

A STUDY ABOUT COMPLIANCE OF VOLUNTARY DISCLOSURE UNDER SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN IN CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REPORT OF COMPANIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BHARUCH DISTRICT

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Abstract - In present era, sexual harassment is a topic of interest and also area of concern for the society. Sexual harassment at a workplace is taken into account violation of women's right to equality, life and liberty. It tends to change workplace environment to an insecure and spiteful, which discourage women's participation in work, thereby adversely affecting their social and economic empowerment and the goal of inclusive growth. So in order to improve women's position in corporate world SEBI has introduced new clause as per this new clause, it is now mandatory for companies to issue a statement that they need to comply with provisions concerning to the constitution of the Internal Complaints Committee under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. So this research paper aims to analyse the compliance of disclosure under sexual harassment of women in corporate governance report of companies with special reference to Bharuch district. Data are collected from selected companies' annual reports available from websites, journal and magazines. Companies are selected as per convenience sampling.

Key Words: Corporate governance, SEBI, Sexual harassment, Workplace, Women.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the improvement in access to education and employment millions of the women are entering into the country's workforce. As women's steps out from homes to male dominating society, that was largely not accepted by society, in this scenario women's faces sexual harassment at workplaces on daily basis. Sexual Harassment is uninvited verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature that's rigorous or prevalent and negatively affects working conditions or creates a discouraging work environment. Workplace defined in 3C of Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964 for women employed in the government it defines as "any department, organization, undertaking, establishment, enterprise, institution, office, branch or unit established, owned, controlled, funded wholly or substantially by the central government."

Sexual harassment in workplace is a matter of serious concern as women's involvement in works unsafe and also affects their right to work with dignity. India is a country which is gifted with a young workforce population which is combined with skills, training, manpower planning and the development of a workplace culture that ensures a safe and violence-free environment, India should be able to tackle its great human potential and contribute to the well-being of families, as well as to the inclusive economic growth of the country. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 was enacted to make sure safe working spaces for women or say ladies and to create facilitate work environments that respect women's right to equality of status and opportunity. In order to ensure safe workplace for women and to increase in transparency, section 134 of the companies Act, 2013 which states that disclosures to be made by companies as part of financial statements and directors reports. Disclosure of compliance with sexual harassment of women at workplace as per (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 in corporate governance report and also disclosure of number of complaints received and disposed off during the reporting period.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A research study was conducted on "An Overview of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace in India: An Analytical Study" (2017) by Rouf Ahmad Bhat, Prof. Dr Anita Deshpande. The aim of the study was to highlight the causes that tend to sexual harassment of women at workplace, Investigate and explore the available data that show the rise and decline in sexual harassment and also to make some suggestions that address the incidents of sexual harassment of women at workplace. The data for this study was deriving from both primary and secondary sources, analysis were done by using particular research method and techniques. The results from the research however indicated that in India sexual harassment is still prevalent in

the workplace despite attempts to eradicate it. Finally, the study recommended that the need of hour is to take a close look over the issue and provide the preventive measures that could better assess the situation.

Pringle (1989) in their study found that its men, who predate women at workplace which leads to trauma. Stanko (1988) asserted that larger the number of male employees more the possibilities of sexual harassment but smaller number of men also doesn't reduce a female's vulnerability. Di Tomaso (1989) aptly observed that many a times complaints of sexual harassment are taken lightly because they are implicitly attributed to women's inability to cope with work place pressure.

Thomas and Kitzinger (1994) a majority of harassment cases go undisclosed and unreported at workplaces. Collinson and Collinson (1996) also studied the women's strategies in response to sexual harassment at workplace. Various case studies mentioned in this paper it was concluded that it was a woman's responsibility to handle sexual harassment at work place. Men tend to harass women in order to marginalize them. It becomes easier for hierarchical powers to marginalize and harass women by not letting them unite. When they resist they are labelled. They constantly attempt to create a way of competition amongst women managers in order to that they never come forward for mutual support.

A study by Gilbert, Guerrier and Guy (1998) on "Sexual harassment Issues in Hospitality Industry, International Journal of Contemporary hospitality management" studied sexual harassment and selling of sexuality in hospitality industry. They argued that every organization wants motivated and efficient employees; therefore, it is the responsibility of organizations to safeguard them occurrences of sexual harassment. Organizations shouldn't merely focus on the mechanisms to deal with instances of Sexual harassment they should also own the preventive responsibility.

A research study conducted by Muller, Coster and Estes (2001) on "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: Unanticipated Consequences of Modern Social control in Organizations, Work and Occupations" studied causes and consequences of workplace sexual harassment Victimization. In order to find the relationship between sexual harassment and work outcomes least square regression and logit outcomes of data collected through questionnaire in a telecom organization was analyzed. The paper stresses that "Sexual harassment is real and its effects are real." Overall it has founded that environmental non tolerance of sexual harassment and general organizational context go hand in hand to reduce sexual harassment victimization of men and women.

A research study conducted by Abeysekera,(2008) "Motivations behind Human Capital disclosures in Annual reports, Accounting Forum" discussed in his study motivations behind voluntary disclosures based on Human Capital. His study states that voluntary employee disclosers in the annual reports of top 30 companies of Srilanka. Content Analysis was used to extract data related to employees which was followed by 11 case study interviews each representing a specific sector in the sample selected through a semi-structured questionnaire. The interview pattern in the questionnaire represented the content analysis coding framework which has six classes viz. Employee relations, measurement, training and development, entrepreneurial skills, employee welfare, equity issues and workplace safety. These interviews were fixed up with people from senior management which helped in understanding the motivations behind these disclosure practices of firms. These disclosures helped these firms in reducing the tensions between firms and their constituents to build further human capital.

3. OBJECTIVES

This research paper seeks to understand the compliance of voluntary disclosure under sexual harassment of women in corporate governance report of five years in corporate governance report and also number of complaints of sexual harassment registered in corporate governance report in selected companies with special reference to Bharuch district after it is made mandatory for listed companies to disclose sexual harassment of women in corporate governance reports.

4. SAMPLE SIZE AND COLLECTION OF THE DATA

This research paper seeks to understand the compliance of voluntary disclosure under sexual harassment of women and number of complaints in corporate governance report of five years in selected companies with special reference to Bharuch district. The sample comprises of 20 selected listed companies and is from different sectors such as pharmaceuticals, food processing, glass manufacturing, chemical manufacturing etc., located in Bharuch district as per convenience and data availability. The research is based on the secondary data. Present study has considered the duration of Financial Year from 2014-15 to 2018-19. All data and information has collected from annual report of companies, journal available on companies' websites.

5. HYPOTHESIS:

H1₀: Companies does not show or disclosure of number of complaints of Sexual harassment.

H1₁: Companies shows or disclosure of number of complaints of Sexual harassment.

6. INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS:

This section of research paper comprises of compliance of disclosure under sexual harassment of women in corporate governance report of financial year from 2014-15 to 2018-19 of companies with special reference to Bharuch district. For this purpose, various companies' corporate governance report is thoroughly viewed that they need to compiled with provisions concerning to the constitution of the Internal Complaints Committee under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. The charts given below shows compliance of voluntary disclosure of sexual harassment of women of 20 companies in 5 years and number of complaints in 2018-19.

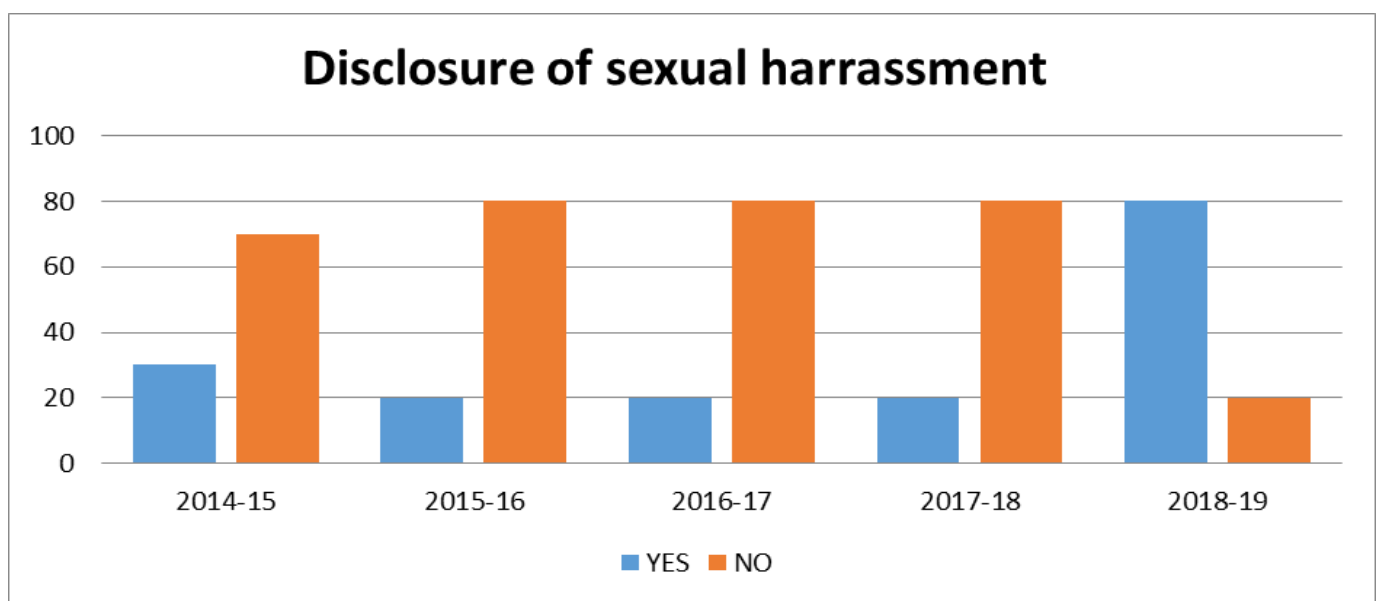


Chart -1: Disclosure of Sexual Harrassment by companies

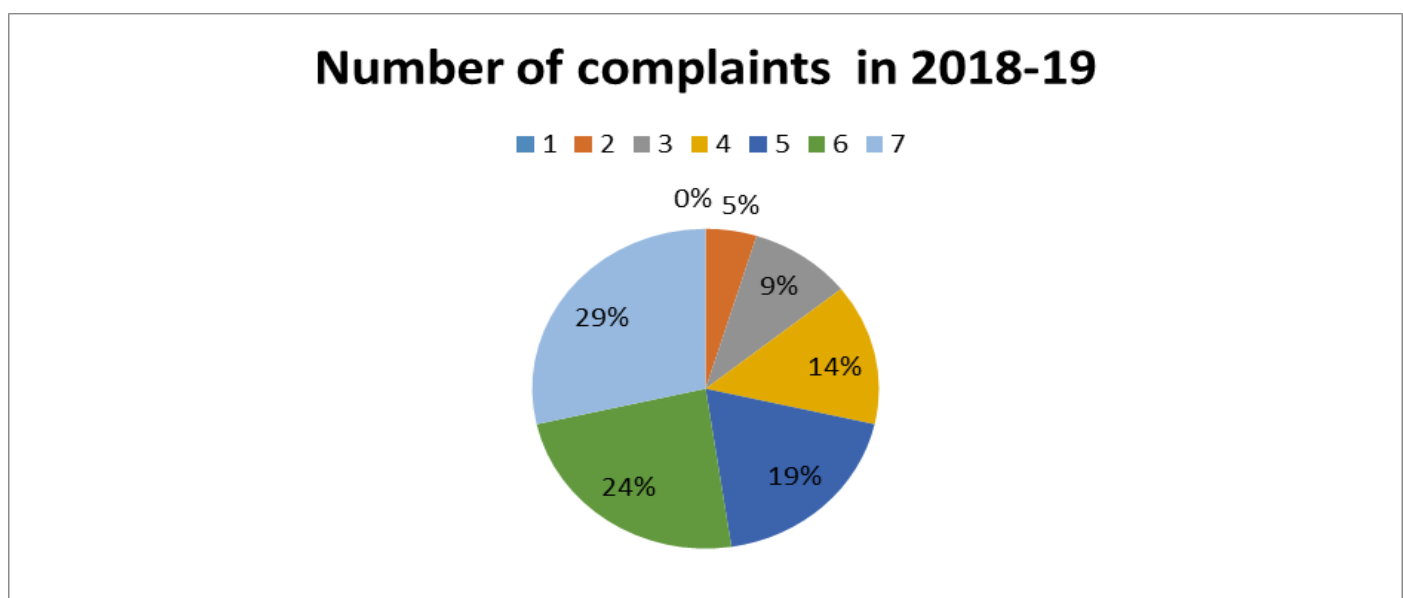


Chart -2: Number of complaints filled in 2018-19

7. CONCLUSIONS

This research paper presents compliance of disclosure under sexual harassment of women in corporate governance report of financial year from 2014-2015 to 2018-19 of 20 companies with special reference to Bharuch district. From the interpretation and analysis of various companies' annual reports it is concluded that there is increase i.e. from 30% in 2014-15, 20% in 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18 to 80% in 2018-19 in voluntary disclosure of sexual harassment of women.

It is also concluded that in year 2018-19 almost all companies' follows provisions related to disclosure under sexual harassment of women in their corporate governance report but still 3 listed companies i.e. LXS, cadila and indofil are lagging behind in voluntary disclosure of sexual harassment of women. This research paper also showed number of complaints filed in 2018-19. So the research paper found that although SEBI made it mandatory for listed companies to disclose provision related sexual harassment of women there are companies which are not compiling with this provision. So research paper reached to a conclusion that most of the listed companies have followed the provision of disclosure of sexual harassment of women. There's no doubt about the fact that India's policy makers are very serious about the issues related to women empowerment, safety and security of women employees at workplace by coming up with legislations mandating companies to disclose harassment complaints & their redressal.

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