



<https://doi.org/10.58419/gbs.v10i2.1022408>

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF MISOGYNISTIC AND TOXIC MALE CULTURE ON WOMEN'S TREATMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

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ABSTRACT

The issue of sexual harassment of women in the workplace is a persistent problem in India, stemming from a macho culture, feelings of insecurity, power dynamics, and a complete male-dominated environment. This research paper examines the different cultural obstacles that women encounter in their everyday lives. In contrast to previous research papers and studies, this paper emphasizes that cultural disparities in gender exacerbate the issue. The presence of a misogynistic and toxic male culture, characterized by bullying, sexual harassment, and gaslighting, emanating from political leaders, influences the perception and treatment of women. The fear that male co-workers have towards women, stemming from the principles of male dominance, leads to power struggles and control measures that persistently harm women. These workplace cultures not only impede women's career progression, but also negatively impact their mental and physical well-being. This study focus on a perspective on the inherent characteristics of sexual harassment and propose practical strategies for creating secure work environments, based on the analysis of case studies, legal regulations, and policies. Emphasis has been placed on the imperative to combat oppressive elements by advocating for cultural transformation, legal measures, and acknowledgment of women's rights.

Keywords: sexual harassment, macho culture, power dynamics, male-dominated, cultural obstacles, misogynistic, toxic culture, bullying, mental well-being, career progression, women's rights etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture can be defined as the collective norms, values, and beliefs characteristic of any organization and associated with the broader culture of society. Misogynistic and toxic male cultures have a significant influence on how women are treated in workplaces. Sexism, a deep-seated hatred of females, and toxic masculinity, which promotes assertiveness, dominance, and unyielding attitudes in males, make females more susceptible to repression, discrimination, and harassment. These cultures can result in bias in various forms, the exclusion of women from decision-making processes, and sexism. The consequences are profound: women in such workplaces may suffer from low self-esteem,



lack of promotion opportunities, and psychological disorders. This research paper aims to analyze how these toxic cultures affect women, including their impact on experiences, promotions, and treatment in the workplace.

"The pervasive influence of misogynistic and toxic male culture within the workplace has significant implications for the treatment of women and the overall corporate environment. Such cultures, often characterized by behaviors that emphasize power and control, create an environment where sexual harassment and discrimination thrive. Research indicates that women are disproportionately affected by toxic workplace cultures, experiencing higher levels of bullying, rudeness, and disrespect from their male counterparts." (Sull, 2023). This toxic male culture not only undermines the potential of women but also perpetuates systemic inequalities that hinder diverse workplace environments (holly, 2021).

Women's experiences in these toxic settings reveal a stark disparity in how corporate cultures function, often prioritizing traditional masculine ideals that devalue and marginalize female contributions. Studies have shown that women are 41% more likely to encounter toxic workplace cultures compared to their male counterparts, highlighting the urgent need for systemic changes in workplace dynamics(Sull, 2023) the interplay of misogyny and power dynamics promotes an atmosphere of silence and compliance, where the fear of retaliation often prevents victims from reporting harassment (holly, 2021)Addressing these issues is crucial for fostering inclusive and equitable workplaces that empower all employees, particularly women.(Sull, 2023)

Understanding the impact of toxic male culture on women's treatment in the workplace is crucial for organizations as they strive to foster a healthier and more productive work environment. It is essential to prioritize the implementation of comprehensive policies and proactive measures to eradicate these deep-seated toxic behaviors and cultivate a culture of respect and equality for all employees.

1.1. MISOGYNY & TOXIC MALE CULTURE IN WORKPLACE

Misogyny is the explicit aversion, disdain, or bias directed towards women or girls. It manifests as social systems or environments in which women face hostility and discrimination simply due to their gender, largely rooted in patriarchal structures that benefit men and disadvantage women(Britannica [Emily Kendall] , 2024)(Hamlets), Misogyny operates on various levels, resulting in both personal and systemic disadvantages for women,



including but not limited to violence, discrimination, and suppressive gender roles(Hamlets). In the context of the law, misogyny can become evident through legislation or legal practices that perpetuate inequality or fail to protect women adequately. The legal system may reflect misogynistic attitudes by allowing biases to influence judgments, leading to unjust treatment of women, particularly in cases involving domestic violence, sexual harassment, and reproductive rights, The consequences of such prejudices extend beyond individual cases, impacting societal norms and reinforcing harmful stereotypes(Equality, 2023),

Toxic male culture refers to a societal mindset that promotes harmful stereotypes about masculinity, encouraging men to engage in aggressive, dominant, and often misogynistic behaviours. This culture often includes the belief that men must suppress emotions, exhibit control over women, and uphold power dynamic hierarchies, wherein men's interests are prioritized over those of women (Hamlets), Toxic masculinity leads to detrimental behaviors that not only affect women's rights and safety but also contribute to the mental and emotional health issues faced by men and boys who feel pressured to conform to these norms (Gallie], 2019).

Misogyny in Indian workplaces manifests as widespread gender discrimination, impacting women's career growth and workplace experiences. Approximately 85% of Indian women report experiencing occupational sexism, affecting their prospects for pay raises, promotions, and job opportunities(Sage Journals [Sanchari Mukhopadhyay, 2021), The gender pay gap remains a significant concern, with evidence showing that women earn about 20% less than men for similar roles.(Sage Journals [Sanchari Mukhopadhyay, 2021),This disparity not only reflects direct discrimination but also underscores the undervaluation of women's work within professional environments. This systemic issue perpetuates economic inequalities and hampers women's financial independence.

Sexual harassment in the workplace is alarmingly prevalent, with around 70% of women reporting having faced some form of sexual harassment during their careers (DHNS, 2018) (Sage Journals [Sanchari Mukhopadhyay, 2021), This pervasive fear of harassment creates a hostile work environment, discouraging women from asserting their rights and limiting their career advancement.Women are significantly underrepresented in leadership positions in India, making up only about 10.5% of senior roles across workplaces (DHNS, 2018),such underrepresentation is not solely a reflection of women's abilities but also indicates the obstacles they face due to misogynistic attitudes embedded within organizational cultures.



This lack of representation reinforces stereotypes and diminishes the visibility of women in decision-making processes.

The culture of many Indian workplaces often reflects toxic masculinity, which promotes aggressive behaviors and a dismissive attitude towards women's contributions. A study indicated that women are often held to higher standards than their male counterparts, facing undue scrutiny and bias in evaluations and promotions(Sage Journals [Sanchari Mukhopadhyay, 2021),

Occupational sexism significantly impacts the mental health and job satisfaction of women. Studies have shown that women experiencing gender discrimination report higher levels of anxiety and depression, leading to decreased job satisfaction(Sage Journals [Sanchari Mukhopadhyay, 2021), This mental burden further exacerbates the difficulties women face in balancing work and personal responsibilities, ultimately affecting their overall well-being.

Cultural norms in India continue to dictate women's roles, often prioritizing domestic responsibilities over professional ones. Reports indicate that women in urban India are expected to spend about 7.5 times more time on domestic work compared to their male counterparts (DHNS, 2018). This expected workload discourages women from pursuing career ambitions and directly impacts their participation in the labor force.

Addressing misogyny in the workplace requires systematic reforms at both organizational and societal levels. Effective policies that promote gender equality, provide safe working conditions, and encourage women's leadership accrue benefits not only for women but also for the organizations and society as a whole. Initiatives aimed at fostering a culture of equality and inclusion are imperative for mitigating the impacts of misogyny(DHNS, 2018) (Sage Journals [Sanchari Mukhopadhyay, 2021).The Impact of misogyny on working women in India's workplaces is significant, creating barriers to equality, safety, and Professional growth. (Rouf Ahmad Bhat, 07-07-2017).

1.2. MENTAL AND PHYSICAL EFFECTS ON WOMEN DUE TO TOXIC MALE CULTURE AND MISOGYNY

Women in toxic workplaces often experience significant mental health challenges due to the constant exposure to misogyny and aggressive male behaviors. Negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, and stress are prevalent as women navigate hostile environments where their contributions may be undervalued or dismissed. Research indicates that these negative



emotions can escalate to more severe conditions, including burnout, cynicism, and feelings of self-doubt.(Xi Wen (Carys) Chan, March 2021)

The physical health of women can also be adversely affected by toxic workplace cultures. Prolonged exposure to stressors associated with such environments can lead to symptoms like insomnia, weight fluctuations, migraines, and other stress-related disorders(Xi Wen (Carys) Chan, March 2021), One study emphasized that women in toxic workplaces reported higher instances of physical ailments, highlighting that emotional distress often manifests in physical symptoms, thus harming overall well-being(Xi Wen (Carys) Chan, March 2021).

Microaggressions prevalent in toxic male cultures significantly affect women's workplace experiences. For instance, instances of being interrupted in meetings, constantly being talked over, or having their ideas attributed to male colleagues are common scenarios(Xi Wen (Carys) Chan, March 2021). A female executive asking to take notes during a meeting, simply to accommodate a stereotype about women's organizational skills, reflects a broader issue wherein women's professional abilities are undermined(Xi Wen (Carys) Chan, March 2021)(Althof, 2021)

Statistical evidence sheds light on the broader implications of toxic culture in workplaces. A notable finding revealed that women were 41% more likely to suffer from toxicity in workplaces shortly after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic(Xi Wen (Carys) Chan, March 2021). In addition, workplaces characterized by toxic masculinity saw increased turnover rates, with studies indicating that workplace toxicity could account for up to 30% of employee turnover(Xi Wen (Carys) Chan, March 2021)(Althof, 2021)

The pervasive nature of toxic male culture results in higher workplace dissatisfaction among women. Employees in toxic environments often report feeling isolated, withdrawn, and demotivated. This leads to absenteeism and, eventually, attrition, as women may seek healthier work environments where their contributions are valued and respected(Xi Wen (Carys) Chan, March 2021).

2. OBJECTIVES

1. To Evaluate the Impact on Women's Career Progression
2. To Examine Effects on Women's Mental Health and Well-being

3. METHODOLOGY

The study "Exploring the Impact of Misogynistic and Toxic Male Culture on Women's Treatment in the Workplace" relies on secondary data from various sources. Secondary sources were compiled from a variety of research articles, Journals and books. The research tool utilized for the analysis of data gathered from various sources for the current study. The research method used in the current study is case studies and secondary data analysis.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Authors	Outcomes
(Rouf Ahmad Bhat, 07-07-2017)	In India Sexual harassment at the workplace is still very much in existence today more than ever. The Study revealed that sexual harassment is a recently emerged social evil which is growing with extreme speed and gives much concern to the authorities about the issue. The study also lays down the causes that have given spontaneous increase in the sexual harassment cases in India. The prevalence of male dominance in the workplace should be addressed by providing women with additional advantages for promotions and other privileges. This approach is likely to result in a decrease in the number of reported cases each year. In addition to this, another significant factor contributing to sexual harassment is the higher level of education attained by women, who are being subjected to betrayal and sexual advances by their employers in exchange for job opportunities. This issue needs to be addressed with strict measures. The present study also analysis the data of National Crime Records Bureau which was released by the department in 2016 and an extensive survey was done about the cases reported in the report. It has been observed that the incidence of sexual harassment of women in the workplace in India is steadily rising. The objective is to develop a mechanism that can effectively stop the situation and decrease the number of cases.
(Srivastava, Jan 2004)	The Supreme Court has played a creative role not only in providing a guideline for preventing sexual harassment of women at work place but also in evolving a Code against sexual harassment. 2. The Indian Penal Code, 1860 contains provisions for However, it is unfortunate that these provisions have seldom been used. Maybe this is not primarily due to lapses on the part of administration or police but also due to non-reporting of incidence of sexual harassment of workmen due to: (i) fear of losing jobs, (ii) not getting promotion, (iii) victimization by employer, (iv) neglect by family members and fellow workers. Whatever may be the explanation there is undoubtedly a mood of frustration among women employees who are victims of sexual harassment. 3. The amendments in the standing orders under the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946(IESOA) and service rules on the lines suggested by the Supreme Court have a deterrent effect on sexual harassment. However, the scope of the IESOA is limited as it is applicable only to establishment employing 100 or more persons. Thus



	establishments employing less than 100 employees are outside the purview of the suggested amendments in IESOA. It is, therefore, suggested that the scope of the Act be widened to cover industrial establishments employing 20 or more persons. 4. In order to prevent sexual harassment of work.
(Poonia, 2019)	India is making significant progress towards its developmental objectives, with an increasing number of women entering the labor market. The recognition of the right to protection against sexual harassment is an intrinsic component of the protection of the women's human rights. This initiative aims to promote women's autonomy, equal access to opportunities, and the right to work with dignity. Sexual harassment in the workplace is a societal issue that requires attention. It is crucial to increase the knowledge and understanding of employers and employees regarding the various types of sexual harassment that can occur in the workplace, as well as the steps that can be taken to prevent it and the legal regulations that govern the prevention and resolution of sexual harassment cases. Regular dissemination and awareness raising activities should be implemented and assessed to enhance the implementation of best practices in addressing sexual harassment in the workplace. These activities should also serve to alert and educate individuals about different forms of sexual harassment, enabling potential victims to prevent such incidents. Improving training programs on sexual harassment and offering written materials or a manual on the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace can aid in addressing and reducing instances of sexual harassment. While a murder results in the destruction of the victim's physical body, sexual harassment causes the degradation and violation of a vulnerable woman's soul.
(Yukta Kotwal, 2024)	Sexual harassment in the workplace is a discriminating, exploitative practice that thrives in an environment of fear, panic, and retaliation. It is an extension of violence in daily life. It is critical to initially comprehend the nature of the issue and its causes to lower the dangers of sexual harassment. Given that men commit these crimes most often, it is hoped that knowledge of background, attitudes, feelings, perceptions, and thoughts may shed light on why this phenomenon occurs
(Aparna Singh Sengar)	It is important to know that there are laws passed to stop the sexual harassment of women at workplace and employers have to frame the new and effective strategies to protect the organization from this social evil. There should be greater public awareness and participation in the governance. The most important part is that the government and the other employees should not make any gender discrimination at the workplace. The law also binds the employees to address and act on the complaints as soon as possible in respect of sexual harassment of women at workplace.
(Fitzgerald, (October 1993))	In the case of sexual harassment, social policy initiatives must be formulated to elevate women's status in the workplace. Harassment grows out of women's inferior status in the world of work; it can be eliminated by improving that status
(Anita Raj, (March 17, 2020))	Approximately 16% of employed women experience unwanted sexual touching in the workplace, while more than 16% are subjected to sexually degrading language about themselves. Additionally, 10% of

	women have been referred to using derogatory and misogynistic terms such as "bitch," "c**t," or other similar names in their workplace. Regrettably, a significant number of individuals continue to endure these inhospitable work environments. Specifically, among individuals who have reported experiencing sexual harassment or assault in the workplace, only 13% of women and 8% of men have chosen to resign from their positions as a result of these egregious acts. Harassed individuals often experienced social stigmatization from their peers. Perpetrators of harassment disregarded their victims, while colleagues discouraged them from addressing the matter. Certain individuals experienced diminished work evaluations or were denied advancements.
(STEWART, January 1984)	Harassed individuals often experienced social stigmatization from their peers. Perpetrators of harassment disregarded their victims, while colleagues discouraged them from pursuing the matter. Certain individuals experienced reduced work evaluations or were denied promotions, but few were fired. Women who ignored the harassment or complained to their bosses received the fewest negative sanctions. Almost half of the women who directly confronted their harassers received some type of negative organizational sanction.

5. DISCUSSION

In Indian workplaces, sexual harassment is still a major problem and is referred to as a "recently emerged social evil." Even with legal frameworks in place, incidents go unreported because people are afraid of reprisals, social disapproval, and possible career setbacks. Male dominance has been firmly established in Indian workplaces due to persistent patriarchal structures, resulting in notable power disparities that support the continuation of sexual harassment. This dynamic is made worse by the growing number of educated women joining the workforce, who is frequently singled out for exploitation by dishonest employers looking to abuse their power rather than being valued for their abilities and credentials. Despite efforts to protect women from harassment, laws like the Vishakha Guidelines and sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) have little effect because of a general lack of awareness and inadequate enforcement. These difficulties highlight how urgently systemic changes and increased accountability are required to effectively address workplace inequality.

Workplace sexual harassment frequently causes victims to experience severe emotional and psychological trauma, which has been compared to a "degradation of the soul," leaving long-lasting effects on their mental health. In addition to the personal cost, victims often experience social exclusion and career setbacks, such as lower ratings or being passed over for promotions, which further isolates them in the workplace. Notwithstanding these



difficulties, the low resignation rates among harassed people reveal a sobering fact that many of them put up with this kind of treatment because they have few other work options or are afraid of social rejection, underscoring the pressing need for structural adjustments to assist and safeguard victims.

A major gap is created by labor laws with limited coverage, such as the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946, which only applies to larger establishments and excludes smaller workplaces. Workers in smaller organizations frequently lack standardized employment practices and protections as a result of this exclusion. Employers' and authorities' slow responses to complaints worsen this problem by undermining workers' confidence in grievance procedures and increasing workplace vulnerabilities.

6. CONCLUSION

The examination of the toxic masculinity and male dominated work environments causes negative effects on women's experiences and their well-being in workplaces. These are cultures that foster hostility/discrimination and disrespect for women and their work. The studies reveal that women are 41% more likely to experience the hostile organizational climate than men which results in high anxiety, depression, and job dissatisfaction, that further impacts retention rate and organizational climate. The results point to the fact that the culture needs to change across various spheres in order to counter toxic masculinity and misogyny. Organization's must therefore adopt measures that encourage gender equity, workers' protection, and women's ascendance to leadership responsibilities. Organizations need to strive towards creating cultures that allow and encourage women's productivity by doing away with barriers that may be in place.

This research highlights the need to establish the culture of respect, and non-discrimination in the workplace. Eliminating toxic behaviours and structural inequality benefits both the female employees and the companies' overall performance and creativity. Solving these problems is not only about compliance with standards—this is a moral obligation that positively affects the health of the organization and the development of society. The study also supports open dialogue and engagement of all employees in the organizational context in order to eliminate systemic factors and promote equal opportunities for everyone in the workplace.

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