



Harassment at workplace

Adiya Shrestha (name changed), 28, from Gokarna lived with her mother and four siblings. A high school graduate, she dreamt of educating her brother and sister. To support them financially, she started to work for a manpower company. Earning her own money and becoming financially independent made her more committed and responsible towards her job.

Her major responsibilities were to receive guests and clean the entire office. Things were running smoothly for a while until her supervisor started to pass inappropriate comments, questions, and gestures towards her. He frequently started to make Adiya stay till late and once even physically harassed her.

Adiya declined her supervisor's advances which led him to add unnecessary work pressure on her. Adiya was not in a position to quit the job because as per the contract, her 1st month's salary was withheld until she worked for a year. And finding another job proved to be difficult. Thus, the financial burden of her family caused Adiya to suffer in silence.

One day, Adiya had to take an emergency leave due to her mother's health. The next day the supervisor verbally abused and scolded Adiya in front of all other staff. This humiliation led Adiya to gather courage and complain to the manager about the abuse she had been facing from her supervisor. Initially supportive, the manager's decision to fire her shocked Adiya. The incident had created a negative working environment in the office thus, the manager had to let go of one of them. But, as it was easier to find a replacement for Adiya than to find a qualified replacement for the supervisor's post, the manager had decided to fire her instead. The manager further justified his decision saying it was common in the company for the male staff to joke with the female staff. And she wouldn't have been fired had she not made it a big issue.

Thus, she was fired without any notice or her first month's stipend. This discrimination caused Adiya to suffer an emotional breakdown and she had been taking antidepressants since then. It has been 5 months since she was fired but, Adiya has lost all confidence to work as she fears of being abused again.