

# Constructing Ideal Strategies for Countering Workplace Violence

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Workplace violence refers to violence that originates from employees or employers and threatens employees and/or other employees. The definition of work related violence that has received pan-European acceptance is as follows, "Incidents where people are abused threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being, or health." This can involve violence resulting from industrial disputes, although this is not a major factor in most incidents. This definition establishes violence as behaviour with the potential to cause harm. Broadly speaking there are three forms:

- Non-physical violence (intimidation, abuse, threats etc)
- Physical violence (punching, kicking, pushing etc)
- Aggravated physical violence (use of weapons, e.g. guns, knives, syringes, pieces of furniture, bottles, glasses, etc).

Violence in all its forms is a concern for staff and management alike. For employers, violence can lead to poor morale and a poor image for the organization, making it difficult to recruit and keep staff. It can also mean extra costs, such as those associated with absenteeism, higher insurance premiums and legal fees, fines and compensation payments where negligence is proven. For employees, violence can cause pain, distress and even disability or death. Physical attacks are obviously dangerous but serious or persistent verbal abuse or threats can also damage employees' health through anxiety or stress. Workplace Gossip is also a form of workplace violence, noting that it is essentially a form of attack.

But, in recent years more women have been coming forward to report such practices the sexual harassment is the major form of violence, women are facing in the workplace It not only degrades the woman, but reinforces and reflects the idea of non-professionalism on the part of women workers, who are consequently regarded as less able to perform their duties than their male colleagues.

### Violence within workplace

- Distress through verbal assaults
- Insults
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Humiliation
- Harassment
- Isolating a person from his/her family, friends, or regular activities

- Enforced social isolation
- Unwanted touching
- Forced sexual activity

## II. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE DATA

Although workplace violence is receiving increased attention in the media, the incidents that make the news are only the tip of the iceberg.

- In 2000, 13,935 women had injuries or illnesses involving days away from work that resulted from assaults and violent acts (Bureau of Labor Statistics [Bureau of Labor Statistics 2010]).
- Homicide is the second-leading cause of fatal occupational injuries for women, after traffic accidents. Thirty-one percent of women who die at work are killed as a result of an assault or violent act. In 2003, 119 women died as a result of an assault or violent act in the workplace (BLS).
- 12.7 percent of all female violent crimes were committed while the victim was working or on duty. These acts of nonfatal violence include rape and sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault and simple assault (BLS).
- Some 36,500 rapes and sexual assaults occur annually in the workplace. In 80 percent of these incidents, the victim was female (National Crime Victimization Survey 2008).
- Nurses experience workplace crime at a rate of 72 percent higher than medical technicians and at more than twice the rate of other medical fieldworkers (NCVS).
- Professional (social worker/psychiatrist) and custodial care providers in the mental health care field were victimized while working or on duty at rates more than three times those in the medical field (NCVS).
- Junior high school teachers have a rate of victimization in the workplace similar to convenience store clerks— 54.2 versus 53.9 per 1,000 workers (NCVS).

The data on workplace violence is scattered and inadequate to understand the extent of the problem. Many acts of nonfatal violence and threats in the workplace go unreported because there is no coordinated data-collection system to process the information. More than 936,000 of the nearly 2 million workplace crimes committed yearly were not reported to the police. Rape and sexual assaults were reported to the police at an even lower rate of 24 percent.

### III. TYPES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

By understanding the cause of the violence we will be better able to eliminate, reduce or manage the risk of occurring. There are three main types of work related violence

#### **Criminal violence**

Violence perpetrated by individuals who have no relationship with the organization or victim. Normally their aim is to access cash, stock, drugs, or perform some other criminal or unlawful act.

#### **Service user violence**

Violence perpetrated by individuals who are recipients of a service provided in the workplace or by the victim. This often arises through frustration with service delivery or some other by-product of the organizations core business activities.

#### **Worker-on-worker violence**

Violence perpetrated by individuals working within the organization colleagues, supervisors, managers etc. This is often linked to protests against enforced redundancies, grudges against specific members of staff or in response to disciplinary action that the individual perceives as being unjust.

### IV. RELATED REVIEW

**Malhotra (2004)** explains that women in Pakistan are constantly being harassed, at work place and on other public places. But, they do not report these incidents for fear of being restricted in their movements. Women also fear retaliation, stigmatization, and the uncooperative and humiliating attitude of officials and law enforcers. The Pakistan Penal Code prescribes punishments for sexual harassment offences, often policemen turn a blind eye even when they are approached by women. Women in Afghanistan have suffered a catastrophic assault on their human rights during regime of the Taliban.

**National Commission for Women** has laid down the code of conduct at work place to prevent sexual harassment of women, which has been sent to all Government offices, Ministries, and Universities with the hope that employers would become more sensitive towards women. The guidelines highlight that it shall be the duty of the employer to prevent or deter the commission of any act of sexual harassment at workplace would include unwelcome sexually determined behaviour by any person either individually or in association with other persons such as eve teasing, unsavoury remarks, jokes causing embarrassment, innuendo and taunts, gender based insults or sexist remarks and unwelcome sexual overtones in any manner, touching or brushing against any part of the body, molestation or displaying pornographic or other derogatory pictures or sayings (**Hindu, Sept 16, 1998**).

**Debashish Sengupta (2011)** has stated that the ILO has a much broader description on workplace violence. Workplace violence could be physical or psychological, anything at place of work that may fall under homicide, rape, kicking, biting,

punching, and harassment, including sexual and racial abuse, bullying, mobbing, victimizing, and leaving offensive messages, name-calling or deliberate silence. Greater levels of awareness are required in organisations, both amongst managers and workers.

#### **Methodology**

Violence against women is a multifaceted problem that requires proactive mitigation strategies by the society, government, families and individuals. The significance of the problem emanates from the fact that its escalation and devastating effects not only lower quality of life but also leads to physical harm, emotional and psychological torture and even death. Negatively, Violence against women is thus a far reaching consequence in family and social relationship. Hence the researcher has chosen the topic for the study. Random sampling method has been adopted to investigate the violence against women issues from the respondents.

#### **Significance of the Study**

The results of this study will significantly contribute in understanding of the various issues relating to violence against women. Specifically, it will be possible to analytical understand and appreciate, with an aim of reducing the various causes and effects of violence, care givers, the policy makers and the society attempts to help curb the crime based on espoused effects to groups and individuals.

### V. OBJECTIVES

- To know the response of women while facing violence
- To probe the causes of violence and its impact on development issues
- To analyze the impact of violence on workplace

### VI. STUDY UNIVERSE

Tamil nadu has been a study universe. Out of 32 districts in Tamil Nadu, Six districts were selected for the study. Those districts have been selected on the basis of the data availed by the National Crime Records Bureau (ie) Three Districts from Higher rate of Violence( Tirunelveli, Madurai & Salem) and Three Districts from Lower rate of violence ( Sivagangai, Thiruchirappalli & Nilgiris).

### VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study is limited to focus only the violence against women in the selected district of Tamil Nadu. The results of the study explicit only the six districts of Tamil Nadu.
2. Some of the respondents are very reluctant to share their experience regarding workplace violence with the researcher.

### EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF WOMEN

DISTRICT	EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF WOMEN		
	Organized Sectors	Unorganized Sectors	TOTAL
Sivaganga	4 7.27%	6 10.90%	10 18.18%
Trichy	4 7.27%	7 12.72%	11 20.00%
Salem	2 3.63%	8 14.54%	10 18.18%
Madurai	2 3.63%	4 7.27%	6 10.90%
Nilgiris	2 3.63%	5 9.09%	7 12.72%
Tirunelveli	8 3.63%	9 16.36%	11 20.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b> <b>29.09%</b>	<b>39</b> <b>70.90%</b>	<b>55</b> <b>100.00%</b>

Majority of 71% of respondents were employed in unorganized sectors. This general trend is also observed in the unorganized sectors and 29% of the respondents were employed in organized sectors. Women in India are mostly employed in sample of respondents.

### RESPONDENTS OPINION ABOUT THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

DISTRICT	WORKING ENVIRONMENT			TOTAL
	Sexual Abuse	Feel Jealous	Miss understanding	
Sivaganga	2 3.63%	1 1.81%	3 5.45%	6 10.90%
Trichy	1 1.81%	3 5.45%	5 9.09%	9 16.36%
Salem	4 7.27%	3 5.45%	5 9.09%	12 21.81%
Madurai	0 0.00%	1 1.81%	4 7.27%	5 9.09%
Nilgiris	4 7.27%	2 3.63%	7 12.72%	13 23.63%
Tirunelveli	2 3.63%	0 0.00%	3 5.45%	5 9.09%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b> <b>23.63%</b>	<b>10</b> <b>18.18%</b>	<b>32</b> <b>58.18%</b>	<b>55</b> <b>100.00%</b>

The above table shows that more than half (58%) of the respondents are not having mutual understanding with one another in workplace, 24% of the respondents have under gone sexual abuse in workplace and 18% of the respondents are feeling jealous with one another in the workplace. The

respondents are willing to reveal their opinion about jealous feel and miss understanding but not about sexual abuse. The researcher adopted different strategies to collect the real information from the respondents.

**TYPES OF VIOLENCE FACED BY WOMEN IN THE WORK PLACE**

DISTRICT	TYPES OF VIOLENCE			
	Physical Violence	Psychological Violence	Economic Violence	Social Violence
Sivaganga	11 20%	7 12.72%	6 10.90%	7 12.72%
Trichy	10 18.18%	4 7.27%	5 9.09%	6 10.90%
Salem	8 14.54%	9 16.36%	7 12.72%	4 7.27%
Madurai	7 12.72%	11 20%	8 14.54%	9 16.36%
Nilgiris	10 18.18%	8 14.54%	7 12.72%	6 10.90%
Tirunelveli	6 10.90%	5 9.09%	5 9.09%	4 7.27%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b> <b>94.54%</b>	<b>44</b> <b>80%</b>	<b>38</b> <b>69.09%</b>	<b>36</b> <b>65.45%</b>

(Multiple responses)

It is found that frequent incidence of violence in the work place. Women are facing all forms of violence in the work place. 95% of the respondents have faced physical violence. 80% of the respondents have reported that they are facing psychological

violence in the work place. 69% and 65% of the respondents have faced economic violence and social violence respectively. All the working women are facing physical, psychological, economic and social violence.

**REASONS FOR VIOLENCE AT WORK PLACE**

DISTRICT	REASONS FOR VIOLENCE AT WORK PLACE				
	Misunderstanding	Caste Discrimination	Feel jealous	Over work load	Total
Sivaganga	0 0.00%	2 3.63%	1 1.81%	3 5.45%	6 10.90%
Trichy	4 7.27%	2 3.63%	1 1.81%	4 7.27%	11 20%
Salem	1	2	4	2	9

	1.81%	3.63%	7.27%	3.63%	16.36%
Madurai	3 6.00%	2 3.63%	4 7.27%	4 7.27%	13 23.63%
Nilgiris	2 3.63%	1 1.81%	3 5.45%	3 5.45%	9 16.36%
Tirunelveli	1 1.81%	2 3.63%	0 0.00%	4 7.27%	7 12.72%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b> <b>20%</b>	<b>11</b> <b>20%</b>	<b>13</b> <b>23.63%</b>	<b>20</b> <b>36.36%</b>	<b>55</b> <b>100.00%</b>

In the perception of the respondents over work load, jealous feeling and misunderstanding with seniors and co-workers are the major reasons for the violence in the workplace. 36% of the respondents were of the opinion that over workload is major cause of violence in the workplace. 24% of the

respondents were of the opinion that feeling jealous is one of the causes for violence in the workplace and 20% of the respondents were of the opinion that misunderstanding and caste discrimination is another cause for violence.

### PERPETRATION VIOLENCE IN WORKPLACE

DISTRICT	PERPETRATION VIOLENCE			
	Higher Authority	Co-workers	Subordinate	Total
Sivaganga	7 12.72%	2 3.63%	3 5.45%	12 21.81%
Trichy	4 7.27%	4 7.27%	2 3.63%	10 18.18%
Salem	3 5.45%	2 3.63%	4 7.27%	9 16.36%
Madurai	4 7.27%	3 5.45%	3 5.45%	10 18.18%
Nilgiris	2 3.63%	2 3.63%	2 3.63%	6 10.90%
Tirunelveli	1 1.81%	5 9.09%	2 3.63%	8 14.54%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b> <b>38.18%</b>	<b>18</b> <b>32.72%</b>	<b>16</b> <b>29.09%</b>	<b>55</b> <b>100.00%</b>

The respondents have stated that they face violence not only by the superiors but also by their co-workers they also behave violently towards them. From the above table, it was found that 38% of the respondents encounter violence in the

workplace mostly from higher authority. It was opined that 33% and 29% of the respondents are encountering violence in the workplace from co-workers and subordinates respectively.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF VIOLENCE ON THE RESPONDENTS**

DISTRICT	PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF VIOLENCE					
	Fear	Anxiety	Anger	Tension	Stress	Total
Sivaganga	2 3.63%	1 1.81%	1 1.81%	3 5.45%	1 1.81%	8 14.54%
Trichy	1 1.81%	0 0.00%	1 1.81%	2 3.63%	2 3.63%	6 10.90%
Salem	3 5.45%	1 1.81%	2 3.63%	1 1.81%	1 1.81%	8 14.54%
Madurai	1 1.81%	3 5.45%	1 1.81%	3 5.45%	1 1.81%	9 16.36%
Nilgiris	1 1.81%	1 1.81%	2 3.63%	8 14.54%	2 3.63%	4 25.45%
Tirunelveli	2 3.63%	2 3.63%	3 5.45%	2 3.63%	1 1.81%	10 18.18%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b> <b>18.18%</b>	<b>8</b> <b>14.54%</b>	<b>10</b> <b>18.18%</b>	<b>19</b> <b>34.54%</b>	<b>8</b> <b>14.54%</b>	<b>55</b> <b>100.00%</b>

In addition to the physical violence, women suffer from the psychological problems also. Understanding psychological impact is of big importance in finding effective ways to support victims in the society. From the above table, it was found that the

majority of 34% of the respondents feeling tension as the impact of violence, 18% of the respondents are feeling fear and anger and the remaining 14% of the respondents are feeling like anxiety and stress as the psychological impact of violence.

**SHARING THE INCIDENCE OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORK PLACE**

DISTRICT	SHARING				TOTAL
	Co-workers	Higher Authority	Union	Family Members	
Sivaganga	6 10.90%	2 3.63%	0 0.00%	1 1.81%	9 16.36%
Trichy	5 9.09%	2 3.63%	0 0.00%	1 1.81%	8 14.54%
Salem	5 9.09%	5 9.09%	1 1.81%	0 0.00%	11 20%
Madurai	5 10.00%	2 3.63%	2 3.63%	1 1.81%	10 18.18%
Nilgiris	4 7.27%	5 9.09%	2 3.63%	2 3.63%	13 23.63%
Tirunelveli	3 5.45%	0 0.00%	1 1.81%	2 3.63%	4 7.27%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b> <b>50.90%</b>	<b>16</b> <b>29.09%</b>	<b>6</b> <b>10.90%</b>	<b>7</b> <b>12.72%</b>	<b>55</b> <b>100.00%</b>

Only colleagues can understand the problems faced by women in a better way than others. From the above table, it is noted that 51% of the respondents depend on their co-workers whenever they are in distress. A section of 29% and 1% of the respondents felt that they report their problems to the higher authority and their union in the organization respectively and the remaining 7% of the respondents are depend on their family members.

#### VIII. FINDINGS

- One third of the respondents are employed in unorganized sectors .Women in India is mostly employed in unorganized sectors.
- It is find out that more than half of the respondents are not having mutual understanding with one another in workplace.
- Sexual harassment is a major problem faced by the women in the workplace.
- It is noted that a significant number of respondents are working more than office hours in a day. The respondents reported that more workload, responsibilities and compulsion by employers of the respondents are the reasons for staying in workplace for longer hours.
- It is noted that the respondents are affected psychologically by the violence in the workplace.
- It is found that a significant number of women felt that returning home in late hours has resulted in misunderstanding between them and others in the family especially their husband.
- It is noticeable fact that Working women were not allowed to express their office tensions at home.
- It is opined that the stress faced by the respondents was responsible for many of their physical ailments.
- It is found that a significant number of respondents depend on their co-workers whenever they are in distress.

#### IX. CONCLUSION

In India, women are way ahead of their counterparts elsewhere in the matter of social legislation. But the implementation

of laws granting rights to women has been so slow, lopsided and haphazard that socially, economically and politically women are kept far behind men. Indian women, thus, have been described as the underdogs of society where, in theory the law of equality exists, and women are considered to be on a par with their male counterparts, but in actual reality, men remain powerful and thrive at the expense of women.

In recent years, on the one hand, incidents of aggressive violence against women are reported to be escalating alarmingly in our country, and this in itself is a sufficient cause for increased concern, and on the other hand, awareness of rights among women has increased, leading to the rise of feminist movement, resulting in a new sensitivity to all forms of subjugation of women by men.

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