



Protection of Women Workers in the Informal Sector from Sexual Violence and Harassment in the Perspective of ILO Convention No. 190: A Comparative Study of Indonesia and the Philippines

*Natasya Indras
Febiola¹

Universitas Negeri Surabaya,
Indonesia

Joko Ismono²

Universitas Negeri Surabaya,
Indonesia

***Corresponding author:**

Natasya Indras Febiola, Universitas Negeri
Surabaya, Indonesia.

✉ Natasya.23333@mhs.unesa.ac.id

Article Info:

Article history:

Received: June 8, 2026

Revised: July 15, 2026

Accepted: July 21, 2026

Available Online: September 01,
2026

Keywords:

Women Workers, Informal Sector;
ILO Convention No. 190;
Comparative Study; Legal
Protection; Sexual Violence and
Harassment



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Abstract

Background: Sexual violence and harassment against women workers in Indonesia's informal sector constitute a growing systemic crisis, compounded by the absence of comprehensive legal protections specifically designed for this vulnerable group. Despite the increasing number of reported cases, Indonesia has not yet ratified ILO Convention No. 190 (2019) on Violence and Harassment, resulting in a critical normative gap within the existing protection framework.

Objective: This study aims to identify normative gaps in Indonesia's legal system by examining the root causes of the problem through the perspectives of legal protection theory, human rights theory, and feminist legal theory. It also conducts a comparative study with the Philippines, which has ratified ILO Convention No. 190 and enacted the Safe Spaces Act of 2019.

Methods: This study employs a qualitative research method using a normative legal approach, a comparative legal approach, and a legislative analytical approach to examine relevant legal frameworks and regulatory developments.

Results: The results of this study indicate the existence of significant legal gaps in protecting women workers in the informal sector from violence and harassment, while the Philippines has demonstrated more progressive developments in adopting and implementing international labor protection standards.

Conclusion: This study recommends the ratification of ILO Convention No. 190, the establishment of specific regulations to protect informal sector workers, an examination of the factors underlying Indonesia's delayed ratification of ILO Convention No. 190, and the strengthening of complaint mechanisms that are victim-friendly and gender-responsive.

To cite this article: Natasya Indras Febiola & Joko Ismono (2026). Protection of Women Workers in the Informal Sector from Sexual Violence and Harassment in the Perspective of ILO Convention No. 190: A Comparative Study of Indonesia and the Philippines. *Journal of Law & Social Politics*, 4 (3), 499-513. <https://doi.org/10.59261/jlsp.v4i3.145>

INTRODUCTION

The issue of power imbalances between employers and workers, as well as between men and women in the workplace, is a common problem that frequently contributes to incidents of sexual violence and harassment in the workplace. This problem has been recognized as a systemic crisis that threatens the sustainable development agenda, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to achieve decent work and gender equality. The impact not only harms individual victims but also hinders women's economic participation more broadly. This issue becomes even more complex when it concerns women workers in the informal sector, who structurally have a much

weaker bargaining position compared with workers in formal employment relationships. Based on state statistical data, 59.11% of workers in Indonesia are engaged in the informal sector, while 64.25% of female workers participate in informal employment, demonstrating that more than half of informal workers are women who experience significant structural vulnerabilities ([Confederation, 2023](#); [Nations, 2023](#); [Statistik, 2023a, 2023b](#)).

The layered vulnerabilities experienced by women workers in the informal sector make them particularly susceptible to violence and sexual harassment. The absence of formal employment contracts often results in exclusion from employment social security systems, limited access to institutional grievance mechanisms, and unequal power relations between employers and workers. Consequently, women workers in the informal sector are placed in highly vulnerable conditions regarding various forms of exploitation, including sexual violence and harassment. This condition is further aggravated because perpetrators of violence and sexual harassment in work environments are often individuals known to victims, including colleagues, work team members, or direct supervisors. As a result, victims may choose to remain silent due to fear of losing their employment, distrust in law enforcement mechanisms because of inadequate responses to reports, or even threats and retaliation from perpetrators ([Organization, 2023](#); [Rusdijati et al., 2022](#)).

The National Commission on Anti-Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) reported 376,529 cases of violence against women that had been successfully recorded in 2025. Of these cases, 89.76% or 337,961 cases occurred within the domestic or personal sphere, 17,525 cases occurred in the public sphere, and 2,707 cases occurred within the state sphere. These figures indicate an increase of 14.07% compared with the previous year, making 2025 the year with the highest recorded number of violence against women in the last decade. However, these figures are believed to represent only a small proportion of actual incidents because many victims still choose not to report. Structural barriers, victim-blaming culture, threats from perpetrators, and the absence of clear, effective, and safe complaint mechanisms for victims contribute to the persistence of a high dark number of cases ([Perempuan, 2024a, 2025a](#)).

At the international level, the issue has been addressed through the adoption and ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Adopted in 2019, this Convention represents the first international instrument that comprehensively regulates violence and harassment in the world of work. The Convention explicitly extends protection to all workers regardless of their formal or informal employment status ([Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 \(No. 206\), 2019](#); [Tilleman et al., 2026](#)). The Philippines became one of the first countries in Southeast Asia to ratify ILO Convention No. 190 in 2024 and strengthened its implementation through national legal instruments, including the Safe Spaces Act ([Republic Act No. 11313, 2019](#)), which aligns with the principles reflected in Recommendation R206 ([Kim, 2024](#); [Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 \(No. 206\), 2019](#)). Meanwhile, Indonesia has not yet ratified ILO Convention No. 190 and continues to lack specific and comprehensive regulations addressing the protection of informal sector workers from sexual violence and harassment occurring in work-related contexts. The comparison between Indonesia and the Philippines is relevant because both countries share relatively similar social, cultural, and economic characteristics as developing nations within the ASEAN region, yet demonstrate significant differences in their legal responses to sexual violence and harassment in the workplace ([Hasanah et al., 2025](#); [Muliati, 2025](#)).

Research on the protection of women workers from violence and sexual harassment in Indonesia has developed in recent years; however, several significant gaps remain. Previous research examining the application of Law No. 13 of 2003 on Manpower to women workers found that labor protection mechanisms in Indonesia are structurally more effective for workers involved in formal employment relationships and have not adequately addressed the realities of informal sector workers ([Hasibuan & Romdoni, 2023](#)). Another study discussed reporting mechanisms for sexual violence within corporate environments and identified barriers experienced by victims; however, its scope was limited to large companies with established human resource departments, making its findings less relevant to the conditions faced by informal workers (Date: 2025 ([Hasibuan & Romdoni, 2023](#))). Meanwhile, Sano (2025) comprehensively analyzed the Philippines' Safe Spaces Act but did not conduct a comparative analysis with other countries, leaving the potential lessons that Indonesia could derive from the Philippine experience insufficiently explored.

Based on this background, this article aims to address several key research questions and problems: identifying legal issues related to the protection of women workers in the informal sector from sexual violence and harassment in Indonesia; analyzing the underlying problems through the perspectives of legal protection theory, human rights theory, and feminist legal theory; comparing the legal protection systems of Indonesia and the Philippines within the framework of ILO Convention No. 190; and formulating policy recommendations based on international standards and the specific needs of women workers in Indonesia's informal sector.

METHOD

This research was normative juridical in nature, constituting doctrinal legal research that examined and analyzed legal norms, principles, and legal instruments through secondary data sources (Wiraguna, 2025). Two main approaches were applied in this research process. First, a statutory approach was employed by examining laws and regulations related to the legal issues under study. Second, a comparative legal approach was applied to compare the legal systems of Indonesia and the Philippines concerning the protection of women workers in the informal sector (Lathofani & Eddyono, 2023; Muliati, 2025).

The legal materials used in this study consisted of primary legal materials, including ILO Convention No. 190 of 2019, the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 39 of 1999 on Human Rights, Law No. 13 of 2003 on Manpower, and Law No. 12 of 2022 on the Crime of Sexual Violence (*Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual/TPKS*). In addition, Philippine legal instruments were examined, including Republic Act No. 11313 of 2019 on the Safe Spaces Act and Republic Act No. 7877 of 1995 on the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act. This research also utilized secondary legal materials consisting of reports from international institutions and relevant academic publications.

The analysis employed three interpretive methods applied to the collected legal materials: systematic interpretation, which examined the relationship and coherence among legal norms within and across statutes to identify regulatory gaps; teleological interpretation, which assessed whether existing legal norms achieved their intended objectives in protecting workers from violence and harassment; and comparative interpretation, which juxtaposed the legal frameworks of Indonesia and the Philippines to identify best practices and potential reform pathways. The legal comparison was conducted using a functional comparative framework that emphasized the comparison of the functions of each legal instrument in addressing similar issues of sexual violence and harassment in the world of work and in producing coherent and comprehensive legal arguments (Irawan et al., 2025; Rusdijjati et al., 2022).

The selection of primary legal materials in this study was based on three criteria: their direct relevance to the issue of protecting women workers in the informal sector from violence and sexual harassment, the applicability of legal norms during the research period, and their representativeness of the legal systems of the two countries being compared. Meanwhile, the criteria for selecting secondary legal materials were that the sources substantially discussed gender-based violence in the workplace, labor law, or comparative law within the ASEAN region. The comparative analysis process was conducted through three stages: identifying conformity indicators based on the four pillars of ILO Convention No. 190; mapping each country's regulations according to these indicators; and analyzing gaps between international standards and the national legal frameworks of both countries (Hasanah et al., 2025; Hidayat & Dalimunthe, 2022; Nonet & Selznick, 2017; Rusdijjati et al., 2022).

The sources of data for this study included laws and regulations, court decisions, reports from international institutions, and scientific literature. As a normative juridical study that relied exclusively on secondary legal materials, this research did not involve human or animal participants and therefore did not require approval from an ethics committee. All data and references were collected, analyzed, and presented in accordance with applicable scientific research ethics standards.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Identification of Legal Problems for the Protection of Women Workers in the Informal Sector

Overview of the Vulnerability of Women Workers in the Informal Sector in Indonesia

The informal sector in Indonesia includes various forms of employment that are not tied to formal employment relationships and do not receive full protection under the employment law system. The ILO defines informal employment as work arrangements in which workers are not adequately covered by legal and social protection mechanisms. Such workers often lack access to social security, adequate labor protections, and official government registration systems (Kim, 2024; Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206), 2019). In Indonesia, this category includes homeworkers, domestic workers, street vendors, freelance day laborers, and various other forms of precarious work.

The vulnerability of women workers in the informal sector to violence and sexual harassment is multidimensional. This vulnerability arises from the intersection of structural, economic, and legal factors. The absence of formal employment contracts limits workers' ability to claim labor protections; the private nature of many informal workplaces reduces institutional oversight; and the economic precarity experienced by informal workers creates dependency relationships that may perpetuate silence regarding violence and harassment (Organization, 2023; Rusdijati et al., 2022). The lack of written employment agreements also means that women workers often have limited formal evidence to support legal claims or pursue remedies through legal mechanisms. Furthermore, many informal workers are not registered within the social security system, restricting their access to protection services provided by BPJS Ketenagakerjaan. Work environments that are private and insufficiently supervised, such as employers' households or remote work locations, may increase exposure to violence and harassment. Additionally, strong economic dependence on employers often forces women workers to remain silent rather than risk losing their source of income (Hasanah et al., 2025; Rusdijati et al., 2022).

Table 1

Vulnerability Profile of Women Workers in the Informal Sector in Indonesia

No	Dimension of Vulnerability	Concrete manifestations	Legal Impact
1.	Informal employment status	No written contract, cash wages, not registered with BPJS Ketenagakerjaan	Difficult to prove employment relationship in legal proceedings
2.	Unsupervised work environment	Working in a household, street, or remote location	Lack of witnesses and physical evidence of the incident
3.	High economic dependency	No savings, family burdens, absence of alternative work	The victim chose to remain silent to keep his job
4.	Limited access to information and laws	Low legal literacy, not knowing their rights	Unable to access existing complaint mechanisms
5.	Asymmetrical power relations	The perpetrator is the boss/employer who has full control over the work	Victims are threatened with losing their jobs if they report

Source: Processed from (Organization, 2023; Perempuan, 2023; Statistik, 2023a, 2023b)

The involvement shown in Table 1 above represents a situation in which workers are formally located within areas protected by law but are practically unable to access or benefit from those protections. (Azevedo et al., 2026; Organization, 2018) stated that in developing Southeast Asian countries, women workers in the informal sector experience violence and sexual harassment at rates two to three times higher than those of formal sector workers; however, the reporting rate remains significantly lower.

According to data from the (Statistik, 2023a, 2023b), 59.11% or 82.67 million of the 139.85 million employed individuals in Indonesia worked in the informal sector. Most women workers are absorbed into informal employment, while the World Bank projects that only one in ten female workers will be employed in the formal sector if the current trend of informality continues. This

condition places women workers in a vulnerable position, increasing their exposure to exploitation and various forms of violence, including sexual violence and harassment (Hasanah et al., 2025; Organization, 2023; Rusdijati et al., 2022).

The Komnas Perempuan institution reported that violence against women in public spaces increased by 44%, from 2,190 cases in 2022 to 4,182 cases in 2023. In 2024, there were 2,702 reported cases of violence against women workers, including sexual violence, physical violence, psychological violence, economic violence, forced labor, and exploitation among informal workers. This figure is believed to represent only a portion of the actual situation, considering the high number of dark numbers (unreported cases) caused by threats from perpetrators, limited awareness of legal rights, and the lack of accessible and flexible complaint mechanisms (Perempuan, 2022, 2023, 2024b, 2025b).

Table 2

Data on Violence and Sexual Harassment of Women Workers in the Informal Sector in Indonesia for the 2019-2024 Period

Year	Number of Reported Cases	Source
2019	3.551	Komnas Perempuan, 2020
2020	3.823	Komnas Perempuan, 2021
2021	4.045	Komnas Perempuan, 2022
2022	3.442	Komnas Perempuan, 2023
2023	3.303	Komnas Perempuan, 2024
2024	4.178	Komnas Perempuan, 2025

Source: Processed from Komnas Perempuan 2020-2025

Table 2 presents annual data on cases of gender-based violence against women (*kekerasan berbasis gender terhadap perempuan/KBGtP*) recorded by the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) in its Annual Record (*Catatan Tahunan/CATAHU*). CATAHU published by Komnas Perempuan does not explicitly distinguish between cases occurring in the formal and informal sectors. Therefore, the data are used to illustrate general trends in violence against women, including violence that may occur in informal workplaces (Perempuan, 2020, 2021, 2022).

Legal Gap in Informal Worker Protection

Currently, Indonesia's legal system does not provide comprehensive and integrated protection for women workers in the informal sector against sexual harassment and sexual violence in the workplace. This limitation is reflected in the fragmented nature of existing regulations, which are often sector-specific and inadequately implemented for informal workers. The analysis of various relevant legal instruments demonstrates that existing protections remain dispersed and have not yet established a coherent legal framework capable of effectively addressing sexual harassment and sexual violence experienced by women in informal employment settings (Hidayat & Dalimunthe, 2022).

Table 3

Mapping of Relevant Indonesian Regulations and Their Scope for Informal Workers

Regulation	Main Coverage	Limitations for Informal Workers	Compliance with ILO 190
1945 Constitution Article 27 paragraph (2), Article 28D, 28G	The right to decent work, self-protection, fair treatment	Very general, there is no specific implementation mechanism for the informal sector	Partial (principle only)
Law No. 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower	Worker protection and prohibition of sexual harassment in the workplace	The definition of 'worker' only includes formal employment relationships; there is no mechanism for workers without a contract	Not Suitable (too narrow)

Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning TPK	Criminalization of various forms of sexual violence, protection of victims	Focus on the criminal aspect, less touching on the aspect of job protection and economic recovery of informal victims	Partially (criminal aspect)
Law No. 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights	Universal recognition of human rights	There is no employment-specific recovery mechanism for informal workers who are victims	Partial (general principle)
Permenaker No. 18 of 2022 concerning the Protection of Women Workers	Prohibition of layoffs due to pregnancy, maternity leave, protection from harassment	Only applicable to formal employment relationships based on employment agreements	Not appropriate (<i>formal only</i>)

Source: Processed from various laws and regulations in Indonesia

Table 3 above clearly demonstrates that there is no single regulation that is comprehensively and fully compliant with the standards of ILO Convention No. 190 in providing protection for women workers in the informal sector in Indonesia. This condition has resulted in a serious legal gap, where the most vulnerable groups receive the least legal protection. This normative vacuum should not be viewed merely as a technical issue in legislation but rather as a reflection of structural inequalities embedded in the way the state defines who is entitled to employment law protection (Kusuma, 2025).

Discussion

Root Analysis of Problems Based on Legal Theory and Concepts

Legal Protection Theory

Philipus M. Hadjon divides the theory of legal protection into two categories: preventive legal protection, which aims to prevent disputes from occurring, and repressive legal protection, which seeks to resolve disputes that have already occurred. In the context of informal sector workers, these two forms of protection remain inadequate in Indonesia (Hadjon, 1987; Hasanah et al., 2025).

According to Rahardjo (2006), in the development of legal protection theory, the legal system must function as an instrument to protect vulnerable groups from stronger parties (Ramadanti et al., 2025). Women workers in the informal sector clearly constitute a vulnerable group within industrial relations because they often lack collective bargaining power, are not protected by trade unions, and directly interact with employers who generally possess greater economic and social power. Therefore, from this perspective, the state has a positive obligation to address gaps in existing legal norms in order to achieve substantive equality in legal protection. As demonstrated in Table 3 of this study, the existing regulatory mapping reveals that none of Indonesia's current labor law instruments provides comprehensive protection for informal workers, illustrating the state's unfulfilled positive obligation within Rahardjo's framework of protective law (Rahardjo, 2006; Ramadanti et al., 2025).

Contemporary perspectives on legal protection theory also recognize the concept of responsive law initiated by Nonet and Selznick (2017) as an important theoretical foundation. This concept emphasizes that responsive law requires legal systems to accommodate the needs and interests of marginalized groups through flexible mechanisms oriented toward substantive justice (Bora, 2026). In this context, the inability of Indonesian labor law to respond to the specific needs of informal sector workers reflects a failure to achieve the stage of responsive law. This failure can be attributed to the historical construction of Indonesian labor law, which has been centered on the formal employer-employee relationship model established under Law No. 13 of 2003. This framework defines *pekerja/buruh* ("worker/laborer") primarily within the context of formal employment agreements, causing the legal system to remain at what Nonet and Selznick describe as the "autonomous law" stage, procedurally legitimate but substantively unresponsive to evolving social realities (Hidayat & Dalimunthe, 2022; Nonet & Selznick, 2017).

Human Rights Theory

Under international human rights law, workplace violence and sexual harassment constitute

violations that undermine human dignity, the right to security, and the right to decent work. The protection of these rights has also been affirmed through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which Indonesia ratified through (Al Ayubi & Zumrotun, 2025; Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 7 of 1984 Concerning Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1984; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979). The Convention obliges states to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women, including those occurring in the workplace.

According to international human rights law, states have obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights. To fulfill these obligations, states must adopt administrative, legislative, and judicial measures to prevent violations of rights, including those experienced by workers in the informal sector. Therefore, the absence of specific and comprehensive regulations protecting women workers in the informal sector from sexual harassment and violence indicates persistent challenges in fulfilling state obligations toward vulnerable groups of workers (Hasanah et al., 2025).

Feminist Legal Theory

Feminist Legal Theory provides an analytical framework for understanding the vulnerability of women workers in the informal sector. This theory criticizes legal systems that are constructed primarily from male perspectives while overlooking women's experiences as legal subjects. Furthermore, traditional labor law has historically been constructed around a male-dominated formal employment model, thereby structurally excluding the realities of women's work, which is frequently situated within informal and irregular sectors (Pratiwi & Pratiwi, 2025; Rusdijati et al., 2022).

The concept of intersectionality explains that the layered discrimination experienced by women workers in the informal sector results from the interaction between gender-based discrimination, which places women in subordinate social positions, and discrimination based on informal employment status, which excludes them from the protection of labor laws. This intersectional condition creates mutually reinforcing vulnerabilities that require holistic, legally responsive, and gender-sensitive approaches (Pratiwi & Pratiwi, 2025).

Comparative Analysis: Indonesia and the Philippines in the Perspective of ILO Convention No. 190

Overview of ILO Convention No. 190

ILO Convention No. 190 on Violence and Harassment, adopted in 2019, is the first international treaty specifically and comprehensively addressing violence and harassment in the world of work. Under this Convention, violence and harassment are defined as a range of unacceptable behaviors, practices, or threats that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, psychological, sexual, or economic harm. A fundamental innovation of ILO Convention No. 190 lies in its inclusive coverage of all workers regardless of contractual status, including informal sector workers. The Convention also expands the concept of the world of work to encompass not only physical workplaces but also work-related travel, public spaces, and work-related communications. Furthermore, it adopts a comprehensive approach involving prevention, protection, enforcement, and remedies, while placing particular emphasis on safeguarding vulnerable groups (Kim, 2024; Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206), 2019).

Indonesian Legal Framework

The legal framework for protecting women workers from sexual violence and harassment in Indonesia is currently dispersed across various legal instruments that have not yet been fully integrated. Constitutionally, several provisions guarantee the right to decent work (Article 27 paragraph (2)), the protection of honor and dignity (Article 28G paragraph (1)), and the prohibition of gender-based discrimination (Article 28I paragraph (2)). However, these constitutional guarantees do not automatically ensure effective protection without specific implementing regulations. In addition, Law No. 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower contains several provisions related to the protection of women workers but does not explicitly regulate violence and sexual harassment in the workplace and does not adequately address the protection of informal sector

workers ([Hidayat & Dalimunthe, 2022](#)).

The most significant legal development has been achieved through Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning the Crime of Sexual Violence (*Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual/TPKS*), which recognizes nine forms of sexual violence, comprehensively regulates victims' rights, and introduces mechanisms for restitution and recovery. However, its implementation within informal employment relationships remains constrained by evidentiary challenges, limited institutional access, and difficulties faced by victims in informal sector settings ([Nomor, 12 C.E.; Rusdijati et al., 2022](#)).

Philippine Legal Framework

In contrast to Indonesia, the Philippines has demonstrated a stronger commitment to addressing sexual violence and harassment in the world of work through a series of complementary legal instruments. Republic Act No. 7877 became one of the earliest laws in ASEAN specifically regulating sexual harassment occurring in workplaces, educational institutions, and training environments ([Republic Act No. 7877, 1995; Rodriguez, 2025](#)).

This significant development was further strengthened through the enactment of Republic Act No. 11313, which expanded protection against gender-based sexual harassment to public spaces, including formal and informal work environments. This regulation requires workplaces across sectors to establish anti-harassment policies and provide accessible complaint and reporting mechanisms ([Republic Act No. 11313, 2019; Sano et al., 2025](#)).

Furthermore, the Philippines ratified ILO Convention No. 190 in 2024, making it one of the first countries in Asia to adopt this international instrument. This ratification was followed by concrete measures, including the harmonization of national regulations, capacity-building programs for law enforcement officials, and public awareness campaigns targeting informal sector workers ([Center, 2022; Sano et al., 2025](#)).

Table 4

Comparison of the Legal Protection System of Indonesia and the Philippines

Indicator (ILO No. 190)	Indonesia	Philippines
Status of Ratification of ILO No. 190	Not ratified yet	Ratified in 2024
Specific Regulations Against Sexual Harassment in the Workplace	Not yet (still spread in the TPKS Law, Manpower Law)	(Republic Act No. 7877, 1995; Rodriguez, 2025) and (Republic Act No. 11313: Safe Spaces Act, 2019)
Informal Worker Coverage	Not explicitly covered in the Employment Law	Explicitly covered by the <i>Safe Spaces Act 2019</i>
Employer's Obligations	There are no specific obligations for a harassment-free work environment in the informal sector	Must have an anti-sexual harassment policy and complaint mechanism
Complaint Mechanism	Limited, requiring a formal employment relationship (PPHI Law)	Available at all levels: EEOC, <i>Barangay</i> , courts with designed accessibility for informal
Victim Protection	TPKS Law (2022), but its implementation is limited to informal workers	Comprehensive protections including a special legal aid program for vulnerable workers
Sanctions for Perpetrators	There is (Criminal), but its application is still weak in the informal sector	Criminal and administrative measures that apply to superiors who do not prevent harassment
Systematic Prevention	There is no education/training obligation for informal	Mandatory anti-harassment training in all workplaces

Mechanism	employers	with public education programs
Source: Processed from ILO (2019b), Center (2022) , Sano (2025), and applicable laws		

Table 4 shows a substantial gap between Indonesia and the Philippines across the protection dimensions addressing the standards established under ILO Convention No. 190, with the Philippines consistently demonstrating a higher level of conformity. This gap is reflected in three pillars that are central to the Convention’s mandate, namely the inclusion of informal workers, accessible complaint mechanisms, and systematic prevention obligations (Muliati, 2025; Organization, 2019b) .

Evaluation of the Conformity of Indonesian National Law with ILO Convention No. 190

ILO Convention No. 190 consists of four main pillars: recognition of the right to a world of work free from violence and harassment, the provision of equal protection without discrimination, proactive prevention mechanisms, and accessibility to complaint and redress systems. Evaluating these four pillars reveals significant challenges in Indonesia’s legal and institutional framework (Hasanah et al., 2025; Kim, 2024; Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206), 2019).

Regarding the first pillar, Indonesia has normatively recognized the right to protection from sexual violence through the 1945 Constitution, the Human Rights Law, and the Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual (TPKS) Law. However, this recognition has not yet been fully translated into actionable operational policies. For instance, Government Regulation No. 27 of 2024 concerning the implementation of TPKS prevention and Ministerial Decree No. 88 of 2023 concerning the prevention of sexual violence provide operational guidance; however, both instruments remain explicitly limited to formal workplace settings and do not adequately address informal employment arrangements, particularly those involving informal workers (Hidayat & Dalimunthe, 2022; Kepmenaker, 2023).

The second pillar concerns Article 2 of ILO Convention No. 190, which affirms that protection must apply to all workers regardless of contractual status, workplace location, or economic sector, including those engaged in the informal economy. In this respect, Indonesia remains far from achieving this standard because existing labor regulations are still primarily oriented toward protecting formal sector workers (Kepmenaker, 2023; Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206), 2019).

The third pillar highlights that Indonesia still lacks a comprehensive and systematic prevention framework, including mandatory risk assessments, employer training obligations, and workplace safety protocols specifically designed for informal work environments to identify and mitigate risks of violence and harassment in accordance with the requirements of ILO Convention No. 190 (Larion, 2024; Organization, 2019a).

The fourth pillar concerns access to complaint mechanisms, which remains one of Indonesia’s greatest challenges. According to the ILO’s 2022 report entitled Safe and Healthy Working Environments Free from Violence and Harassment, based on a national survey of workers across multiple sectors in Indonesia, 70.93% of respondents reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment or violence in the workplace. The majority of victims expressed reluctance to report such incidents due to uncertainty regarding available complaint procedures and fear of retaliation (Perempuan, 2025b; Rusdijjati et al., 2022).

This research has significance beyond the Indonesian context and contributes to the global academic discourse on worker protection in the informal economy. According to reports published by the International Labour Organization (ILO), more than two billion people globally were engaged in the informal sector by 2023, with a significant concentration in developing regions across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The absence of adequate legal protection identified in this study reflects systemic international challenges, as labor protection frameworks have historically been developed from the perspective of formal employment relationships and have often failed to capture the realities experienced by most workers worldwide. By demonstrating that the Philippines, a country with a comparable level of economic development, has established a broader protection framework through the ratification of ILO Convention No. 190, this study provides empirical evidence that similar legal reforms can be pursued in Indonesia. Furthermore, it offers an indicator-based analytical model that may be adapted by scholars and policymakers in other developing countries facing comparable challenges (Confederation, 2023; Organization, 2018; Perempuan, 2023).

Table 5*Analysis of Indonesia's Legal Conformity to the Four Pillars of ILO Convention No. 190*

Pillars of ILO Convention No. 190	Conformity Status	Key Limitations
Recognition of Rights	Partial	There is a constitutional norm (TPKS Law), but it is not yet operational for the informal sector
Inclusive Coverage	Unfulfilled	Systematic exclusive regulation of informal workers, Ministerial Decree No. 88 of 2023 is only for formal companies
Prevention Mechanism	Partial	Preventive obligations are only for formal employers, there is no mechanism specific to the informal sector
Complaints & Remedies	Partial	Mechanisms are available (PPA Symphony, Ministry of Manpower Channel), but not accessible to informal workers
General Conclusion	Inadequate	Comprehensive legal reform and ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 are needed

Source: Analysis based on ILO Convention No. 190, Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning TPKS, Kepmenaker No. 88 of 2023, and Government Regulation No. 27 of 2024

The results of the analysis presented in Table 5 show that Indonesian regulations can only partially fulfill one of the four pillars of ILO Convention No. 190, with the absence of inclusive protection coverage for informal workers representing a major weakness. The standards established under ILO Convention No. 190, even when measured solely through normative conformity without assessing the effectiveness of implementation, demonstrate that Indonesia remains considerably distant from achieving full compliance. Komnas Perempuan has also consistently emphasized that the ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 remains urgent to ensure comprehensive legal protection, particularly for informal sector workers who remain excluded from existing regulatory frameworks (Perempuan, 2025a).

Novelty and Differences with Previous Research

This article differs from previous studies in three significant aspects. First, several previous studies have focused exclusively on the formal employment sector. Second, some studies have discussed the *Undang-Undang Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual* (Sexual Violence Crime Law/TPKS Law) without incorporating the perspective of ILO Convention No. 190 or conducting comparative legal analysis. Third, previous studies examining the Philippines have generally analyzed its legal framework independently without conducting a comparative assessment with Indonesia.

The novelty of this article lies in the integration of three legal theoretical perspectives (legal protection theory, human rights theory, and feminist legal theory) within a single analytical framework. Furthermore, this study specifically focuses on informal sector workers, enabling a more precise examination of their structural vulnerabilities, and conducts a comparative analysis between Indonesia and the Philippines using measurable conformity indicators (Muliati, 2025; Nonet & Selznick, 2017).

This research has several limitations that should be acknowledged academically. First, as a normative juridical study, this research is limited to examining legal norms and does not extend to evaluating the effectiveness of their implementation in practice. Therefore, it cannot empirically assess the extent to which existing regulations provide actual protection for women workers in the informal sector. Second, the comparative analysis is limited to two countries, namely Indonesia and the Philippines, which restricts the broader generalizability of the findings and recommendations to other ASEAN member states. Third, the empirical materials utilized in this study were derived from institutional reports, including CATAHU Komnas Perempuan and ILO reports, which are subject to

methodological limitations, including the possibility of underreporting cases occurring within the informal sector. Finally, the analysis of Philippine legislation relies exclusively on publicly available legal documents and evaluative reports without direct observations or interviews with relevant stakeholders in the Philippines; consequently, the practical dimensions of legal implementation remain insufficiently explored ([Hasanah et al., 2025](#); [Hidayat & Dalimunthe, 2022](#); [Lathofani & Eddyono, 2023](#); [Muliati, 2025](#); [Sano et al., 2025](#)).

Policy Recommendations and Implications

Recommendations for the Government of Indonesia

1. Ratification of ILO Convention No. 190

The most urgent measure is the ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206 as international legal instruments supporting national labor law reform. Based on the experience of the Philippines, ratification does not necessarily require immediate and drastic changes to the existing legal system; rather, it can be implemented gradually by addressing identified normative gaps and strengthening existing protection mechanisms ([Muliati, 2025](#); [Sano et al., 2025](#)).

2. Informal Worker Protection Regulation

Adequate and specific regulations are required in the form of comprehensive legislation or Government Regulations that establish clear provisions regarding the definition of sexual violence and harassment within informal work contexts, employers' preventive obligations, accessible complaint mechanisms, victims' rights to justice and recovery, and proportionate sanctions for perpetrators and employers who fail to fulfill their obligations ([Rusdijjati et al., 2022](#)).

3. Strengthening the Mechanism on Complaints

The government needs to establish a multi-channel complaint mechanism to improve accessibility for victims, including a 24-hour hotline, services at the subdistrict and village levels, anonymous online reporting systems, and integrated complaint units within the Manpower Office. These mechanisms must also be accompanied by guarantees of protection for complainants to prevent retaliation and ensure effective accountability for perpetrators ([Organization, 2022](#)).

a. Recommendations for Law Enforcement and Related Agencies

The author recommends that law enforcement institutions and related agencies, including *Komnas Perempuan* and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (*Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak*/Ministry of PPPA), establish specialized units dedicated to handling cases involving informal sector workers through protocols adapted to the specific characteristics and vulnerabilities of this group. In addition, the Ministry of Manpower should integrate workers' rights education into strengthened community-based empowerment programs, which are considered more effective than purely top-down approaches. The justice system should also develop and improve fast-track mechanisms by providing exemptions from case-related costs and facilitating pro bono legal assistance for victims who lack financial capacity ([Hasanah et al., 2025](#); [Organization, 2022](#); [Rusdijjati et al., 2022](#)).

b. Recommendations for Communities and Employers

Strengthening literacy, awareness, and education regarding sexual harassment and violence prevention should be expanded within informal business communities. Such initiatives should include information regarding employers' legal responsibilities and available complaint mechanisms while involving community leaders to transform permissive social norms that tolerate gender-based violence ([Rusdijjati et al., 2022](#)).

c. Implications on Academics

This article contributes to three dimensions of academic discussion: the systematic identification of gaps within Indonesian labor law norms, the development of a comparative legal analysis model based on measurable indicators that can be replicated in future studies, and the demonstration of the importance of integrating feminist legal theory into labor law analysis, which remains relatively limited in Indonesian legal scholarship. This study also supports future research agendas, including empirical evaluations of the effectiveness of complaint mechanisms

and comparative studies of ASEAN countries that have ratified ILO Convention No. 190 (Muliati, 2025; Nonet & Selznick, 2017; Pratiwi & Pratiwi, 2025; Sano et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that Indonesia's existing legal framework on labor protection contains fundamental deficiencies, not only in its procedural mechanisms but also in its capacity to protect women workers in the informal sector from sexual violence and harassment. Using an integrative methodology derived from legal protection theory, human rights theory, and feminist legal theory, this study reveals that the underlying problems are rooted in inherent biases within the legal system, which was initially structured around formal employment relationships and has consequently marginalized the most vulnerable populations. Furthermore, the extent to which Indonesia complies with the normative standards of the four components outlined in ILO Convention No. 190 is examined, revealing that only one pillar is partially fulfilled. This finding not only indicates insufficient regulatory measures but also highlights significant disparities in how legal systems define eligibility for protection.

A comparative analysis with the Philippines provides empirical evidence that legal reform in this area is feasible for developing countries. The Philippines' progress, demonstrated through its ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 and the enactment of the Safe Spaces Act of 2019, illustrates that inclusive protection mechanisms can be extended to informal sector workers through strong political commitment and systematic regulatory harmonization. The scientific contributions of this research can be identified through three key innovations: an analytical framework that integrates three legal theories into a comprehensive approach, an in-depth examination of informal sector workers as a demographic group that has been largely overlooked in labor law discourse, and an indicator-based comparative analysis model with potential applicability for cross-border studies within ASEAN.

As a normative juridical study, these findings contribute to the development of normative-comparative legal analysis and the advancement of legal protection frameworks; however, the dimension of empirical implementation effectiveness requires further investigation in future research. Prospectively, this study provides a foundation for several related academic inquiries, including empirical investigations into the effectiveness of grievance mechanisms for informal workers following the enactment of the Law on Sexual Violence Crimes (*Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual/TPKS* Act), sociological studies exploring reporting barriers at the community level, and broader comparative analyses involving additional ASEAN countries that have ratified ILO Convention No. 190. Therefore, legal reform in Indonesia must adopt a fundamentally transformative and gender-responsive approach by moving beyond a purely technical legal perspective and serving as a concrete manifestation of the state's commitment to protecting the human rights of all citizens without exception.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise be to the author for the presence of Allah SWT for all the graces, gifts, and conveniences that have been given so that this research can be completed.

The author would like to thank the Faculty of Law, State University of Surabaya and all lecturers who have provided guidance, knowledge, and direction during the lecture process until now.

The author also offered an appreciation full of sincerity to his parents, Alm. Bambang Indraswoko and Alm. Lilik Agustina. Even though he passed away, his love and prayers during his lifetime have always been the force that accompanies every step of the writer's life and efforts until now. Thank you also to the author's two older sisters, Vica Indras Novironica and Lauryn Indras Marcellyna, for their support and unwavering enthusiasm for the author.

The author also expressed his gratitude to Shinta Amanda Putri and Sutra Dwi Nurhandayani, as well as all fellow writers who cannot be mentioned one by one, for their enthusiasm, strength, and availability in discussing with the author.

Lastly, the author would like to thank all institutions that have helped and supported the author in the process.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Natasya Indras Febiola as the main author has contributed or is responsible for all aspects of this research, including conceptual, formulation of legal issues, legal analysis, and manuscript preparation. Joko Ismono contributed to supervision, conceptual feedback, critical revision of the manuscript, and final approval. Both authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript and are responsible for the content of this work.

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