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**A STUDY ON AWARENESS OF TEACHERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ABOUT  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

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**Abstract:**

In the present times women have come out of their traditional roles as they have become educated and economically independent. They have a multi dimensional role to play, primarily managing their families and also their career of the workplace.

As per the report of the media it has been revealed that women are being sexually harassed at educational institutions.

In this kind of present scenario it is needed that women should be aware about their rights which would help them in getting protection or assistance while facing sexual harassment.

The current study would help to bring awareness about the rights of the women particularly with reference to harassment faced by them at educational institutions. The awareness created would increase social security and welfare and thus empowering them.

The study would help in deciding the necessity to organize training and counselling sessions for lady teachers as well as girl students.

The increase in the awareness about the laws and acts with respect to women would help in creating a society where women are safe and protected.

**Key Words : Women, Sexual, Educational, Awareness**



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## A STUDY ON AWARENESS OF TEACHERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ABOUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

### Introduction :

In present day with the economic liberalization and awareness among people, Indians have witnessed a continual increase in educational institutes and consequently more and more women are getting educated and employed. The present scenario is that on the one hand thousands of opportunities are available for women to shine in different fields of their interest such as education, sports, politics, media, culture, science and technology etc. and on the other side there is increase in gender based violence and also women have been discriminated and marginalized at every level of the society.

It is the duty of government to address the issues of women safety, when they participate in the daily routines like study and work; and more specifically to address the harassment that women and girls face in the process of carrying out their daily activities.

So, in compliance with the Supreme Court judgement and guidelines issued in 1997 to provide effective enforcement of the basic human right of gender equality and guarantee against sexual harassment and abuse, more particularly against sexual harassment at workplace. After 1997, there occurred many cases which questioned security of women at their workplaces. So finally with lots of corrections, Ministry of Law and Justice (Legislative Department) published an act in The Gazette of India (Dated 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2013) The Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act-2013.

The current study has been planned to study the awareness about the rights of a women particularly with respect to their sexual harassment and abuse at educational institutions.

The awareness created would empower the women about their rights and thereby achieve the objectives of equality, development and peace.

### Definition :



• **Harassment :**

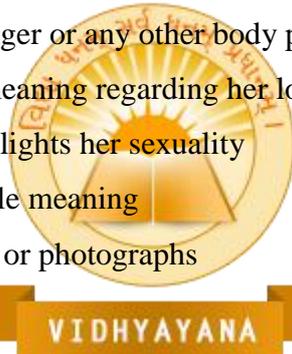
The Supreme Court defined Sexual Harassment as any unwelcome, sexually determined physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct. Examples included sexually suggestive remarks about women, demands for sexual favours, showing pornography and sexually offensive visuals at the workplace.

• **Educational Institution :**

An educational institution is a place where people of different ages gain an education, including preschools, childcare, primary-elementary schools, secondary-high schools, colleges and universities. They provide a large variety of learning environments and learning spaces.

**What is Sexual Harassment? :**

1. Unwelcomed touch by male
2. Trying to cross or have already crossed the personal zone of female
3. Using of vulgar gestures by eyes, finger or any other body parts from male
4. Comments by male having double meaning regarding her looks or dressing
5. Usage of words by male which high lights her sexuality
6. Sending messages/mail having double meaning
7. Sending or insisting to see porn film or photographs
8. Demand of sexual favour by male
9. Rape or unnatural sex by male



**Review of Literature :**

- Various incidence of harassment has been reported by heads of departments and institutes and some cases in academia have been reported by media and in certain cases, victims were asked to resign the jobs as they refuse to comply with the drives of male heads and bosses. Although Government of Pakistan has enforced harassment act (2010) and made mandatory, but none of the university in the sample has implemented it till 2014. Even until 2016 some of the least gender sensitive provinces of Pakistan have not formally enforced and passed the harassment act, which shows not only insensitivity towards the harassment of women rather insignificant concern.(Rizwana ,2016)
- Former Human Resource Development Minister Smt. Smriti Irani informed the Lok Sabha (As per



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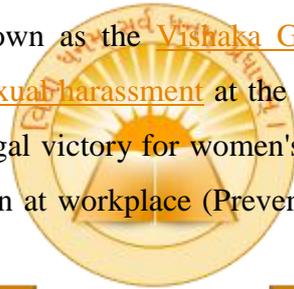
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Indian Express dated 14/12/2015) that 75 cases (out of 82 university responses) of sexual harassment of women lecturers, professors and research scholars by academic heads were reported in the annual return on cases of sexual harassment for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 30<sup>rd</sup> March 2015 (UGC Report)

- All women are vulnerable to this type of violence irrespective of their occupational status, marital status, educational or economic status. It can also be concluded that high socio-economic or educational status does not protect a woman from sexual harassment. It is clear that sexual harassment is one of the most endemic forms of violence against women and girls today (M.Reena,2014)
- The Bhanwari Devi case attracted widespread national and international media attention, and became a landmark episode in India's women's rights movement. Women's activists and lawyers have propagated the view that Bhanwari attracted the ire of her rapists solely on the basis of her work. A number of groups which championed the latter view filed a [Public Interest Litigation](#) (PIL) in the [Supreme Court of India](#), under the collective platform of Vishaka. The petition, filed by Vishaka and four other women's organizations in Rajasthan against the State of Rajasthan and the Union of India, resulted in what are popularly known as the [Vishaka Guidelines](#). The judgment of August 1997 provided the basic definitions of [sexual harassment](#) at the workplace and provided guidelines to deal with it. It is seen as a significant legal victory for women's groups in India. (Wikipedia) Later on the act on Sexual Harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) 2013 was implemented.



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### Objectives:

Saurashtra region is becoming an 'Education Hub'. In view of this, the present study would serve as a litmus test for teachers' about their knowledge of rights and how they use them for their security. The objectives of the study are:

- To study the awareness in teachers about the existing laws and act for the welfare of women and their rights against sexual harassment at educational institutions.
- To study the role of women cell or local complaints committee for teachers in institution.
- To study the awareness in teachers of higher education about the rights of women against sexual harassment at educational institutions on basis of types of institutions.

### Tools and Techniques:



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Primary data have been collected from ministry of women and child welfare department, Gazette of India, NGOs, various women welfare organization, police station and websites and also from books, articles and news papers. The researcher made the questionnaire using this data.

Through this questionnaire data had been collected from 75 faculties associated with educational institutions as teaching faculty in Saurashtra region. Outcome of the questionnaire was analysed using MS Excel.

### Result and Discussion:

The researcher had collected information from faculties who serve in different streams like Arts, Science, Home Science, Commerce, Law and Education in university and colleges.

#### A. Basic Information :

Basic Information	Result in %
Designation	
Principal	8.00
Head of the Dept.	8.00
Asso. Prof.	30.66
Assit. Prof.	48.00
Visiting Lecturer	5.33
Institution	
College	78.66
University	21.33
Types Of Institution	
Self Finance	38.66
Grant In Aid	61.33
Government	0
Teaching Experience	



0-10 years	40.00
11-20 years	24.00
21-30 years	26.66
More than 31 years	9.33
<b>Serve To Whom</b>	
Only Girls	64.00
Only Boys	0
Co-Education	36.00
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	41.33
Female	58.66
<b>Age Group</b>	
25-35 years	30.66
36- 45 years	25.33
More than 46 years	44.00
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Married	81.33
Unmarried	14.66
Other	4.00

- Principals, HODs, Asso.Prof., Assit. Prof. and Visiting faculties were taken as samples of the research so that representation of all these designation can be included.
- The information was collected from the faculties of colleges and university including self finance and grant in aid institutions.
- The information was obtained from the faculties who had teaching experience of 1 year to 40 years, so researcher got information about sexual harassment



at educational institutions more accurately.

- The information was obtained from the faculties who teach in co-education as well as girls colleges/departments.
- Information was obtained from both, male and female faculties to know the opinions of the gender which is victimized and the gender which is the victimizer.
- Information was obtained from the faculties aging 25 to 60 years so on the basis of their age, their awareness about sexual harassment at educational institutions could be known.
- Researcher had taken information from married, unmarried and divorced faculties, so it can be known that their social status can affect their awareness regarding sexual harassment at educational institutions.

**B. About Internal Complaint Committee :**

Question	Yes	No	Don't Know
Do your institution have Internal Complaint Committee ?	64	6.66	29.33
Is it active ?	93.75	6.25	-

- 64% of faculties know that their institution have Internal Complaint Committee (ICC). While 6.66% faculties deny to have ICC, but surprisingly around 29% faculties don't even know about ICC.
- Around 93% of ICC are active in respective institutions.

**C. Information regarding awareness about laws based on types of institutions :**

16 faculties from university and 59 faculties from colleges were samples as an awareness of sexual harassment at educational institutions.

Question	Answer	University	College
		Result in %	Result in %
Awareness About law	Well Awarred	50	30.50
	Less Awarred	50	69.49

- As compared to college faculties, university faculties are well awared about laws of Sexual Harassment at educational institutions.

**D. Awareness about Sexual Harassment at educational institutions :**

Researcher prepared these questionnaire which are based on guidelines of Supreme Court.

Response	University	College
	Result in %	Result in %
What is Sexual Harassment?		
Well Awarred	100	83.05
Less Awarred	0	16.94
Authority demands to work alone before and after working hours indicates his malafide intention		
Yes	81.25	66.10
No	12.5	32.20
Not Attempt	6.25	1.69
Higher authority insists for regularity and perfection in work		
Yes	12.5	11.86
No	87.5	88.13
Behaviour of female at workplace influences male to harass her		
Yes	62.5	69.49
No	37.5	42.37
Not Attempt	0	5.08
Dressing of female at workplace influences male to harass her		
Yes	56.25	61.01
No	43.75	38.98
Misusing feminism to get relief in work		
Yes	68.75	47.45
No	25	45.76
Not Attempt	6.25	6.77
Female ignores her sexual harassment to get promotion or favour		



Yes	75	57.62
No	18.75	32.20
Not Attempt	6.25	10.16

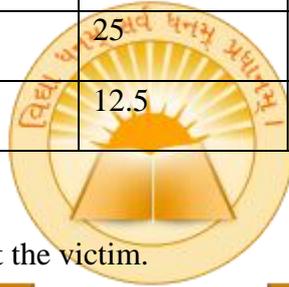
- As compared to college faculties, university faculties are fully aware about what is Sexual Harassment.
- As compared to college faculties, university faculties agree that if authority demands to work alone before and after working hours indicates his malafide intention. While around 8% faculties didn't attempted this question.
- Both college and university faculties agree that if higher authority insists for regularity and perfection in work is not a Sexual Harassment.
- Both college and university faculties almost equally agreed that behaviour of female and dressing of female at workplace influences male to harass her.
- Both college and university faculties almost equally agreed that misusing feminism to get relief in work by female. While around 13% faculties didn't attempted the question.
- As compared to college faculties, university faculties agree that female ignores her sexual harassment to get promotion or favour. While around 16% faculties didn't attempted the question.

**E. Information about Human Behaviour :**

	University	College
Response	Result in %	Result in %
Support the victim		
Yes		1
No	0	
Relations with victim for deciding whether to or not to support her?		
Yes	37.5	33.89
No	62.5	66.10
Is personal life affected if the victim files complaint?		
Yes	75	77.96



No	25	22.03
Is professional life affected if the victim files complaint?		
Yes	75	74.57
No	25	25.42
Do you feel that strict laws encourage the victim to raise voice against Sexual Harassment?		
Yes	87.5	88.13
No	12.5	11.86
Are the laws misused by female?		
Yes	62.5	67.79
No	25	23.72
Not attempt	12.5	8.47



- Almost all faculties agreed to support the victim.
- Both college and university faculties almost equally agreed that their relation with victim will not influence them for deciding whether to or not to support her.
- Both college and university faculties almost equally agreed that personal and professional life gets affected if the victim files complaint.
- Both college and university faculties almost equally agreed that strict laws encourage the victim to raise voice against Sexual Harassment.
- Both college and university faculties almost equally agreed that laws are misused by female. While around 21% faculties didn't attempted this question.



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**F. Data collected from Mahila Police Station, Rajkot :**

The information about cases of Sexual Harassment of last 5 years gathered from Mahila Police Station, Rajkot is as below :

Sr. No.	Year	No. Of Complaint
1	2014	Nil
2	2015	04
3	2016	Nil
4	2017	03
5	2018	02

\*As on 25/09/2018

**G. Data collected from Harassment Cell, Saurashtra University, Rajkot\* :**

Information of last 5 years regarding cases or complaints of harassment at university level is as below :

Sr. No.	Date & Year	Department	Complainant and accused/defendant	Status
1	30/06/2013	University campus	anonymous complaint against anonymous eve-teasers / anti social elements in university campus. Spot of incident not mentioned.	No report filed
2	2014	Law	anonymous complaint-Against Visiting Faculty	No report filed
3	30/08/2018	Bioscience	By Ph.D. Student against her guide	Cell report submitted to VC, forwarded to syndicate and the guide has been suspended and his guide ship has been withdrawn



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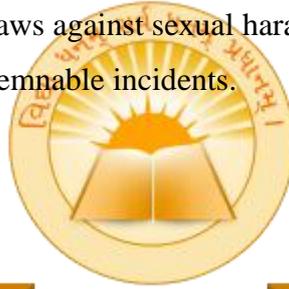
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\* As on 12/09/2018

### Conclusion:

Response from college and university faculties to the questionnaire based on definition and guidelines on sexual harassment given by Supreme Court showed much similarity. Results of the present study show that faculties engaged in higher education are aware of what sexual harassment means and also feel that the strict laws against sexual harassment of women have been instrumental in encouraging women to raise their voice against such incidents.

Though such incidents like rapes, gang rapes, sexual harassment affect their personal and professional life as opined by the faculties and the data of Mahila Police Station and Harassment Cell of Saurashtra University showed contradiction. Also the agencies supposed to be filing complaint against sexual harassment receive very few complaints. Apart from enacting strict laws against sexual harassment, the government and the society need to act in the direction of stopping such condemnable incidents.



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