

A STUDY ON EMPLOYEE AWARENESS ON (POSH) IN RELIANCE RETAIL LIMITED

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ABSTRACT

The Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act and the landmark Vishaka Judgment were established to combat sexual harassment in the workplace, particularly targeting the protection of women. The POSH Act mandates the formation of Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) in companies with more than ten employees to address complaints confidentially and promptly. This paper focuses on assessing awareness levels of the anti-sexual harassment policy and procedures within a selected hospital. A questionnaire was distributed among hospital employees to gauge their understanding of the policy. The anticipated outcome of this research includes the enhancement of existing policies, the development of new ones, and the improvement of awareness through various communication channels. Through this study, efforts are directed towards creating a safer and more respectful workplace environment for all employees, in alignment with the provisions of the POSH Act and the Vishaka Judgment. The analysis also includes employee data from women employees within a store, identifying unique factors affecting each employee and gaining a deep understanding of harassment in the retail sector. This sector faces a challenge in retaining the tacit knowledge held by experienced employees, making it crucial to address harassment to preserve and transmit this knowledge for sustaining competitiveness. The study, conducted on Reliance Retail Limited, used the U-test, t-test, correlation, and ANOVA, with a sample size of 200 respondents selected based on practical considerations, available resources, and time constraints, employing convenient sampling.

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination that encompasses unwelcome attention of a sexual nature, creating a hostile or intimidating work environment. It encompasses a broad spectrum of behaviours, ranging from seemingly minor transgressions and annoyances to more severe forms such as sexual abuse or assault. These behaviours can manifest in various ways, including verbal comments, gestures, physical advances, or the display of explicit materials.

It's important to recognize that sexual harassment can occur in any workplace setting, regardless of industry, organizational size, or demographic composition. While the stereotype often portrays women as the primary victims of sexual harassment, it's essential to acknowledge that individuals of any gender can be targets, and perpetrators can also be of any gender. This underscores the importance of addressing sexual harassment comprehensively and inclusively within organizations.

Examples of sexual harassment behaviours include:

Verbal Harassment: This involves making sexual comments, jokes, or innuendos, as well as engaging in sexually explicit conversations or discussions that make others uncomfortable.

Non-Verbal Harassment: Non-verbal forms of sexual harassment may include leering, staring, or making suggestive gestures or facial expressions that convey sexual intent.

Physical Harassment: Physical harassment can range from unwanted touching, groping, or brushing up against someone in a sexual manner to more severe forms such as sexual assault.

Visual Harassment: Displaying or circulating sexually explicit images, videos, or other materials in the workplace can contribute to a hostile environment and constitute sexual harassment.

Quid Pro Quo Harassment: This occurs when employment decisions or benefits are conditioned on the acceptance of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other conduct of a sexual nature.

Hostile Work Environment: A hostile work environment is created when pervasive or severe sexual harassment interferes with an individual's ability to perform their job effectively or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

It's essential for employers to take proactive measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, including implementing clear policies and procedures, providing regular training on harassment prevention, and reporting mechanisms, and fostering a culture of respect, diversity, and inclusion. Additionally, organizations must respond promptly and effectively to reports of sexual harassment, conducting thorough investigations and taking appropriate disciplinary action against perpetrators.

By creating an environment where all employees feel safe, respected, and valued, organizations can mitigate the risk of sexual harassment and cultivate a positive workplace culture that

promotes employee well-being and productivity. Addressing sexual harassment not only protects individual rights but also contributes to the overall success and reputation of the organization.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

H L Kumar and Gaurav Kumar (2023), the practical application of law at workplace. The procedure, manner of enquiry and model formats make the book very useful and provides guidance to those working in this field.

P J Koshy (2022), focused on the creation of a sensitized awareness amongst men and women about harassment at workplace by way of gender discrimination, patriarchal manacles and withholding fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India. This book provided employers with the tools to comprehend the impact of Posh Act in liberating and empowering women employees against harassment or assault at the workplace by putting an end to all kinds of gender polarization- a thorn in the flesh of every working woman. However, the book was limited to the PoSH Act alone and while it is essential to understand the Act in detail, a broader perspective on the cultural, social, and psychological factors contributing to sexual harassment in workplaces could have enriched the content. This wider lens would have provided a more holistic understanding of the issue and informed readers about the need for comprehensive solutions.

Sarah Prior, Brooke de Heer (2022), a compelling perspective that frames sexual violence on college campuses as a form of sexual terrorism. They argue that institutional compliance and inaction within the neoliberal university perpetuate this system of sexual terrorism. By using a sexual terrorism framework, the book examines numerous examples of campus sexual violence through an intersectional lens, delving into the role of the institution and the influence of neoliberalism in undermining prevention efforts. The authors draw on five components of sexual terrorism (ideology, propaganda, amorality, perceptions of the perpetrator, and voluntary compliance) to illustrate how the “ivory tower stereotype” and the adoption of neoliberal values into education contribute to an environment where victimization is prevalent. The book emphasizes institutional culpability and the impact of neoliberal value systems within higher education, highlighting the pervasive rape culture that sustains the system of sexual terrorism. its focus on systems of inequality and oppression, adopting an intersection, and racially minoritized individuals. Drawing from campus violence and institutional harm research, the authors define campus sexual violence as a serious social problem rooted in structural

inequality. They advocate for civic responsibility at the institutional level and the development of institutional advocates to combat sexual violence. The book seamlessly blends theoretical and practical perspectives, making it a valuable resource for students and scholars in sociology, criminal justice, women's and gender studies, social/political policy, victimology, and education.

Ellen Pinkos Cobb's (2022), a much-needed compilation of sexual harassment laws across more than 50 countries in regions including Europe, Asia Pacific, Americas, and the Middle East and Africa. With the #MeToo movement gaining global significance and impacting workplaces worldwide, the need for a timely and comprehensive resource on international workplace sexual harassment laws for multinational employers has become evident. Each region's legislation is presented, offering insights into the laws of individual countries, along with some cultural context and recent developments that indicate present and future trends in workplace sexual harassment regulation. The book is written in clear, plain English, making it accessible to readers without a legal background, and it provides essential reading material and a key resource for employment and business attorneys, global employers, managers, human resources professionals, and occupational health and safety professionals. By filling a crucial gap in the existing resources, this book becomes an indispensable tool for navigating the complex landscape of workplace sexual harassment laws across different jurisdictions.

Anil Kaushik (2021) Regulations in the workplace, offering guidance on how to address various challenges and effectively manage Labour-related matters. It focuses on discussions about employment contracts, working conditions, wage laws, employee benefits, and compliance with Labour regulations. The book provides valuable guidance for employers, human resource professionals, and legal practitioners, helping them navigate the complexities of workplace Labour laws and ensure compliance with the legal framework.

CS Rupanjana De (2021), an exploration of the historical development of sexual harassment laws worldwide and in India. The book provides in-depth discussions on the provisions of the PoSH Act, 2013, as well as the erstwhile Vishaka Guidelines. It thoroughly covers various remedies available against sexual harassment under the Act, in addition to other Civil and Criminal remedies, remedies under ADR, and relevant Service Rules. The author provides a detailed discussion on International Treaties and Conventions pertaining to gender equality, women empowerment, and prevention of sexual harassment with a vast coverage of laws against sexual harassment from various countries. The book also extensively analyses the

remedies available under the 2013 Act, various Service Rules applicable to organizations, criminal remedies under the Indian Penal Code, 1860, Indecent Representation of Women Act, 1986, other civil remedies and the S He-Box mechanism.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyse information about a topic. In a research paper, the methodology section allows the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability. It is a design or plan as a guide for conducting research and to systematically solve the research problem. It includes research design, sampling procedures, data collection method and analysis procedure.

DEFINITION

“Research is defined as a process of enquiry and investigation” (Jill Collis and Roger Hussey)

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is a blue print framework which specifies the details of the procedures necessary for obtaining the information needed to structure or solve research problems. The research design refers to the overall strategy that you choose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way thereby ensuring you will effectively address the research problem.

Descriptive research is a research method that describes the characteristics of the population or phenomenon that is being studied. This methodology focuses more on the “what” of the research subject rather than the “why” of the research subject. The idea behind this type of research is to study frequencies, averages, and other statistical calculations. Although this research is highly accurate, it does not gather the causes behind a situation.

DATA COLLECTION

While dealing about the method of data collection to be used for the study, we should keep in mind two types of data. i.e., primary data and secondary

Primary Data

Primary data are these which are collected for the first time and they are original in character. The researcher to study a particular problem and collects them himself. Here, questionnaire is the primary data.

Secondary Data

The secondary data are those, which are already collected by someone for some purpose and are available for the present study. In this study secondary data has been collected for supportive evidence and analytical study. Here, I have collected some from journals and books.

Data collection& instrument

In this project, the research has used questionnaire for collecting primary data. The questionnaire consists of a number of questions typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms relating to certain specific aspects regarding which the researcher collects the data.

PILOT STUDY

small study to test research protocols, data collection instruments, sample recruitment strategies, and other research techniques in preparation for a larger study.

For sample determination we use the formula

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times q}{E^2}$$

n = sample size

z = z score (for 85% CI is 1.96)

p = number of positive occurrence (from pilot study 85% is 0.85) q = 1-p

E= margin of error (for CI 95% is 0.05)

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.85 \times 0.15}{0.05^2} = 200$$

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES:

purposive sampling was used in this study. The population under investigation is unknown. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method where units are selected for inclusion in the sample due to their characteristics.

SAMPLE SIZE

The sample area selected for the study by using sample determination. The study was carried out with a sample size of 200 respondents. The sample size was selected based on the practical considerations, available resources and the time constraints of the research project.

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED FOR THE STUDY:

1. Percentage Analysis

2. Charts

3. Mann-Whitney test

4. Correlation

NON-PARAMATRIC

MANN WHITNYY-U TEST

| | 1. Gender | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|------------|-----------|-----|-----------|--------------|
| ADDRESS | 1 | 155 | 97.53 | 15117.00 |
| | 2 | 45 | 110.73 | 4983.00 |
| | Total | 200 | | |
| CULTIVAING | 1 | 155 | 98.22 | 15223.50 |
| | 2 | 45 | 108.37 | 4876.50 |
| | Total | 200 | | |
| FAILURE | 1 | 155 | 99.92 | 15487.00 |
| | 2 | 45 | 102.51 | 4613.00 |
| | Total | 200 | | |

| | ADDRESS | CULTIVAING | FAILURE |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|---------|
| Mann-Whitney U | 3027.000 | 3133.500 | 3.397E3 |
| Wilcoxon W | 15117.000 | 15223.500 | 1.549E4 |
| Z | -1.364 | -1.042 | -.260 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .171 | .298 | .790 |

a. Grouping Variable: 1. Gender

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no difference between the distributions of the variable (ADDRESS, CULTIVAING, or FAILURE) across the two groups defined by gender.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a difference between the distributions of the variable (ADDRESS, CULTIVATING, or FAILURE) across the two groups defined by gender.

INTERPRITATION

- There is no statistically significant difference between the ranks of address for the twogender groups (p = 0.173).
- There is no statistically significant difference between the ranks of cultivating for thetwo gender groups (p = 0.298)
- There is no statistically significant difference between the ranks of failure for the twogender groups (p = 0.790)

NON-PARAMATRIC CORRELATION

Correlations

| | | | ADDRES S | CULTIVAI NG | FAILUR E |
|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| Spearman's rho | ADDRESS | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .178 | .062 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .012 | .385 |
| | | N | 200 | 200 | 200 |
| | CULTIVAI NG | Correlation Coefficient | .178* | 1.000 | .171 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .012 | | .016 |
| | | N | 200 | 200 | 200 |
| | FAILURE | Correlation Coefficient | .062 | .171* | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .385 | .016 | |
| | | N | 200 | 200 | 200 |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis for Address and Cultivating:

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant correlation between addressing powerdifferentials and cultivating a culture of acceptance.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant correlation between addressing powerdifferentials and cultivating a culture of acceptance.

Hypothesis for Address and Failure:

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant correlation between addressing power differentials and recognizing the severity of harassment.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant correlation between addressing power differentials and recognizing the severity of harassment.

Hypothesis for Cultivating and Failure:

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant correlation between cultivating a culture of acceptance and recognizing the severity of harassment

INTERPRETATION

- There is a statistically significant positive correlation between addressing and cultivating at the 0.05 level 2-tailed, suggesting that as addressing value increases, cultivating values also tend to increase
- There is no statistically significant correlation between addressing and failure at the 0.05 level 2-tailed
- There is a statistically positive correlation between cultivating and failure at the 0.05 level 2-tailed, indicating that as cultivating value increases, failure at the 0.05 level 2-tailed

SUGGESTION

Given that 78% of respondents are female, organizations should focus on gender diversity and inclusivity by implementing mentorship programs, leadership development initiatives, and diversity training. Targeted career development opportunities are crucial, especially for the majority of respondents aged 25-30 who have completed their SSLC, through training programs, workshops, and educational assistance. Addressing workplace power dynamics by promoting transparent decision-making, open communication, and a culture of fairness can help mitigate power imbalances. Encouraging the reporting of harassment by establishing clear procedures, providing victim support, and ensuring confidentiality is essential, as is improving communication channels through regular feedback mechanisms and enhanced internal communication platforms. Finally, aligning organizational policies with employee perceptions through regular policy reviews and feedback can help maintain trust and ensure that policies and practices meet employees' needs and expectations.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings highlight several key areas for organizations to focus on in order to foster a more inclusive, equitable, and supportive workplace. The significant representation of females among respondents underscores the need for gender diversity initiatives, such as mentorship programs and leadership development. Targeted career development opportunities for employees aged 25-30 who have completed their SSLC can enhance growth and advancement. Addressing workplace power dynamics through transparent decision-making and a culture of fairness can help mitigate imbalances. Prioritizing harassment prevention and awareness training is essential, given the varying levels of concern and awareness among respondents. Educating employees on harassment, its impact, and the importance of reporting incidents will contribute to a safer work environment. Regular policy reviews, employee feedback, and necessary adjustments will ensure alignment and foster trust. Implementing these strategies will help create a workplace that promotes diversity, equity, inclusion, and safety for all employees.

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