, 1989), systems that emphasise primarily on the extent to which the victim responds assertively to the harasser. Gruber (1989) has ordered responses along a continuum from the least confrontational to the most. Terpestra and Baker (1989) proposed a similar framework, and Gutek and Koss (1993) provided a two-dimensional system defined by degree of assertiveness, and whether the response involved the help of others.

All these systems suffer from a major limitation – they are not based on the reactions of actual victims. They are based either on rational derivation (Gruber, 1989; Gutek & Koss, 1993) or, on the written responses of research participants to brief descriptions of hypothetical situations. Actual victims have been shown to behave quite differently than the research participants (Fitzgerald, 1993; Gutek & Koss, 1993). Also, these systems have focussed only on the action oriented and problem solving responses, while neglecting the psychological reactions (Fitzgerald et al., 1995).

Fitzgerald (1990) proposed a framework derived by coding responses provided by actual victims surveyed in a large sexual harassment prevalence study. This system differs from the other frameworks principally by the inclusion of the cognitive strategies that actual victims frequently employ. The system consists of ten strategies, classified as either internally focussed (endurance, denial, detachment, reattribution, and illusory control), or externally focussed (avoidance, appeasement, assertion, seeking institutional or organisational relief, and seeking social support). Internal strategies are characterised by attempts to manage the perceptions and emotions associated with the event, whereas externally focussed strategies are problem solving in nature.
Wasti and Cortina (2002) investigated coping responses to sexual harassment across 4 samples of working women from 3 cultures and 2 occupational classes. Complete-link cluster analyses provides a coping framework, suggesting that avoidance, denial, negotiation, advocacy seeking, and social coping are universal responses to sexual harassment. Further, Fitzgerald's (1990) internal-external dichotomy appears to capture higher order relationships among coping responses.

**Internally Focussed Responses**

A common response, particularly to less severe situations, is to ignore the harassment and do nothing (endurance), or to pretend that the event is not happening or has no effect (denial) (Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Gutek, 1985; Gutek & Koss, 1993; Loy & Stewart, 1984; Mohan & Priyadarshini, 1996). A study by Mohan and Priyadarshini (1996) found that nearly 54% of the harassed girls ignored and did nothing in response to being harassed. These girls either ignored the harassment because of helplessness or pretended that it did not happen. Fitzgerald et al. (1995) labelled the latter responses as denial. They noted that denial could be of information, threat, vulnerability, or effect. Alternatively, doing nothing may imply endurance, that is, tolerating a situation because it is unavoidable, one is afraid, or one does not know what else to do. It may also imply some other cognitive strategy not detectable by checklists of action-oriented, problem solving strategies.

Other internally focussed responses that have been identified are detachment, illusory control, and reattribution. Gruber and Bjorn (1982) found that 10% of the victims they studied used reattribution as a coping strategy, reinterpreting the situation in such a way that it was not defined as harassment. Others invoked extenuating circumstances (e.g., the harasser was lonely), or attempted to interpret his intentions as benign (Gutek, 1985; Rabinowitz, 1990). Self-blame, which Fitzgerald et al., labelled as illusory control, also appears to be a common response.
Jensen and Gutek (1982) found that 25% of the female victims attributed harassment in some way to their own behaviour, an attribution that inhibited both reporting and seeking social support. Using data from 3 samples of working women and men, a study by Harned and Fitzgerald (2002) examined the association between sexual harassment and eating disorder symptoms by studying the processes that may underlie this relationship. The results of structural equation modeling suggest a link between sexual harassment and eating disorder symptoms among women and indicate that this relationship is mediated by psychological distress, self-esteem, and self-blame.

**Externally Focussed Responses**

The most common problem solving strategy appears to be *avoidance*. The literature suggests that approximately half of the employed victims actively attempt to cope in this way (Culbertson *et al.*, 1993; Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1988; Gutek, 1985; McKinney *et al.*, 1988; Schneider, 1991). Also common is *appeasement* – an attempt to “put off” the harasser without direct confrontation (e.g., humour, excuses, delaying, etc.). Humour is particularly common in less serious situations. Gruber and Bjorn (1982) have labelled this response as *masking*. A substantial number of victims seek social support by talking and discussing the problem with friends and family. Women also employ a variety of assertive responses to communicate that harassment is unwelcome. Mohan and Priyadarshini (1996) reported that more than 18% of the victims confronted the harasser by attacking him verbally or physically, according to the degree of harassment. Gruber and Bjorn (1982) also reported that 15% of the victims in their sample attacked their harassers verbally and 7% attacked them physically.

By far the most infrequent response is to seek *institutional/organisational relief* (i.e., notifying a supervisor, bringing a formal complaint, and filing a lawsuit). Victims apparently turn to such a strategy as a last resort when all
the efforts have failed. Fitzgerald et al. (1995) have noted that the least confrontational responses are the most common. Victims are more likely to talk with a supervisor than file a complaint, and legal claims are by far the least common response. As the sensitivity to this issue increases, the frequency of reporting can be expected to increase (Wagner, 1992).

A recent study by Magley (2002) explored the underlying structure of women's coping with sexual harassment from a rational-empirical approach. On the basis of multidimensional scaling, clustering, and confirmatory factor analysis across 8 data sets, 4 clusters of coping behaviours emerged, with little variance across the data sets. The four clusters that emerged are behavioural engagement, behavioural disengagement, cognitive engagement, and cognitive disengagement. This framework provides insight into the complex forms that women's coping with sexual harassment takes and has important legal implications.

According to a report (Awasthi, 1995), the first case of eve teasing was registered in the state of Punjab in the year 1992, while no case was registered in 1993, only 3 cases were reported in 1994 where as the unreported cases were as high as 27,530. Many women do not report because of the belief that nothing would be done (Gutek & Koss, 1993; Martindale, 1990). The most common reason, however, for not reporting is fear – fear of retaliation, of not being believed, of hurting one's career, or of being humiliated (Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Gutek, 1985; Gutek & Koss, 1993; Martindale, 1990; Phillips et al., 1989; Saunders, 1992). Mohan and Priyadarshini (1998) reported that 25% of the victims preferred a direct confrontation rather than reporting to the Police, because they got a sense of satisfaction and higher self esteem as they could reprimand the aggressor themselves.

Studies also show a link between more assertive responding and negative outcomes (Culbertson et al., 1992; Hesson-McInnis & Fitzgerald, 1992; Livingston, 1982). For example, in a study by Culberston et al.'s (1992),
one-third of the victims felt that when they complained, they were humiliated in front of others. Gutek (1985) reported that 60% of the non-reporters in her sample believed that they would be blamed for the incident if they made a formal complaint; another 60% believed that complaints would be ineffective because nothing would be done.

A number of studies show that the explicit, repeated, and severe cases of harassment are more likely to elicit some form of assertion or a formal complaint (Baker & Terpstra, 1990; Livinston, 1982; Mohan & Priyadarshini, 1996). The behaviour that is transitory or less explicit is typically ignored, met with humour, or avoided (Gruber & Bjorn, 1982; Loy & Stewart, 1984; Mohan & Priyadarshini, 1996). A moderate correlation between harassment severity and assertive response has been reported in several research studies (Brooks & Perot, 1991; Hesson-McInnis & Fitzgerald, 1992; Livingston, 1982). Other factors that have been found to be related to the type of response include feminist beliefs (Brooks & Perot, 1991), sex role conventionality and self-blame (Jensen & Gutek, 1982).

Terpstra and Baker (1988) found that only about 1% of victims ever took legal action—the rarest of all responses. Such assertive action often incurs considerable cost besides a lot of time. Furthermore, taking the matter to court is a risky and often a traumatic venture (Dolkart, 1992). As Livingston (1982) states, “Given the immense psychological and economic costs to individual who use formal action, in contrast to the potentially meagre gains, it is not surprising that so few victims choose this response”.

Thus, the literature on responses to sexual harassment has focussed almost exclusively on problem-focused strategies, discussing them primarily in terms of mastery and implicitly invoking a trait perspective by asking what the participant would do or the victim should do in a variety of circumstances. Coping has been defined as a process rather than a trait, concerned with what is actually said or done in a specific situation. Coping
is not equated with mastery; rather, it is defined as all efforts to manage a stressor, unsuccessful as well as successful.

2.7 THE CONCEPT OF FEMININE WORTH

The word “feminine”, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English (1985), implies “of, like, suitable for, women”; while the word “worth”, according to the same dictionary, means “having a certain value, or of value equal to”. Thus, “feminine worth” literally means “the value of a woman”.

The perception of feminine worth is nothing but the general attitude of people towards the role and status of women in the contemporary society vis-à-vis that of men. An egalitarian or a liberal attitude would be one, which leads a person to respond to a woman independently of her sex. A person who possesses this attitude believes that the sex of a woman should not influence the perception of her abilities or the determination of her rights, obligations, and opportunities. A true egalitarian would not discriminate against women in non-traditional roles and would not relate differentially to a woman on the basis of stereotypical beliefs. Kurdek (1988) suggested that liberalism represents an individual’s ability to integrate the perceived rights and needs of the individual with the general social norms. However, these attitudes may not be unidimensional – a person might be “conservative” on some of the issues concerning women, while “liberal” on others (Ashmore et al., 1995).

The concept of feminine worth is an index of the individual and collective role of women in society. The perception of feminine worth of a person indicates the extent to which he/she values the role of a woman as an individual. The perception of feminine worth of a woman also reflects her own self worth.

The concept of femininity and the accompanying images of womanhood found in the traditional Indian philosophy and mythology do not form a
consistent and uni-dimensional picture. The most powerful visual images of the feminine element have been as a creator (earth goddess), or as a destroyer of evil (mahisasuramardini). In the Harappan and Vedic times, the procreative aspect of her powers was benign, giving rise to many local and regional manifestations in unique and artistic ways. Fine examples of this manifestation are found in many parts of South and West India since prehistoric times. The more aggressive and warlike image of the mother goddess was popularised from early medieval times with a proliferation of sculptural images of Kali/Durga as the destroyer of the ‘buffalo-demon’. These images are powerful as they treat the feminine as an autonomous entity, all encompassing. These images are put on a high pedestal with respect, reverence and awe. Mother goddesses as spouses of the male trinity – Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva – are seen in relation to the male entity, but put in the secondary position of consorts, important in their own right, yet always subordinate to their male counterparts (Hawley and Wulff, 1984). The image of the consort has been most commonly accepted as the ideal one, and the Indian wives try to emulate them in real life.

In the ancient Hindu mythology the symbolism and iconography relating to the theme of the feminine range over a wide variety of moods, powers, and roles. This mythology presents not only Sita who is an epitome of unquestioning surrender and sacrifice, but also Saraswati (Goddess of learning), Durga (Goddess of protection and power), Kali (Goddess of power), and Lakshmi (Goddess of wealth). In fact, hardly any aspect of life has escaped iconolatry in female forms. Yet we find that this variety in the mythological imagery is missing in the actual theories of femininity, which display the stereotyped view of women as essentially weak and vulnerable beings. There seems to be a separation between the metaphysical/mythological frameworks on the one hand and the social/theoretical frameworks on the other, as if they deal with entirely different worlds, having no connection, or at most having a very loose one only, with each other (Verma, 1995). The consequence is that despite very
lofty conceptions of womanhood in some metaphysical frameworks and mythological constructions, when it comes to view the woman as a reality on the ordinary plane of life, the perspective becomes narrow and partial.

Sudhir Kakar, in his writings, has pointed out the ambivalence of the traditional Indian attitude towards women, viewing them alternately as nurturing mothers and devouring demons (Kakar, 1981). On the one hand, a woman is equated with animals and on the other hand, she is worshipped as a goddess (Kumari, 1998). The Hindu mythology and religion are replete with negative images of women. Both positive and negative images coexist and reinforce certain deep-seated attitudes towards women, as well as belief in the power of the female in the deeply patriarchal culture of the dominant Brahmanical tradition in the Indian subcontinent.

This narrow conception of femininity is well known throughout the world, cutting across cultural and temporal differences. Whether it is ancient Indian texts like Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Dharmashastras or western philosophers like Aristotle, Hegel, and Rousseau, they all have more or less the same conception of womanhood. They all view the essence of manhood and womanhood as sharply contrasting with each other and allot entirely different roles to men and women, generally placing women in powerless and inferior rank in the socio-political context. One classic example of this view in Indian thought is Manusmriti (A Dharmashatra or law code). Even epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata, which have a very strong grip over the Indian masses, directly or indirectly, reflect a similar view.

Several myths in the Indian culture have deep philosophical implications for understanding the nature of feminine identity and reflect how the early Brahmanical tradition viewed gender relations in a largely patriarchal society. In some myths, the male character transforms to the female form. What is pertinent to these myths is that the change of sex occurs in the context of a punishment, reprimand or curse meted out to the male in
question. For instance, in the *Mahabharata, Arjuna* was cursed by the nymph *Urvashi* to lose his manhood and take on a feminine form as *Brhannala*.

The Indian culture should not be equated simply with *Vedic* or *Hindu* culture, since it is highly plural and complex. Yet, as far as the conception of femininity is concerned, it remains almost constant in the midst of this plurality. The complex society and patriarchy is structured in the different communities that inhabit the Indian subcontinent. The worship of mother goddess cults and their ubiquity or absence can be related to the implicit or explicit influence of matriarchal practices on communities, which subsequently, over historical time, were transformed into patriarchal societies.

The worth or the status of woman is an elusive concept. According to the famous American anthropologist Linton (1936), the status of any individual means the sum total of all the positions that he/she occupies. It represents his/her position in relation to the total society. According to Coser and Rosenberg (1964), all culturally prescribed rights and duties, inherent in social positions have been encompassed in the term status. There are two types of status—*ascribed status* and *achieved status*. *Ascribed status*, according to Linton, are those which are assigned to the individual without reference to their innate differences or abilities. The *achieved status*, are those requiring special qualities, although they are not necessarily limited to these. They are not assigned to individuals from birth but are left open to be developed through competition and individual effort.

Linton further argues that the role is the dynamic aspect of status. There is no status without role and no role without status. In any society women occupy an important place and so does the question regarding-the status of women. The status of women in society is intimately connected with their
economic position, which depends on rights, roles, and opportunities for participation in economic activity.

In a patrilineal social set up, women have been assigned an inferior status to men. Even after five decades of independence, Indian women’s position is still subordinate to men. An Indian woman never stands alone; her identity is wholly defined by her relationships to others. First, she is a daughter to her parents. Second, she is a wife to her husband and daughter-in-law to his parents. Third, she is a mother to her sons.

In India, men still continue to dominate women in spite of the Indian Constitution guaranteeing equal rights to women. Women at one hand are eulogised, and at another, they are battered, degenerated, humiliated and molested or raped. According to Upadhyay (1996), it is the double standard taught to and imbibed by us during the early periods of socialisation that is largely responsible for this behaviour towards women. In one of his editorials in The Tribune (Jan 8, 1995), Hari Jai Singh holds that India is full of contradictions, with 16th century co-existing with 21st century thrust.

Woman, as a class, has remained in a state of subjugation and inferiority. The apparently elevated status of women is linked with the feminine virtues, which are mainly self-negating: self-sacrifice, tolerance, and submission. The self-negating virtues, and attaching them exclusively to femininity, causes women to take pride in their subjugation and to resist a change for the better. Generation after generation, women have been moulded by the ethics of self-negation and trained to take pride in being exclusive custodians of this norm. This has been the subtlest and the most powerful instrument of preventing change towards an egalitarian society. Thus, the whole world that was always as much hers as man’s has remained eclipsed from the woman.
Empirical research in recent years has brought out clearly the extent to which women occupy disadvantaged positions in traditional economic and social arrangements (Sen, 1995). Women, a majority of the world’s population, receive only a small proportion of its opportunities and benefits (Nussbaum & Glover, 1995). Looking at the female is to male ratios in the population, give some insight into the acuteness of the problem of gender inequality. According to the 1993 UN Human Development Report, there is no country in the world in which women’s quality of life is equal to that of men. In industrial countries, gender discrimination is mainly in employment and wages, while in the developing countries, the great disparities, besides those in the job market, are in health care, nutritional support, and education. For instance, India, defying the scientifically proven biological fact that women live longer than men, has more men than women. The reasons for this include high maternal mortality and infanticide and nutritional neglect of the girl child (Nussbaum, 1995).

In family behaviour, inequalities between women and men are often accepted as natural and appropriate. Sometimes the operational decisions relating to these inequalities (e.g., providing more health care or nutritional attention to boys vis-à-vis girls) are undertaken and executed through women themselves (Sen, 1995).

Anthropological accounts provide a consistent indication of the marked preference for sons all over India (Madan, 1965; Kapur, 1973). Statistics document higher rate of female infant mortality, and call attention to the fact that whatever health care and schooling are available in India; daughters are the last to receive it (Kakar, 1981).

Contemporary studies from different parts of India reveal that the traditional preference for sons is very much intact. Amartya Sen provided an estimate of missing girls and women in India as ranging between 25 to 50 million (Sen, 1995). According to the UNICEF (2000), due to sex-
selective abortion, female infanticide and inferior access to food and medicine, there are 60 million fewer women in the world today than would be expected from demographic trends. These women would have been alive today, but are not, because of rampant sex discrimination that prizes a boy’s life over a girl’s. At the birth of a son drums are beaten, conch shells blown, while no such spontaneous rejoicing accompanies the birth of a daughter. Celebration at the birth of a son, particularly the first son, has been documented repeatedly (Miller, 1997; Wadley, 1975; Das Gupta, 1987). Genetic testing for sex selection, though outlawed, has become a booming business in India. Sex discrimination by parents in favour of males also occurs in feeding, dispensation of medical care, and allocation of love and warmth (Miller, 1997). Due to this cultural devaluation, women develop a feeling of worthlessness and inferiority (Kakar, 1981; Singer, 1995; Whatley & Wasieleski, 2001).

In India, more than five thousand women are killed every year by in-laws unhappy with the size of dowries they get. UNICEF (1997) revealed that in India more than dozen dowry deaths are reported every day, mostly due to kitchen fires designed to look like accidents. Most violence against women not only goes unpunished but is tolerated in silence.

The horror of domestic violence has always been there in the society as a brutal secret, silent and pernicious. Today it is spreading like an epidemic to more and more homes – the secret is becoming more and more public. It is not just the illiterates who are involved in marital violence. Menon and David (1998) point out that as educated and financially independent women begin to question male dominance, there is a sharp increase in atrocities against them leading to more broken homes.

Stereotypical images of women still prevail in the minds of the people and any woman who does not fit into this image is not considered a “nice” woman. Sexual slangs and swear words are all right, if used by a male but such language usage by a girl is considered inappropriate. Romaine (1994)
reports that the male peer groups place high value on obscene language usage. A similar view is held for women who drink and smoke. People with traditional sex role ideologies view these women as fair game.

Rigid notions about relative gender roles prevent the cognisance of the extent of work participation by women. There is a deliberate exclusion of a whole range of non-market activities (household production, family maintenance, reproductive activities, etc.) performed by women from the purview of gainful participation and actual employment (Kumari, 1998). These household activities are quite porous in terms of time, space and participatory functions. Assigning an economic value to these activities is very difficult. A woman who is visibly employed works twice as much as the housewife because besides working at the workplace, she also does all that a housewife is doing.

In the world of business also the position of women is no different. Today, women represent more than 50% of the world’s population, yet in no country do they represent nearly half of the corporate managers (Izraeli & Adler, 1994). In the Fortune 500 companies, only six companies have women CEOs and the number of top women corporate officers is 118 as against 2,259 men. Despite significant progress and a variety of laws formulated to prevent wage discrimination, women are still earning less than their male counterparts for the same job. Even in the advanced countries like U.S.A, the median salary of women corporate officers is $518,596 vis-à-vis $765,000 for men. Barriers to women’s entry into senior management, otherwise known as the “glass ceiling” exist across the globe, and in some areas of the world, it is worse than in others. Women are more likely to be pigeonholed in less challenging positions than men. Women are often placed on a separate, and less promising career track.

The question of women’s political status has become a national as well as a gender issue. Indian politics has been male-dominated ever since it
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emerged in its modern form during the national movement, which began in the last quarter of the 19th century. There is a reflection of the patriarchal nature of Indian society as well as the generally subordinate status of women, which discourages the women to join politics. A large number of women participated in the freedom struggle and quite a few of them emerged as prominent leaders and were elected in the first Lok Sabha in 1952. However, their strength was only 4.4 per cent in the house. The representation of women has risen very slowly in Indian Parliament. In the present Lok Sabha constituted in 2004, the total number of women account for 45 in the 540-member house. Though political parties mostly dominated by men, repeatedly claim to be champions of women’s empowerment, they continue to set up a scandalously small number of women candidates. The decisive criterion in giving nominations is not ensuring women fair representation, but the chances of winning.

Domestic responsibilities, lack of financial clout, rising criminalization of politics and the threat of character assassination are making it increasingly difficult for women to be part of the political framework. Moreover, women politicians point out that even within the political parties, women are rarely found in leadership positions. In fact, women candidates are usually fielded from 'losing' constituencies where the party does not want to 'waste' a male candidate (Rai, 2002). Many women politicians are finding it difficult to participate in politics, let alone equalize the gender gap that exists. This has been supported by recent elections. Looking at the drift of events, it would be a long time before Indian women, numbering around 480 million, are adequately represented in the Lok Sabha.