

# AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN HOTEL INDUSTRY, PUNJAB REGION

Sukhdeep Kaur<sup>1</sup>, Dr. (Prof.) Shalini Gupta<sup>2</sup>, Dr. (Assistant prof.) Palwinder Kumar<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PhD Research Scholar, DBU Mandi Gobindgarh, Assistant Professor KC College of Hotel Management, S.B. S. Nagar, PB, India

<sup>2</sup>Department of Management, DBU Mandi Gobindgarh PB, India

<sup>3</sup>School of Hotel Management & Tourism, DBU Mandi Gobindgarh PB, India

Received: 14 March 2020 Revised and Accepted: 8 July 2020

**ABSTRACT:** The Sexual harassment has been a significant issue in service sector, especially in the hotel industry. Each and every organization considers it as unethical behavior in the working environment, because it creates critical issues and effect individual personal life along with professional life. The motivation behind this research is to explore about sexual harassment in hotel business and take a closer approach to understand that the all functioning departments such as front office, housekeeping, production, F&B service and supporting of hotel are equally susceptible to such occurrence. Frequent meetings with employees, training and handbook of polices could help to minimize prevalence of sexual harassment. The hotel industry faces an overall deficiency of skilled staff and attempting to hold capable female representatives.

**KEYWORDS:** Sexual Harassment, Hotel Industry, Female Employee, Service Sector.

## I. INTRODUCTION

While going through the term sexual harassment researcher came to understand that almost all hotels are aware that sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that could be occurring at front desk, in restaurant, and or in the guest rooms etc. This kind of act on the work floor is viewed as a complex type of harassment in work environment where one employee receives unwanted sexual advancements from a guest. It might leave negative influence on victim and organization (Salin 2009, 38). The hotels are service based industry and that deals with guest accommodation or lodgings. In this industry guest gets both tangible and intangible experience as employees having interaction with guests (Hayes and Ninemeier 2016, 2.). In Hotels employees interact socially or professionally either with their friend circle, business partner, boss or colleagues and guests. It could impact a worker both emphatically and adversely (Bowling et. al 2006). The work place harassment leads to negative social effect on individual. In addition, working environment harassment accompanies many adverse outcomes for both the worker and the association. From the organization point, it cost by losing skilled employee, performance and productivity along with overflow expenses. On the other side from employee point of view it lose their health wellbeing and prosperity and further affect performance of colleagues and deteriorate overall organization culture (Hershcovis, Reich et. Al. 2015, 9-11).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The women in hotel industry are the most sensitive to sexual harassment because their status is viewed as lower than guest. Therefore some guest takes this as privilege and abuses them without fear of results. The other reason of hotel female employee vulnerability to sexual harassment is because of their interaction with guests, especially receptionists, bar tenders, guest room attendant and waitresses. The employees who are working in public areas such as restaurant, swimming pool, and lobby can get help easily for a hostile incident (Colleen et.al, 2000).

### Sexual harassment in various departments

The GRA (guest room attendant) associate with guest to cleaning and tidying up the room and they regularly work closely to guest and helpless against sexual harassment because their workplace is confined from open zones. Past studies has demonstrated that sexual harassment is internationally significant issue especially room attendant. This has also been discovered about GRA that, they defenseless against different kind of harassment either undesirable physical, visual and verbal conduct. In any case, while guest rooms are private areas, therefore investigating harassments are on GRA moderately challenging (Boon, 2007). However, let us see other aspects of sexual harassment on workplace in next paragraph.

According (Eaton, 2004), restaurant staff is also vulnerable to events of sexually harassing conduct because of different social qualities. At the point when restaurant selecting waits staff with "outgoing personality," particularly service staff is the most obvious of such cases. The service staff that have more inviting and sociable character can create higher benefits and furthermore increase bigger tips for themselves. For front desk, employee's daily duties to meet the guests need goes beyond handling request and operating reservation system. They are always at risk of an encounter with sexual advance or other irate situations. Hotels managers know that in these situations all employees will perform and even difficult to "manage a smile" on face (Guerrier, 1999).

**Managerial preventive strategies**

From the managerial side administrators required to gather information for relevant incident from workers to reveal and solve the issue. The employee ought to report quickly to seniors in the event they encountered any type of harassment. On the other hand management/ administrators should pay attention to each and every incident. Further it is the administrator responsibility to manage effectively and with transparency by keep mind privacy of all staff members. Additionally, all workers should have organization handbook, which incorporates advices for adapting to sexual harassment (Ineson et. al. 2013).

The (Prekel, 2001) suggested that, the sound approach empowers the firm to manage the disciplinary issue adequately. It also gives right direction to manage issue in most proficient methods to deal with issue from both angles inside and out. Without clear strategy on sexual harassment organizations may have several hurdles to take disciplinary actions against harasser. In order to diminish negative effect of sexual harassment manager should make fast and proper move on each case to increase employee performance and productivity (van der Burg, 2003).

**Emergence & Significance**

The hotel business is different than other business because of its own characteristics. On the other side sexual harassment by guest which also called third party harassment with female employee is quite common. Due to the characteristics like satisfying the customers in hotel business leads several complex variables which create such incidents. The findings of study will help to find high prevalence of sexual harassment in various divisions of hotels and proposes approaches to overcome any barrier.

**Research Objectives**

- To study on the prevalence of sexual harassment in various divisions of hotels.
- To propose approaches to overcome the prevalence of sexual harassment.

**III. METHODOLOGY & PROCEDURES**

To conduct this study a structured questionnaire was developed to collect primary data from 1000 female employees in different hotels of Punjab region. To test the relationship among variables chi-square and frequency test has applied. It is a quantitative measure used to determine whatever a relationship exists between two categorical variables. The Chi-square statistics is significant at the .05 level.

H0: Female Employees of all departments are equally vulnerable to sexual harassment by guests.

H1: Female Employees of all departments are not equally vulnerable to sexual harassment by guests.

Each study has its own limitations it include topic, sample size etc. but in this research the topic was very sensitive therefore participants bit hesitate even they were willingly participate in this study. The Convenience sampling was used to fulfill research objectives and it has own limitations.

**Analysis and Interpretation of Results**

After statistical processing of scores for the prevalence of sexual harassment in hotel Industry findings have been presented in the Tables 1.1 and 1.2. The results have been analyzed for the present study for interpretation.

**Table: 1.1 Frequency of employees personally experienced sexual harassment by hotel guest(s).**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	450	45
No	550	55
Total	1000	100

Around 45% female employees reported that they personally experienced sexual harassment by guest and 55% employees denied any sexual harassment as they afraid to accept.

**Table 1.2 Observed and Expected Frequencies of Service Departments**

Service department	Sexual harassment n (%)	Chi square value	Degree of freedom	p-value	Total n (%)
House Keeping	134 (56.1)	101.892	4	0.000*	239 (23.9)
Front office	100 (35.1)				285 (28.5)
F & B Service	152 (52.2)				291 (29.1)
F & B Production	5 (5.4)				93 (9.3)
Supporting Dept. (Spa, Beauty parlor, Health club etc.)	59 (64.1)				92 (9.2)

The chi- square result test of independence for H0 specify a statistically significant difference between observed and expected values  $p \leq 0.000$  and the table 2 shows that sexual harassment was most prevalent among supporting departments (64.1%) followed by housekeeping workers (56.1%) and F & B Service workers (52.2%). This was significantly ( $p=0.000$ ) higher than those in front office (35%) and in F & B production (5.4%). So in this case null hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 1.3 Frequency of responses of study population on steps to be taken to minimize sexual harassment**

Steps to minimize sexual harassment	Number	Percentage
Orientation programme for new employees	253	25.3
Policy handbook	403	40.3
Periodic meetings	336	33.6
Advisory letter	5	0.5
Warning letter	3	0.3
Transfer	0	0

The results presented in the table 1.3 showed that around 40.3, 33.3% and 25.3% recommended policy handbook, periodic meetings and orientation programme for new employees to minimize sexual harassment respectively. Only 0.5% and 0.3% recommended for advisory letter and warning letter respectively. None of them recommended transfer.

**IV. RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS**

The aim of the research was to provide a view of Prevalence of Sexual Harassment in Hotels, and analysis about most vulnerable department. Study has shown maximum female claimed that they personally experienced sexual harassment by guests in hotel. Further study indicates that supporting department (Spa, Beauty parlor, Health club etc), Housekeeping, and Food & Beverage Service were more vulnerable than Front office and Food Production department. The sexual harassment is somehow part of social structure so as in hospitality industry. Due to low moral values of individual and silence toward any kind of harassment it spreads. However, it can be minimized, according to the respondents orientation programme for new employees play significant role along with structured policy handbook. These programmes and policies will guide to employees how, whom and where to report such incidents without fear.

The Managers ought to have both avoidance and strategic plan towards Sexual Harassment, yet above all periodic meeting will assured to female employee that management is there to hear employee side and act accordingly. On the other side employee should also have to behave in discipline and proper manner to maintain work culture of organization by taking their job respectfully and well regarded.

**V. REFERENCES**

[ 1 ] Salin, D. 2009. Organisational Responses to Workplace Harassment: An Exploratory Study. Personnel Review, 38, 1, pp. 1-27.

- [ 2] Hayes, D. K., Ninemeier, J. D. 2016. *Human Resources Management in the Hospitality Industry*. 2th ed. Wiley. Hoboken.
- [ 3] Bowling, N. A., Beehr, T. A. 2006. Workplace Harassment From the Victim’s Perspective: A Theoretical Model and Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Applies Psychology*, 91, 5, pp. 9981012.
- [ 4] Hershcovis M. S., Reich, T. C., Niven, K. 2015. Workplace Bullying: Causes, Consequences and Intervention Strategies. *Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, pp. 1-22
- [ 5] Boon, B. (2007) Working within the front of house/back-of-house boundary: Room attendants in the hotel guest room space. *Journal of Management and Organization*, 13,2, 160–174.
- [ 6] Colleen E. O’Connell, Karen Korabik (2000). Sexual Harassment: The Relationship of Personal Vulnerability, Work Context, Perpetrator Status, and Type of Harassment to Outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. Volume 56, Issue 3, Pages 299-329
- [ 7] Eaton, D. E. (2004). Beyond room service: Legal consequences of sexual harassment of staff by hotel guests. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 45 (4), 347-361. doi: 750807191
- [ 8] Rospenda K. M, Richman, J. A., Ehme, J. L. Z., Zlatoper, K. W. 2005. Is Workplace Harassment Hazardous to Your Health? *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 20, 1, pp. 95110.
- [ 9] Raver, J. L., Nishii, L. H. 2010. Once, Twice, or Three Times as Harmful? Ethnic Harassment, Gender Harassment, and Generalized Workplace Harassment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96, 2, pp. 236-254.
- [ 10] Ineson, E.M., Yap, M.H.T., and Whiting, G. (2013) Sexual discrimination and harassment on the hospitality industry, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 35, pp.1–9
- [ 11] Prekel, T. (2001). Sexual harassment: Causes, consequences and cures. Retrieved from
- [ 12] [http://www.capegateway.gov.za/eng/yourgovernment/gsc/3576/publications/guidelines\\_manuals\\_and\\_instructions/S/63925](http://www.capegateway.gov.za/eng/yourgovernment/gsc/3576/publications/guidelines_manuals_and_instructions/S/63925)
- [ 13] Van der Burg, W. (2003). Dynamic ethics. *Journal of Value Inquiry*, 37 , 13-34.
- [ 14] Colleen E.O’ConnellKarenKorabik (2000). Sexual Harassment: The Relationship of Personal Vulnerability, Work Context, Perpetrator Status, and Type of Harassment to Outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. Volume 56, Issue 3, Pages 299-329
- [ 15] Guerrier, Y. (1999). *Organizational behavior in hotels and restaurants*. West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons