

HARASSMENT AWARENESS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM HAVP

Seminar on “Protection Against Harassment of Women At Workplace Act, 2010”

February 24, 2015

District **DG Khan**



TITLE OF THE SEMINAR

Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2010

ACTIVITY DATE

February 24, 2015

VENUE

DG Khan, Arts Council, Dera Ghazi Khan

METHODOLOGIES

Following methodologies were used during the seminar:

- Interactive speeches & Discussion
- Question & Answers

NAME OF SPEAKERS

1. **Mr. Muhammad Saqib Azeez:** Chief Guest (The Commissioner, Dera Ghazi Khan)
2. **Mr. Ch Muhammad Azhar:** (Ex Deputy Commissioner DG Khan, Principal DPS, Dera Ghazi Khan)
3. **Ms. Bushra Khaliq:** (Executive Director, WISE, Lahore)
4. **Dr. Riaz Malik:** (District Coordinator, National Lady Health Workers Program, DG Khan)
5. **Mr. Ahmed Khan Laghari:** (EDO Community Development, DG Khan) Focal Person HAVP
6. **Ms. Sumaira Ansari:** (Chairperson, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Women Crisis Centre, DG Khan)
7. **Ms. Aisha Khan:** (Researcher)
8. **Ms. Javeria Niaz:** (Program Officer, WISE, Lahore)

PROCEEDINGS

Public Seminar was held on February 24, 2015 at DG Khan, Arts Council, Dera Ghazi Khan. More than 400 (male & female) participants from public/ private sector including Police, Rescue 1122, Education, Health, Social Welfare and Labor Departments participated in the seminar. The members from civil society, electronic and press media also attended the event. A large number of working women from different walks of life participated in the seminar.

Mr. Shahid Iqbal: (Manager Programs, WISE, Lahore)

He welcomed the chief guest, guest of honors, guest speakers and all the participants on behalf of Women Ombudsperson and WISE. He started with the introduction of Harassment Awareness Volunteers Program (HAVP); he said that although the law against sexual harassment at workplace "The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010" has been passed in 2010 and according to this law all the organization are bound to adopt the code of conduct against sexual harassment within the 6 months after enactment of this law. The Management of organization



doesn't know how to adopt code of conduct and employees are unaware about remedies under this law. The ratio of reported cases of sexual harassment is quite low as compared to actual number of incidents. So keeping all in view The Office of the Women Ombudsperson has launched "Harassment Awareness Volunteer Program" for the orientation of "The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010". And today's seminar is the continuity of this program.

Ms. Javeria Niaz: (Program Officer, WISE, Lahore)



While giving presentation on the campaign activities in DG Khan, she explained that the Volunteer's training on "The Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010" was organized on 21st of February 2015. Seventeen (17) volunteers (09 male & 08 female) from different parts of district DG Khan attended the capacity building training workshop. The orientation on the issue of Harassment, Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace, Act 2010 were the main topics of the training. After that training, 20 volunteers along with the WISE team members visited 30 workplaces including 10 banks, 05

Hospitals, 05 Colleges, 10 factories/ industries, where the volunteers conducted brief sessions on the topic of the compliance of anti-harassment laws.

Ms. Aisha Khan: (Researcher)



While speaking to the participants, she shared the key findings of her research conducted on the issue of sexual harassment at workplace in district Dera Ghazi Khan. She said that majority of the women have to face sexual harassment at workplaces in DG Khan; its include unwelcome sexual advance, verbal or written communication or physical conduct of a sexual nature, abuse of authority, creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment and retaliation on refusal of sexual favor. She suggested that government should take comprehensive steps for the proper implementation of code of conduct.

Ms. Sumaira Ansari: (Chairperson, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Women Crisis Centre, DG Khan)

While addressing the seminar, she said that women in Pakistan are not encouraged to play their active role in country's development. While further sharing her life experiences she told that there are many social barriers and taboos in the way of women development and empowerment. She gave examples of those who are potential and can become successful entrepreneurs, managers and much more; but due to the stereotype role and responsibilities women are only defined as the home keepers and in fact are not encouraged to get themselves mainstreamed. She highlighted the impact of the laws on the lives and productivity of the working women after enactment of anti harassment law, the social perception regarding women mobility and mainstreaming would be changed and has become better. The women are now able to contribute and play their due role for the economic empowerment as well as country's economic uplift.





Dr. Riaz Malik: (District Coordinator, National Lady Health Workers Program, DG Khan)

He appreciated the efforts of Women Ombudsperson for the promotion of the anti harassment laws. He also highlighted the importance of "Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2010. He said that in the Health Department women employees are in large numbers and now after the enactment of the said law all the women employees, especially lady health workers of health department will feel protected. He assured that all the steps will be taken for the complete compliance of code of conduct in its true spirit and harassment free environment will be ensured to the female employees of health department.

Ms. Bushra Khaliq: (Executive Director, WISE, Lahore)



During her speech for the better understanding of participants she discussed main features of "The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010". She comprehensively told the participants about the role and powers of Women Ombudsperson

Role of Ombudsperson:

1. To receive direct complaints from employees of all organizations
2. To hear appeals where the accused or complainant are not satisfied with decision of Inquiry Committee of an organization
3. Any employee shall have the option to file a complaint either to the inquiry committee or the Ombudsperson

Powers of Ombudsperson:

- Summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person and examining him on oath;
- Compelling the production of evidence; Receiving evidence on affidavits;
- Issuing commission for the examination of witnesses
- entering any premises for the purpose of making any inspection or investigation, enter any premises where the Ombudsperson has a reason to believe that any information relevant to the case may be found;
- The Ombudsperson shall have the same powers as the High Court has to punish any person for its contempt.
- Ombudsperson shall while making the decision on the complaint may impose any of the minor or major penalties

Compliance of Code of Conduct:

She also highlighted the steps for the code of conduct compliance

1. Incorporate of Code of Conduct for "Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2010" as a part of Management, HR and Gender Policies
2. Constitution of 3 Member Standing Inquiry Committee
3. Designation of a competent Authority
4. Display the code of conduct
5. Orientation to all the staff members including support staff





Mr. Ch Muhammad Azhar: (Ex Deputy Commissioner DG Khan, Principal DPS, Dera Ghazi Khan)

While addressing the seminar, he shared his views in details about the social context and the women status. He criticized the male chauvinism, male domination and myths prevails in the society in general. Muhammad Azhar also briefed about those myths while establishing his arguments on the historical context where women were always considered as commodity and not equal to other human beings. He appreciated the existing laws and emphasized on more laws be placed to ensure protection and prevention of women from other forms of violence.

Mr. Muhammad Saqib Azeez: Chief Guest (The Commissioner, Dera Ghazi Khan)

The chief guest of the seminar, Mr. Saqib Aziz shared his views on the law and the status of women in society and at work places. He appreciated the Govt. initiatives regarding protection of women in the province. While explaining more on the social status of women in Pakistan, he said that during the Zia military regime, many laws were introduced which were absolutely contradict to women fundamental rights, since that the progressive people and women groups were fighting to repeal those laws, few of those were later amended but still there is long journey to achieve the target of gender equality.



He opined that the laws cannot become effective if their implementation at all levels will not get ensured. He commented that this is now our collective responsibility to make sure that standing inquiry committees are formed within all organizations and institutions. He also ensured the district administration full support for the implementation of the law at the work places in Dera Ghazi Khan.

At the end of the seminar the certificate distribution ceremony was held and Mr. Muhammad Saqib Aziz, Commissioner, Dera Ghazi Khan presented the certificates among the participants of Volunteer's Training on "The Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010".



Media Coverage:

The local media was engaged throughout the campaign in the district and issued press news with the good coverage of seminar and training of volunteers, and by publishing the promotional message of the Ombudsperson in mainstreamed newspapers.