



Professional Ethics

HS-219

TEACHER: MS. UZMA RIYAZ

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

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Privacy Right

The right to personal privacy or the right to have a private life off the job. It also implies the right to control the access to and the use of information about oneself. For example, the personnel division needs medical and life insurance information about employees, but immediate supervisors usually do not.

(Refer to cases 2 & 3 on page 122 in the course packet.)

Right to Equal Opportunity: Preventing Sexual Harassment

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Definition

The unwanted imposition of requirements of a sexual nature in the context of a relationship of unequal power. It is a display of power and aggression through sexual means. It is an assault on the victim's dignity.

Two Main Forms

Quid Pro Quo: This includes cases where supervisors require sexual favors as a condition for some employment benefit, such as a job, promotion, raise, etc. It can be a sexual offer or even a sexual threat.

Hostile Work Environment: This describes a workplace where a sexually threatening environment exists for employees. It includes sexual proposals, lewd remarks, sexual leering, posting sexually explicit content such as indecent photos, and inappropriate physical contact.

Right to Equal Opportunity: Nondiscrimination

Definition of Discrimination

It is to be discounted or rejected because of one's sex, race, skin colour, age, or political or religious beliefs. These aspects constitute one's self-identity and self-respect. Hence discrimination may be damaging to one's self-image.

(Refer to cases 1 & 2 on page 124 in the course packet.)

Right to Equal Opportunity: Affirmative Action

Definition of Affirmative Action

It is giving a preference or advantage to a member of a group that in the past was denied equal treatment, in particular, women and minorities.

Forms of Affirmative Action

Weak Form: It is preferential treatment whereby a woman or a member of a minority is hired over an equally qualified white male.

Strong form: It is preferential treatment whereby women or minorities are selected over better-qualified white males.

(Refer to the *Regents of the University of California V. Bakke* case on pages 124 & 125 in the course packet.)

An Important Question

Can preferences, in any of the two forms, ever be justified morally?

Arguments Favoring Reverse Preferential Treatment

These take three main forms.

- 1) Compensatory justice: Past violations of rights must be compensated. The members of a group that has been disadvantaged in the past are given preference now.
- 2) To counterbalance the negative impact of sexism and racism, reverse preferential treatment is warranted to ensure equal opportunity for women and minorities.
- 3) One consequence of reverse preferential treatment is that women and minorities are integrated into the economic and social mainstream (especially in male-dominated professions such as engineering), providing role models for others in the same communities or groups.

Arguments Against Reverse Preferential Treatment

- 1) Reverse preferential treatment lowers economic productivity by using criteria other than qualifications in hiring.
- 2) Such treatment encourages racism by creating intense resentment and frustration among white males and their families.
- 3) Such treatment encourages or confirms traditional stereotypes that women and minorities cannot make it on their own without special help, thereby adding to self-doubt and lack of confidence in members of these groups.

(Refer to case 3 on page 127 in the course packet.)

Source:

Engineering Ethics by Charles Fleddermann