

University female students personal experiences, perspective of sexual harassment, (A case study of University of Balochistan)

Social Sciences

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Abstract

The purpose of conducting the present study is to analyze the worse situation of sexual harassment in university campus. The main objective of study was to know the situation or nature of sexual harassment against female students at University of Balochistan, and specifically to examine in context of students knowledge and understanding about sexual harassment and as well as to explore the impacts of sexual harassment on educational performance of female students. A sample of 100 female students was taken from dissimilar disciplines of university of Baluchistan; a structured questionnaire (consisted on both close-ended and open-ended questions) was filled by respondents. In the light of study findings mostly female students have been offended of this form of sexual abuse. They were concerned about their educational career because of frequently occurring cases of sexual harassment in campus against female students and since existence of hostile environment a huge number of victims quitted their education.

Key words: Balochistan University, Sexual harassment.

Introduction and Background

Sexual harassment is a form of sexual assault, commonly includes unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that affects an individual's work or school performance; well there is no common or single definition of what comprised prohibited behavior. Usually international instruments define sexual harassment broadly as a form of GBV (gender based violence) and as

biased treatment, as national laws focus very much on the illegal behavior. All definitions, however, are in agreement that the prohibited behavior is unwelcome and causes hurt to the victim. Equal employment opportunity commission defines sexual harassment as including,

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. (Michele A. Paludi & Richard B. Barickman, 1991).

Sexual harassment may occur in a variety of circumstances, but academic sexual harassment is more serious and common issue globally, in academic settings such as at school, college and university level we can find profound effects of sexual harassment on student's performance. In academia sexual harassment is likely to take forms such as provision of sexual favors in exchange for grades, inclusion in activities and scholarships etc. Academic sexual harassment as defined that “ *academic sexual harassment is the use of authority to emphasize the sexuality or sexual identity of a student in a manner which prevents full enjoyment of educational benefits, climate, or opportunities.* (Margaret A. Crouch, 2001)

Sexual harassment is often deemed a form of illegal discrimination against an individual on the basis of her/his sex; it commonly engages an expression of sexual behavior that looks for to exploit a relationship where there is an imbalance of authority between or among faculty members/students, boss/subordinates, and supporting staff/students besides this it may also occur in a variety of ways, e.g. harassment of student by students, staff member by staff member, harassment can occur anywhere on campus, including classrooms, corridors, cafeteria, and as well as in library. There are two general types of sexual harassment situations which are *Quid Pro Quo* and *Hostile Environment* sexual harassment. *Quid Pro Quo* is a Latin phrase meaning this for that or something for something, means exchange between parties where one is asked to provide sexual favors in return something else. Under the EEOC definition, *Quid pro quo cases involve behavior in which “submission to which conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment [or] sub-mission or to rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decision affecting such individuals”.* (Michele A. Paludi & Richard B. Barickman, 1998).

In academia, a *Quid Pro Quo* sexual harassment usually involves a supervisor or teacher who has the power to make decisions about the employee or student based on whether he or she submits to sexual demands. (Mary L. Boland, 2002) Quid pro quo sexual harassment engages an individual with organizational power who expressly relations a “term, condition or right of education” to the response of a student to unwanted sexual advances. So, failure to receive a promotion, failure to be assigned preferred working durations, threats of being fired, and failure to get the grade earned such as indefensible negative employment appraisals or recommendations all show quid pro quo sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment in educational settings (schools, colleges, and universities) has been the subject of research because it has been observed that sexual harassment complaints against male teachers and students are alarming, verbal sexual harassment is the most common form of sexual harassment reported by students and female students experience more widespread and more severe forms of sexual harassment than males. Terms or disliked words such as jani, janu, yar, bitch, chick etc are usually used in universities as well as in schools, colleges by males’ students as conducts to assert masculinity by debasing female peers. *Another common way for males to perform their masculinity is to engage in hetero-sexual discourse by sexually objectifying their female peers and discussing sexual acts they would like to engage in or have already engaged in. This is often done near the female students, but is not always directed at them, thus creating a space where women are targeted and objectified with no outlet for response or complaint of tangible harm. Such activities create a hostile climate for most students. This behavior is generally not stopped by teachers, and sometimes it is encouraged by their tacit participation.* (Elizabeth J. Meyer 2010)

The issue of sexual harassment is very serious since *it is estimated that over 50% of all women have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace and 20-30% of all college women have been sexually harassed* (Gervasio & Ruckdeschel, 1992). *It is of concern since sexual harassment interferes with human rights as the victims experience stressful physical and psychological effects which may in turn prevent them from achieving their rightful place in employment and education.* (Menon A, Shilalukey Ngoma M.P, 2009)

College and university campuses are places where students are deeply engaged with academic and social activities, they are also places where women face sexual harassment starting from the first day they step foot on campus. *One national survey revealed that four out of five female undergraduate students said that they had been victims of violence in a dating relationship and of those women, 29 per cent reported incidences of*

sexual assault. [DeKeseredy and Kelly, 1993].in a campus survey of undergraduate students at the university of Alberta, *21 per cent of students reported having at least one unwanted sexual experience at some point in their life, with 15 per cent after age 14. Of those students who reported having an unwanted sexual experience after the age of 14, 42 per cent said that it took place while being registered at university.* (A survey of unwanted sexual experience among university of Alberta students, 2001).

Sexual harassment has remained a widespread problem in Pakistan. Harassment has especially been high among domestic workers, students and nurses. In a survey conducted by the Daily Times in August 2010, female govt. & private sector employees complained about the abusive and harassing behavior of their male colleagues as well as senior officials which shows that the subject needs a serious consideration and effort to create an environment which is harassment free. (Daily Times survey, 2010). Besides this many other complaints of sexual harassment have been registered against teachers and students in Pakistan. Quaid-e-Azam University which is considered one of the top among top 500 universities in the world, frequently cases of sexual harassment rocked the Quaid-e-Azam University and because of consistently increasing cases of sexual harassment finally the students requested to President of Pakistan to take action against these matters of university. Keeping in view the recent and past incidents, government passed the protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Bill in 2010 in order to provide a safe and hostile free environment to the working women, but unfortunately this law also served as a piece of paper.

Problem statement

It has been observed through previous studies that the sexual harassment is commonly occurring in educational institutions and workplaces of Pakistan. Although there is existing laws and code of conducts against sexual harassment but in spite of this we could not find any code of conduct and policy against sexual harassment in university of Balochistan. Therefore without any fear the female students and as well as female teachers are being offended of sexual assaults, on the basis of an assumption this study was conducted that sexual harassment is contrary to University's values and moral standards, which basically recognize the self-esteem and worth of each individual. This study gives to the answer of different questions such as knowledge and perception of students about sexual harassment, intensity of sexual harassment as well as the different effects of sexual harassment on female students of university of Balochistan.

Methodology

This study was conducted in university of Balochistan Quetta; the participants were students from the dissimilar departments of university, a sample size of 100 respondents was selected through purposive sampling method. The data was collected using structured questionnaire and the questionnaire was pre-tested, following the research ethics an informed verbal consent was obtained from the participants prior to participation in the research. The data were coded to remove any identification of participants. The data was analyzed by simple frequency distribution tables.

Results and Discussions

The demographic results of the respondent's shows females 100 (100%), as all the respondents were females. 54 (54%) respondents were at the age of 22-25, 36 (36%) were at the age of 18-21, while 10 (10%) respondents were at the age of 26-above. 29 (29%) respondents were Urdu speaking, 20 (20%) were Pashto, 18 (18%) were Balochi, 16 (16%) were Brahvi, 13 (13%) were Punjabi and 4 (4%) belong to other languages. 67 (67%) were single, 23 (23%) were engaged while 10 (10%) respondents were married.

Table 1
Frequency distribution of respondents according to their awareness regarding sexual harassment

<i>Response</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	78	78%
No	22	22%
Total	100	100%

78 % majority of respondents perceived that they had knowledge about sexual harassment while small percentage of respondents reported not knowing what sexual harassment was.

Table 2
Frequency distribution of respondents according to their victimization of sexual harassment

<i>Response</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	73	73%
No	27	27%
Total	100	100%

73 % majority of respondents answered that they have been offended of sexual harassment and merely 27 % respondents were not victimized.

Table 3
Frequency distribution of respondents according to their feelings/sentiments in case of victim of sexual harassment

<i>Response</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Feel Humiliated/degrade	25	25%
Feel traumatized	16	16%
Feel angry	51	51%
It does not affect me at all	08	08%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100%</i>

Above table shows 51% respondents experienced anger, 25 % respondents felt humiliated or degrade due to being victimized of sexual harassment, 16 % suffered traumatized while 08 % respondents answered that it does not affect us at all.

Table 4
Frequency distribution of respondents according to their view/observation regarding to the causes of sexual harassment

<i>Response</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Low moral Standards	34	34%
Absence of strict law & code of conduct	41	41%
Overall gender discrimination against women in society,	22	22%
Modern fashion design	03	03%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100%</i>

41 % of the respondents considered absence of strict law and code of conduct as the cause of sexual harassment, 34 % realized that our low moral standards are cause of sexual harassment, 22 % respondents' answer was with over-all gender discrimination against women in the society, and simply 03 % respondents' observation was about modern fashion design as a cause of sexual harassment.

Table 5
Frequency distribution of respondents according to their observation regarding occurred cases of sexual harassment in University campus

<i>Response</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	76	76%
No	24	24%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100%</i>

76 % majority of the respondents answered that they observed the cases of sexual harassment in University campus, whereas 24 % respondents were not aware about occurred cases of sexual harassment.

Table 6

Frequency distribution of respondents according to their observation about most common ways of sexual harassment in university campus

<i>Types of sexual harassment</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
<u>Type 1: verbal</u> Whistling, unpleasant comments/remarks, sexually-explicit jokes, demands for sexual favor etc	Quite common	51	51%
	Fairly common	45	45%
	Some times	03	03%
	Almost never	01	01%
<u>Type 2: non-verbal</u> Staring, offensive massages or calls, offensive letters, offensive literature, winking etc.	Quite common	45	45%
	Fairly common	34	34%
	Some times	16	16%
	Almost never	5	05%
<u>Type 3: Physical</u> Touching, pinching, obstructing a passageway, etc	Quite common	31	31%
	Fairly common	15	15%
	Some times	45	45%
	Almost never	09	09%

It is a multiple response table which shows the observation or knowledge of respondents about the various common ways of sexual harassment in campus. A majority of them 51 % considered verbal sexual harassment is quite common, 45 % claimed that verbal sexual harassment is fairly common, 3% respondents answer was sometimes and merely 01 % respondent's answer was with almost never. About non-verbal type of sexual harassment 45 % respondent's answered that it is quite common, 34 % answered with fairly common, 16 % respondents considered it sometimes while only 05 % response was almost never, responding about physical type of sexual harassment 45 % answered that it occurs sometimes, 31 % respondents considered it common, 15 % respondents realized that it is fairly common way of sexual harassment, whereas 09 % respondents answer was almost never.

Table 7

Frequency distribution of respondents according to their experience about status of perpetrators

<i>Response</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Chairperson's/Heads	23	23
Male teachers	19	19
Other employees	17	17
Male students/classmates	37	37
Strangers	04	04
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100%</i>

37 % of the respondents alleged that male students/classmates are involved in sexual harassment, 23 % respondents blamed that sexual harassment is offended by head of departments, 19 % respondents considered that mostly teachers are harassers, 17 % respondents realized that sexual harassment is done by other employees while 04% respondents claimed that strangers offend sexual harassment.

Table 8

Frequency distribution of respondents according to their personal experience about various types of dresses which encourage sexual harassment

<i>Response</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Shalwar kurta/ shalwar with dupata	11	11%
Shalwar kurta/ shalwar without dupata	16	16%
Sadee	10	10%
Balochi and Pashto dress	14	14%
Jeans	37	37%
Others	02	02%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100%</i>

Most of the respondents 37 % indicated that Jeans is an encouraging factor of sexual harassment, 16 % responded with Shalwar kurta/ shalwar without dupata, 14 % considered Balochi and Pashto dresses a promoting factor of sexual harassment, 11 % respondents viewed shalwar kurta/shalwar with dupata as a reason of harassment, 10 % respondents answered with Sadee, while only 2 % realized that any other dress style become supporting cause of harassment.

Table 9
Frequency distribution of respondents according to where mostly women have been harassed

Response	F	%
Chairperson & lecturer offices etc	24	24%
Classrooms	39	39%
Cafeteria	11	11%
Corridors	17	17%
Library	07	07%
Other places	02	02%
Total	100	100%

39 % of the respondents considered classrooms as place of harassment, 24 % students indicated that mostly students are being victim of sexual harassment in chairperson, lecturer and other offices, 17 % respondents realized that corridors are place of harassment, 11 % respondents answer was cafeteria, 07% respondents viewed that library is a place of harassment, while only 2 % respondents claimed that other places are the points of harassment.

Table 10
Frequency distribution of respondents according to their awareness regarding existence of any code of conduct or committee which deal the cases of sexual harassment in campus

Response	F	%
Yes	09	09%
No	91	91%
Total	100	100%

91 % a clear majority of the respondents were not aware that any committee or code of conduct exists in campus to deal with the cases of harassment, while merely 09 % respondents perceived that they had knowledge about existing of committee or code of conduct in campus.

Table 11
Frequency distribution of respondents according to their personal experience about statement that does sexual harassment affects the educational performance of students

Response	F	%
Yes	89	89%
No	11	11%
Total	100	100%

89 % of the respondents indicated that sexual harassment affects the educational performance of students while a small percentage of respondents realized that it does not affect the educational performance of students.

Table 12

Frequency distribution of respondents according to their knowledge that is sexual harassment a reason which leads to dropping out of girls from higher education

<i>Response</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	79	79%
No	21	21%
Total	100	100%

Majority of the respondents 79 % indicated that sexual harassment is a leading cause of drop outs, whereas 21 % respondents considered that it is not a cause of drop outs of female students from educational institutions.

Table 13

Frequency distribution of respondents according to their observation that the victims of sexual harassment quitted their education

<i>Response</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	59	59
No	41	41
Total	100	100

Above table shows 59 % respondents alleged that a huge number of students quitted their education because of sexual harassment, whereas 41 % respondents viewed that sexual harassment did not relinquish the education of female students.

Conclusions

The study under-review aimed to evaluate the hostile environment of sexual harassment against female students in university campus and examine the students understanding regarding sexual harassment its effects and other performance consequences. Sexual harassment in the educational sector is a burning issue, and in Pakistan the sexual harassment is common in all public places especially in education sector sexual harassment has been conceptualized as a form of gender based violence therefore which leaves profound impacts on women behavior, as study findings show that sexual harassment is very common in university because a huge number of cases

have been observed against female students. Therefore due to this hostile environment the educational performance and productivity of students is being decreased consistently. It has been examined too, that sexual harassment has various negative effects on students including drop out of students, result decline, health, social and psychological affects, it has been observed from the results of the study that female students are more likely to be affected in university campus and sexual harassment is often committed by head of departments, teachers, employees, male students and as well as strangers, absence of effective code of conduct , disciplinary action and committee illustrate the vulnerability of female students in campus which increase the concerns of students regarding to their future.

Prevention implication

Results of the study illustrate that sexual harassment is a problem at UoB and the perception of the students suggests that female students are more likely to be affected. As sexual harassment creates serious concern in any institution, it is recommended that preventive measures must be taken at UoB. Because it is the responsibility of university to provide safe and hostile free environment for the students to learn. For sensitization of students, teachers and employees etc university must initiate awareness campaigns such as workshops, seminars, pamphlets and as well as open forum discussions about sexual harassment. In addition to sensitizing programs a visible strategy of complaints and regulatory procedures requires to be set up for both students and staff. It is suggested that for the facility of complainants, complaint boxes should be display in university premises and moreover the security cameras/ spy cameras must be planted in all corridors, classrooms and offices.

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