

Sexual Harassment Victims at Workplace: A Guide for Industrial Social Workers

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Abstract

As a social worker they should be at the forefront advocating and establishing helpful systems for the sexual harassment victims who come forward. Hence employers and the management team are considered as industrial social worker in a sense, since they are in a position to help workers who are in need of help. Yet before that, the industrial social workers should have a full understanding of the phenomenon of sexual harassment before they can offer help to sexual harassment victims. Hence, this paper intends to outline the incidences, experience, effect and complain mechanisms of women sexual harassment at workplace. The knowledge provided in this paper is hoped to widen the awareness and strategies that industrial social workers can use to help sexual harassment victims handle such behaviors in future.

Introduction

Sexual behavior in the workplace is not a recent phenomenon. While evidence of this type of behavior could be traced throughout the history of the nation, sexual harassment remains silent or hidden social issue until mid 1990's. Today, as a response to women's movement and also government's effort, the issue of sexual harassment has found its place in the Sixth and Seventh Malaysia Plan. Under the then Ministry of National Unity and Social Development, a National Action Plan has been drawn up to conduct training and awareness program to help women understand the issue of sexual harassment. Thus the concept of sexual harassment in Malaysia is of recent origin.

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The history of sexual harassment occurred in our country way back in 1950's. Women groups have taken action against sexual harassment in the past (Nor Affizar, 2001). In 1950, women rubber estate workers from the Panavan Karupiah in Sitiawan and a Klang estate went on strike in protest against sexual harassment in the plantations and demanded an end to the problem. In fact The Malaysian Trade Union Congress has conducted a survey with public sector employees on sexual harassment but unfortunately has not been able to sustain follow-up actions on the issue.

What is sexual harassment

According to the code of practice on The Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Harassment in The Workplace (Ministry of Human Resources, 1999: vi - viii) as outlined by the Ministry of Human Resources, sexual harassment is any 'Any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature having effect of verbal, non verbal, visual, psychological or physical harassment: that might, on reasonable grounds, be perceived by the recipient as placing a condition of a sexual nature on her/his employment; or that might, on reasonable grounds, be perceived by the recipient as an offence or humiliation, or a threat to her/his well-being, but has no direct to her/his employment.' (Ministry of Human Resources, 1999: vi - viii).

According to the Malaysian Code of Practice, sexual harassment divided into two categories, that is sexual coercion and sexual annoyance. Sexual coercion is sexual harassment that results in some direct consequence to the victim's employment. That is sexual harassment occurs when decisions on hiring, firing, promotion, and salary are based on an employees submission to sexual demands. If the demands are rejected and the employee suffers adverse job consequences as a result, the employer has engaged in an illegal sexual discrimination and is strictly liable for quid pro quo sexual harassment. Meanwhile, sexual annoyance is sexually related conduct that is offensive, hostile or intimidating to the recipient, but nonetheless has no direct link to any job benefit (Ministry of Human Resources, 1999: vi - viii). This is actually much more difficult to define due to its subjective nature.

Sexual harassment occurs in a variety of circumstances, for example, the victim as well as the harasser may be a woman or man, and the victim does not have to be of the opposite sex. In fact the harasser can be the victim's supervisor, an agent of the employer, and supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or anon-employee. Further the victim does not have to be the person harassed but could be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.

According to a number of research that was conducted among administrators (Sabitha, 1999, 2000; Mahmood et al., 2002), management and support staff in organization (Syarifah, 2001) students in higher learning institutions (Sabitha, 1999) and factory workers (Mazlinda, 1999/2000) found the following items are perceived as sexual harassment in our country.

Table 1: Sexual harassment items

1.	Touching of the intimate parts of the body
2.	Touching of the non-intimate parts of the body or hand, etc
3.	Patting
4.	Kisses
5.	Hugs
6.	Pinching
7.	Brushing up your body
8.	Stands close to you in a way that makes you uncomfortable
9.	Acting in over familiar behavior
10.	Comments on appearance to make you look more attractive in the workplace
11.	Pressure for dates for example drinks, dinners etc
12.	Asks to stay late and work late with him/her when there is no work to do
13.	Give intimate gifts for example night gaunt, lingerie and alike
14.	Starring or excessive eye contact or suggestive looks
15.	Leering/ogling/cornering
16.	Sexual jokes, stories or language
17.	Pinups, displays, circulation, pictures, cartoons, stories or pornography of sexually suggestive materials
18.	Sexual remarks about cloth
19.	Sexual remarks about the body
20.	Sexual remarks about sexual practices
21.	Demands for favors with threats or mistreatments
22.	Implied reward or better treatment for sexual co-op operation
23.	Sexual letters
24.	Sexual telephone calls
25.	Whistling and making cat calls (making sounds)

(Source: Sabitha, 1999)

Since the perception of sexual harassment varies from one individual to another (Sabitha, 1999a,b; 2000 a,b), in deciding whether an environment is hostile, no one factor controls (Sabitha, 1998; 1999a; 2000c,e; Syarifah, 2001). An assessment is usually made based upon the totality of the circumstances.

Myths of sexual harassment

There are a lot of misconceptions about sexual harassment, making any incident labeled harassing by one person may be construed differently by others. Amongst the most common ones are

If a girl/woman dresses or behaves in a sexy way, she is asking for it

This is a classic excuse of shifting the blame on to the victim. Dressing or behaving in a sexually provocative manner doesn't cause sexual harassment by not dressing or

behaving in a sexy manner doesn't prevent sexual harassment either.

It is a small matter and a bit of fun and flirting, anyway women enjoy it even if they pretend not to

Ask any woman who has been harassed if she enjoyed the experience. Sexual harassment and flirting should not be confused. The former spells disrespect for the opposite sex.

Only young women get harassed

Sexual harassment crosses the barriers of age, physical appearance and marital status. Sexual harassment is about those who possess power and those who don't. An example would be an employee who often harasses his junior but will not run the risk of harassing his superior.

Women should ignore sexual harassment

Many are forced to ignore it so as to avoid any embarrassment. However research shows that if it is ignored at the workplace, it will continue or get worse 75% of the time.

These misconceptions about sexual harassment discourage women victims from coming forwards to make complaints.

Effects of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment has been found to cause employees to feel uncomfortable and to engage in adaptive behaviors that have costly consequences to organizations. Brown (Stockdale, 1996) states that individuals who are sexually harassed are exposed to and undergo multiple abnormal stressors. An organizational stressor has been defined as an antecedent condition within one's job or the organization that requires adaptive responses on the part of an employee (Beehr & Newman, 1978). Organizational stress has been defined as the uncomfortable feelings derived from forces found in the workplace that an individual experiences when he or she is forced to deviate from normal or desired patterns of functioning.

Sexual harassment also will cause additional problems related to organizational relationships. Companies that have high rates of sexual harassment also have high rates of racial harassment, discrimination, and other forms of unfair treatment (Sandroff, 1992). This finding indicates that companies that tolerate sexual harassment tend to have personnel problems in general.

One of the most disturbing consequences of sexual harassment is the human impact, with devastating short and long term physical and psychological consequences.

Many victims suffer 'detrimental physical and psychosocial effects ranging from sickness, anger, anxiety, tiredness, fear, sleep problems, weight loss, relationship problems, depression and loss of confidence, to nervous breakdown. Not surprisingly, the victim's relationship with others (particularly other man – if the harasser was a man) can also be adversely affected (Gutek, 1985) as can a victim's general attitude towards work in terms of lowered motivation, decreased job satisfaction, lowered confidence to do the job and lowered organizational commitment (Jensen & Gutek, 1982; Loy & Stewart, 1984).

Further sexual harassment also has economic cost to the organization. In 1988, Working Women magazine surveyed 160 of the Fortune 500 manufacturing and service companies in the US, representing 3.3 million employees (Sandroff, 1992) and found an average company loss of \$6.7 million a year in decreased productivity, increased absenteeism and higher employee turnover caused by sexual harassment. It was indicated that the U.S. Army could have purchased seventy-eight Black Hawk helicopters with the direct and indirect financial resources expended on sexual harassment in 1994 (Firestone & Harris, 1999). Despite these tangible financial or economic costs, the 'real' or underlying cost to organizations and human suffering may be immeasurable.

Impact on Women

Gender is one of the strongest predictors of sexual harassment (Fitzgerald & Ormerod, 1993). Most studies indicate that women are the majority of victims of sexual harassment (Gutek, 1985). Since women are the major victims of sexual harassment, hence this section will focus specifically on the effect of women.

Barling, Dekker, Laughlin, Kellanay, Fullager and Johnson (1996) developed, assessed and evaluated the stability of the model across gender, empirically contrasted the result obtained from a sample of Canadian women with results obtained from Canadian men employed in the same organization. They found strong support for the proposed model of the consequences of sexual harassment. For example, in all three samples, the frequencies of sexual harassment exerted a direct effect on negative work-related mood, which in turn, affects turnover intentions, psychosomatic problems (headaches, sleep problems, gastric problems, upper respiratory infections) and interpersonal dissatisfaction (i.e. with co-workers and supervisors), and the size of the part co-efficient was considerable. In addition, the frequency of sexual harassment was a positive predictor of turnover intentions for both female samples but not the male sample.

Crull (1982) surveyed victims of sexual harassment and found that many of the women reported negative outcomes related to work performance (75%), psychological health (90%), and physical health (63%). She also found that more than 25% of those sampled had been fired or laid off as a result of sexual harassment. Gutek (1985) similarly surveyed victims of sexual harassment as to their psychological and effective reactions, and found that the harassment had affected the women's feeling about their job (38%) and their relationships with others at work (28%). Other researchers (Gutek, 1985; Gutek et al., 1990) also have also observed lower job satisfaction among women

who have been sexually harassed. In addition, such women have also quit their jobs (9%), transferred to other jobs (5%), quit trying for a job (10%), talked to a co-worker about the incident (22%) or lost a job because they refused sex (7%). Thus there were some direct organizational consequences of these harassing behaviors.

Study conducted by the author and colleagues (Sabitha, 2002) also showed similar results, whereby it created problems in various ways. The following table shows the various effects that are faced by the respondents who have faced at least one form of Sexual Harassment in terms of gender differences.

1. Career effects

		Male		Female	
		Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)
	Career effects	41	12.7	29	18.0
1.	Change work habits	13	4.0	8	5.0
2.	Reduced performance because of stress	12	3.7	7	4.3
3.	Absenteeism	1	0.3	2	1.2
4.	Withdrawal from work	6	1.9	2	1.2
5.	Changes in career goals	3	0.9	5	3.1
6.	Make you less friendly	11	3.4	9	5.6
7.	Make you dress differently	2	0.6	6	3.7
8.	Making you avoid men or women	25	7.8	19	11.8
9.	Less interested in work	7	2.2	5	3.1
10.	Spoiling your chances of promotion	7	2.2	3	1.9
11.	Consider leaving or asking for transfer	12	3.7	11	6.8
12.	Other reasons	0	13.0	1	0.6

2. Emotional Effect

		Male		Female	
		Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)
	Emotional Effect	35	10.9	31	19.3
1.	Shock, denial	7	2.2	7	4.3
2.	Anger, frustration	26	8.1	24	14.9
3.	Guilt	7	2.2	4	2.5
4.	Shame, problem	17	5.3	10	6.2
5.	Insecurity, embarrassment	5	1.6	8	5.0
6.	Felt flattered	10	3.1	8	5.0

3. Physical effects

		Male		Female	
		Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)
	Do you experience any physical effect	28	8.7	14	8.7
1.	Headaches	6	1.9	4	2.5
2.	Inability to concentrate	22	6.8	11	6.8
3.	Sleep disturbances	7	2.2	10	6.2
4.	Lethargy	4	1.2	4	2.5
5.	Gastrointestinal distress	7	2.2	1	0.6
6.	Respiratory problems	3	0.9	0	0.0
7.	Phobias, panic reaction	7	2.2	3	1.9
8.	Nightmares	2	0.6	0	0.0
9.	Eating disorders	0	0.0	2	1.2
10.	Demagogical reactions	1	0.3	1	0.6

4. Social Effect

		Male		Female	
		Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)
	Social Effect	23	7.1	20	12.4
1.	Withdrawal/not socializing	10	3.1	5	3.1
2.	Lack of trust	13	4.0	12	7.5
3.	Change in physical appearance	8	2.5	3	1.9
4.	Change in social networks	8	2.5	8	5.0

5. Changes in self-perception

		Male		Female	
		Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)
	Changes in self-perception	19	5.9	12	7.5
1.	Poor self concept/self esteem	9	2.8	7	4.3
2.	Powerlessness	3	0.9	5	3.1
3.	Isolation	10	3.1	4	2.5
4.	Lack of competency	4	1.2	5	3.1

Does complain really work?

Many times employees are encouraged to come out and complain their harassment incidences to the management. According to the past study, this will depend on how clear and 'friendly' is the complaint system in the organization. Based on a study conducted by the author (Sabitha, 1998) among administrators revealed that almost 90% of the administrators in this study agreed that it is important to have an anti-harassment act in their organisation. On the other hand, almost 90% of respondents in the study either do not know or were not sure whether there were procedures in their organisation to manage sexual harassment complaints.

Based on the same study, almost 90% of the administrators admitted that they themselves were not sure of the reporting procedures even if it happened to them. When it happened they frequently confronted the harassers in a nice way (59.4%), followed by lodging a complaint (30.5%) and the last resort was to ignore the incidence (10.1%). Studies in the past (Thacker, 1992; Savery, 1985) also showed that target of sexual harassment use avoidance/denial, low intervention strategies more frequently than other strategies and that these strategies are the least effective in ending sexual harassment behaviours.

This study also showed that 64.2% of the administrators have little or no confidence at all that they would be safe or be protected by the organisation when lodging a complain. In fact they faced several consequences when they reported the incidents. Among them were that the reprisal was still pending (69.2%), it would got them into more trouble (46.2%), no action was taken (38.5%), top management was not happy for making such report, so were the supervisors (30.8%) and co-workers (61.5%). These results showed that it created a very uncomfortable atmosphere for the individuals who made complaints regarding sexual harassment. Other studies also (Spann, 1990) indicated that a victim's reluctance to report sexual harassment might be exacerbated by the attitudes and behaviours of executives and managers. If sexual harassment tolerated by management and if reports are not taken seriously, targets may believe that the risks of reporting are too great.

The findings among administrators by the author also showed that although the respondents have been harassed, yet 15.8% said that sexual harassment does not happen in their organisation. This is an important finding given that other studies have also found that victims who reported they have experienced various behaviours but did not feel that they have been harassed (Fitzgerald et al., 1988). Their lack of awareness on what constitutes, as sexual harassment behaviour at workplace is the main reason that sexual harassment is seldom discussed in the work settings. This might pose a problem to victim who approaches such administrators that have little awareness on the issue (Brooks et al., 1991). Further the perceived attitude of those at the top of the organizational hierarchy may influence the organizational climate regarding sexual harassment. If members of top management view sexual harassment as a legitimate workplace issue, the risks of confrontation may be less (Spann, 1990).

Further Pryor and Stroller (1994) suggested that local social norms are important influence of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment may be more likely to occur in

situations where it is perceived as socially permissible (Gutek, 1985). To some extent, the reaction of work group leaders (eg, management in organizational settings) to sexual harassment may define local social norms. Potential harassers may perceive that they are free to harass if management tolerates or condones such behavior. So the perceived attitudes of local work group leaders may provide an important index of local norms (Larwood, Sz wajkowski, & Rose, 1988; 1989). This assumption has theoretical roots that behavior is a function of the social environment and the person.

Coping with sexual harassment

Although people may say it is all in your head, management can claim it's an imported issue that doesn't exist in Malaysia. But while it may be easy to sweep it under the carpet, many women are all too familiar that the problem of sexual harassment whether it's coming from colleagues or strangers. In reality most women undergo it, but are confused as to what is happening to them. Harassment is unpleasant. What is worse is that a woman is often advised to be patient and compromising, particularly when it comes to dealing with superiors. And that includes men, as a whole.

Used to being blamed for every untoward happening that she usually 'brings upon herself', a woman naturally chooses to keep silent about sexual harassment, rather than trust someone enough to discuss the matter. For example in our study done by the author (Sabitha, 2002), when a lady victim was asked why she did not do anything, the response was as follows:

"There is nothing much I or anyone could do.... it is really up to the management...if they want to take up the matter or just ask me to forgive and forget...Well it is easy for them, but I am the one who have to go through all this misery... If I tell my colleagues then I will look cheap or started it...if I tell my husband I am worried that he will be thinking what did I do, instead of helping me...worse still if it gets to my other family members... what would they think of me... I guess it is fated that women should learn to deal with the matter in her own way without causing a lot of noise... and we have to force ourselves to think that it is men's world and just bear with it...."

The confusion and anger at her own inability to do something positive, for the shame of being treated without dignity – turns inward. Rather than analyze such feelings and act constructively, women generalize; "Men will be Men", as though the mere physical differences gives the latter the right to hurt the other gender.

Again and again we see reports of women having to resort to external agencies like the police, the labor department and service bureaus in the hope of stopping the harassment or being forced to resign when the situation became intolerable. In an extreme case, women who complained of sexual harassment have been dismissed for having complained of such harassment and not exhausting internal company procedures.

Some victims even leave their job. In times of economic recession, leaving a job could result in a woman remaining unemployed for a long time. This situation is not

helped by the fact that the majority of women continue to work in lower-paid, lower status jobs, largely in the areas of clerical, sales, manufacturing and service industries. Job opportunities available to women continue to be limited. If a woman refuses her harasser's advances or suggestions, it is not just her job she is putting at risk but her whole financial existence.

The situation can also affect her marriage and relationship with men. When a woman finds herself having to explain the effect that sexual harassment is having on her attitude towards her job, she may discover that she feels guilty and terrified that she will be accused of "leading him on". In some way, she may have to deal with accusations from her boyfriend or husband who question her behavior and not that her harasser. Or she may find herself calming his anger or jealousy after confiding in him for advice and comfort.

Strategies to help victims

Past few years, a lack of public awareness about sexual harassment, especially for women has made them wary of the whole issue, and thus not empowered enough to deal with it. The elimination of sexual harassment means recognizing the subordinate position of women and the need to give respect and dignity to women. Sexual harassment is violence against women; it violates human rights and prevents women's enjoyment of their fundamental freedom. Therefore, sexual harassment is not a private matter but a social issue that demands national concern and action.

From the functionalist point of view, every institution has its duty to be performed, be it family or any form organizations in the society. Hence, as an organization, which should help the society to maintain balance, it has a duty to help the sexual harassment victims in their organization. The following strategies can be advocated and suggested to employers and the management team, who can act as industrial social workers in their organization, to help victims to overcome sexual harassment. They are as follows:

1. Action by victims

There are various strategies that can be used by the victims, such as speak out and let the harasser know that they did not like the act, inform the trade unions and management if the harasser refused to stop.

Victims of sexual harassment should maintain records of all incidents including, date, time, place, names of offenders and witnesses. Victims should tell offenders to stop the sexual harassment. If the conduct continues, the employer should be notified, perhaps using the employer's complain mechanism or grievances system.

If the harassment continues, even after complaining using internal mechanism, the victims should make a complete (and confidential, do not tell anyone that they are doing it) diary of everything that is going on day by day, who said what or did what, etc.

Write down in a separate record what went on up to now, and be very specific as possible, as memories fade away with time.

2. Labeling sexual harassment incidences

The reality of sexual harassment is socially constructed; any incident labeled harassing by one person may be construed differently by others. Many times sexual harassment is referred to as a crime of perception. Hence to determine whether an environment is hostile, social workers can look at:

- Whether the conduct was verbal or physical or both
- how frequently it was repeated
- whether the conduct was hostile or patently offensive
- whether the alleged harasser was a co-worker or supervisor
- whether others joined in perpetrating the harassment
- whether the harassment was directed at more than one individual; and
- what happened when senior management became aware of the situation – such as whether the offensive conduct was dealt with and immediately ended or condoned.

3. The role of management

These recommendations were outlined with specific reference made to the high level of perception towards sexual harassment amongst administrators and the present practice in public organizations to curb the incidence of sexual harassment at the work place. The first role to be taken by management is that of role model; demonstrating recognition of the value of the employee's dignity, the importance of his/her professional contribution to the company, leading by example. Management should demonstrate an attitude of respect towards other men and women within the organization, where opinions of both are valued, and where opportunities for advancement are equally available and determined solely on professional merit. In this way, the administrators can model expected behavior to his/her subordinates and this modeling can in turn be disseminated throughout the ranks.

The second role for management lies on the establishment and enforcement of a sexual harassment policy. This is because 90% of the respondents are not sure how their organizations manage sexual harassment complaints (Sabitha, 2000d). This policy should be a vehicle for educating all company members, regardless of position of gender, of company expectations regarding the sexual harassment issue. It can also be a tool in helping to foster an environment of respect between all employees. The policy should outline complaint procedure including the role that management will take serious action investigating complaints, and disciplinary procedures for those found guilty of sexual harassment. It will also serve as a means of defense for companies who are faced with a lawsuit over sexual harassment charges. With any sexual harassment policy that is formulated within an organization, emphasis should be placed on prevention whereby the costs to an organization are much less if an

environment of sexual harassment can be avoided.

It is necessary for employers and unions to take proactive measures to deal with the problem and ensure a safe and healthy working environment for all. The code of practice on the preventing and handling of sexual harassment should aim to provide the in house preventive and redress mechanisms for dealing with the problems at the company level without having to seek redress through other channels such as the Industrial Court, to save costs, time and avoid embarrassment.

Last but not least employees cannot rely on the societal consciousness of individual managers, faced with conflicting priorities, to meet their needs for a safe and respectful work environment. For management, sexual harassment must remain an issue enmeshed with employee effectiveness, and seen as a threat not only to the individuals who suffer most personally from it but also to the most fundamental resource of the company - the personnel resource.

4. *The need for legislation*

From the legal standpoint, there are no specific laws that deal with sexual harassment in Malaysia. Only two sections in the Penal Code provide some protection to those who have suffered such harassment. The nearest law that is related to sexual harassment cases are under the Penal Code, Section 509, any person who insults the modesty of any woman by word, through sound, gesture or exhibit any object intentionally, shall be punished for a term which may extend to five years, or with fine, or with both. When it involves assault or use of criminal force, the convicted person may be charged under Section 354 of the Penal Code for outrage of modesty, which carries a punishment up to ten years, or with whipping, or with a fine, or with any two of such punishment. If the victim is forced to resign from her job as a result of sexual harassment, she can sue her employer for constructive dismissal and/or sue the person who harasses her for compensation for damages suffered. It is unlikely that the authorities will get involved if there has been no physical injury.

For years various NGOs and government agencies have been lobbying for more effective statutory measures to deal with sexual harassment. Hence a specific law on sexual harassment can encourage victims to overcome sexual harassment. Though we have the Code of Practice on the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Harassment have been influential in drawing up guidelines for employers, yet there are areas that still need serious attention. The Code places the onus on the employers to act equally and fairly in the face of sexual harassment complaints. Unfortunately, many at times, this does not happen. Hence legislation would take the code to another level where a person's basic right can be safeguarded and better guaranteed.

Secondly, due to the hierarchical nature of the employment relationship, sometimes superiors abuse their power by sexually harassing subordinates. It therefore becomes incumbent upon legislators to ensure that everyone views this abuse of power as unacceptable just as it is unacceptable in any worker-worker relationship. Legislation would set a standard and establish the boundaries for what is acceptable behavior

and what is unacceptable conduct.

Thirdly many employers in Malaysia have little experience in dealing with sexual harassment complaints and require specific mechanism and processes to be set up to provide certainty an uniformity. For these employers, arbitrary discretion in setting up their own procedures would introduce unnecessary tensions and may lead to dissatisfaction by the parties involved. Thus, legislation would ensure that employers have an authoritative method for investigating complaints, and would minimize the time and effort spent adapting the pre-existing grievance mechanism to the specific case of sexual harassment.

5. Sexual Harassment Awareness Training

Workplace should conduct sensitized training on sexual harassment for their workers. A recent study by the author (Sabitha, 2005) on the effects of training on the perception of sexual harassment at workplace showed positive results whereby it can improve workers awareness on sexual harassment behaviors. Thus training employees at all levels of organization concerning the behaviors that constitute sexual harassment is necessary ingredient for sexual harassment prevention. Seventy six percent of the respondents in the 1988 USMSPB survey indicated that training employees would lead to a reduction in the frequency with which sexual harassment occurred (Thacker, 1992).

Training employees not only has the advantage of alerting potential harassers to the type of behaviors that will not be condoned but also removes any confusion about the behaviors the organization will find problematic. In addition an effective training program is key to any effort to eliminate sexual harassment from a particular workplace. Training should be continuing and directed to both management and non-management employees. Programs should be tailored to the workplace. Training programs can include lectures, discussion groups, role-playing, and dramatizations.

Further, gender awareness could be increased, through training creating awareness among male and female is important, since the recent cultural change gravitates towards increased gender equality (Carelli, 1988). Gender equality brings with it the necessity of changing old norms to conform to newly emerging rules of behavior between sexes. This means changing the present norm. This is no simple task to accomplish. But norms change, though change happen slowly.

To do training, management can focus on the following as a guide;

- to promote changes in both men's and women's knowledge, attitudes and behavior to achieve a harmonious and equal partnership between men and women, and to enable women to achieve their full creative potential
- to improve communication between men and women and to enable them to understand the importance of joint and shared responsibilities
- to encourage men and women to feel responsible towards the need to eliminate sexual harassment and violence against women in general.

On the overall by taking these steps, the organization will be doing the most it can to prevent harassment and respond promptly to complaints of offensive conduct. And invariably, the cost of such measures will be much less than that of defending a lawsuit and paying damages if the employee wins.

Conclusion

In summary organizations need to view sexual harassment as an area of concern because it is expensive and affects the overall effectiveness of organizations. It is to be remembered that the maximization of professional service remains a pivotal objective of any organization. Hence to help an organization to achieve those objectives an organizational, the employer and the management team who can act as industrial social worker, must have a good understanding on the phenomenon of sexual harassment. In this way they can provide new or better services to workers through creation or modification of policy, the creation or modification of a program, or the initiation of a project on zero tolerance towards sexual harassment at workplace.

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