KISSAN SUPPORT SERVICES (PVT) LIMITED

GENDER SENSITIVITY AND PROTECTION AGAINST HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE 2024

GENDER SENSITIVITY AT WORKPLACE

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Gender Sensitivity at workplace is an essential aspect of creating a respectful, an inclusive, and a productive environment for all employees, regardless of their gender. It involves recognizing and addressing gender-based differences, biases, and inequalities that may affect employees' experiences, opportunities, and well-being. A gender-sensitive workplace fosters equal opportunities, fair treatment, and mutual respect among employees, thereby contributing to the overall success of the organization.

2 UNDERSTANDING GENDER SENSITIVITY

2.1 Gender Sensitivity refers to the awareness and acknowledgment of gender-based differences and the need to address these differences in a manner that promotes equality. This includes recognizing the unique challenges and barriers that different genders may face in the workplace, such as unequal pay, limited opportunities for advancement, or gender-based discrimination and harassment.

2.2 A gender-sensitive workplace actively works to eliminate these barriers by implementing policies, practices, and initiatives that promote gender equality. This includes ensuring equal opportunities for all employees in hiring, promotions, training, and development, as well as creating a workplace culture that values diversity and inclusion.

3 COMMON GENDER STEREOTYPES AT WORKPLACE

Gender stereotypes are generalized and oversimplified beliefs or assumptions about the characteristics, roles, and behaviors that society expects from individuals based on their gender. These stereotypes often reflect cultural norms and traditional views of masculinity and femininity, creating rigid expectations about how men and women should behave, think, and interact.

3.1 MALE STEREOTYPES

3.1.1 AGGRESSIVE

Men are often viewed as naturally aggressive, which can pressurize them to behave competitively. A gender-sensitive workplace promotes collaboration over aggression for both genders.

3.1.2 INDEPENDENT

Independence is frequently associated with men, implying they should not ask for help. A supportive workplace encourages teamwork and collaboration from everyone.

3.1.3 NOT EASILY INFLUENCED

Men are often perceived as strong-willed, which may limit their openness to new ideas. Encouraging flexibility and openness benefits the entire workforce.

3.1.4 DOMINANT

The expectation of male dominance can create power imbalances. Gender sensitivity promotes shared leadership and decision-making roles.

3.1.5 ACTIVE

Men are often viewed as more physically or mentally active, but gender-sensitive workplaces should recognize and encourage proactivity in all employees.

3.1.6 WORLDLY

This stereotype suggests men are more career-driven and ambitious, neglecting work-life balance. Gender-sensitive policies should support balanced personal and professional lives for all.

3.1.7 NOT EASILY HURT

Men are often expected to suppress emotions, which can lead to unhealthy work environments. Emotional expression should be normalized for everyone.

3.1.8 DECISIVE

Men are often seen as more decisive, which can result in them being given leadership roles over equally capable women. A gender-sensitive workplace ensures decision-making roles are based on skill, not gender.

3.1.9 NOT AT ALL TALKATIVE

Men are often expected to be concise or reserved, limiting their participation in discussions. Everyone should be encouraged to express themselves openly.

3.1.10 TOUGH

The idea that men must be tough can prevent them from seeking support. A healthy workplace culture supports vulnerability for everyone.

3.1.11 LESS SENSITIVE TO OTHERS' FEELINGS

While men are often seen as less empathetic, emotional intelligence is a valuable asset for all employees, regardless of gender.

3.1.12 NOT DESIROUS OF SECURITY

This stereotype suggests men are willing to take risks, but security and stability are valid concerns for everyone. Gender-sensitive policies should recognize individual needs.

3.1.13 RARELY CRIES

Men are often discouraged from showing emotional vulnerability. A supportive workplace allows everyone to express emotions freely.

3.1.14 LOGICAL

Men are often stereotyped as more logical, overshadowing the critical thinking skills of women. Gender sensitivity promotes equal recognition of analytical abilities in all.

3.1.15 ANALYTICAL

Similarly, being analytical should not be seen as a male trait. All employees should be encouraged to develop their analytical skills.

3.1.16 CRUEL

The assumption that men are naturally less compassionate can discourage empathy. A gender-sensitive workplace fosters kindness and understanding in all employees.

3.1.17 BLUNT

Directness can be valuable, but it should not be associated with one gender. Tactful communication is important for both men and women.

3.1.18 NOT NURTURING

The stereotype that men are not nurturing can limit their involvement in mentorship roles. Gender-sensitive workplaces recognize that both men and women can be excellent mentors and leaders.

3.2 FEMALE STEREOTYPES

3.2.1 NOT AGGRESSIVE

This stereotype implies that women are naturally less assertive, which can discourage them from voicing opinions or taking leadership roles. In a gender-sensitive workplace, assertiveness should be encouraged in all employees, regardless of

gender.

3.2.2 DEPENDENT

Women are often viewed as reliant on others for decision-making, which undermines their autonomy and confidence. A supportive environment fosters independence in everyone.

3.2.3 EASILY INFLUENCED

Labeling women as impressionable overlooks their ability to think critically. Everyone should be recognized for their individual capacity to form well-informed opinions.

3.2.4 SUBMISSIVE

Women are sometimes expected to take a backseat in professional settings. A gender-sensitive workplace promotes equal participation and leadership opportunities for all.

3.2.5 PASSIVE

Passivity is associated with women being less proactive, which may affect their career growth. Encouraging initiative and active participation is a key to a balanced work environment.

3.2.6 HOME-ORIENTED

The notion that women are primarily focused on domestic roles can result in bias against women in career advancement. Work-life balance should be supported for all employees.

3.2.7 EASILY HURT EMOTIONALLY

This stereotype assumes women are overly sensitive, potentially questioning their ability to handle challenges. Emotional intelligence should be valued in all genders.

3.2.8 INDECISIVE

Women are often perceived as uncertain, which can affect their credibility in decision-making roles. Everyone should be encouraged to make confident and informed decisions.

3.2.9 TALKATIVE

Being labeled as talkative can lead to the perception that women engage in unnecessary conversation. Communication skills should be recognized as valuable in both men and women.

3.2.10 GENTLE/SENSITIVE TO OTHERS' FEELINGS

While empathy is often attributed to women, it is an important trait in all leaders. A gender-sensitive workplace appreciates emotional intelligence in everyone.

3.2.11 DESIROUS OF SECURITY

Viewing women as overly concerned with security can limit their risk-taking opportunities. Gender-sensitive policies should encourage calculated risk-taking for everyone.

3.2.12 CRIES A LOT

This stereotype diminishes the emotional expression of women. It is important to foster a work environment where expressing emotions is acceptable for all employees.

3.2.13 EMOTIONAL

Associating women with emotional instability can question their decision-making abilities. Emotional expression should be seen as human, not gender-specific.

3.2.14 VERBAL

Women are often perceived as more verbal, which can affect their professional image. Effective communication should be appreciated regardless of gender.

3.2.15 KIND

While kindness is often attributed to women, it should be encouraged in all employees as a sign of a healthy and supportive workplace culture.

3.2.16 TACTFUL

Diplomacy and tact are valuable qualities in the workplace and should not be gendered. Both men and women should be encouraged to develop these skills.

3.2.17 NURTURING

Although nurturing is stereotypically seen as a female trait, mentorship and guidance are crucial leadership qualities that should be valued in everyone.

4 IMPORTANCE OF GENDER SENSITIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE

4.1 PROMOTES EQUALITY AND FAIR TREATMENT

Gender sensitivity ensures that men, women, and individuals of all gender identities are treated with equal respect and opportunities. It eliminates biases and ensures that hiring, promotions, and workplace practices are based on merit rather than gender.

4.2 CREATES A POSITIVE AND INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

A gender-sensitive workplace fosters an environment where all employees feel valued and respected. This inclusivity boosts morale, encourages teamwork, and enhances employee engagement, leading to a more harmonious and productive work culture.

4.3 REDUCES DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Gender sensitivity helps in preventing gender-based discrimination and harassment by raising awareness about inappropriate behavior. Employees are more likely to recognize and challenge gender biases, stereotypes, and harassment when they are aware of their harmful effects.

4.4 ENHANCES ORGANIZATIONAL REPUTATION

Organizations that promote gender sensitivity are seen as progressive and fair. This improves their reputation among clients, customers, and potential employees, making them more attractive to top talent and business partners.

4.5 INCREASES EMPLOYEE RETENTION AND SATISFACTION

Gender-sensitive practices lead to higher job satisfaction and retention rates, as employees feel valued and supported in their personal and professional development. This is particularly important in retaining female employees and ensuring they have equal opportunities for growth.

4.6 BOOSTS PRODUCTIVITY AND INNOVATION

A diverse and gender-sensitive workplace encourages the exchange of different perspectives and ideas. When employees feel included and respected, they are more likely to contribute their best, leading to increased innovation and overall productivity.

4.7 HOW TO REMOVE STEREOTYPES

To remove gender stereotypes in the workplace, organizations should focus on fostering a culture of inclusivity and equality through education, policy changes, and leadership commitment. This includes providing gender sensitivity training to raise awareness of unconscious biases and challenging traditional roles, such as the belief that men are more suited for leadership or women for care giving. Equal opportunities for career advancement, fair hiring practices, and flexible work policies should be promoted; ensuring both men and women can excel without being confined by stereotypes. Open communication, mentorship programs, and a commitment from leadership to model and enforce diversity can further dismantle these harmful stereotypes, creating a balanced and respectful environment where

employees are recognized for their individual abilities, not their gender.

5. THE PROTECTION AGAINST HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT THE WORKPLACE ACT, 2010 (AMENDED 2022)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010, is a significant legal framework in Pakistan aimed at protecting women from harassment in the workplace. The Act was amended in 2022 to further strengthen the legal protections for women and ensure a safer and more respectful work environment.

5.2 KEY PROVISIONS OF THE ACT

5.2.1 DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT

The Act defines harassment as any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. This broad definition ensures that various forms of harassment are covered under the law.

5.2.2 COMPLAINTS MECHANISM

The Act requires organizations to establish a complaints mechanism for reporting incidents of harassment. This includes the formation of an inquiry committee to investigate complaints and recommend appropriate actions.

5.2.3 CONFIDENTIALITY

The Act emphasizes the importance of maintaining confidentiality during the investigation process to protect the privacy and dignity of the complainant.

5.2.4 PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION

The Act prohibits any form of retaliation against the complainant, witnesses, or anyone involved in the investigation process. This is crucial to ensure that employees feel safe and empowered to report harassment without fear of reprisal.

5.2.5 PENALTIES FOR HARASSMENT

The Act outlines penalties for individuals found guilty of harassment, including fines, dismissal from service, or other disciplinary actions as deemed appropriate by the inquiry committee.

6 AMENDMENTS IN 2022

The 2022 amendments to the Act introduced several important changes aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the law and expanding its scope. Some of the

key amendments include:

6.1 EXPANDED SCOPE

The definition of harassment was broadened to include not only sexual harassment but also other forms of harassment that may occur in the workplace, such as bullying, intimidation, and emotional abuse.

6.2 INCREASED PENALTIES

The amendments increased the penalties for individuals found guilty of harassment, sending a strong message that such behavior will not be tolerated.

Examples may include but limited to following Penalties:

Minor penalties:

a. Censure
b. Withholding for a specific period, promotion or increment.
c. Hold, for a specific period, at an efficiency bar in the time-scale.
d. Recovery of the compensation payable to the complainant from pay or any other source of the accused.

Major penalties:

a. Reduction to a lower post or time-scale or to a lower stage in a time-scale.
b. Compulsory retirement.
c. Removal from service.
d. Dismissal from service.
e. Payment of a Fine. A part of the fine can be used as compensation for the complainant. In case of the owner, the fine shall be payable to the complainant.

6.3 PROTECTION FOR WHISTLEBLOWERS

The amendments introduced protections for whistleblowers who report incidents of harassment, ensuring that they are not subject to retaliation or negative consequences.

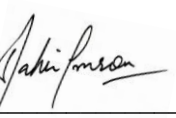
6.4 TRAINING AND AWARENESS

The amendments mandated that organizations provide regular training on harassment prevention and the rights of employees under the Act. This is intended to raise awareness and prevent incidents of harassment from occurring in the first place.

7 CONCLUSION

Gender sensitivity and the protection against harassment are critical components of a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace. By promoting gender sensitivity, organizations can create an environment where all employees feel valued and

respected, regardless of their gender. The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 (Amended 2022), provides a strong legal framework for protecting women from harassment and ensuring that they can work in a safe and supportive environment.



02.10.2024
Dated

Head/Manager-HR Department