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## RESEARCH ARTICLE | SPECIAL ISSUE: WOMEN'S STUDIES

# Sexual Harassment at Workplace: Effects and Reactions

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**Abstract:** Sexual harassment at workplace is a phenomenon that has many implications for women. Also, organizations and other employees are not immune to the devastating consequences of sexual harassment against women. Victimized women respond to harassment differently, such as silence, tolerance, bullying and aggression, leaving the workplace and even positive responding to sexual demands. In this article, in-depth interviews with victims will address the reactions and effects of harassment. We have also used the same tool to analyze the consequences of sexual harassment in organizations. The main questions of the study were the type of victim response to the harasser, the impact of the harassment on the victim, and the organization or other staff. The findings are obtained from interpretation and classification of in-depth and semi-structured interviews with 25 women in 23-47 age groups. They were selected from those with bachelor and doctoral degrees and working in government and private sectors. In order to obtain data, 5 open-ended and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 managers and administrative and financial assistants of public and private companies. The results of qualitative content analysis of interviews with victims, focused group, and the organizational management panel showed that women's responses differed by education, age, public or workplace privacy, from fear and silence to aggressive responses and complaints. And even retreats toward harassers were different. From individual perspective, harassment causes depression, morbid fears, prolonged anxiety, pessimism and suspicion, physical illness, labeling and social isolation. From an organizational point of view, there is virtually no protection mechanism for victims, which results in the abandonment of work, unwanted displacements, harassing dismissals, and even harassment and reduced organizational productivity.

**Keywords:** Women; Workplace; Sexual Harassment; Effects; Reactions; Organizational Turnover.

## Introduction

The evolution of the pattern of participation in the economy has led to growing number of women in the labor market. This increase over the past four decades has also affected the job perspective, with women being employed only as unskilled laborers at the lower levels of organization, but gradually ring to higher positions in the pursuit of awareness. In fact, male-centric domains and patriarchal dominance of the family environment in other ways reflected at the workplace and continued to evoke a sense of danger in the ownership of the domain, with a slow entry of female. One of the most important responses to the presence of women in public organizations and environments was an increase in sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is literally any physical or mental injury or harassment incurred on them because of their sexuality, being male or female, which is why sexual harassment, has also been implicated in some sources (Ragheb, 2013:75). Although there is no precise definition of sexual harassment and its implications, the EEOC's definition of sexual harassment in 1980 is most commonly cited. It says, "It is illegal for people to be harassed because they are women or men. Sexual harassment includes unwanted sexual offers, requests for sexual intercourse, and other verbal and sexual abuse of a sexual nature". In this definition, the EEOC specifically defines two behaviors as being sexually explicit - first the suggestion and unwanted sexual intercourse, and the second, verbal and physical abuse that harms individuals. These behaviors can be implicit, or explicit, so as to endanger ones job position. Therefore, sexual abuse is targeted in most cases and can be

considered as a crime and a violation of the law.

It also emphasizes that in sexual harassment, victimization can be both women and same sex. Sexual harassment that can make the workplace an insecure and hostile environment usually involves employers and managers, co-workers, or people who are involved with the victim for obtaining organization services, such as clients and clients of an organization (Retrieved from EEOC site)

We generally face two types of sexual harassment: quid pro quo harassment and hostile environment harassment. Quid pro quo means enticing women to have sex or other sexual pursuits in return for receiving a reward, promotion, or endowment at the workplace. This abuse requires the victim's consent to achieve the privileges.

Hostile environment harassment means that the public sphere of the workplace, with a negative attitude to the presence of women, calls for restraint, insult and humiliation and ultimately elimination. It might be better to call this division direct and indirect harassment. Direct sexual harassment, which is rewarded, promoted and the like by women for sexual acts or privileges, or threatened with dismissal, deprivation, or degrading if they do not meet the harasser's wishes. In indirect sexual intercourse, the work environment is difficult due to the gendered viewpoint of attending and specifically promoting the organizational status of women, and is plagued by sexual references and behaviors and speeches that annoy women and create insecurity.

More explicitly, the hostile environment harassment involves a broad approach to

sexual and non-sexual behaviors that aim to humiliate, exclude, and deprive people's access to certain privileges solely because of their gender (Tomkowicz, 2004: 99).

One of the forms of sexual harassment is the hostile environment against women, which in this space is negative about the presence of women at a workplace and their promotion to the top of the organizational power pyramid. Offensive or unwanted offensive against women becomes repetitive and becomes a set pattern. Sexual harassment, which addresses gender and femininity in an inappropriate, unfriendly, and harsh environment against women, is not often viewed as an abusive sexual orientation (Leskinen, 2011: 25). These harassments are usually perpetrated by co-workers and even subordinates (Welsh, 1994: 6).

Women's participation in the labor market has intensified sexual harassment as women endured it before sometimes at home or public spaces. Sexual harassment is a tool of pressure on women to leave work and home. In its first reactions, Redbook Magazine published an article in the mid-1970s warning of increasing sexual harassment of working women. Research published in the journal in 1976 showed that 90% of women in question have had experienced at least one sexual harassment. The study was repeated in the late 1970s and found that sexual harassment continued to threaten 50 to 80 percent of employed women. Therefore, some researchers believe that an increasing presence of women at the workplace, especially in low-paid jobs, has led to an increase in sexual harassment cases. Based on this abundance, the US Supreme Court predicted in the 1990s that sexual abuse in the 21<sup>st</sup> century would

remain a managerial concern in organizations (Martin, Sullivan, 1994: 5).

Spitzberg (1999), reviewing 120 studies with over 100,000 participants, found that sexual harassment and hostile behaviors toward women were more prevalent than physical violence, such as beatings, which were most often perpetrated by men against women (Spitzberg, 1999: 241).

In Iran, sexual harassment at the workplace has received less attention from researchers than domestic violence and street harassment, but the existence of the first sexual harassment law in 1960 indicates that this phenomenon has existed in our society for decades. Article 9 of the Civil Liability Act adopted (1960) by the Joint Justice Commission states: "A girl who has been forced to commit illicit intercourse as a result of fraud, intimidation or abuse of underage status may be in addition to causing material damage."

Soheila Sadeghi Fassaei from the University of Tehran who conducted in-depth interviews with 30 women in 2010 about their experiences and attitudes about sexual harassment at the workplace found that sexual harassment is pervasive and prevalent trouble and is caused by lack of power balance between victim and offender, patriarchal attitudes in society. Supervising many sectors, including the private one and blaming working women, is one of the most important causes of sexual harassment at the workplace (Sadeghi Fassaei, Rajab Larijani, 2011:111). Women are vulnerable to violence such as sexual harassment at the workplace because they are unpredictable as a result of such behaviors. These abuses are part of experiences of women's lives, which illustrate humility, repression, and some form of social control.

The fear of sexual harassment for women is so serious that it can alter their perceptions of place, time and social relationships (Sadeghi, Mir Hosseini, 2009: 125).

What is being discussed in this article is victims' reaction to sexual harassment at the workplace and its consequences for victims. The consequences of sexual harassment at the workplace are not limited to female, but also affect the organization and performance of its staff and managers. The response of women victims of sexual harassment varies from aggression to action, silence, and secrecy.

On the other hand, the effects of sexual harassment are not only on psychological distress such as fear and worry, humiliation, and even the physical problems of the victim, such as tension headaches, reduce the productivity (turn over) and effectiveness of victims in the workplace and, ultimately, their long-term absences can cost 130 million dollars annually in damages to governments. This is due to entitlement to paid leave and the replacement of forces that leave the workplace because of sexual harassment. Because of the lack of protection laws, complaining about sexual harassment to an organization manager can still make the situation worse for victims (Epstein, 1997: 649).

Even some studies have gone further and examined the effects of sexual harassment as a subset of the hidden and emerging discrimination of organizations on the growth of countries' economies. One of these studies examined the economic situation during the 1990s to 2010. The member states of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development state that one of the factors contributing to the negative growth rate in their economies is gender inequalities [defined

as abuses of these inequalities] (Kaveh, 2014: 2).

## 2- Methodology

In this study, the experience of victims of the effects of sexual harassment at the workplace is analyzed. According to the methodology of feminism, the most important pillar of research is the emphasis on the gender factor in the sense that they want to incorporate female knowledge and experience into the scientific production cycle. Thus, the positivist methods derived from natural sciences and deductive methodologies, the questioning and assumptions of theories and their tests against empirical evidence are not appropriate because of the multitude of experiments. Thus, social research has increasingly been forced to use inductive strategies such as qualitative methods (Fleick, 2008: 13).

According to this methodology, qualitative analysis can reveal inequalities that govern women's daily lives, and one of the research goals of women's studies is to show these gender inequalities.

### 2-1- Research Method

In this study, in-depth interviews with victims of sexual harassment will address the reactions and effects of such abuses. We have also used the same tool to analyze the consequences of sexual harassment for organizations. The main questions of the study are the type of victim response to the harasser, the impact of the harassment on the victim, and the organization or other staff. The findings are obtained from the content analysis and classification of in-depth and semi-structured interviews with 25 women aged 23 to 47 years. Each interview lasted between 60 and 70 minutes, included

information on the effects and responses to sexual harassment. They were selected from the bachelor's degree to doctor's degree working in the public and private sectors. In order to obtain the data on the impact of sexual harassment on the performance of organizations, 5 open-ended and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 managers and administrative and financial assistants of public and private companies. All interviewers have been identified through the snowball method and have been introduced to the conversation to gain confidence from previous interviewees. The interviewees are selected randomly and one of the criteria is that respondents have experience of sexual harassment. Rapid notes are used to record information and in cases where the sensitivity of the subjects is high, such as a focus group session. Respondents are also assured that their names will remain confidential.

### 3- Results

In this study, women interviewees aged 23-47 years were selected from both private and government organizations. Their average age is 35, who has been at the workplace for several years and is familiar with sexual harassment in the workplace. Their education varies from diploma to doctorate, and the average student is bachelor. They are selected from both public and private sectors and are in non-managerial and organizational positions such as secretarial and service to university lecturer and deputy minister, 5 of whom are official employees of the organization and the rest are contractual, and corporate ones. Women in almost all parts of the world are the most victims of sexual harassment in every occupation, which affects their performance, efficiency and productivity,

and is an important factor in job dissatisfaction and commitment to the workplaces. Therefore, the organization is also affected by this phenomenon as an inhumane behavior that can affect inter-organizational relationships. Identifying the sexual and gender repercussions of victimized women can help develop preventive mechanisms and strategies to combat harassment within the organization and to help women at the workplace.

At present, almost no organization in the country has gender-based prevention strategies and policies, and this hidden phenomenon has not been addressed by executives and legislators. All of the findings are exploratory and contextual, namely a study of the lived experience of working women and entering their lives to examine the consequences of sexual abuse on them, so it is by no means generalized.

### 3-1-The Individual Consequences of Sexual Harassment

#### *3-1-1-Mental Disorders and Physical Illnesses*

Sexual harassment can infiltrate individual layers of life and create unbalanced situations for the victim individually. The many consequences of sexual harassment are not easily revealed because many of harassment remain hidden from women themselves. These long-term abuses can lead to mental disorders and physical illnesses. For example, when women are the victims of sexual harassment at workplace, they will be psychologically anxious over the long-term origin of illnesses and physical complications such as hypertension and heart palpitations and restlessness, etc.

The results of some research among employed women show that harassment

affects women's job satisfaction and anxiety at work, and there is a relationship between these two variables, sexual harassment increases women's anxiety and level of job satisfaction. As the level of stress at work increases, women's job satisfaction decreases and therefore, organizational productivity and efficiency (Hutagalung, Ishak, 2012: 728).

Nillofar, 35, a senior associate in an organizational unit, says: "Due to the severe abuse of my colleagues and managers, I have anxieties about going to work every day, for a while now that I have learned that my left hand is aching and that I have a toothache at night. When I went to the doctor, he asked me to see a counselor."

Roya, 27, a bachelor and archivist at a state-owned company, says: "The office is right at the bottom of the long corridor that has two shelves full of files, every time I call, heart shuts, my hands start to shake, my mouth is drying up, sometimes I don't hear myself, because the last time I went to his room was the office time, he showed me pictures of naked women on his phone, and then said he was doing it for the sake of comradeship! Then he wanted to hold my hand as I quickly got out. I think I'm getting nervous soon because I see nightmares in this room."

### ***3-1-2- Pessimism and Suspicion***

Although the relationship between the negative mental image of women being sexually abused is less discussed, almost all over the world one of the indirect consequences of harassment and violence against women is their cynicism and suspicion of abusive men (Mohebbi, 200:16).

So that the verbal and psychological abuse on the abused will cause the abusers to distrust men.

Fatima, 43, an employee with 20 years of experience, says: "Even higher education couldn't change my look at men, maybe that's why I never got married and trusted men so hard because they always looked at us sexually."

Negar also criticizes men from the Focus Group, saying, "I've worked in private companies for 15 years and changed my job more than eight times. I don't think men can handle a powerful woman."

Shirin, a senior staffer, says, "I did the best thing every time, I was more in the eyes of men and more abused, and I try to never be the best because I have to endure all kinds of sexual rubbish and rude suggestions."

### ***3-1-3- Organizational Stigma***

Sexual harassment at workplace is a silent phenomenon that is more likely to be blamed than harassed; women are reluctant to talk about it because of sex, fear of reproach and other possible costs. Some of the harassers speak of abusive demands, such as invitations to dinners, temporary marriages, social friendships, and sexual intercourse, which lead to self-blame, along with verbal and psychological abuse that is intended to humiliate women at the workplace.

Shirin, a 32-year-old math teacher, says: "More men than women blame and stigmatize, how much you do make up, like others pay attention to you, and ... make you silent if you are bullied and don't say anything."

Sara, 25, a chemical engineer who recently worked at a company says: "I love my job. My work environment is highly valued and



Islamic, and I travel with a tent, although sometimes some senior engineers, by definition, they want my physique and appearance to come close. If I react, I may ruin myself because I'm a newcomer."

### ***3-1-4- Feeling Guilty and Isolation***

One of the important consequences of sexual harassment for victims is that in the unprotected context, victims feel guiltier and blame themselves. This in turn leads to the isolation and marginalization of women. In men's workplaces, women are more likely to feel guilty.

Samaneh, 31 year-old single woman who have studied TV direction says: "Whenever I go into our unit manager's room, he frowns, doesn't look at me, opens the door, He rarely admits me in his room and is annoyed by my presence, interpreting his work as purity, but I feel bad about it. I consider myself to be the culprit, just as if I were to fall into sin. I also feel ashamed because I know a lot about myself in his office. So I'd rather never meet my manager directly."

Maryam, a 26-year-old international secretary, says: "I've felt guilty since I told my co-worker about the abuse. She returned to her job not to harass the women, I do have a conscience, lest I should have made her joke with me! Maybe I should have been silent ..."

### ***3-1-5- The Financial Bottleneck***

One of the consequences of sexual harassment at workplace that is usually overlooked is the financial hardship of women leaving the workplace, disobeying superiors' demands, or even retaliating for the manager with reduced salaries and benefits and lack of job promotion. This has been less independently addressed as

a consequence of sexual harassment, with almost all interviewees referring to it.

Zahra, 38, director of a production unit, says: "The gender perspective of the producer always hurt me, the managers of other units get more from me, which is supposed to be because I'm a woman and married, so it costs me a living. I'm always the first person who gets the benefits. "

Susan, 37, a professional marketer, says she experienced five different work environments, all of which forced her to leave the company because of the abuse of her colleagues and clients: "No one knows how hard it was for me and my family to leave the work. Because I was not willing to be in touch with some of my customers, they wouldn't buy from me anymore, and that would have been a complaint from the company manager. "

## **3-2- Organizational Consequences of Sexual Harassment**

### ***3-2-1- Reduced Turnover and Irregularities***

Field observations show that sexual harassment at workplace leads women to be relegated to lower levels of the organization, forced dismissal, negative evaluations, and reduced job opportunities.

Sexual harassment is an important factor for women's absence, delayed entry into the workplace and reduced focus on professional activities. The same observations suggest that the resignation of women from their jobs can be largely due to sexual harassment, meaning that women are subjected to harassment in order to give up the task entrusted to them (Avina, O'hnohue, 2002:73; Loy, Stewart, 1984:33).

Kasrai, 52, is the owner and director of a large construction equipment marketing

company, with more than 70 percent of its employees being women. "Women are precise and empowered, but unfortunately they are very sensitive, and sometimes they leave their jobs because of a lack of communication with clients, so this sensitivity goes to my eyes and my company because finding a job is hard and I will lose," she says.

Nouri, a deputy administrative director of Mali, a government agency, says: "Women often demand relocation and change of service because of dissatisfaction with their boss or colleagues. This will slow down the performance of the unit, and sometimes increase demand for certain units."

Jabri, a managing director of a cultural institute, says: "I have seen women repeatedly insisting on changing tables. They do not tell the cause but insist that their workplace must change, which usually defames a unit. Sometimes more women run away to a room, which can discredit the whole company."

For some interviewees, the frequent shifting of women due to sexual harassment leads to inactivity, inefficiency and effectiveness at workplace, while leaving the workplace also bring power vacuum and financial loss to the organization.

### **3-3- Victims Reactions to Harassment**

According to some researches, women who have experienced sexual harassment at workplace do not usually express it and, in many cases, find it nonassertive. For women this harassment cannot be serious unless it is sustained or applied by a colleague or manager to make the workplace unbearable (Gruber, Smith, 2010: 243).

Depending on cultural conditions, women's responses to sexual harassment vary at

workplace but they can be different, depending on the type of abuse and the person being harassed. Silence and tolerance, secrecy, aggression, and resistance, and eventually meeting the demands of the manager, co-worker, or customer are the most important responses of abused women at the workplace. In the present study, the most frequent response to sexual harassment is silence and tolerance to the abuser, neglecting and minimizing the issue, reducing their negative emotions and trying to avoid the abuser (Sadeghi Fasa'i, Rajab Larijani, 2009: 125). This can make the perpetrator even bolder. Azar, an architect and 35-year-old engineer, says: "I loved the single engineer, the young man was very justified and he also noticed that I wanted to grow in contact with him and when my manager noticed we have to cut by my manager force. One day when we were working with the same engineer, he was angry to me saying that don't you want to go on vacation? We were very surprised because I was doing the business. This unusual behavior made me very angry and pessimistic. "Everybody approached me and expressed interest, this gentleman mistreated him, I only tolerated it for three years. If I stood in front of him, I would have to leave."

Simin is a 32-year-old cultural sales manager says: "The manager was pushing us to sell this institute's products. At one meeting, unfortunately, my personality and gender were attacked rather than questioning my performance. I felt like their problem was that I was a woman and I had the responsibility to get where they wanted to have, even insulted me and I just kept silent. But I couldn't survive because the disruptions continued and I finally left there."



## **Discussions and Findings**

The undesirable consequences of sexual harassment are not separable because each has a significant effect. Sexual harassment has different effects on different people, and the consequences of harassment need to be examined individually depending on the circumstances of individuals and organizations (Leskinen et al., 2011: 37). Not only social and cultural conditions define the variables that influence sexual harassment, but also affect victims' definitions of the degree of harassment. In many cultures, sexual harassment is seen as a human right for men and has no negative impact on women, such as the separation of the workplace between men and women in ideological societies, which is even a concession to women, while in some cultures such separation means rejection of gender and a negative view of women. Or men not looking at women when talking at work in traditional ideological societies are a sign of a man's unwillingness to sin, and in some cultures it can be seen as a source of guilt and neglect of a woman's sexuality. Therefore, it is important to consider the consequences of cultural conditions governing organizations.

Many harassers do not disclose their abusive behaviors and conduct. Anxiety and insecurity are among the most important consequences of sexual harassment at the workplace that almost all interviewees have experienced the same. In all interviews, the feeling of insecurity at the workplace is one of the most important sexual harassment, whether it is from a partner or superiors. Hand tremors, palpitations, restlessness, clenching teeth and tooth pressing, weakness and fatigue and chronic headaches are the most important

physical consequences of sexual harassment at the workplace, with less attention being paid to the psychological root of these patients. Gender rejection is seen as a form of sexual harassment, especially in a hostile environment. As mentioned, women face organizational isolation and their potential for growth is minimized. The gender rejection has many forms: silence, avoiding the recognition of another and overt unacceptance. Also, the psychological effects of the gender rejection include social anxiety, depression, loneliness, anger and embarrassment, and feelings of distress and mental health disorders. The worst reports of workplace is health related co-workers' rejection of sexual harassment (Tabatabaei Qomi, 2011: 19).

Rebecca Merkin, an American professor of communications science, also says in a study that nearly 2.8 million people lose their jobs each year due to job dissatisfaction and environmental anxiety, most of who are those who have wanted or unwanted sexual harassment and leave their workplace.

In many cases, women suffer from illnesses and disorders resulted from sexual harassment, the cost of absenteeism and even the costs of treatment provided by employers. From an organizational point of view, resignation of the individuals imposes a cost on the organization that has to be replaced by new people. Therefore, one of the most important organizational consequences of sexual harassment for employers is the threat to labor productivity and stability (Merkin, 2008:10).

Sexual harassment has even worse consequences for the organization. Studies show that sexual harassment reduces interpersonal professional relationships. And in addition to reducing productivity, it will

lead to a shift to other parts of organization, it can increase the victim's nervous behaviors and irregularities in organizational presence (Barling et al., 2001: 259 & Langhout et al., 2005: 977).

The results of some studies, such as those by Laskinen et al. (2011), show that in organizations with a masculine structure, women prefer to leave the workplace if they report sexual harassment rather than dissatisfaction or change in other sectors. They usually resign from their own profession. The research team says female victims lose their job after being harassed and distrusted by other colleagues and the masculine environment of their organization and experience more work anxiety. On the other hand, the existing legislation focuses more on physical harassment that is substantiated and does not address verbal harassment, degrading treatment or hostile behavior (sexual harassment) that exerts additional psychological pressure on women (Leskinen et al, 2011: 38).

The results of some researches in the United States show that even in the worst of sexual harassment, women still prefer to leave the

workplace instead of reporting to domestic and foreign litigants. This shows that they are unsure of how the organization's management and internal review authorities are responding to their complaint and are concerned about losing their organizational status.

On the other hand, one of the consequences of sexual harassment and its follow-up is to put the victim's name on the blacklist of managers. The study found that women who insist on pursuing their complaint are in many cases as surplus forces. Organizational labels can be a barrier to business continuity and growth, and a pressure on the victim to leave the organization (Serini et al., 1998: 208). Even if women are sued and prosecuted, the corporate label still does not release the victims.

Opportunities for growth and promotion are denied to women who have destroyed the brand or organization. Fewer organizations are willing to hire a woman who has had a lawsuit at the workplace and been sexually abused. For this reason, women prefer to either remain silent or conform to the patriarchal culture of the organization or leave their workplace. But this silence encourages abusers to repeat and intensify their behaviors.

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**چکیده:** آزار جنسی در محیط کار از پدیده‌هایی است که آثار و پیامدهای زیادی بر زنان دارد. ضمن اینکه سازمان‌ها و سایر کارکنان نیز از پیامدهای مخرب آزار جنسی زنان در امان نیستند. زنان قربانی واکنش‌های متفاوتی نسبت به آزار جنسی نشان می‌دهند، سکوت و مدارا، فرافکنی و پرخاشگری، ترک و فرار از محیط کار و حتی تن دادن به خواسته‌های آزارگر از جمله این واکنش‌هاست. در این مقاله، طی مصاحبه عمیق با قربانیان آزار جنسی، به واکنش‌ها و آثار این‌گونه آزارها می‌پردازیم. همچنین از همین ابزار، برای تحلیل پیامدهای آزار جنسی بر سازمان‌ها استفاده کرده‌ایم. سؤالات اصلی پژوهش، آثار آزار جنسی بر قربانی و واکنش او نسبت به آزارگر به‌عنوان مهم‌ترین بخش پیامدهای آزار جنسی و نیز تأثیر آزار جنسی بر سازمان و سایر کارکنان بود. یافته‌های این پژوهش از تحلیل محتوا و طبقه‌بندی مصاحبه‌های عمیق و نیمه‌ساختارمند با ۲۵ زن ۲۵ تا ۴۷ سال در تهران و ۴ شهر ساری، مشهد، بوشهر و تبریز به‌دست آمده است. همچنین با تشکیل گروه کانونی با حضور ۶ نفر از همین طیف سنی و با تحصیلات دیپلم تا دکتری که در ۲ بخش دولتی و خصوصی شاغل هستند، اطلاعاتی درباره آثار و واکنش‌ها نسبت به آزار جنسی به‌دست آمد. برای رسیدن به داده‌هایی درباره تأثیر آزار جنسی بر عملکرد سازمان‌ها نیز به ۵ نفر از مدیران و معاونان اداری و مالی شرکت‌های دولتی و خصوصی مصاحبه باز و نیمه‌ساختاریافته انجام شد. نتایج حاصل از تحلیل محتوای کیفی مصاحبه با قربانیان، اعضای گروه کانونی و پنل مدیران سازمانی نشان داد که واکنش زنان جدا از تحصیلات، سن و دولتی یا خصوصی بودن محیط کار متفاوت است و از ترس و سکوت (پنهان‌کاری) تا واکنش‌های تهاجمی و شکایت و حتی عقب‌نشینی در برابر خواسته آزارگر متفاوت است. این آزارها از منظر فردی باعث افسردگی، ترس‌های مرضی، اضطراب‌های طولانی‌مدت، بدبینی و سوءظن، بیمارهای جسمی، انزوا، برچسب خوردن قربانی و خودآزارگرپنداری او می‌شود. از لحاظ سازمانی، تقریباً هیچ سازوکار حمایتی از قربانیان آزار جنسی، وجود ندارد و این پدیده منجر به ترک نیروی کار، جابه‌جایی‌های ناخواسته، اخراج آزارگر و حتی آزاردیده، ایجاد محیطی پلیسی در سازمان و کاهش بهره‌وری می‌شود.

**واژه‌های کلیدی:** زنان، محیط کار، آزار جنسی، واکنش، پیامدها، بهره‌وری سازمانی.