A Study on a Study on Employee Awareness on Anti- Sexual Harassment Policy (POSH)

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DOI : https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.6.0425.1486

ABSTRACT :

This paper aims to assess workers' knowledge of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy, sometimes called the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH), in the workplace. Despite the legal obligation under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, many employees remain unaware of their rights or the mechanisms in place for protection and redressal. This paper investigates workers' knowledge, opinion, and practical understanding of POSH in several industries. The paper also examines the effectiveness of corporate awareness efforts and highlights differences between policy implementation and staff understanding. The findings highlight the significance of continuous education and awareness in establishing a safe and inclusive working environment.

Introduction :

Sexual harassment at the workplace is a significant issue that reduces general organisational performance, mental health, and employee morale. Often referred to as the POSH Act, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act of 2013 was enacted in India to ensure a safe and respectful work environment. Every business under this regulation must have policies, internal complaint committees (ICCs), and awareness and training programmes to prevent and address sexual harassment. Following the law is just one side; telling employees about the policy and their rights is also rather crucial.

Employee awareness is really important for the successful implementation of the POSH policy. Employees who are ignorant or misinformed about the procedures, reporting channels, and protections granted under the Act may be hesitant to report harassment or may not view such behaviour as inappropriate. This can lead to underreporting of incidents, persistent pain, and toxic workplace conditions still in place. Therefore, judging the level of awareness is absolutely crucial to assess the efficacy of the present organisational activities.

Typically, companies conduct e-learning courses, seminars, and workshops to inform their staff members on the POSH policy. But the frequency, depth, and distribution modalities of these awareness efforts range significantly among various sectors and business sizes. While some employees may receive comprehensive training, others may only have a basic knowledge of the policy's existence. Furthermore, social and cultural taboos regarding openly challenging sexual harassment could even further weaken the effectiveness of such programmes.

This study intends to close the knowledge gap by evaluating how well employees understand the POSH policy and how certain they feel in its use inside their organisation. Surveys and interviews will help to gather employee awareness, sense of safety, and confidence in the redressal process. The findings of this study will help to clarify the current degree of awareness and give companies clear recommendations to improve their anti-sexual harassment initiatives.

Review of Literature :

A frequent issue in the workplace, sexual harassment has attracted increasing attention in recent years due of legal developments and social movements such #MeToo. Victims of workplace sexual harassment suffer psychological, emotional, and professional consequences, Fitzgerald et al. (1997) argue; thus, it is absolutely essential that businesses have strong preventive measures in place. The creation of Internal Committees (ICs) and mandated awareness training under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, signalling a significant turning point in India in addressing this issue.

Although many businesses claim to have implemented POSH policies, a study by Sharma and Sharma (2016) found that only a small percentage of employees actually understand the complaint procedures and provisions. Often, underreporting of incidents results from this disparity between policy

implementation and staff knowledge. Deka and Bhattacharjee (2020) emphasised in such way that awareness initiatives are not implemented consistently across organisations, so generating varying degrees of knowledge among employees.

Raghavan and Saha's (2018) study found that, particularly in male-dominated industries, many employees lack faith in the redressal mechanisms provided under POSH. Their study emphasised the importance of sensitising campaigns that go beyond legal compliance and instead foster a culture of respect and equality at the workplace. Shukla and Mishra (2019) emphasised again that POSH training is more effective when it includes interactive elements such case studies, role-plays, and open discussions instead of one-way lectures.

Organisational support, leadership involvement, and continuous reinforcement, according to studies, often have a major impact on the effectiveness of POSH initiatives. The Internal Committee's prominence and the simplicity of complaint processes have a major impact on employees' willingness to report misconduct, according to Kapoor (2021). Thus, improving knowledge is not only a legal obligation but also a strategic need for employee well-being and corporate reputation.

Research methodology

Research design, the foundation for identifying the research challenges, is known as research design. The research design is the term used to describe the planning of the research projects.

Exploratory Research.

Descriptive Research.

Casual Research.

Research Design :

Aiming to meticulously show the degree of awareness, perception, and understanding of employees regarding the Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy (POSH), this study adopts descriptive in nature research design. This method allows the researcher to assess current levels of awareness, identify knowledge or implementation gaps, and explore attitudes on reporting systems and workplace safety.

Data collection method

From the staff members in different sectors, data collecting method The appropriate advice is provided and conclusions are drawn. A descriptive research approach was used in this work to assess several industries.

Sources of information 40 Preliminary two sources of information, primary as well as secondary.

Questionnaires help to collect primary data. Questionnaire used to gather information. Collection depending on principal information questionnaire.

Sampling Method:

The sample method consists of executives from all departments present throughout the general shift. This study gathers data from many organisational departments using a simple random sample method. Every participant is chosen randomly and independently, so ensuring that all have an equal chance of being chosen.

Data collection

This study used a questionnaire as its instrument to collect data. A questionnaire is a planned, organised series of questions meant to elicit responses from potential candidates. The survey question indicates the study goal under evaluation. The researcher must test any attitude by collecting relevant literature statements and then transforming them into questions.

Findings

The study underlines that although workers have high broad knowledge of the POSH policy, significant knowledge and application differences still exist. With a significant proportion of contractual workers (47.5%) and short-tenured employees indicating a transient workforce that could be connected to market dynamics or organisational growth, most of the respondents are young (75% between 18 and 25). Of those surveyed, 66.7% said HR orientation is the primary source of knowledge about the POSH policy, which 79.5% are familiar with. Still missing, however, is understanding of significant aspects including the Internal Committee (IC), complaint procedures, and the complete spectrum of sexual harassment. Only 50% of respondents admit both verbal and non-verbal harassment as illegal; 28.2% still misinterpret certain harassing behaviours as acceptable. This reflects the demand for better, inclusive, and practical training programmes.

A strong majority believe their firm is committed to a zero-tolerance culture; 76.9% report satisfaction with their organization's efforts. Nearly half of the individuals, however, are either unaware of or uncertain about the complaint filing processes and support resources now available. Widespread (84.6%) fear of retribution and 20.6% of employees would think twice about or decline to report harassment out of distrust or fear. Underused and misinterpreted, the Internal Committee—a crucial legal organisation under the POSH Act—lies with only 5.1% of respondents considering it their first point of contact. Lack of openness in action taken against harassment cases and uncertainty regarding consequences for offenders (71.8% unsure) further undermine confidence in the system.

Although the majority of employees find the POSH policy to be successful and are comfortable seeking assistance, concerns about training consistency, ignorance of legal rights, limited IC use, and a perceived risk of retaliation highlight the need of more strong, clear, and inclusive education and communication tools. Organisations have to stress building trust, confidentiality, and legal compliance by means of regular and engaging awareness programmes, efficient policy enforcement, and open case management if they are to ensure a really safe and encouraging environment.

Conclusion:

Though a great majority of employees are aware of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy (POSH), there is still vital knowledge, application, and faith in the redressal processes among them. Although HR departments have been key in increasing awareness, the uneven frequency of training sessions and uncertainty about Internal Committee responsibilities and reporting procedures highlight the need of more structured and inclusive educational projects. Fear of reprisal, underuse of the Internal Committee, and misconceptions about what constitutes harassment highlight even more the importance of creating a more open, supportive, and gender-sensitive workplace culture.

Organisations have to go beyond only policy documentation if they are to offer a really safe and polite workplace. Regular, interactive, legally informed training courses, better knowledge of consequences, promises of confidentiality, and a zero-tolerance policy reinforcement are all absolutely vital. This study underlines the pressing need for companies to step up their POSH-related projects not only for compliance but also to promote a culture of respect, trust, and equality for all employees.

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