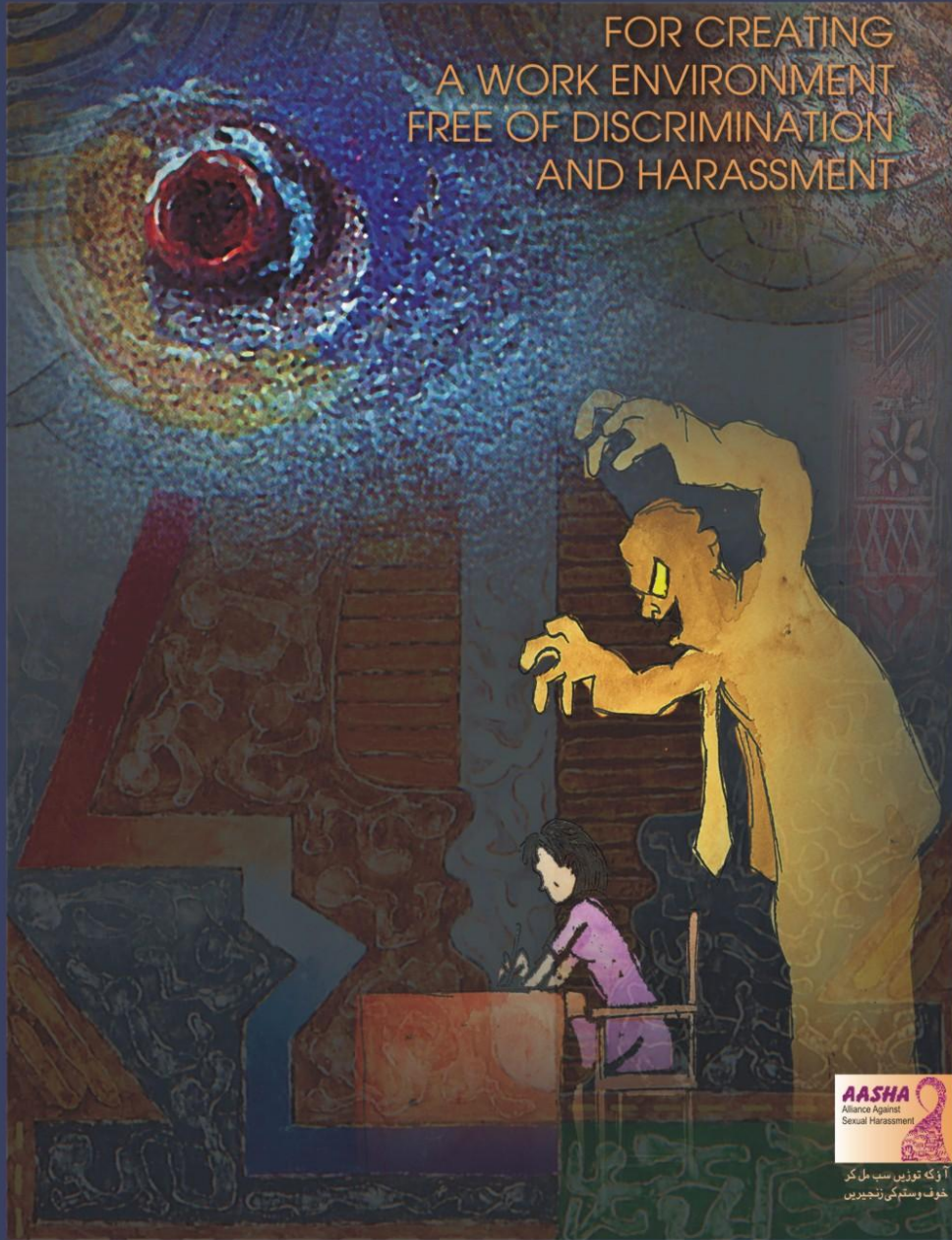


GUIDELINES

FOR CREATING
A WORK ENVIRONMENT
FREE OF DISCRIMINATION
AND HARASSMENT



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22nd December has been declared as a day to mark the struggle to address sexual harassment at work in Pakistan.

*You all are welcome
to join in this effort*

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BACKGROUND

In Pakistan it has been difficult for women to fully contribute to their country's development because the environment to work, in general, is difficult and un-supportive. Women commonly face inappropriate behaviour and harassment on the streets, at the work place and in public places.

The government has been trying to increase the number of women employees for the last several years, but even the minimum quota of 5% remains unfilled. Outside the government some women are working in senior positions and are running businesses, but, in general, the trend of women working in government or private employment has not become popular. Regardless of the economic and social compulsions to earn an income, women have to face several hurdles to work outside their homes.

Some organizations have explored the

On the streets: catcalling, touching, putting down, making fun, intimidating and singing to tease women.

In the buses: touching, pushing, humiliating, swearing and using vulgar language

Why does inappropriate behaviour occur with women at their work place?

Though women in agriculture and many other occupations have been working outside their homes since several centuries, the general myth or traditional concept that women should stay at home still prevails. People in

Not all people think like this. Many who are enlightened and wise realize that society has developed and so has the role of women. Women now can, and should, contribute to society, not only in the home but in every aspect of life. No country can progress if half of its population is restricted from contributing to its progress. Women have rights, like men, as citizens of our country and they should have equal opportunity at work. Men and women both have the right to work in an environment free of discrimination, intimidation and harassment.

Why is it important to address gender discrimination and sexual harassment at work?

productively of that organization positively. Therefore it is important to address any issue of discrimination and harassment at

traditional role as a man and not his merits or capabilities. For example, if a woman is senior and is capable she may still not get a promotion only because the management believes that women cannot take on positions of high responsibility. Stereotyping a man or a woman into their traditional roles or associating them with careers traditionally associated with their gender would also fall under this category. For example, always asking a woman to make tea at professional meetings or always expecting a woman to be a teacher and a man to be a scientist.



What is gender discrimination and sexual harassment?

Gender Discrimination is an attitude or action/decision taken

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as “any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when it interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work

i) Abuse of authority

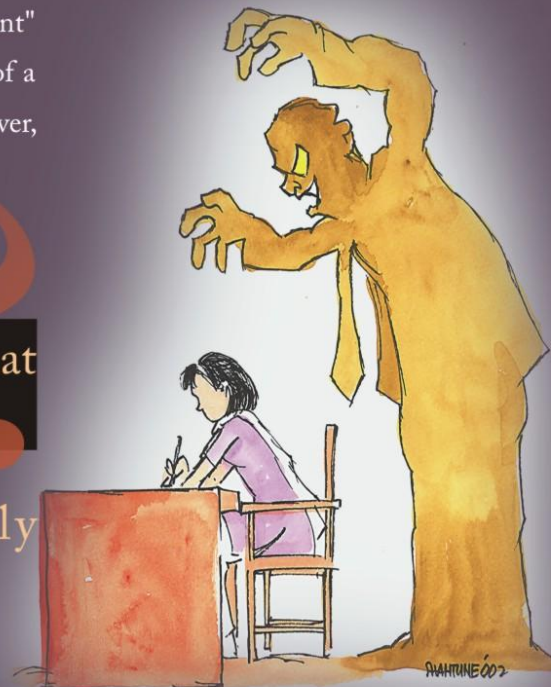
A demand by a person in authority, such as a supervisor, for sexual favours in order for the victim to keep or obtain certain job benefits, be it a wage increase, a promotion, training opportunity, a transfer or the job itself.

man, but in our country that is not as

- ◆ There are jokes or graffiti to put down women.
- ◆ You are not taken seriously and constantly undermined.
- ◆ You are treated as someone's daughter or wife.

The typical "hostile environment" claim, in general, requires finding of a pattern of offensive conduct, however,

HOW
How do you know that you are being sexually harassed?

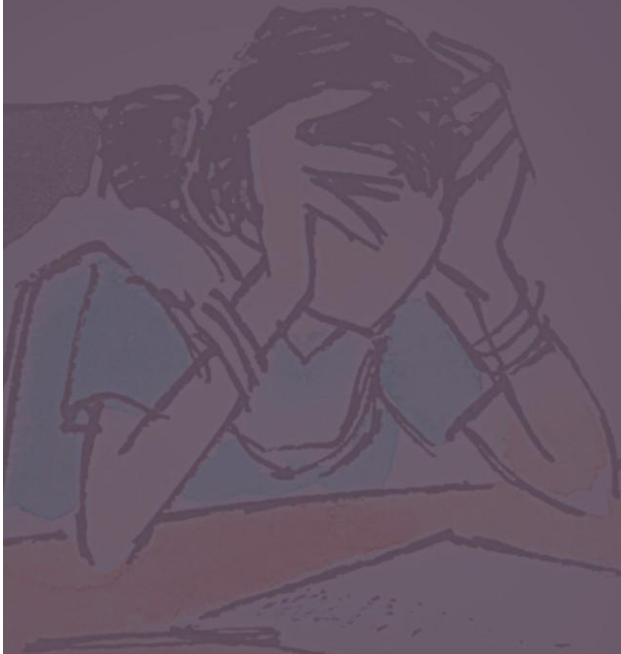


In Pakistan, typically, it is the women



Some common work-related problems that

- ◆ No work or too much work given
- ◆ Refusal to provide information or any support which would be an obligation
- ◆ Sudden criticism of your work
- ◆ Denial of opportunities to go abroad or to some training
- ◆ Bad annual confidential report (ACR) or report of insubordination
- ◆ You are invited to dinners constantly, even if you do not entertain these advances
- ◆ Close physical contact while you work
- ◆ Unnecessary touching, patting, grabbing
- ◆ You receive vulgar, or romantic cards or messages



Why do women put up with it?

- ◆ Women usually do not talk about it as they are afraid of losing their jobs.
- ◆ They are also afraid that no one would believe them.
- ◆ They feel that they will be blamed for it.
- ◆ The society associates such

What is the

- ◆ Women continue to work under stress which may cause physical and mental problems for them. They sometimes suffer from headaches and more serious problems related to stress.

Such harassment impacts their work quality and the organization is also at a loss.

They at times resign and therefore the organization



ADDRESSING GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT




EFFORTS

men and
women can

Women and men both need to get used to the fact that in the work setting they have to be professionals. They both need to step out of their traditional socialization and should not carry the traditional imbalanced power relations between men and women to their work place. Therefore assuming that women should add colour to the work environment, or make tea for everyone, or can be laughed about should not be the norm. In the same manner, men who are not used to seeing women in their homes should not assume that they have authority over them only because of their gender, and get offended if a woman gives them new ideas or professional feedback.



◆ Personal security and dignity is a right of each individual.



◆ Women should learn to interact with their male colleagues in a professional manner and should not use their being a woman to get things done. At times the traditional socialization of women encourages them to act helpless and get men to do their work, or demand unnecessary facilities. They should be aware that this kind of playing with traditional expectations encourages male colleagues to take on their traditional role of protector,

◆ If they feel that they are being harassed, they should inform a senior, or a responsible colleague, of any humiliating behaviour they experience.

◆ If men experience any humiliating experience they should also report to their senior or any other responsible staff that they trust.

◆ In general, men should also dress and behave in a professional manner and should not assume the traditional role of a Pakistani man who assumes control, decision making and judgment on other people's morals as a given right only by virtue of being a man. They should focus on job

EFFORTS Employers could make

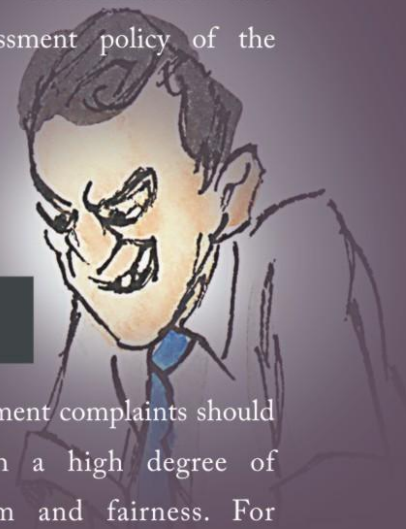
- ◆ Employers can first consciously work on their own attitudes on professionalism and accept women and men both as employees who are bound by the regulations of an organization, and should behave in a manner determined by fair labour practices and international standards.

Employers should make sure that they develop a code of conduct and/or a policy that addresses the common problems of gender discrimination and sexual harassment in their organization. This includes

- ◆ Awareness about intimidating behaviour, gender discrimination and sexual harassment should be part of the induction plan of employees. From time to time awareness sessions should be held so that the employees are clear about the behavioural expectations of the organization. Employees should also know about the Gender discrimination and Sexual harassment policy of the

Complaints

Gender harassment complaints should be dealt with a high degree of professionalism and fairness. For informal complaints the supervisor or a member of senior management should intervene, inquire and take appropriate action in a confidential manner ensuring that the complainant does not experience a reaction or backlash



A Standing Committee on Gender Justice should be set up of three members, one of whom must be a woman. At times it is quite all right for organizations to ask a credible member

handle such an issue. AASHA

EFFORTS N G O s could make

- ◆ NGOs should also make such policies and procedures for their own organizations and set an effective precedence for other private sector and government organizations to follow.

NGOs working on gender issues and those of labour and human rights should be pro-active in this arena. They should organize awareness sessions for the labour force, professionals and men and women in the non-formal sector.

PROBLEMS Common problems

The most common problems faced by the victims, after a formal complaint of gender discrimination or sexual harassment is lodged are:

- ◆ Attack on the victim's reputation, questioning whether the victim provoked the situation.
- ◆ Too much lime light on the victim discussing her/his personal life.
- ◆ Social pressure from the colleagues to take back the

- ◆ Opening parallel cases against the victim to intimidate.
- ◆ Putting pressure on the victim to leave the job.

The common problems faced by the management after a formal complaint is lodged are:

- ◆ Public gossip about the company where the case took place, thus creating a fear of
- ◆ damaging the reputation of the company/organization.

Not enough evidence available in the complaint or during the inquiry to make a clear

COMMITMENT
to deal
with the
problem

We need to share the commitment to deal with this problem. Those who experience this type of harassment should be committed to bring such harassers to task and follow up the complaints. At the same time others should learn how to interact with the other gender in an intimidation free environment. It may take a while but if we are committed it is not difficult to

*We can all
join hands to end
sexual harassment
at work.*

ALLIANCE AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE

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