

Employment Status of Female Employees in Taiwan



In May 1998, the Council of Labor Affairs of Taiwan conducted a survey on the status of female employment which looked into the measures taken by enterprises regarding maternity protection, situations in which female workers receive and training, and women's viewpoints on the enactment of the proposed Gender Equality in employment Law.

Of the 3,689 female workers interviewed, 18.8 percent said that wage disparity is the most serious problem. Other respondents cited discrimination in screening (7.4 percent), personal appraisals (7.1 percent), assignments (6.3 percent) and promotion (6 percent). Next, 1.8 percent of the respondents indicated that they faced being dismissed or forced to resign, followed by pregnancy (1.6 percent), childbirth (0.9 percent), and taking care of children (0.8 percent).

Of the total interviewees, 7.9 percent claimed that there had been incidents of sexual harassment in their workplace, although 85.4 percent said that sexual harassment had never occurred while 5.6 percent did not know if such incidents had occurred. Of the women who claimed sexual harassment had occurred in their work-

place, 17.7 percent said that the offenders were punished, but a vast majority, 73.4 percent, said no punishment was meted out. Only 6.5 percent said their employer had set up preventive measures against sexual harassment, and 83.4 percent said there are no such measures in their workplace.

About 28.6 percent of the interviewees indicated that there is no policy for maternity leave in their workplace. Enterprises that set regulations for maternity leave grant workers an average of 6.1 weeks leave, lower than the eight weeks stipulated by the Labor Standards Law. About 70 percent stated that they are granted maternity leave with full wage, but 8.6 percent are granted leave with only a partial wage and 3.8 percent are given unpaid maternity leave. Only 6.4 percent said that there is a family-leave policy that allows them to accompany their spouse at childbirth. In general, they were granted only 2.5 days of leave for this purpose. While 80 percent of those who had family leave are paid for such leave, 3.1 percent are paid a partial wage and another 3.1 percent are granted an unpaid leave.

Only 13.5 percent of respondents indicated that there are regulations on childcare

leave in their workplace. About 34.1 percent indicated that no one had ever requested childcare leave and 55.6 percent replied that some people had requested it. While 5.4 percent said they received discriminatory treatment due to taking childcare leave, 2.2 percent were rejected when they expressed their desire to be reemployed afterward.

When being dismissed, transferred, or treated unfairly due to the gender factor, 83.2 percent said that nobody had made a formal appeal against their employers. Of these, 1.1 percent of the employers gave the petitioners unfavourable treatment, while only 0.3 percent gave petitioners equal treatment. Female workers who were dismissed or received unfair treatment did not further pursue grievances against their employers, because they did not know the proper procedure.

While 65.4 percent said the Gender Equality in Employment Law is necessary, 18.6 percent felt it was unnecessary. In addition, 20.2 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the enactment of this law will have a direct impact on female employment practices.

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