

Sexual harassment in the workplace and its impact in the work environment research...

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Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and its impacts in the work environment

Introduction

- Sexual harassment which is a common behaviour identified in different countries around the world has been observed to cause significant social and economic effects, especially to women and girls.
- Sexual harassment has caused losses in millions of dollars due to lost opportunities in professions and education to the women in the society and men whose numbers are similarly significant (Boland, 2005).
- Employers are recommended to ensure that sexual violence in their companies and organizations is prevented, since apart from causing depression to the victims, it also affects the network input and output leading to low productivity within the businesses (Juliana & Elizabeth, 1992).

Background of sexual harassment

- Sexual harassment often occurs in places such as restaurant, office, school institution, mines, hospitals or any other type of work setting among others.
- Different countries have varied definitions for sexual harassment.

Particularly, sexual harassment is a behaviour observed throughout the globe.

- Sexual harassment is illegal and involves sexually oriented behavior that is ruthless and is characterized by sexual demands and advances coupled with physical contact, with the promise of a reward in exchange for the sexual favors (Paludi, Michelle & Barickman, 1991).

- Sexual harassment is often considered illegal when it becomes frequent and offensive creating a hostile environment for the victim (Victoria, 1998).

What sexual harassment involves

- Often, the victim has no power against the act largely especially when sexual violence is perpetrated by someone of a higher authority than the victim or when there are differences in age, political, social, gender and employment relations (Paludi et al., 1991).
- Strangers can be sexual harassers, students, work colleagues, clients to organizations and businesses, relatives, teachers and even friends.
- In some instances, the sexual attack may be public when it involves harassers who feed from humiliating their victims; however, often victims are attacked when they are alone and in private.
- In involves discrimination in employment especially when the victim believes that objecting to the sexual advances may prevent promotion in the workplace or retrenchment if some workers engage in sexual activities. In some instances, helpless victims tolerate to be sexually exploited in order to get favor from their masters (Boland, 2005).

Effects of Sexual Harassment

- Depends on an individual, frequency and duration of the incidences; sexual harassment can cause severe psychological effects including stress and depression.
- Sexual harassment highly affects women preventing them from participating in different social and economic forums fully. This makes them fail to access various opportunities in the job market that results to

inequalities.

- Victims who fail to comply with the expectations of the harasser end up being fired, or are prevented from advancing in their careers hence loss of the much needed income.

- Relocation to other cities and job transfers are some of the extreme measures victims often take due to the public humiliation they experience.

Furthermore, some cases of sexual and social relationships of the victims force them to assume drastic decisions (Victoria, 1998).

Dealing with Sexual Harassment

- Sexual harassment can be checked through formulation of strategic policies, rules, regulations and procedures against sexual violence in the workplace, this will help to improve the work environment in the organization while eliminating hostility (Juliana et al., 1992).

- Organization should prioritize the need of adjusting gender ratio in the workplace to ensure equality. For example, organizations with fewer females than men should hire more females to equalize the ratio.

- Organizations should integrate training and education on sexual harassment on their awareness programs to make their members understand the need of avoiding sexually exploitive activities (Juliana et al., 1992).

- The government and the corporate agencies should also be involved in the efforts to prevent the sexual violence in the workplace by encouraging them to formulate binding laws and Acts. For example, the Civil Rights Act of 1964

in the United States has been very effective in containing harrassment (Juliana et al., 1992).

Benefits for preventing sexual harassment

- Apart from individual benefits of social and economic advantages to initial victims, the organization as a whole is bound to gain from the institutional changes that enhance elimination of this practice.
- There will be increased productivity due to increased work output, reduced conflicts and better cooperation amongst employers in an organization.
- The ethical standards and discipline in the organization will be improved which will then aid organizations and other institutions to gain the trust and respect from clients.
- A general reduction of expenses by the company will similarly be observed since there will be no cases of healthcare treatment costs from harassment and legal fees in law courts, organizations will then be able to meet their financial goals (Boland, 2005).

Conclusion

- It is therefore evident that sexual violence in the workplace is a detrimental practice that demands critical attention.
- This will help improve on the working conditions and eventually produce both social and economic gains to the workers and employers.

References

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