

Sexual Harassment of Women in Selected Local Airlines in Lagos, Nigeria: An Analysis of the ILO Sexual Harassment Indicators

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Abstract. Sexual harassment at the workplace is one of the most frequent and pervasive forms of violence against women. The study explores the prevalence of the ILO sexual harassment indicators; determine the extent of reported cases of sexual harassment by victims to the management of their organizations; and examines the common challenges with the Nigeria statutory labour laws on sexual harassment. The study focused on female employees of twelve (12) airlines in Lagos, who were randomly selected and sampled with open and close-ended questionnaire. One hundred and nine (109) questionnaires properly filled were analysed. An in-depth unstructured interview was also conducted with five other female employees in each of these airlines. The results show a significant prevalence of multiple forms of sexual harassment among the respondents. There is no provision in the Nigeria Labour Law that specifically addresses sexual harassment at the workplace. Following this, the study recommends that employees who have been harassed should avoid the culture of keeping silent or playing along. Employers of labour should also keep a zero tolerance policy for sexual harassment at the workplace. Government should equally enact stringent labour laws to prevent sexual harassment. Civil Society Organisations should embark on advocacy and sensitization of the public on the effect of sexual harassment of women in workplace.

Keywords: Sexual Harassment, Women, Local Airlines, Analysis, ILO Sexual Harassment Indicators.

1. Introduction

Feminist movements originated in the 18th Century England. But by the 20th Century, the myriad of women agitations and protests spurred the liberal feminist movements in the United States, France and other parts of Europe (Afonja 2005). Initially they were concerned with gender discrimination

and the nature of equality. These liberal feminist movements channeled their campaign on concrete and pragmatic issues and demanded for women to be given opportunities to participate in power structure that will ultimately give women equal access to positions that men had traditionally dominated. By so doing, they proposed that men and women should be given equal opportunities in education, politics and work. It was on the strength of their campaign against gender discrimination that they ambitiously conceived sex discrimination at the workplace as a form of sexual harassment (Yusuff 2013). Following this, women of all ages in formal employment and professions were swept up in debates on what constitute physical and verbal conducts that suggest sexual harassment at the workplace. In contrast to the pragmatic approach of the liberal feminist movements, the conscious goal of radical feminist movements in North America in the mid 1970s, was to restructure the societal institutions and replace patriarchy, which they claimed have served to keep women in subjection to men and support sex discrimination and sexual harassment (Afroditi 2009). Over and above this, the radical feminist movements blamed sexual exploitation of women on men and ultimately intensified campaign against sexual harassment as a form of violence and a component part of human rights abuse against the dignity of women. The broad effects of this campaign nevertheless, laid a valid and structural foundation for the demand for nonverbal/visual conducts like staring lustfully/sexual suggestive look, winking, licking lips, whistling and throwing kisses to be addressed as part of continuum of offensive and unacceptable conducts of sexual harassment against women at the workplace. Their argument is that sexual harassment could be visual and can occur without physical touching or verbal statement. Yet, overtime, the International Labor Organisation (ILO) Committee of Experts on Application of Convention and Resolution on Sexual Harassment adopted the nonverbal/visual conducts as a component part of conducts that suggest sexual

harassment and finally criminalized them as sexual harassment and offences against the dignity of women at the workplace.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Sexual Harassment Index Report of the Committee of Experts on Application of Convention and Resolution on Sexual Harassment notes that sexual harassment at the workplace encompasses physical, verbal and nonverbal/visual conducts, which include unsolicited, unwarranted and unwanted words, deeds, actions, gestures and symbols. It covers a wide range of offensive behaviours such as posting suggestive photographs/pornographic pictures/messages, telling sexual jokes, making sexual innuendos, use of vulgar languages, discussing sexual activities, commenting on physical attributes, use of sexual sign like whistling, winking, licking lips, using demeaning, inappropriate and uncomplimentary terms such as “babes,” physical grabbing or pinching and other unsolicited, unwarranted or offensive touching such as touching/fondling breast, touching buttocks, sexual coercion, romancing or conduct such as rape (ILO, 2010). According to the United States of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC 2008), “sexual harassment is an “unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favour and other physical, verbal or nonverbal/visual, conduct of sexual nature, which when submitted to or rejected could reasonably interfere with the victim’s work performance or create a hostile, intimidating, traumatic or offensive working environment”.

Sexual harassment is generally a component part of human rights abuse, assault and violence against women (Heise 1993). It leaves the victim with a traumatic, hostile or intimidating working environment. This in fact shows that work could become hostile in a situation where sexual advance, when submitted to or rejected. Hence, this could reasonably interfere with the victim’s work performance or create a tyrannical, intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment (EEOC 2008). Sexual harassment is one of the most prevalent and pervasive forms of violence against women at the workplace. It is a form of violence against women because it is often associated with all manner of sexual conducts, hostility, assault and abuse (Weiss 2010). Especially, when sexual advance is rejected this could lead to unwarranted hostility, threat, intimidation, bullying or coercion from the perpetrator.

Sexual harassment is rarely a onetime incident but a repeated, if not frequent occurrence in some cases. When it becomes frequent, it may leave the victim with an intimidating, hostile or traumatic working environment, especially manifesting in

physical, mental, health and psychological trauma (Heise, 1993). It could also create feelings of disorientation, disenchantment, despair, powerlessness and worthlessness (Fitzgerald 1993). When this happens, work could become tyrannical especially because sexual harassment could penetrate to the core of the victim’s personality as shame and social stigma (ILO, 2010). Sexual harassment is generally a component part of inhuman degrading treatment, assault and violence against women. Though men also suffer incidents of sexual harassment at the workplace but women are more likely victims. There are also possibilities of same sex sexual harassment, however.

Sexual harassment at the workplace is one of the most pervasive yet least recognised forms of violence against women. The reason is because of the refusal of “victims” to report or disclose their experience even when they sulk and live with the trauma and other psychological effects. Several studies indicate that the refusal of “victims” to report or disclose incidents of sexual harassment at workplaces is because of the social stigma and shame that are associated with the “assault” (Vidaal and Petrak 2007, Gannon et al 2008). That most often, the consequences of reporting or disclosing sexual harassment at the workplace are too severe to potentially damage professional reputation and career of the victim, including loss of job or delay in promotion. It could also lead to humiliation and inevitably, the victim may face a choice between his/her work and self- esteem (Weiss 2010, ITUC 2008). Despite the fact that victims are often more reluctant to report or disclose their experience like other forms of physical assaults and violence, it is still a very serious problem of inhuman treatment, assault and violence against women (Heise 1993).

Against this background, this paper shall attempt to provide a social discourse of the phenomenon of sexual harassment at the workplace with special emphasis on female employees (cabin crews, ticketing officers and admin. staff) of twelve (12) local airlines operating in the domestic wing of the Muritala Mohammed Airport, Lagos. This is because women are more likely victims of sexual harassment at workplace. So also, they are more likely than men to define broader range of conducts as sexual harassment (Rotundo, et al. 2001).. This study shall also provide relevant industrial relations theory to diagnose and explain work, and sexual harassment as a form of violence against women at the workplace, which could reasonably create feelings of powerlessness, disenchantment, tyranny, traumatic and hostile working environment when submitted to or rejected. Above all, specific objectives of this study shall include the followings:

- To explore the prevalence of the ILO checklist of conducts that suggest sexual harassment that the women had experienced at workplace.
- To determine if the women have ever reported incident of sexual harassment at the workplace to the management of their organisation.
- To examine the challenges with the Nigeria statutory labour laws on sexual harassment at the workplace.

2. Theoretical Framework

Since the wake of the rapid and profound social changes of the 20th Century industrial capitalism, and the emergence of feminist movements around the world, theories to diagnose and explain work and sexual harassment of women at the workplace have attracted political, social and academic attentions. Yet, there appears to be contentious debate among scholars concerning how sexual harassment should be defined within the academic literature and the theoretical framework that best explains it (Afroditi, et al. 2009). These issues play a fundamental role in how theories on sexual harassment are conceptualized and designed to diagnose and explain it as violence against women at the workplace. Especially, as domestic violence against women is assuming serious global concern, much of the discussions about violence against women in formal employment centres around the various ways in which women are sexually harassed at work places and how women are fast losing control over their sexual life. Following this, streams of industrial relations theories have provided both subtle and overt explanations of sexual harassment of women at the workplace and aver that it could reasonably create tyranny, traumatic and hostile working environment whether submitted to or rejected.

The novel conceptualisation of tyranny of work to explain the abusive work relationship like sexual harassment and hostile working environment is by all means a pioneer work of Karl Marx (1818-1883). In his classical work: *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscript* published in 1844 (Rinehart 1975), Marx used the word tyranny of work to describe the hostile working environment produced by alienation and sexual harassment, especially when submitted to or rejected by the victim. Marx was among the first to engage the theory of alienation to explain the abusive work relationship and tyranny of work, rather than constructing a definite theory of sexual harassment. Following this, we propose that the same theory of alienation used in explaining tyranny of work can also be used to explain sexual harassment as sexual assault and exploitation. Marx used the term

“tyranny and exploitation” in his substantive contribution to outline a framework for the theory of alienation because the alienation paradigm generally focuses on explaining workplace exploitation (be it material or sexual exploitation). The implication is that the conception and application of alienation is relevant to the study of sexual harassment of women because it helps to locate sexual harassment in a wider social context of Marxist feminist perspective of exploitation and provide a parallel understanding of the tyranny of work that will consequently lead to broader platform for dealing with the question of sexual exploitation as a form of assault, which could interfere with the victim’s work performance or create shame, frustration and disenchantment at work.

Alienation therefore occurs in the context of abusive work relationship and unequal power where the perpetrators use their positions to oppress, extort and exploit the victim sexually. This underscore the fact that a workplace is often structured and defined by asymmetric relations derived from interaction that make it easier for male bosses, colleagues (and even clients) to use power vested on their position to exploit, and extort sexual gratification from female employees. The female employees, in an attempt to secure their job and avoid unwarranted hostility, threat, intimidation, bullying or coercion, “unwillingly” submit themselves to sexual advances of their male bosses, colleagues (or clients). The resultant effect is broadly a condition of objective powerlessness where the victims express behaviourally their frustration and disenchantment with work. This is because sexual harassment penetrates to the core of the victim’s personality. It debases the victim and produces all forms of social stigma and feelings of frustration, powerlessness, shame, despair and worthlessness (Appelbaun et al., 2007). Alienation also manifests in economic realities of labour with warnings from employers such as: “get pregnant and get sacked.” In the airline industry, it is implicitly or explicitly a contractual term or condition for female employees at the point of recruitment. This means that the female employees should either delay marriage or live on contraceptives to avoid pregnancy, in obedience to the terms and conditions of their employment. The obvious implication of this warning is that women do not seem to have control over their sexual life! Marx, who wrote a classic statement on alienation and workplace exploitation, argues that when oppression in materialistic society is overcome, gender oppression and exploitation will also vanish. This is so because as far as industrial capitalism compels women to engage in paid employment for self actualisation and for material needs, the product of their labour will continue to

produce wealth for the employer and exploitation, oppression, hostile or offensives work environment for the victims of sexual harassment (Rinehart 1975). What this suggests is that sexual harassment at the workplace is an “inherent and inevitable” consequence of industrial capitalism primarily because industrial capitalism is by nature oppressive in every way! This is so because sexual harassment at the workplace is a product of economic relations arising from the women’s participation in the labour market.

3. Research Methodology

Lagos State is situated along the Nigerian southwestern coastline. The state is Nigeria’s and indeed, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Sub-Saharan Africa’s economic and commercial hub, attracting operation of several business organisations due to its geographical location and economic potentials. The study was conducted among female employees (cabin crews, ticketing officers and Admin staff) of twelve (12) airlines operating at the domestic wing of the Muritala Mohammed Airport, Lagos. Female employees of these organisations were purposively selected for this study because women are more likely than men to define a much broader range of conducts as sexual harassment (Rotundo, et al. 2001). Quota sampling method was employed to draw respondents from these airlines. The questionnaire used for the study was drawn to reflect the ILO checklist of indicators or conducts that suggests sexual harassment of women at the workplace. In all, one hundred and twenty (120) female respondents were randomly selected and sampled with open and close-ended questionnaires. Out of this figure, one hundred and nine (109) representing 91.0% of the questionnaires properly filled and returned were analysed for the study. An in-depth unstructured interview (IDI) was also conducted with five other female employees in each of these airlines. These sets of respondents were not part of those sampled with questionnaires. The in-depth unstructured interview (IDI) questions were not arranged as a fixed questionnaire. Answers to the questions were also gently probed, only where necessary, to give respondents a moment to reflect and gather their thoughts for clearer responses and information. Above all, the field work was conducted in a way that assured the privacy of identity and information provided by the respondents. The data was analysed with inferential and descriptive statistics presented in frequency tables with the aid of statistical package of the social sciences (SPSS).

4. Results and Discussion

Prevalence of the ILO Checklist of Indicators of Conducts that Suggest Sexual Harassment

Since domestic violence against women has assumed global concern, sexual harassment of women in the workplace has also gained research attention. Although there has been a valuable efforts to develop an all inclusive index of indicators or conducts that suggest sexual harassment, the concerted effort to achieve this had been the novel International Labour Organisation (ILO) checklist of indicators of conducts that suggest sexual harassment, which has been empirically tested in some studies. Yet, some studies (Bello, 2016; Adenugba and Ilupeju 2012; Olufayo,2011; Noah 2008) on prevalence of sexual harassment have conceptualized and designed few conducts that suggests sexual harassment at workplace. While we recognise that such efforts have contributed positively to knowledge, we also believe that the tendency to jettison the all-inclusive International Labour Organisation (ILO) checklist of indicators of conducts that suggest sexual harassment will result in some important knowledge gaps because studies have shown that women are more likely than men to define a more broader range of conducts as sexual harassment (Rotundo, et al. 2001). And because the prevalence and frequency of sexual harassment is higher for women, so also is their multiple experiences of conducts that suggest sexual harassment during their working lives (Afroditi et al 2009; Lucero et al, 2006). Hence, for this study however, we conceptualized and adopted the ILO checklist of sexual harassment as an instrument to measure the prevalence of individual based experiences of the women’s (i.e,respondent’s) sexual harassment at the workplace. This sexual harassment checklist and indicators are key to understanding the women’s multiple experiences of conducts that suggest prevalence of sexual harassment at workplaces, especially when sexual harassment at the workplace is conceptualized as unwanted sexual advances that could reasonably lead to intimidating, hostile or traumatic working environment when submitted to or rejected. It is an assault and generally a component part of violence and human rights abuse against women (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2008).

The composition of data on Table 1 shows clearly that the most severe of the physical forms of sexual harassment that the respondents had significantly experienced are sexual coercion/threat from non-submission to love advances (89.9%), unsolicited Sexual related gesture/enticement in cash or kind (88.0%), unsolicited sexual related invitation with complimentary cards(79.8%), unwanted patting at the back (70.6%), unwanted touching/fondle of breast (65.1%), unwanted touching/patting of buttocks (62.4%) while the least are unwanted Pecking/Kisses (48.6%), unwanted hugging (46.8%) and posting of pornographic/sexual photos/messages (30.3%)

Table 1: Distribution Based on the Prevalence of the ILO checklist of Conducts that Suggests Sexual Harassment that the Women had Experienced at Workplace

ILO Index of Conducts that suggest Sexual Harassment	Respondents Experience	
	No	%
<u>Physical Conducts</u>		
Unwanted Hugging	51	46.8%
Unwanted touching/ patting of buttocks	68	62.4%
Unwanted Pecking / Kisses	53	48.6%
Unwanted touching/fondle of breast	71	65.1%
Posting of Pornographic/Sexual photos/messages	33	30.3%
Unwanted Patting at the back	77	70.6%
Sexual coercion/ threat for non-submission to love advances	98	89.9%
Unsolicited Sexual related gesture/enticement in cash or kind	96	88.0%
Unsolicited sexual related invitation with complimentary cards	87	79.8%
Rape/attempted rape	-	-
<u>Verbal Conducts</u>		
Sexual Comments about Physical attributes	73	67.0%
using inappropriate and uncomplimentary terms such as “babes,”	56	51.4%
Sexual jokes / teasing	67	61.5%
Dating related pressure for drink, lunch or dinner.	97	89.0%
<u>Nonverbal/ visual conducts</u>		
Staring lustfully /Sexually suggestive look	105	96.3%
Throwing Kisses	55	50.5%
Sexual Sign like winkling	62	57.0%
Sexual sign like licking lips	44	40.4%
Sexual sign like whistling	25	23.0%

Also, the most severe of the verbal forms of sexual harassment that the respondents had significantly experienced are dating related pressure for drink, lunch or dinner (89.0%), sexual comments about physical attributes (67.0%) sexual jokes/teasing (61.5%), while the least incident rate of verbal forms of sexual harassment that the respondents had experienced is using inappropriate and uncomplimentary terms such as “babes,” (51.4%)

Above all, the most severe of the nonverbal/visual forms of sexual harassment that the respondents had significantly experienced are staring lustfully/sexually suggestive look (96.3%), sexual sign like winkling (57.0%), throwing Kisses (50.5%), sexual sign like licking lips (40.4%), while the least incident rate of nonverbal/visual forms of sexual harassment that the respondents had experienced is sexual sign like whistling (23.0%). Over and above this finding, the nonverbal/visual component of offensive and unacceptable conducts of sexual harassment could reasonably cause embarrassment and interfere with the victim’s work performance. Reported Incidents of Sexual Harassment by Female Employees to the management of their Organisations

According to Chapter 25 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State (2011) there is credible evidence of zero tolerance of the law to sexual harassment. Information concerning whether respondents reported an incidence of sexual harassment at the workplace to the management is very important for assessing whether the management of the airline have an appropriate policy in place for preventing sexual harassment against women in the workplace. The composition of data on Table 2 shows that a profound majority (97.2%) of the respondents, though had experienced physical, verbal and nonverbal/visual conducts that suggest sexual harassment yet did not report the matter to the management while only 2.8% indicated that they did.

Table 2: Distribution Based on Whether Respondents have ever Reported an Incident of Sexual Harassment Experienced at the workplace to the Management.

Whether Sexual Harassment was Reported to Management	No	%
Yes	03	2.8
No	106	97.2
TOTAL	109	100

Interestingly, the result of the IDI conducted revealed the steps that the women believe should be taken to address the issue of sexual harassment. “Sexual harassment is an inevitable experience of womanhood. Confronting harasser is very challenging. I will rather change my job if I can no longer cope instead of ridiculing myself by reporting the case to the management. I am not sure if my airline has any sexual harassment policy, one

of the IDI respondents states.” The implication of this is that when a woman compromises physical, verbal and nonverbal/visual conducts that suggest sexual harassment, she will have no option than to keep playing the dirty game to keep her job. This is why the fear of losing their jobs for the shame of having obliged the harasser may have reasonably accounted for the reluctance to report their experience of sexual harassment to the

management. Hence, they have no choice other than to play along by compromising their dignity. This of course puts a question mark on the dignity of the women as this is seen as falling short of standard prescribed by the International Labour organization. Willness, et al. (2007) provide explanation for the reluctance of women to report their experience of sexual harassment at their workplaces. According to them, this includes the fact that many still do not recognize that sexual harassment is an actionable offence. Victims may be reluctant to come forward with complaints because of fear that they will not be believed, and their charges will not be taken seriously or that they may be subjected to reprisals and consequently lose their job or promotion.

Besides, the fact that most of the young women see sexual harassment as an “inevitable” experience of womanhood makes it more culturally acceptable to keep silent and not report the case to the management. The reason may be that some of the conducts that suggest sexual harassment are extremely difficult to prove. Especially, issues that are most problematic include whether staring lustfully/sexually suggestive look, throwing Kisses, winking, licking lips and whistling can be reported as sexual harassment? The result of the IDI conducted also reveal that the women’s interpretation and understanding of sexual harassment is also largely a function of their social exposure. This finding confirms Lucero, et al. (2006).report that meaning of sexual harassment is generally socially constructed, depending on social norm, culture, religion, value system and social views of life of the individual making the judgment. They argue further that behavior is more likely to be labeled sexual harassment particularly when there are physical assaults such as patting of buttocks, fondle of breast and attempted rape etc.

5. Challenges with the Nigeria Statutory Labour Laws on Sexual Harassment at the Workplace.

Sexual harassment of women at a place of work is a crime against all known labour laws. It contravenes the women’s fundamental human rights to work. It is a component part of human rights abuse. Because of the nature of the crime, and in order to suppress the crime and bring perpetrators to justice, the response at national and international levels have put in place a number of laws, treaties, conventions, resolutions and protocols dealing with sexual harassment of women. At the international level, there are a number of these measures that Nigeria is signatory to. Prominent among these are: The 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Rights to Life, Dignity and Pursuit of Happiness, which also

include rights to work and to participate freely with dignity in legitimate economic activities to earn a living; and The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 48/104, 1993 on the Declaration of the Elimination of Violence against Women that obligates the state parties to prohibit sexual harassment at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere. The Article 2 of the 1993 United Nations Declaration of Elimination of Violence Against Women, defines sexual harassment “as an offence against the liberty and dignity of women”. The 1995 United Nations Women’s Conference in Beijing also drew up a Platform of Action of objectives and action to advance women’s rights, including outlawing sexual harassment at work. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention (No.111) of Employment and Occupation Convention on Gender Discrimination, though does not explicitly mention sexual harassment, but the concern is that gender discrimination could be addressed as part of continuum of unacceptable conducts of sexual harassment against women at the workplace; the 2003 ILO Campaign for Decent Work enjoins state parties to protect women from sexual harassment and violation of their rights to dignity and other forms of discrimination including health, safety. The Protocol of African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa also obligates the state parties to protect women from all forms of abuse including sexual harassment.

Efforts have also been made to domesticate these legal instruments. At the national level, the Nigeria Sexual Offences Act (2015); the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP Act, 2015); the 1990 Criminal Code Act of the Law of Federation of Nigeria, Section 57 and 58; and the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, provide for the respect and dignity of human persons. The Constitution provides in Section 34(1) that “no person shall be subjected to torture, or any form of harassment, assault or inhuman degrading treatment”. At the state level, the rights of the citizens to the dignity of their human person against sexual harassment, assaults and exploitation are also enshrined in the Criminal Law of Lagos State (2011). In Chapter 25 section 262, the law defines sexual harassment as “unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favours, and other physical, verbal or /nonverbal/ visual, conduct of a sexual nature, which when submitted to or rejected can implicitly or explicitly affects a person’s employment or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment”. The law further states that “any person who sexually harasses another person is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for three (3) years”. Furthermore, Section 257 (b) states that “any person who knowingly send or

attempts to send, by post anything, which encloses an indecent or obscene print, painting, photograph, lithograph, engraving book, card, or article, which has on it, or on its cover, any indecent, obscene, or grossly offensive words, marks, or designs, is guilty of a misdemeanor and is liable to imprisonment for one (1) year.”

Yet, there is no provision in the Nigeria Labour Act (2004) that specifically addresses sexual harassment at the workplace. The closest one is the Employees Compensation Act (2010), which has provision for compensation to a worker in the case of mental stress, especially if the mental stress is as a result of a sudden and unexpected traumatic event arising out of or in the course of the employee’s employment. Especially, the Labour Act does not contain provisions that could make employers of labour liable for exposing women to sexual harassment, if they do not have appropriate policy for handling complaints of sexual harassment. Following the fact that the Nigeria Labour Act (2004) does not specifically address sexual harassment at workplace, this suggests that Nigeria is lagging behind in response to sexual harassment as a problem in the workplace. The problem in the administration of justice in pressing charges against perpetrators of sexual harassment at workplace is that some of the conducts that suggest sexual harassment are extremely difficult to prove. Apart from rape and physical assault, it is difficult if not ridiculous to press for court charges against conducts like staring lustfully/sexually suggestive look, throwing Kisses winking, licking lips and whistling.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Since the wake of the rapid and profound social changes of the 20th Century industrial capitalism, and the emergence of feminist movements around the world, sexual harassment of women at the workplace has increasingly gained global attention as a form of violence and a component part of human rights abuses against women. Especially, much of the discussions about violence against women in formal employment centre around the various ways in which women are sexually harassed and embarrassed at the work place, and how women are fast losing control over their sexual life with warnings from employers of labour such as: “get pregnant and get sacked”

This study was conducted among female employees (cabin crews, ticketing officers and Admin staff) of twelve (12) airlines operating at the domestic wing of the Muritala Mohammed Airport, Lagos. The study conceptualized and adopted the ILO all inclusive sexual harassment index or indicators as instrument to measure the prevalence

of the women sexual harassment at the workplace. Most respondents, who claim to have experienced sexual harassment in this study, indeed experienced multiple forms of harassment. The most severe of the physical forms of sexual harassment experienced are sexual coercion/threat for non-submission to love advances, unsolicited sexual related gesture/enticement in cash or kind, unsolicited sexual related invitation with complimentary cards, unwanted patting at the back, unwanted touching/fondle of breast and unwanted touching/patting of buttocks. The most severe of the verbal forms of sexual harassment experienced are dating related pressure for drink, lunch or dinner, sexual comments about physical attributes, sexual jokes/teasing, using inappropriate and uncomplimentary terms such as “babes,” And above all, the most severe of the nonverbal/visual forms of sexual harassment experienced are staring lustfully/sexually suggestive looks, sexual sign like winking and throwing kisses. The report also shows that men are more frequently the perpetrators, who are usually superior officers, colleagues, subordinates and clients to the organization. Interestingly also, the result of the IDI conducted reveal that the women believe in the option of resigning their job if they can no longer cope, rather than ridiculing themselves by reporting cases of sexual harassment to the management. There is also no provision in the Nigeria Labour Act (2004) that specifically addresses sexual harassment at workplaces and this suggests that Nigeria is lagging behind in recognition and curbing of sexual harassment at the workplace

Though some of the conducts that suggest sexual harassment are very difficult to prove, yet, fighting against all manner of sexual harassment of women at the workplace is all encompassing. This is because preventing sexual harassment at the workplace requires considerable efforts of the government, Civil Society Organizations, employers of labour, management of the organisation, the trade unions and the employees. They are expected to play different but critical roles in the war against sexual harassment. Importantly, government should show more political and legal will to make stringent labour laws to prevent sexual harassment of women in the place of work. Employers of labour should be made liable for exposing women to sexual harassment especially if they do not have appropriate policy for preventing sexual harassment and for handling complaints arising from such. Trade union also have a lot to do in terms of sensitising the employees with behaviours that suggest sexual harassment at the workplace. The union has a duty to work with the employer of labour and management of the organization to adopt a clear

sexual harassment policy for the organization, as well as clear and appropriate procedure of investigating complaints. Especially also, the employees who have been harassed should avoid the culture of keeping silence or playing along. Victim could make an official complain to the management or decide to resolve the matter informally. Above all, Civil Society Organisations also have a lot to do in terms of advocacy and sensitization of the public on the issue of sexual harassment of women in their places of work.

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