INCIDENCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN IN TEXTILE INDUSTRY & LAW PROFESSION – A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract: The textile industry and the legal profession is one of the classical industries in the world. Both the industries are universal in nature because almost all nations produce textile and practice law. This global growth of these industries has however, created hurdles to women who work in these two industries. This paper highlights the shocking conditions of women in textile industry and legal profession and also comes out with suggestions to provide a hassle free work environment for women.

Keywords - Legal profession, Sexual harassment, Textile industry, Women.

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1. INTRODUCTION

a) About Textile industry in Tamil Nadu:

Tamil Nadu is famous for textile industry all around the world, as it encompasses of 43% of the all the bigger Indian textile mills and nearly 80% of the smaller units in India. The industry provides work for a large number of female textile workers who come from oppressed socio economic classes. Tamil Nadu is one of the fastest growing states in India. There are other industries as well but the state is predominantly known for its textile industry. Coimbatore is referred as 'Manchester of South India' as there are large numbers of textile mills in and around the city of Coimbatore. Other cities that play a significant role in the growth of textile industry in Tamil Nadu are Tirupur, Karur, and Erode.

Among a total of 2049 textile mills in India, Tamil Nadu comprises of 893 large and medium textile mills. The percentage is even more for the smaller textile divisions. As the textile industry employs around 35 million people, it plays a great role in the economy of the country.

b) About Women in Textile Industry in Tamil Nadu:

The competition in global market led to elasticity and feminization of labor in textile industry of Tamil Nadu. The immense expansion in garment exports has concurred with inclusion of female labor in the textile industry in huge numbers since 1985. These textile factories mostly targeted on young, unmarried, women and girls. Textile mills could find large number of women joining the textile units in from 1990's and which now accounts to 70% of women employees in textile mills. This work force however, faces number of troubles during or after the course of their employment.

The supervisors often physically abuse female workers as well. It is difficult to ascertain these incidents because of unwillingness of women to talk about it. There are also reports that these women have been compelled into sex business as well by the supervisors, managers, hostel staffs and labour suppliers.

c) About Legal Profession in Tamil Nadu:

India has the world's second largest legal profession with more than 6,00,000 law professionals. The principal service providers are individual lawyers and small firms [1]. The Legal Profession is a vital branch of the machinery for running of integrity. Without a well-organized profession of law, the courts would not be in a position to manage justice successfully as the indication in favors or against the parties to a suit cannot be properly organized, facts cannot be properly expressed and the best legal opinions in support or against the case of the parties cannot be put forth before the court. "A well-organized system of judicial administration postulates a properly equipped and efficient bar;" and a well regulated profession for pleading causes is a great desideratum to tone up the quality of justice [2].

d) About Women in Legal Profession in India:

Traditionally, legal practice in India has been a male conquered profession. Over the last two decades, however, India has responded to its call as a forcefully promising nation by creating new kinds of "global" legal work spaces that created a center of attention and tendered seemingly gender-neutral advantages for its associates.

In Tamil Nadu there are about 7691 women lawyers, where men are around 44429 in number (Bar council of Tamil Nadu, 2011) [3]. Women face sexual harassment of varying degrees and sexual harassment laws need to be interpreted to keep in mind such instances. First, sexual harassment laws usually address harassment at the place of work. For women lawyers, the 'workplace' is often the courts. However, lawyers practicing in the courts are not 'employees' of the judges, and therefore the definitions of workplace, employers and employees in sexual harassment law needs to be inferred broadly [4].

Secondly, it is exceedingly complex for women lawyers to complain of harassment. Women lawyers would face sexual harassment from co-lawyers, senior lawyers, judges, co-workers and their employers. Law students, legal interns and paralegals are particularly prone to harassment as well as others who access the system such as clients or litigants. In India, women, especially those who do not stick to usual standards are at risk of sexual harassment in the form of sexual rumors and observations by male lawyers in the courts.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that tends to create a hostile or offensive work environment [5].

Sexual harassment incorporates gesturing sexually, offensive e – mail or voice messages, forcible physical touch / molestation, Demand / request for sexual favors, name calling, displaying pornographic pictures, sexist teasing, preventing a person from taking up a job, verbal / emotional abuse, demeaning and humiliating/ undermining remarks / statements.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The condition of women in the textile factories of Tamil Nadu is still far from being standard. They are subjected to sexual harassment and abuse at the hands of their supervisors. They are also denied protections at work place that is violation of their right to occupational health and safety, right to be free from sexual harassment and violence, and right to be paid for overtime. (Rehman Azhar) [6].

Dina M. Siddiqi (2003) [7], states that, workers must be assured of full confidentiality throughout the process once harassment has been filed. He also insists that, no procedure will work unless workers are assured of protection from retaliation. All personnel in positions of authority should have mandatory gender sensitivity training, especially on the topic of sexual harassment in the workplace. Women need to have the self-confidence to be able to distinguish and report without fear between casual, friendly comments and sexual intimidation and blackmail. Counseling services for those who have been subjected to harassment should also be made available.

Sexual harassment is an important source of mental stress for female workers. The incidence of sexual harassment ranges from insults directed at a person's gender, suggestive comments, or language, and demeaning remarks to unwelcome touching and grabbing and other physical assaults. These types of sexual harassment were under reported since female workers were very shy to disclose any information on this subject. Moreover, unmarried workers were afraid of disclosing any information on sexual harassment since it decreases their marriage possibility,   (F. Begum, R. N. Ali, M.A. Hossain and Sonia B. Shahid, 2010) [8].

The legal system should take initiatives and collect systematic information about the women lawyers experience in areas such as promotion, leadership opportunities, compensation, alternative work schedules, satisfaction levels and sexual harassment (Deborah L. Rhode 2001) [9].

Lianne Krakauer, Charles P.Chen (2003) [10], has found in their study that gender has a very strong impact on the career patterns of lawyers. The author recommends that the law students should be made aware of the various barriers addressed by women legal professionals like gender bias, sexual harassment, lesser opportunity for promotion, income differentials and work-family conflict.

The reason for women quitting the legal firms is due to the male dominated work environment and inflexible workplace culture that is prevailing in the law firms. In addition to this discrimination and sexual harassment has also been the reason for high attrition rate of women lawyers (Melissa Castan and Jeannie Paterson, 2010) [11].

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will throw light on the sexual harassment experienced by the women in textile industry and legal profession in Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu and the effects of harassment in the workplace. This study will offer constructive suggestions for the women workers in textile industry and women lawyers to overcome the problems of sexual harassment.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study include:

★ To find out the impact of sexual harassment on the work environment, on productivity, and workers' attitudes and responses to their work.

★ To formulate strategies to enhance the work place for women in textile industry and legal profession.

V. METHODOLOGY:

The validity of any research is based on the systematic method of data collection and analysis. Both primary and secondary data was used for this study. The primary data was collected from the respondent's i.e. women lawyers and from the women in textile industry in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu. The secondary data was collected from journals, books and web sources.

The major emphasize of this research design is on gaining ideas and insight of the problem. The respondents were selected using convenient sampling technique in which the respondents who are approachable were included for the study. This is a Descriptive research as it would give a clear idea on the problems of sexual harassment of women legal professionals and women workers in textile industry, since descriptive research is mainly done in order to gain a better understanding of this topic.

Field survey method was used to collect the primary data from the selected set of respondents. Structured Questionnaire is the key tool used to collect the pertinent data from the selected set of respondents. The questionnaire was pre tested through a pilot survey. The questionnaire consists of the following subdivisions:

♦ Personal Information
♦ Professional Work History
♦ Sexual Harassment

VI. ANALYSIS:

6.1 Design of the Research

The study is descriptive in nature. It attempts to describe the important work place issue of women in legal profession and textile industry i.e. sexual harassment. This issue has to be found from the 100 women who are working as legal professionals and textile workers in Coimbatore city of Tamil Nadu. 50 women from each industry, namely legal profession and textile industry were chosen for the study. The data which was collected has been analyzed using Chi – Square test and Structured Equation Model (SEM).

6.2 Chi – Square Test:

A Chi-Square-test was conducted on the dependent and independent variables to identify the statistically significant constructs (if any) [12]. The Null and Alternate hypothesis were framed and results were drawn with 0.05 significance value.

Chi – Square test is used to check on the relationship between sexual harassment and

• Productivity
• Work attitude

Null hypothesis Ho: There is no relationship between sexual harassment and productivity and work attitude of women.

Alter native hypothesis H1: There is close relationship between sexual harassment and productivity and work attitude of women.

<Insert Table 1 here>

Inference:

Table 1 depicts that, there is relationship between sexual harassment and productivity and work attitude of women. This reveals that women's productivity and work attitude is highly affected due to sexual harassment.

1. **Productivity:**

Productivity is the ratio of output to inputs in production; it is an average measure of the efficiency of production. Productivity of textile workers and women lawyers are highly found to be affected by sexual harassment. As women get mentally affected by sexual harassment, they tend to lose concentration in their work. Thus, it is essential to take necessary measures to avoid sexual harassment in workplace, since it affects the efficiency of women.

2. **Work Attitude:**

A job attitude is a set of evaluations of one's job that constitute one's feelings toward, beliefs about, and attachment to one's job. Work attitude of women in textile industry and women lawyers are affected due to sexual harassment. Thus, sexual harassment creates a negative work environment where women feel disturbed to come to work.

6.3 Structured Equation Modeling (SEM) using Partial Least Square (PLS) Path modeling:

SEM is most appropriate for this study due to the interdependent nature of the research variables. The SEM was chosen to test the structural model for several reasons. The present research models comprise many paths. Unlike regression that examines only a single relationship at a time, SEM provides estimation for a series of separate regression equations

simultaneously. SEM is particularly useful when dependent variables become independent variables in subsequent dependent relationships (Hair et al., 2005) [13]. SEM technique is superior as it allows for the specification and testing of complex path models and is considered more rigorous and flexible than the comparable technique (Hu, et al., 1999) [14].

SEM is applied to evaluate the strength of the hypothesized relationships among the constructs in the theoretical model developed by this study. SEM is a family of statistical technique that incorporates and integrates factor analysis and path analysis. It is utilized to model multivariate casual relationships and test multivariate hypotheses. In recent years, the application of SEM is becoming increasingly prevalent in the field of research.

<div align="center"><Insert Table 2 here></div>

Theoretical framework and Hypothesis development:
When understanding the phenomenon of the sexual harassment, it is helpful to have a framework within which to work and from which testable hypotheses are drawn. A theoretical framework in this research enables predictions, to make the outcome of sexual harassment of women in the legal profession and textile industry. It enables to evaluate observed business behavior and therefore provides better explanation for the issues and its consequences.

Hypotheses Development:
The following hypotheses are framed with the available literature:

H_1 : Increase of Harassment does not affect the job satisfaction of the respondents (X_1).
H_2 : Increase of Harassment does not affect the productivity of the respondents (X_2).
H_3 : Increase Harassment does not affect the work attitude of the respondents (X_3).
H_4 : Increase of Harassment does not result in the stress of the respondents (X_4).
H_5 : Increase of Harassment does not affect the turnover of the respondents (X_5).

6.4 Path Modeling:
The hypotheses were tested using PLS a SEM technique. SEM enabled researcher to answer a set of interrelated research questions in a single, systematic and comprehensive analysis by modeling the relationship between multiple and dependent constructs simultaneously. SEM assessed the structural model, the assumed causation among a set of dependent and independent constructs and evaluated the measurement model loading of observed items (measurements) on their expected latent (constructs). The result was hence a more rigorous analysis of the proposed research model and viewed it as a better methodological assessment tool. Hence this study used AMOS 18.0 software to perform the analysis. Table: 2 bring out the results of bootstrapping.

<div align="center"><Insert Table 3 here></div>

<div align="center"><Insert Figure 2 here></div>

VII. Results And Discussions:

- T value for the factor 'Job Satisfaction' is 5.954 which implied positive impact and it is significant at 1 percent level and thereby rejects the hypothesis (H_1). Hence, it is found that the increase in harassment will definitely affect the job satisfaction of the respondents.
- The second factor 'Productivity' have the T value as 6.716 which implied a positive impact and it is significant at 1 percent level and thereby not accepting the hypothesis (H_2). Hence, the increase Sexual harassment explicitly generates low level of productivity.
- T value for the factor 'Work Attitude' is 6.582 which implied a positive impact and it is significant at 1 percent level and thereby rejecting the hypothesis (H_3). Hence, the sexual harassment affects the Work Attitude of the sample respondents.
- T value for the factor 'Stress' is 6.712 which implied positive impact and it is significant at 1 percent level and thereby rejecting the hypothesis (H_4). Hence, increase in the level of Sexual harassment increases the stress level of the respondents.
- T value for the factor 'Turnover' is 6.413 which implied positive impact and it is significant at 1 percent level and thereby rejecting the hypothesis (H_5). Hence, sexual harassment also results in the Turnover of the respondents.

VIII.   Suggestions
The following suggestions can be implemented to build a harassment free workplace for women in legal profession and textile industry.

- Implementing a strong policy explicitly prohibiting harassment, including a description of disciplinary consequences that will be applied.
- Providing training to educate on the issue of harassment and periodically remind them of strong desire to maintain a harassment free workplace.
- Having multiple avenues in workplace for making an internal complaint and regularly informing the women about the complaint process. A "victim-friendly" complaint procedure encourages women to come forward, is sensitive to their situation, stresses the need for confidentiality and ensures that retaliation will not occur, whatever the investigation outcome is.

- Ensuring that every complaint is taken seriously. It is essential that the decision committee or employer act in a timely manner. Commencing an investigation immediately and taking appropriate corrective action as soon as possible is necessary.

IX. Conclusion

This research will add to the different dimension and diversity of sexual harassment of the women in textile industry and legal profession in terms of their work related issues. This research study has used Partial Least Square method which understands that the selected sample respondents are highly affected from the consequences of harassment like job satisfaction, productivity, work attitude, increase in stress and turnover of the respondents.

Sexual harassment has been found as the main reason for women quitting the textile industry and legal profession. Thus it is necessary to take proper measures to reduce the attrition level of women lawyers and employees by minimizing the occurrence of sexual harassment in the work place. Thus the results of the study clearly indicate that the higher the level of harassment related issue; lower is the level of job satisfaction and productivity. The decision making authorities should take proper initiatives to reduce sexual harassment in the work place of women in textile industries and women legal professionals in order to increase the participation level of women in both the fields.

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TABLES

Table 1, Chi – Square Test

S. No	Factors	Calculated value	Degrees of Freedom	Table Value	Significance
1.	Productivity	166.700	4	9.488	Significant
2.	Work attitude	511.168	2	5.991	Significant

Table: 2 Six constructs of the study

No.	Work place issues
X1	Job Satisfaction
X2	Productivity
X3	Work Attitude
X4	Stress
X5	Turnover

Table: 3 Results of selected six factors on work place issues

Paths			Estimate	Mean	S.E.	't' Value	Result
Turnover	←	Sexual Harassment	1.000	0.895	0.133	6.403	Sig. at 1% level
Stress	←	Sexual Harassment	1.217	0.871	0.136	6.708	Sig. at 1% level
Work Attitude	←	Sexual Harassment	0.482	0.845	0.128	6.591	Sig. at 1% level
Productivity	←	Sexual Harassment	1.073	0.922	0.137	6.711	Sig. at 1% level
Job Satisfaction	←	Sexual Harassment	0.966	0.768	0.129	5.943	Sig. at 1% level

FIGURES

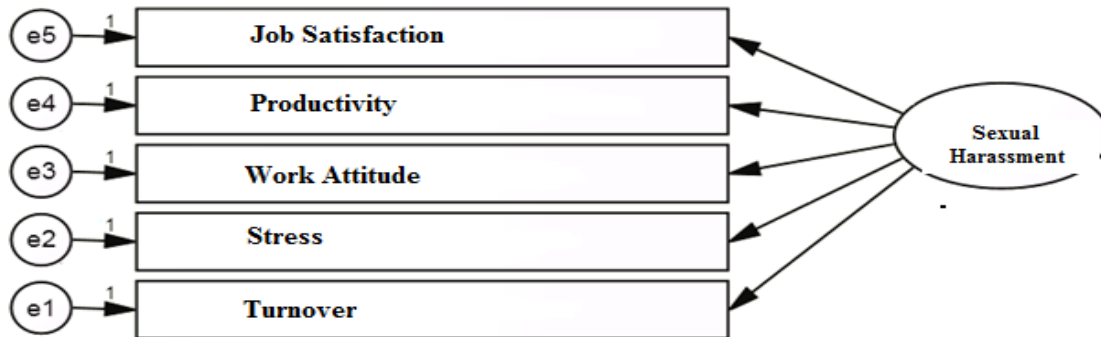**Figure: 1 Six constructs of the study**

Figure 2:   Structural Model – Results of Hypotheses of selected five factors on Sexual Harassment