



Case Study - 2 : Sexual Harassment At The Workplace

You are the team lead in a project. Your junior Mr. A, in the team is an extremely hard working and a productive individual who always completes his assignments on time. However of late, it has been brought to your notice that Mr. A has been misbehaving with Mrs. x who is a junior to him in the team. Mrs. x approaches you and apprises you of her uncomfortable situation in the team. According to her, Mr. A has been making advances towards her in the wrong way and on occasions has even asked her out for dinner which she disapproved of. Mrs. x demands immediate action against Mr. A. How will you proceed and what actions will you take to resolve the crisis?

Solution

The situation is one of alleged sexual harassment at the workplace which, if proved true, will portray the company in poor light, thereby affecting its credibility and profitability in the long run. A sense of insecurity might creep in among other female employees of the companies, thus hampering the team spirit.

An independent panel must be immediately set up having women members on its board to probe the allegations impartially. Guidelines regarding the same has been laid down by the Supreme Court in Vishakha case. In order to ease the situation, Mrs. x should be transferred from Mr. A's team citing reasons like team restructuring.

Since Mr. A is a competent employee, therefore, unless proven guilty one cannot initiate serious penal measures against him. However, while the investigation process, Mr. A can be asked to stay (after speaking to him on the same) on leave as a cautionary measure.

One can also inquire at personal level to find about the behavioral pattern of Mr. A from other female employees of the company. If the investigation committee finds Mr. A as guilty, one should immediately terminate him and not to be much concerned about his skills and efficiency as excellence and productively can be easily bought in the market, but not the credibility. Besides respecting women is a cardinal principle on which no compromise is thinkable.

However, if the charges are proved wrong, one should immediately reinstate Mr. A and apologize personally to him. Also penal actions should be taken against Mrs. X. In the long run one should get CCTV cameras installed at the workplace and even appoint women group leaders in the team so as to send a strong message to women in the organization that gender is no bar to being promoted. One can also send a note to the company to organise gender sensitisation camps to build awareness about female rights among other employees.