CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

With rapid industrialization, economic development and modernization in varied spheres of economic activities, the employment of women has increased in many folds. Quite apart from this, globalization has led to steady increase in the rate of employment of women. But it has also led to many evils such as gender discrimination, physical and mental harassment and more specifically sexual harassment at workplace. Indeed sexual harassment apart from being dehumanizing act, is an unlawful intrusion of the right of privacy and sanctity of a female. It is a serious blow to her supreme honour and offends her self-esteem and dignity; it degrades and humiliates the victim particularly where the victim is helpless/innocent (Srivastava, 2004). Also, sexual harassment is a very complex issue, involving legal, cultural and psychological aspects and it requires a multidimensional response (Chand, 2009).

The term “sexual harassment” first came into use in the late 1970s in the United States. Catherine MacKinnon, a legal scholar from the United States, made the first argument that sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by the constitution and civil rights law of United States. Afterwards, various definitions and meaning were made in different countries and international instruments to express sexual harassment. Through all these definitions, certain common elements of sexual harassment can be observed worldwide. Speaking generally, a behaviour constituting sexual behaviour must

1. occur in the place of work or in a work-related environment;

2. occur because of the person’s sex and/or it is related to or about sex;
3. be unwelcome, unwanted, uninvited, not returned, not mutual and
4. affect the terms or conditions of employment – ‘quid pro quo’ or the work
   environment itself ‘hostile work environment’ (Bhasin, 2007).

In Vishaka Vs State of Rajasthan (1997), the Supreme Court of India had defined
“Sexual harassment “to include: such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour
(whether directly or by implication) as: (a) Physical contact and advances; (b) A demand
or request for sexual favours; (c) Sexually coloured remarks; (d) Showing pornography;
(e) Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature. The
same judgment also expresses the preventive measures of sexual harassment in its
guidelines. Indian Constitution also seeks to protect the interest of women through
fundamental rights and directive principles of policy. But part of the problem in India, is
that there is no specific legislation dealing with sexual harassment except some criminal
laws dealing with rape and sexual assault.

As at present in India, millions of women are engaged for employment in the
agriculture, industry and services. They are found in both organized and unorganized
sectors of Indian economy. The women employed in organized sector have some, though
not enough, legal protection to safeguard their rights and interests. Sexual harassment is
the main problem, now a day, being faced by a substantially large number of women at
workplace. The origin of this problem dates back to the entry of women in the field of
employment. However, this problem is reported and caught attention of the public and the
government only recently (YES, 2004). Even today this problem is not being seriously
taken by the social scientists, the employers and the policy makers and no effective
measures have been adopted to prevent or at least reduce the incidence of sexual
harassment at workplace. So far, a number of bills (by the National Commission for
Women, Women’s Organization and the Government) have been drafted but there is still
confusion on what bill would serve the purpose better. At present, the introduction of Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Workplace Bill, 2010 in Parliament was approved in November, 2010.

One of the major reasons for lack of attention by the social scientists is that the matter of sexual harassment is not coming to the limelight due to the not-reporting behaviour of victims, though there are many incidences of sexual harassment at workplaces. Main cause of this non-reporting are (i) fear of losing job; (ii) fear of not getting promotions; (iii) fear of victimization by the employer; (iv) fear of being neglected by the family member and of victim blaming for her victimization; (v) feeling of shame and guilt, etc.

According to the available research studies, sexual harassment at workplace worsens the victims’ physical, emotional and psychological well being as well as it makes the job related negative impacts among the victims such as loss of productivity, high rate of absenteeism, lack of concentration, etc. Anyhow sexual harassment of women at workplace violates her right to job security and equal opportunity.

As we all know, research studies on sexual harassment in all perspectives such as legal, socio-cultural, gender, organizational, and psychological etc can lead to create better policies for prevention of sexual harassment. Hence the present study ‘Victims of Sexual Harassment at the workplace – A Comparative Study in the Organized and Unorganized Sectors of Tirunelveli District’ is an eager attempt to contribute for the policy making for prevention of sexual harassment at workplace.

Tirunelveli district covers an area of 6,823 Sq.Kms. It is in the south eastern part of Tamil Nadu and is triangular in shape. It lies between 08º 08’ and 09º 23’ of northern latitudes and 77º 09’ and 77º54’ of eastern longitudes.
6.2 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Methodology includes the objectives of the study, sampling procedures, data collection and data analysis as follows

6.2.1 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To study the demographic background and employment details of the sample women respondents.

2. To discuss the sexual harassment victimization at workplace in terms of nature of victimization, place of victimization, frequency of victimization, victims’ reaction to victimization, professional relationship between victim and harasser, and the like.

3. To examine the relationship between personal and physical characteristics of the victims and level of sexual harassment.

4. To study the correlation between the extent of sexual harassment and the harasser's stimulating factors.

5. To discuss the reporting behaviour of victims about sexual harassment.

6. To analyze the impact of sexual harassment victimization of victims.

7. To offer suggestions for the prevention of sexual harassment of working women at work place and protection of women from sexual harassment.

6.2.2 Hypotheses of the Study

1. Age of the victims is independent of the level of sexual harassment for both organized and unorganized sectors.

2. There is no relationship between marital status of the victims and level of sexual harassment for both organized and unorganized sectors.
3. Living style of the victims is independent of level of sexual harassment for both organized and unorganized sectors.

4. There is no relationship between complexion of the victims and level of sexual harassment for both organized and unorganized sectors.

5. Appearance of the victims is no way related to level of sexual harassment for both organized and unorganized sectors.

6. Physique of the victims is independent of level of sexual harassment for both organized and unorganized sectors.

7. There is no relationship between dressing habits of the victims and level of sexual harassment for both organized and unorganized sectors.

8. Make-up and other beauty tips of the victims are not related to the level of sexual harassment for both organized and unorganized sectors.

9. There is no relationship between sociability of the victims and the level of sexual harassment for both organized and unorganized sectors.

6.2.3 Sampling Procedure

The Tirunelveli District has 11 Taluks. Of them, 8 Taluks were selected randomly. In Tirunelveli District, both organized and unorganized sectors were identified by the researcher for the purpose of selecting the women workers. The common broad five categories of employment sectors namely (i) manufacturing, (ii) trading, (iii) construction, (iv) hotels and restaurants and (v) ‘others’ includes education, health, finance and the like were selected in Tirunelveli district for the present study. As per the research plan, out of 1000 sample women respondents, 500 each from organized and unorganized units of the above-mentioned five categories of employment sectors were selected on the basis of convenience sampling technique.
For the purpose of data collection, a well designed interview schedule was prepared and conducted pilot study for deletion and additions of questions in the schedule.

After the data collection, interview schedules with incomplete responses 21 from organized sectors and 63 from unorganized sectors were identified and deleted. Finally, 479 respondents from organized sectors and 437 respondents from unorganized sectors were considered for the analysis. Based on the information gathered from the interview schedule, out of 479, from organized sector 304 (63.47 per cent) and 437 from unorganized sector 323 (73.91 per cent) were found to be victimized due to any form of sexual harassment at workplace in the selected employment sectors.

6.2.4 Collection of Data

Both primary and secondary data have been used for the present study. Since the subject of the research is purely women related personal and confidential study, the researcher has employed two well-trained women investigators with him for approaching the respondents for personal interview to collect data so as to full fill the objectives of the study. The selected respondents were contacted in person and the objectives of the study were clearly explained to them and their co-operation was ensured.

6.2.5 Tools of Analysis

The following statistical analysis techniques were employed in the present research.

Descriptive statistics like mean, standard deviation and the like have been computed. The percentages for the items relating to the demographic background of the (victims) respondents have been used. The Chi-square test was employed to examine the relationship between personal and family characters of the victims and level of sexual
harassment. In order to study the correlation between the extent of sexual harassment and harassers’ stimulating factors, Path analysis was used.

6.2.6 Variables Investigated in the Research

The dependent and independent variables analyzed in this research were as follows:

6.2.6.1 Dependent Variables: Sexual harassment victimization is the prime dependent variable and other related dependent variables are level of sexual harassment, reaction to sexual harassment, reporting behaviour of victims and impact of sexual harassment.

6.2.6.2 Independent Variables: The demographic factors of victims and other personal, family characteristics of victims are the independent variables. They include age group, marital status, type of family, forms of harassment, complexion, appearance, physique, dressing habits, make-up and beauty tips, and sociability of victims, etc.

6.3 MAJOR FINDINGS

In the first section, demographic background and employment details of the sample women respondents were discussed.

1. It is inferred from the analysis that majority of the respondents belong to the age-group of 26-35 years, followed by 18-25 years in both the sectors.

2. More than 50 per cent of the respondents in organized sector are graduates and post-graduates whereas maximum of the respondents in unorganized sector are below HSC.

3. It is observed that more than 60 per cent of the respondents in both sectors are Hindus, followed by Christians and Muslims in the study area.

4. Caste-wise analysis shows that majority of the respondents in both sectors belong to backward class (BC).
5. It is noticed from the martial status-wise analysis that 71.61 per cent and 20.04 per cent of the respondents in the organized sector are married and unmarried, whereas in unorganized sector 48.51 per cent and 36.61 per cent of the respondents in unorganized sector are married and unmarried respectively. Widows and divorced constitute 2.51% and 3.76% respectively in organized sector and 6.86% and 6.64% in unorganized sector.

6. It is found from the analysis that in organized sector, the distribution of the respondents into urban and rural is in the ratio 58.66: 41.34 and in unorganized sector, in the ratio 29.98: 70.02.

7. 48.43 per cent of the respondents are living within families and 30.48 per cent are in Working Women’s Hostels in organized sector. In the case of unorganized sector, 74.37 per cent of the respondents are living within their families and 13.96 per cent of them living alone in house.

8. Majority of the respondents are in nuclear families in both sectors.

9. Place of employment is found mostly in urban areas for organized sector whereas it is equitably distributed between urban and rural areas for unorganized sector.

10. It is understood from the mode of job-wise classification of the respondents, majority of them are having regular job in both organized and unorganized sector. Among those having regular jobs, nearly 89 per cent in organized sector and 17 per cent in unorganized sector are permanent job holders.

11. Majority of the respondents in both sectors are subordinates, followed by superior officers in organized sector and lower administrative staff in unorganized sector.

12. In majority of the workplaces under the study area are male and female working jointly, followed by working with a male colleague in both sectors.
13. Majority of the respondents are having regular day time office hours in both sectors. Nearly 12 per cent in organized and 11 per cent in unorganized sectors are having evening and night shifts.

In the second section, respondents’ awareness relevant to workplace sexual harassment issues were studied.

14. More than 8 in 10 in organized sector and 9 in 10 in unorganized sector are not aware of the fact that sexual harassment of working woman was a crime.

15. Maximum respondents in organized as well as in unorganized sectors are not aware of Supreme Court Guidelines for prevention of sexual harassment at workplace.

16. Regarding the first source of awareness of Supreme Court Guidelines, only a few respondents in organized sector are aware of Supreme Court Guidelines through newspapers and popular magazines in organized sector and through close persons and in workplace in unorganized sector.

17. To a question ‘Do you have a Complaints Committee, constituted by your employer specifically for redress of sexual harassment complaint at your workplace?’, nearly 9 in 10 in both sectors replied in negative.

18. In organized and unorganized sectors, only a small percentage of the respondents reported that their employers have notified the prohibition of sexual harassment at workplace to them.

In the third section, sexual harassment at workplace in terms of the harassers’ professional relationship to victims, place of victimization, frequency of occurrences of victimization and the like were discussed.

19. 304 respondents out of 479 in organized sector and 323 respondents out of 437 in unorganized sector were victimized due to sexual harassment at workplace. Thus, sexual harassment incidences are conspicuous in both sectors.
20. Majority of the harassers are subordinates in organized sector and are coworkers in equal grade in unorganized sector.

21. Majority of the harassers’ age range between 31 and 45 years, followed by 46 and 60 years in both sectors.

22. Majority of victims’ experience at the time of sexual harassment range between 5 years and above, followed by 2 to 5 years in both sectors.

23. Majority of the victims at their first harassment experience belong to the age group of 18 – 25 years, followed by 26 – 35 years in organized sector, while majority of the victims belong to the age group of 26 – 35 years, followed by 18 – 25 years in unorganized sector.

24. Majority of the victims have experienced sexual harassment victimization on their way from home to office and from office to home, followed by lunch hour victimization, in both sectors. Sexual harassment victimization during regular office hours is crystal clear in both sectors. It takes place in all other situations in a small measure in both sectors.

25. Majority of the victims are working in manufacturing units at the time of harassment at workplace in both sectors.

26. Regarding the nature of unwelcome sexually determined behaviour, majority respondents have faced physical contact and advances, followed by sexually coloured remarks in both sectors. Duration of sexual harassment victimization faced by majority victims is once, followed by upto six months in both sectors. Likewise, frequency of sexual harassment victimization is maximum ‘once’, followed by 2 to 5 times in both sectors.
In the fourth section, relationship between personal, family characteristics and level of sexual harassment were discussed by applying Chi-square test.

For the purpose of measuring the level of sexual harassment, Likert Types Scaling Technique and descriptive statistics namely arithmetic mean and standard deviation were applied.

20 statements relating to sexual harassment were identified and score was calculated.

27. Out of 304 victims in organized sector, 82, 164 and 58 of them belong to the category of high level, medium level and low level sexual harassment respectively. In the case of unorganized sector, out of 323 victims, 178, 103 and 42 of them belong to the category of high level, medium level and low level sexual harassment respectively.

28. The Chi-square results reveal that the personal and family characteristics of victims such as age, living style, complexion and sociability factors influence the level of sexual harassment in both sectors, that marital status influences the level of sexual harassment in organized sector does not influence it in unorganized sector and the personal and family characteristics of victims such as appearance, physique and use of make-up and other beauty tips do not influence the level of sexual harassment in both sectors and victims’ dressing habit influences the level of sexual harassment in unorganized sector does not influence it in organized sector.

In the fifth section, correlation between the extent of correlation and harassers’ stimulating factors such as physical appearance, use of make-up and other beauty tips, sociability variables and dressing habits were discussed.

The Path Analysis was used to decompose the statistical relationship into direct, indirect and substantial indirect effects.
29. In the case of organized and unorganized sectors, out of eight variables, five variables namely fair, wheatish, attractive, simple and medium complexion are most influential of the extent of sexual harassment and exert positive direct effect.

30. In the case of organized sector both the factors make-up and perfumes emerge as the dominant and significant variables by exerting maximum direct effect on the extent of sexual harassment, while in the case of unorganized sector, make-up only emerges as the dominant and significant variable by exerting maximum direct effect.

31. In the case of organized as well as unorganized sectors sociability variables such as friendly with male workers and speaks frankly/openly are significant variables by exerting positive direct effect on the effect of sexual harassment.

32. In both sectors, salwar/churidhar and skirts have positive significant association with the extent of sexual harassment and sarees have no significant effect on the extent of sexual harassment.

33. In the sixth section, the reporting behaviour of victims in terms of reaction of victims to the sexual harassment incident, victims’ information of sexual harassment to family members or friends, reaction of family members/friends to victims’ information, outcome of the sexual harassment complaints to employer, victims’ reason for not reporting of victimization to police, victims’ opinion on reason for the prevalence of sexual harassment at workplace and victims’ ranking of situations contributing to generate sexual harassment victimization and the impact of sexual harassment in terms of physical impact, psychological impact, emotional impact, work-related impact, victims’ standpoint on workplace sexual harassment and victims’ suggestion of punishment to be given to the harasser were discussed.

33. Majority of the victims (54.27 per cent) did not make any report in organized sector while 14.47 per cent reported to more than one person, 14.47 per cent 13.82 per
cent to the superior officers, 11.18 per cent to co-workers and the rest to union or employer representative. Only one victim reported to the police. But in the case of unorganized sector, 39.63 per cent of the victims reported to the superior officers, 34.98 per cent to the co-workers, 6.20 per cent to more than one person, 4.95 per cent to union or employer representative and 13.00 per cent did not report to any one. Only a few reported to the police. Thus the reporting behaviour of the victims in both sectors is poor.

34. Maximum victims in organized sector tolerated the harassment, followed by warned the harasser in organized sector and maximum victims (44.58%) complained to the employer, followed by warned the harasser in unorganized sector.

35. Maximum victims informed their family members or friends in organized sector as well as in unorganized sector.

36. Out of 142 victims who responded to a question on their reaction to victims’ information, maximum took steps to report in both sectors, followed by advised the victim to tolerate in organized sector and suspected on victim in unorganized sector.

37. Of those who responded to the type of outcome of the complaint to the employer, the various types vary from 0% to 5.26% in organized sector and from 2.17% to 13.62% in unorganized sector. It is crystal clear that stern action against the harasser is taken only to a minimum extent by the employer in both sectors.

38. Fear of damage to victim’s reputation, more influential nature of the harasser, fear of marriage and future life, fear of revenge by the harasser, cumbersome complaint process, relatives’ suspicion, fear of job security, etc are found to be important reasons for not reporting of sexual harassment victimization to the police in both sectors.
39. Male employees taking advantage of casually speaking female employers, is the most important reason for the prevalence of sexual harassment at workplace in both sectors, followed by gender-based inequality at the workplace in organized sector and by women working in far-away places from home in unorganized sector.

40. In organized sector, loneliness at workplace and superiors/bosses coercing female employees occupy the first two places and in unorganized sector, superiors/bosses coercing female employees and women seeking promotion occupy the first two places among the factors contributing to the generation of sexual harassment victimization. The Spearman’s coefficient of correlation for the ranks or orders for nine pairs of different situations contributing to generation of sexual harassment victimization is calculated to be $r = 0.917$.

41. Sleeplessness and high blood pressure are the principal and significant physical impacts in both sectors. Other forms of physical impacts namely headache, nausea and ulcer are also present in both sectors to a reasonable extent.

42. Feeling powerlessness, confusion and disgust are the dominant forms of emotional impacts on victims in organized sector and feeling powerlessness, disgust and getting angry in unorganized sector.

43. Loss of concentration in work and frequent absenteeism at work are maximum, followed by loss of motivation to work in both sectors.

44. Maximum victims suggested dismissal of the harasser in both sectors, followed by warning with counseling to harasser in organized sector and transfer of the harasser in unorganized sector. Other forms of punishments are suggested by the victims in a small measure.
6.4 SUGGESTIONS

The problem of sexual harassment at workplace is a complex issue and it should be approached in various perspectives such as legal, moral, ethical, psychological, gender, organizational and socio-cultural. Since it requires a multidimensional response to deal, the researcher would like to make the following wide range of collective suggestions cum recommendations.

6.4.1 Common Sexual Harassment Preventive Programs

There are varieties of preventive programs which may be implemented in the workplace. The major programs are:

(i) Make physical changes to minimize the danger of sexual harassment
(ii) Organizing sensitization and orientation programs to change the perception and attitudes towards sexual harassment
(iii) Skills training on sexual harassment

6.4.1.1 Physical Changes in workplace

1. The distance of seat arrangements between male and female employees may be increased at workplace, wherever the proximity to be avoided and whenever a female employee felt to maintain distance.

2. Separate Lunch halls, separate recreation halls and separate toilet facilities may be maintained at workplace to preventing sexual harassment from such situations.

3. Physical setting like loneliness of woman employee at workplace, women in alone with the male superior and women along with the male colleague are the situations which may be strictly avoided at the workplace.

4. Usually, in a crowded workplace situations where male and female employees need to work together in busy with their works. Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) setup may be installed to monitor on the sexual harassment at such workplace.
This CCTV system may deter the potential harasser not to perpetrate his harassing behaviour.

5. Better lighting on the workplaces during evening and night shifts to be maintained.

6. Provide ‘To and from’ safe and secure transport facilities to the women employees specifically during evening and night shifts, if the industry or management can offer.

6.4.1.2 Sensitization and Orientation programs

There are many misconceptions and attitudes towards sexual harassment among the male and female employees, such as ‘sexual harassment is normal and not a serious crime’, ‘sociability of women in workplaces turns in harassment of them’; ‘women have to tolerate the harassment for their job security’, etc. These wrong perceptions and attitudes are the factors for maintaining the sexual harassment at workplace, to be removed through sensitization and orientation programs to both male and female employees, and employers at workplaces.

The Sensitization and orientation programs have to aim at

1. Raising awareness of risks of sexual harassment by documenting incidents and publicizing them.

2. Educating men and women through lectures, pamphlets, audio visuals and drama about risk factors and circumstances of sexual harassment at workplace.

3. Teaching basic life skills on personal interactions between male and female employees, and between employees and employers.

4. Raising awareness on legal safeguards available to protect the women from sexual harassment, which may include the available laws, and the outcome of remarkable judgments on cases related to sexual harassment in the country.
5. Programs can ensure awareness among the workforce and managers of what constitutes sexual harassment, their responsibilities, and the details of the grievance procedures, and to update them on any changes

6.4.1.3 Skills Training on Sexual Harassment

Training is among the most important of the proactive measures which can be taken to ensure protection of women from sexual harassment.

1. Every member of workplace needs to develop values, behaviours life skills, and professional skills which enable them to interact in a positive manner with people of divergent backgrounds by sex, age, rank, status, designation, income, work experience, behaviour etc. So the trainings on these skills will enhance the ability to handle relationship with colleagues, superiors, bosses, subordinates, acquaintance, clients, customers, patients, competitors and other categories of people who may be related to their workplace.

2. Trainings should include that how a women to challenge the different and difficult forms of sexual harassment situations at workplace and by the way to prevent such victimization.

The following are suggestions exclusively given to the government, to the employers, to the NGOs, to the male workforce, to the female workforce and to the victims under different heads.

6.4.2 To the Government

1. As the very priority and without delay, the government should initiate steps to effectively implementing the Supreme Court’s guidelines which is elaborately covering all the necessary preventive steps for sexual harassment at workplace. This implementation should cover both organized and unorganized sectors.
2. With regard to unorganized sector, the district authority may identify and classify the employees of unorganized sectors by their nature of work and within that units may be formed with a hundred women employees per unit and for them a complaint committee to be formed. Through this committee, the Supreme Court’s guidelines can be effectively implemented.

3. The suitable and specific legislation on sexual harassment should be enacted and implemented which should apply to all the working sectors regardless of number of workforce, place of work, nature of work, organized/unorganized sector, private/public sector etc.

4. The separate and specific law on sexual harassment at workplace should provide punishment/disciplinary procedures to the perpetrators as well as employers who do not take such cases seriously. Also the law should address restitution and compensation to the victims.

5. The sexual harassment legislation should address both male and female, since the recent surveys indicated that men also faced sexual harassment at workplace.

6. Any legislation on sexual harassment should clearly set out the procedures for reporting a complaint, should emphasize documentation relating to the complaint, and should require a thorough investigation into the matter to make sure that people are not subjected to malicious claims.

7. The legislation should also cover harassment by customers; harassments occurred while the women going outside of workplace for official purpose including the routine movement between house and workplace and vice versa.

8. The law should allow only the women police to investigate the sexual harassment complaints. Hence it will give the way to the victims to frankly express the harassment.
9. In case of trial in the court, the expression that the inquiry into and trial ‘shall be conducted in camera’ as in rape cases to avoid secondary victimization in the court.

10. Sex Education should form a part of university curriculum so that the young generations will be acquainted with the possible consequences of sexual harassment of women. This may reduce the present rate of incidence and extent of sexual harassment at workplace.

11. Hot-Line facilities: “Sexual Harassment Prevention Hot-Line Assistance”, can be provided by the expense of government in all districts by which counseling to the victims through phone calls and assistance to the victims to file a formal complaint to be offered depends upon the choice of victims, at free of cost. The Hot-Line assistance has to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of a victim who gets the counseling from it.

12. The government should initiate and sponsor for the research on sexual harassment at all kind of workplaces. By doing so, the awareness of the sexual harassment, rate of sexual harassment victimization, various impacts of sexual harassment etc., can be measured. These researches can lead to the new policies of sexual harassment and to the necessary changes in existing laws relating to sexual harassment.

13. As at present, the statistics of sexual harassment in Crime in India Report under the head of crimes against women shows all the reported eve teasing cases (cited as sexual harassment cases). It is therefore suggested that the statistics of ‘sexual harassment at workplace’ to be collected and figured under separate head in Crime in India Reports. It will help to understand the seriousness of this problem and will support a lot of future researches in this area of research.
6.4.3 To the Employers

1. Take steps to provide awareness on sexual harassment issues in social, psychological, organizational and legal perspective, and train the employees to tackle the offensive behaviour of harassers.

2. Follow all the preventive measures laid down in the guidelines of Supreme Court’s Judgment on Vishaka Vs Rajasthan (1997) case.

3. Every employer must design a very clear Sexual Harassment Prohibition and Prevention Policy which must be made known to each employee in the organization. Certain steps should be taken by the employers to ensure that the affected women are given adequate redress. The policy should clearly provide for actions like –

(a) Downgrading of job status and responsibilities of those employees who are found guilty of sexual harassment at work place; (b) Transfer of harasser to another position or other; (c) A warning and counseling on misconduct; (d) Suspension; (e) Dismissal; (f) Transfer of victim on her request; (g) Compensation and Counseling to the victims.

4. The employment policy has to often provide a complainant with the alternative of using either an informal or formal complaints mechanism. Because, Informal mechanisms tend to adopt a more conciliatory approach to dealing with incidents of harassment, often through a discussion conducted between the victim, the harasser and a facilitator. Formal processes involve a full investigation of the claim, including separate interviews with each party, and culminate in an adjudication of the merits of the claim.

5. Train all managers and supervisors on the prevention of sexual harassment. The reputed NGOs with valuable experience can be utilized to play a significant role
in organizing sexual harassment awareness programs and in training for prevention and protection from sexual harassment to the workforce.

6. Set up an internal mechanism for employees complaints and instruct employees how to use the internal process.

7. Appoint the professional counselors who should advise victims, guide them through the process of making a complaint, assist them in resolving it informally, and assist them to solve their emotional, psychological and organizational impacts of harassment.

8. Always take sexual harassment complaints seriously and investigate promptly and carefully.

9. Develop and enforce a zero tolerance policy as it relates to sexual harassment in the work environment.

10. Document all actions and incidents of alleged sexual misconduct and harassment.


12. On specific, the victims of sexual harassment should be treated with compassion and respect in consonance with U.N. Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, 1985. Also, be fair to all parties and respect confidentiality of all parties.

6.4.4 To the NGOs

1. Awareness about Supreme Court’s guidelines on prevention of workplace sexual harassment and rights of working women should be extended to the whole society by the Non-Governmental Organization or voluntary organization along with the help of Medias and Self Help Groups.

2. Posters can be stuck about Supreme Court’s guidelines in the public places like ration shop, markets, hospitals, bus stops, railway station. Medias such as T.V and
Radio should broadcast awareness about Supreme Court guidelines. Awareness through T.V serials can be more effective, because T.V serials’ viewing is shown as very common recently. News papers and common magazines should frequently publish these in the good faith of welfare of society. In this awareness creation, the government and other sources should support the NGOs financially and in other possible ways.

3. Sexual harassment trainings such as concept of sexual harassment, what constitutes sexual harassment, laws relevant to sexual harassment, understanding of remarkable decisions by courts in sexual harassment cases, prevention of sexual harassment, interpersonal relationship in workplace, how to make a complaint of sexual harassment etc., can be offered to workforce of organized and unorganized sectors.

4. The N.G.Os should monitor this kind of social evil and can collect the details of sexual harassment victimization when discussing in the women forums and through this, the N.G.Os may assist the victim to lodge Police complaint. This will make the women workers to seek redress without fear.

5. Voluntary counseling service can be offered to the victims both at the workplace and outside the workplace. For this purpose, Toll-free Hot-Line Assistance may be offered by the N.G.Os in co-operation with the government or other funding agencies.

6. N.G.Os can assist the victims to file a police complaint, to follow-up in all proceedings of court trial.

7. N.G.Os should identify and tie-up with a women’s lawyer forums and make the use of them in the cases of victims of sexual harassment.
6.4.5 To the Female Workforce

1. The woman employee should voluntarily come to assist a victim colleague in all possible ways including the complaining process and to attain a counseling service etc.

2. The women employees should voluntarily form a network among them and also connect themselves with the NGOs working for women issues, which will enable them to access the support services in easiest ways.

3. The women employees should seriously engage themselves in participating sexual harassment training programs through which they can get legal awareness, techniques to identify and handle the harasser and harassment incidents.

4. The women employees should be social and must maintain good relations with co-workers and superior officials but their behaviour pattern should be such as would not allow anybody to take disadvantage of their free nature and always they should be very careful with the potential harassers in the workplaces.

5. A working mother can give a wide range of instruction to their daughters who are going to enter in employment about how to maintain a good relationship in workplace, what are the issues in which a woman to be careful in her workplace and how to tackle a situation of sexual harassment for the prevention of sexual harassment.

6.4.6 To the Male Workforce

1. Male employees should willingly participate themselves in the awareness and training programs for prevention of sexual harassment.

2. Male employees should voluntarily come forward to assist the aggrieved victims of sexual harassment in all possible ways.
3. They should strongly advice their male partner to avoid the harassing behaviour and explain the legal consequences of sexual harassment if they identify any person with symptoms of harassing behaviour.

4. They should seriously warn the person whose behaviours are found offensive, unwanted sexual nature in workplace. They should not support the harassers of sexual harassment in anyway.

5. If a person realizes himself that he has disorganized personality and sex perversion or if a colleague advises him to change a particular deviant sexual behaviour at workplace, that person or with the assistance of the colleague should come forward to refer to psychiatrics for psychological testing and can avail the counseling and treatment. This process may treat a potential harasser to maintain a respectful name in the workplace as well as public life and may prevent him from committing unwanted, offensive behaviours.

6.4.7 To the Victims

The aggrieved victims may follow the subsequent suggested methods to deal with sexual harassment:

(a) Direct approach: Confront the harasser and tell him that his behaviour is not appreciated/ not welcomed and that it must be stopped. Stay focused on the behaviour and its impact. In an uncomfortable situation be direct and honest, and remove yourself (herself) from the situation immediately.

(b) Indirect approach: Send a letter to the harasser stating the facts, personal feelings about the inappropriate behaviour and expected resolution.

(c) Third party: Request assistance from third person. Ask someone else to talk with the harasser, or to intervene on behalf of the victim to resolve the conflict.
(d) Keep track of events in journal: write down the dates, times, places and an account of what happened. This will be useful later if victim chooses to file formal complaint.

(e) Keep evidence: Letters, memos, gifts, drawings & text (sms) message on mobile phones or voice messages on answering machines etc, can all be important evidence of harassment.

(f) Report to next hierarchy: Report the behaviour to immediate supervisor or others in chain of command and ask for assistance in resolving the situation.

(g) Police Complaint: File a formal police complaint against harasser/perpetrator.

(h) Approach activists: Approach the women’s activist, explain the sufferings and get the assistance to file a complaint in Women’s Rights Commission, for your (victim’s) redress.

6.5 CONCLUSION

This present thesis work attempts at an evaluation of sexual harassment of women at workplace in organized and unorganized sectors in Tirunelveli district. The statistics that nearly 6 out of 10 in organized sector and 7 out of 10 in unorganized sector were found to be victims due to any one form of sexual harassment, showed the high risk of sexual harassment to the women at workplace. It is found that women employed in all spheres of employment are exposed to the risk of sexual harassment. High rate of sexual harassment victimization is fed by chiefly poor reporting of victimization among victims, lack of awareness of victims ‘that sexual harassment at workplace as a crime’, lack of awareness of Supreme Court’s Guidelines for prevention of sexual harassment and failure on the part of the employers to constitute a Complaints Committee at their workplace as per the Supreme Court’s Guidelines. With regard to impact of victimization, sexual harassment adversely affects the physical and psychological well being of victims as well
as it makes the job related impact among victims. With regard to personal and family characteristics of victims, the variables age, complexion, sociability are related with the level of sexual harassment. The path analysis shows that the variables fair complexion, attractive appearance, friendly with male coworkers, frank/open speaking and dressing habits as skirts and salwar/churidhar are correlated with the extent of sexual harassment. Formation of Complaints Committee, awareness creation of Supreme Court’s Guidelines, gender sensitization counseling to the male workers, basic training for women workers for tacking sexual harassment, provision of necessary material, financial, psychological and legal assistance will go a long way in the prevention of sexual harassment and protection of victims at the workplace. Mainly a specific law incorporating Supreme Court’s Guidelines and its sincere implementation is believed to reap a good harvest in order to ensure the fundamental right life with dignity to the women. Furthermore and in final, the researcher highly intends to recommend the future researches on the sexual harassment may wider its scope to cover the psychological, organizational, legal and socio-cultural perspective, since it requires a multidimensional response to deal. Also, the future researches shall be conducted among both the sexes with the broader sampling designing in every state to support the relevant policy making of government and immediate enactment of a special law specifically to deal with the sexual harassment at workplace. In this regard, the scholars and NGOs may be motivated to involve in this research with the government funding.