

Situational Crime Prevention Strategies In The Organizations Towards Women Security and Safety

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Abstract

In India, 25.51 percent of urban and 30.02 percent of rural women are away from home to attend their professional activities (MoSPI, 2018). The activities are time based in India, for instance school, public office, private office, shops, mall and etc. have specific time under their governing act. These timings are not gender based hence, women is not restricted to work on specific time, however as part of culture and customs women are preferred to work in day time. At present, Multinational companies (MNC) are operating IT, ITes, BPO, KPO industries which requires women work forces that work 24/7 (Rai and Anup, 2006). Hence, the security for women is enhanced in above said sectors. The issue of women security is of high concern in recent times with several crimes against women are published through media (Sharma, 2015). Therefore an insight on the issue is need of the hour. The concept of situational crime prevention is highly placed model that will ensure the safety and security of the women in work place. This work is prepared based on the discussions with various industrial human resource, security and safety professionals who are responsible for women employee security and safety. The paper will discuss the issues, good practices and prominent strategies used in security aimed towards the women safety and security with legal provisions.

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Introduction

India being the seventh largest economy (Times of India, 2019) and second most populous country in world, have emerged as potential job market of the universe. The women participation is inevitable in work force across the world. Last, three decades, women have joined work force of India including the private organization to support for family and national economy. According to Indian Factory Act (1948) women employee should not work beyond 7 pm and Tamil Nadu state rules are permitting until 10 pm. After emergence of LPG (liberalization, privatization, and globalization) several foreign companies have invested in business which

require a huge work force for their business operations. Women work force were recruited by many organization to perform duties 24/7. When an organization operates 24/7, they must ensure safety and security of their employee's from home to office and vice-versa. This is taken care by trained professional security work force with legal compliances, ensuring safety at workplace. Ms. Michelle Bachelet (2018), first woman Special Envoy to the UN Secretary General, advocated for creating an atmosphere conducive to increased participation of women, positively encouraging and supporting them since she took charge.

Legal support for Women safety and security

The safety and security of workers are mandated by the law, therefore it is liability of the employer to secure its staff. Some important law covering the safety and security of the employees are as follows.

Factories Act 1948 Sec 66 (1) b- Working Time for women Employees, state government provided conditional based exception to commercial establishments like media, hotels, hospitality and service sectors. Those conditions are like transportation, safe workplace, safe transportation in late hours, etc.

Vishaka committee- Guidelines and norms laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Vishaka and Others Vs. State of Rajasthan and Others (JT 1997 (7) SC 384), which defines sexual harassment, prevention measurements and guidelines given to government and non-governmental organizations.

Sexual Harassment at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013- The POSH Act mandates that an employer should create a safe workplace environment for every women employee.

Common strategies to reduce crime opportunities

The following are the strategies that are adopted by the organisations and recommended by the researchers in view of women safety and security in work place and during transportations. These practices are viable strategies for reducing the crime against women and will ensure reporting behaviour among the victimised.

Providing accommodations for outstation employees – Many organizations are providing accommodations for female employee, who join their organisation from outstations. These accommodations were audited by the security head of organization frequently on the reference and relevance to risk and crime opportunities. Accommodation is a service; which is maintained by organization with clear policy and procedures.

Providing self-defence Training- training on self-defence will create confidence among the women employees. Physical training from various martial art professionals who show

demonstration on how to handle potential criminals alone. Carrying self-defence equipment like pepper spray and its operation methods are elucidated during training.

Creating situational awareness among women employees – Security Awareness training is mandatory for all employee who joins in the organization. In this training security professional will share the details of policy, procedures and process related to women’s security and safety at work place to every employee. This awareness training will be of great help during an unforeseen situation.

Provides vehicle for pick and Drop- As per legal guidance, every organization should provide safe travel arrangements for women who deliver duties after 7 pm. State rules give relaxation up to 9 pm. However, organizations should create policy on pick up and drop, which consist of following best practices

- (i) Male employee should be picked up first
- (ii) Female should be dropped first
- (iii) Security can be an escort in the vehicle during odd hours and
- (iv) Report to security, if any violation is experienced or attended by a colleague, they also collect regular feedback on drivers and escort security from every women employee for identifying any service laps or policy violation etc.

Creating whistle blower policies (WBP) - Whilst blowing policy is the best method in all organization for reporting any type of harassments, crime against the organization, opportunities of crime, loss-incurring activities by any stockholders. WBP has identified clear method of handling all information, feedback and complaints without involving informer. All information received shall be handled with utmost care by the designated officials

Forming ICC (Internal Complaints Committee) – As per POSH (Sexual Harassment at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013) is guiding all government and non-governmental organization to create ICC for creating confidence on reporting harassments at workplace, ICC will receive complaints and proceed for action based on policies. ICC should have minimum of four members, chaired by Women employee.

Creating safe working environment – Employer must create safe working environment for women employee via various physical security measures to be implemented, such as manual access control of all entry and exit, manual or CCTV surveillances, managing visitors with maximum check points etc.

Unique Platform report on insecure act or condition at work place- Reporting on any incidents to management requires easy communication method (established by the organisation). It shall have common E- mail ID, Hot line etc, ICC or HR team should communicate to all employee via Email and / or SMS in frequent intervals about usage of Hot line. Harassment complaints received in this unique platform will be reviewed by the committee and initiate actions, if required.

Heed on any information against women security and safety- All information's related with women security and safety shall be treated with high priority it shall be investigated based on which a report may be submitted to management for further action.

Communicating Code of Conduct (CoC) - Organisations must have code of conduct for employees as per Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 that contains the details of Dos and Don'ts of employee at workplace. Though communicating code of conduct via various media to employee will reduce anomaly and harassment at work place since they are aware of action, any violation will breach the CoC.

Using posters to reduce violence against women at work place- Creating pictorial awareness posters, which can be placed at common areas like café, reception, and training room etc. This poster should convey policy, procedures, instructions, Hotline numbers, ICE contact etc.

Campaign on women safety among male employees- Every year March 8th is celebrated as world Women's day, during the celebration male employees are committed with co-workers to do various campaigns like taking pledge against women harassment and promising that they create safe and secure working environment to women.

Creating ICE (In Case of Emergency) centre for emergency support- In view of women safety and security, there should be one point of contact made available from organisation to attend any type of emergencies. When employee feels insecure may be notified to the management, as she requires immediate support from organisation; she could connect to ICE number which will guide her towards resilience.

Zero tolerance on policy implementation- Organization have several policies with established procedures for implementing. No management should compromise any policy matter towards women safety, which shall ensure a safe working place for women.

GV- Background verification- Every organization is having various contractors for providing verification services of their new recruited employees. Sometime this service is provided by the same organization, while a standard operating procedure is required to verify the employee's, antecedents, criminal background or obtaining antecedences certificate through police, this will help organisation in mitigating crime risk in work place.

Using technologies to reduce crime opportunities- In the internet era, we could develop many applications for women safety exclusively from an organisation. Based on the organization wealth it can create many technologies towards women safety. Available technologies such as GPS monitoring of vehicle, sharing of live location by women employee when she travel for official purpose, creating SOS (save our ship) alarm etc. Recently, Tamil Nadu police has created **Kavalan** mobile application dedicated exclusively for all women safety and security.

Policy on working from residence- For reducing the expense of organization they give opportunity to work from home (FOH), which is one of the best option against women working in the late hours.

Conclusion

In KTCC (Kanchipuram, Thiruvallur, Chengalpatt and Chennai) districts, most of the companies are having common practices to create safe and secure environment to their women employees. With the help of police, many of the organizations are utilizing CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) funds for installing surveillances system in the organisation (in and around) including the neighbourhood that are aimed at safe roads to women. Campaign on using SOS application are really reaching to women work force and giving confidences to them for reporting any odd events experienced by them during the course of work. The safety of working during the working hours are of great concern in the contemporary society. It also challenges the organisation in establishing a safe environment to its women workers. By following and practising the above mentioned good practices the organisation could reduce the damage and mitigate the crimes against women in their work place. While these exercises are cost effective in nature but results should be comprehensive. They can win confidence and non-comprised locomotive to the women during and after work to reach home safe at late hours.

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