



Contents list available <http://www.kinnaird.edu.pk/>

Journal of Research & Reviews in Social Sciences Pakistan

Journal homepage: <http://journal.kinnaird.edu.pk>



WORKPLACE HARASSMENT OF FEMALES IN EIS (EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS): MACRO AND MICRO DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AND PRACTICES

Aqsa Noreen ^{1*}, Zainab Asif ², Dr. Muhammad Sabboor Hussain¹

¹GC Women University, Sialkot

²University of the Punjab, Lahore

Article Info

*Corresponding Author

Email Id: mughalarif448@gmail.com

Abstract

This exploratory study aims to traverse the peril of harassment faced by females in educational institutions. Researches manifest that females are not only bullied by males but by females as well. The intimidators revealed that they had been bullied before the job too. This program of inquiry used a mixed approach due to its specific nature to arrive at results. This research paper planned to use an online questionnaire to collect data. Besides, eleven females were also interviewed. Questionnaire and interview questions were sent to the university instructor for plausibility, authenticity, and regularity examination, and his suggestion was taken into consideration. The researchers have injected the feminist theory to limit the scope of pertinent data in elaborating the data gathered. The results are very perspicuous and stipulate that verbal harassment is the most prevalent type in our educational institutions, and it leaves enormous impacts on the mental and emotional well-being of the victim. It also affects the working capacity of a person or an institution/organization. Another significant finding is that EIs must provide counseling to both victim and bully and raise cognizance among the students/masses. The study recommends that EIs should devise cogent policies against harassment. Thus, there is a dire need for more research on this topic to draw attention to this alarming issue.

Keywords

Educational institutions, verbal harassment, victim, Bully



1. Introduction

Workplace harassment is misbehavior from one person to another person at the workplace. Workplace harassment can be verbal, non-verbal, psychological, physical, and mental. In the 1970s, a Norwegian researcher, Olweus, began studying a form of aggression, termed *mobbing* and later, *harassment*. Olweus (1993) defined harassment as repeated exposure to adverse actions, such as a purposeful attempt to injure or inflict discomfort upon another either through words, physical contact, gestures, or exclusion from a group by peers over time (Minutolo, 2009).

1.1 Background of the study:

The word bully was initially used in the meanings of admirable, spirited, and traced back to the 16th century. In its current sense, which dates back to the late 19th century, harassment involves a bully who intimidates a victim through direct or indirect actions with a sense of superiority. Over time, harassment has become a growing issue, especially with fair sex during their working years/hours.

The job years are crucial for job-holding girls, but harassment proves to be a roadblock. Many females learn several new skills in this period, but this specific period can also prove the worst for some females because of being bullied. Harassment of females in Educational Institutions had not gained the attention of researchers before the 21st century. Researchers started working on this threat when harassment of females became a grave issue. Now, harassment in academia has caught much attention. In the early years of the job, females are mostly not well-aware of the people around them. So, one of the

biggest challenges in this process is harassment. Mostly in the workplace, females receive verbal harassment, e.g., receiving taunts, bad comments, name-calling, etc.

1.2 Significance of the study:

In the discussion of harassment, Educational Institutions (EIs) are not an anomaly. Female harassment in EIs has now become pervasive. Educational Institutions are the backbone of the country's progress as it is said that the classroom decides the future of a nation, but unfortunately, the threat of harassment considerably reduces the efficiency of these institutions. Harassment of females in educational institutions has gained a good deal of significance due to its lethal effects.

This kind of behaviour is not only fatal for the intimidator, but people who usually do harassment to others also suffer from psychological issues because they do this due to their feeling of dominance, but deep down, they feel inferior. Bystanders of harassment also have negative impacts on their minds by witnessing harassment. Harassment has become the cause of suicide for many people. It affects a person's health, i.e., they face health complaints like headaches, stomach problems, anxiety, stress, etc. However, it is essential to spread awareness among people to save them from suffering.

1.3 Scope of the study:

This study will focus on the harassment of females in EIs. This study can be used as a sample for researchers. Female harassment is a big issue that has not yet caught the attention of Governments,

particularly in countries like Pakistan. The issue of harassment of female in EIs has not been resolved yet. So, this article will help others that how to prevent or cope up with harassment in EIs. The ratio of female victims is increasing day by day. That is why it is essential to bring to light this alarming issue.

1.4 Limitations of the study:

The research was conducted on 84 different people. Small sample size is a limitation as the results cannot be generalized or transferred to the population from which the sample was taken. However, the respondents were the community's educated class to fulfill the demand of heterogeneity. The method of interaction with the sample members was online through a questionnaire with open-ended, closed-ended, and multiple-choice questions. Question types permitted a little subjectivity to the members, and the online survey method also put a limitation. All the members came from different backgrounds and had a different understanding of the concept, so lack of face to face communication or interview due to the prevailing pandemic situation also served as limitations. Moreover, handling such dynamic, social topics is always a critical task.

In eastern oriental society, harassment, especially in women, is considered a quite sensitive and complicated issue. Data collection and getting a questionnaire filled by people voluntarily in a non-secular society is an uphill task. Not many people are open to admitting that they have been victims of harassment. Due to this, there may be a lack of honesty from people while filling in their answers.

The English language being second or third may be an obstacle for the people to understand the questionnaire's questions. In addition to it, people had different interpretations of different terms. So, they interpreted the questions according to their preconceptions. That is why language and interpretations may act as limitations.

Another challenge was the specified period allowed to investigate the problem. Unlike the scholars who can devote several years or even their lifetime to research a single topic, the researchers of this topic had limited time. This research took place in a particular setting within a short period. The results may not be generalizable to other contexts because human behaviour varies from place to place and from time to time. Nevertheless, it does provide food for thought to future researchers by opening this area of research. This study examines the issue of harassment of females, its effects, and to provide ways to uproot this evil.

1.5 Delimitations of the study:

This research took place in two different institutions and two different cities of Pakistan, Government College Women University Sialkot being the first one and Government Girls Degree College Havelian, Abbottabad being the second one. So, the scope of this study is delimited to these particular settings.

The sample population was taken from the institution mentioned above. Eighty-four people were the respondents and had diverse opinions. So as academic research, the sample taken thus satisfies the requirement regarding the depth of the study.

The study was delimited to an online survey to gather responses from the people. Face to face

communication was another option, but due to the corona pandemic, the online survey method was adopted to best suit the research design during the prevalent times.

1.6 Statement of the problem:

Workplace harassment of a female is a growing problem. Usually, new jobholder females do not have the know-how of harassment. So, when they join an institution, the people around them start teasing them. So, it would be difficult for them to decide whether to continue working or resign. The student sufferers also face dilemmas. If it is not stopped, it will become the biggest flaw in any institution. People who become victims do not raise their voices because of societal reputation issues. That is why the issue remains unsolved.

1.7 Research Aims and Objectives:

- The main aim of the study is to explore the significant types of harassment faced by females.
- The study's second aim is to explore the detrimental effects on physical, mental and emotional well-being of the victims.
- The study's main objective is to highlight the right solutions to this threat.

1.8 Research Questions:

1. What are the various types of harassment faced by females in ELs in Pakistan?
2. What are the detrimental effects of harassment of females in EIs?
3. What are the major steps to stop this evil?

2. Literature Review

Harassment is not a new topic in the field of research. 'School harassment has been around for as

long as anyone can remember, featured in Western literature for over 150 years, e.g., Charles Dicken's *Oliver Twist* (Dicken's 1939/1966); Thomas Hughes' *Tom Browns' schooldays* (Hughes, 1857/1892)' (Shelley Hymel, 2015, p. 293) In western societies, harassment of females is one of the moot points. However, in Pakistan, this issue has recently caught the attention of researchers. Women are thought to be the symbol of family honor and dignity in Pakistan. In the past, it was not a severe threat. However, with technological advancement and the influence of Western culture, this issue has been growing at an alarming pace. Harassment leaves severe impacts on the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of people.

Many Studies revealed that its effects are wide-ranging and far-reaching. For the people having strong nerves, it causes a little discomfort, but for the emotionally unstable people, it may result in depression or even suicide in some cases. Adverse effects of harassment include depression and anxiety, increased feelings of gloominess and desolation, changes in sleep and eating patterns, and loss of interest in activities. It is essential to highlight that it causes scathe to all the people involved, either directly or indirectly.

It is not only the intimidator who suffers but the bully, himself/herself, suffers from psychological issues. People who witness harassment have negative impacts on their mental health and may feel encouraged to adopt those tactics if they are being rejected or coercively getting their wishes fulfilled or merely for the display of power. However, victims face drastic consequences. Bullied

jobholders cannot perform well in their institutions. Adebayo and Juliet (2014) say, 'teachers get bullied in educational institutions which have detrimental effects on the students resulting in low morale. The higher the educational qualifications of teachers, the higher are harassment and harassment, thus resulting in poor performance' (Kuwadzana, 2014). Victims feel trouble in decision making, in delivering lectures, sharing opinions, and participating in group activities. In short, harassment may turn an extrovert into an introvert or misanthropist. A large scale study conducted on 779 educators revealed that 46.5 percent had been subjected to harassment (Suzy fox, 2010, p. 931). It reveals that even the nations' architects are suffering. Thus harassment takes the form of a curse for the fate of the whole nation. Moreover, the bystanders of harassment in educational institutions or workplaces are more vulnerable to the moral quandary. If there is harassment in any institution by the teachers/supervisors, the students/employees will learn the same behavior. Recently, a case of Lahore Grammar School teachers involved in harassment was reported. It was disclosed that their male teachers bullied the female students and that it was not a current issue. Lahore Grammar School teachers usually do bully and harass female students. So, their students learn this behavior from them and do harassment to the timid people. A similar instance of Government College University, Lahore, was reported where a drunken professor sexually harassed his female students. So, the situation is becoming worst day by day. Women face innumerable challenges, and their track towards the

development of their career may best be termed as a labyrinth. Being caught in the middle of challenges, it seems a Herculean task to manage all affairs concurrently. Women are the pillars of society. They are the leaders of all the times. If a woman is strong in all the ways, then she can take good care of all other chores. If people keep hurting them, they cannot manage all the things together. Upon them lies the foundation of a society. Whether it's in job or in education, women have been a victim of discrimination. Studies conducted on gender issues report that female employees have more exposure to harassment. (Mary M. Meares, 2001, p. 8). It is thus evident that, unfortunately, women employees are an easy target of their bosses or superiors. With this trepidation, they decide to quit their jobs, but the effects of harassment do not go away even after leaving the job. Victims spend much time trying to gain support and defend them from harassment. Dr. Charlotte Rayner, a UK researcher, found that 20 percent of those who witness workplace harassment look for another job and that 98 percent are distressed by it (Redman, 2020). There is a notion that harassment is not a significant threat, and most of the people living in competitive societies have to face it, but then they get over it. Nevertheless, getting over such trauma is not easy. Many other post-traumatic effects of workplace harassment of females in educational institutions include absenteeism, insecurity, decreased motivation, low self-esteem, high blood pressure, physical numbness, pains in the back and panic attacks, etc. The notion that workplace harassment has adverse effects on employees is not new. (Malik, 2013, p.

619). There are many studies conducted on the linkage between workplace harassment and worker's emotional well-being; for example, it has been consistently focused on the prevalence of reported workplace harassment and its impact on the psychological health of the bullied (Bilgel, 2006); lower overall job satisfaction (Lapierre et al. 2005); high level of anxiety, depression, psychosomatic complaints, and musculoskeletal problems (Einarsen, 1996; Bjorkqvist, 1994); physical health complaints (Bowling & Beehr, 2006); and effect of harassment on self-esteem, terror, annoyance, and nervousness (Malik, 2013, p. 619). Dawn reported that a 16-year-old girl committed suicide by hanging herself with a ceiling fan in Karachi because the owner of the house where she worked had harassed and bullied her. There are many other cases about girls being bullied, which have never been reported. (Kanza, 2020). This type of cases will surge gradually until the creation of strong policies against them. To eradicate this evil, educational institutions should frame the policies, favorable for both the bullies and the victims. Strict actions or zero-tolerance policies may result in adverse consequences as there are some risk factors involved on both sides, which in extreme cases, may lead to suicide by the victim or retaliation by the bully. On the other hand, lenient handling may further boost up the morale of a bully. So, balanced and rational policies should be developed and executed. Educational institutions can provide counseling facilities to their students as it is one of the best ways to cope with this issue, which works well. Ross states, 'Counseling for bullies and victims are most

effective when part of each session focuses on having participants begin to understand the motivation and feelings of the other one. Bullies need to consider why their victims behave as they do, as well as how they feel like victims; victims also need to have some insight into what has brought the bullies to their current unacceptable level of behaviour in addition to considering ways (if any) in which they could try to handle the harassment problem themselves' (Bennett, p. 16). So, through counseling, harassment can be controlled or stopped peacefully. Sometimes talking to each other is also a possible solution. Another way to amicably stop harassment is through negotiation. A bully should be asked about his/her problem, and then through communication or agreement, the issue should be resolved. In this way, one can also save herself from disgrace or ill-reputation. Mikkelsen says, 'one of the most effective tools to overcome such conflicts and harassment at workplaces is the communication between the victim and the bully. This helps in controlling the conflict and harassment to a great extent. There is no better solution without dialogue between the victim and the bully' (Helga Mikkelsen, 2011, p. 2). Anti-harassment training will also be helpful in this regard.

2.1 Theoretical review:

"It is the belief in the importance of gender equality, invalidating the idea of gender hierarchy as a socially constructed concept." (Tanwar)

Feminist theory posits that sexual harassment should be treated as a sexist act that aims to subjugate and disempower women, and punish their

efforts to compete with men over jobs and status,” said Henry. (Henry, 2017)

In addition to highlight women's rights, it also aims to protect the women and girls from domestic violence, sexual harassment and abduction. The research shows that our people are stern followers of established social beliefs. Patriarchy leads to discrimination and inequality as a result of which women are seen as victims in the most cases. The interviewees' responses have a link with the sexual objectification and sexual harassment as most of them were being harassed on the basis of physical appearances. All this creates an atmosphere of oppression. Feminist theory provides theoretical, ideological and philosophical insight into all the chain of issues mentioned above and hence can be applied as a solution of harassment.

Recently sexual harassment, harassment and threat were emphasized around the globe by using hash tag Me Too. Women all around the world narrated their stories of sexual threat and harassment via twitter. The Me too movement also worked as women empowerment. Aurat March is also considered an outgrowth of the feminist movements which has gained much popularity. With its slogan of "My body, my will"

Nadia Ashraf, a young PhD student at Karachi University's Dr. Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Research, committed suicide because she was allegedly being harassed by her supervisor Professor Iqbal. Nadia Ashraf often told her close friends that Dr. Iqbal Choudhary will not permit her to have a Ph.D. degree and she told that she don't know what he wants from her.

2.2 Types of harassment

There are many types of harassment, but females face these kinds of harassment in EI:

- Verbal harassment
 - Non-verbal harassment
 - Social Harassment
 - Direct harassment
 - Indirect harassment
 - Sexual harassment
- a) Verbal harassment: Verbal harassment is when words hurt someone on purpose, usually more than once, victims feel bad because of it, and have a hard time stopping what is happening to them.
 - b) Non-Verbal Harassment: Non-Verbal harassment means daunting/condescending someone without using words. Angry facial expressions, hand gestures, giggling, staring, and ugly body postures are a few examples.
 - c) Social harassment: Social harassment is hurting someone's relationships or reputation. It includes ignoring someone without any reason, spreading rumors, insulting someone in a public place, sharing someone's private information with others, leaving someone, etc.
 - d) Direct harassment: Direct harassment is the most apparent form of harassment. It includes slapping, hitting, pinching, mocking, insulting someone, passing bad comments, etc.
 - e) Indirect harassment: This is the most blemishing type of harassment. It includes rumors, gossips, backbiting to bring harm to someone's reputation.

f) Sexual harassment: The type of harassment, whether physical, verbal, or emotional, involves a bully harassing an intimidator based on a person's sex, body, and sexual activity. Examples of sexual harassment include passing sexualized or abusive comments, making sexual gestures, pinching, bumping and touching someone sexually, cracking sexual jokes, etc.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research design:

Scrutinizing "Harassment of females in EIs, macro and micro discourse analysis of communication patterns and practices", Mixed Method Approach is used by researchers in the form of a survey for the collection of data. An online questionnaire was designed to have open-ended and closed-ended and multiple-choice questions related to harassment the females in EIs and experiences of being bullied. This online survey was conducted on a sample of 84 University students. Mostly, the age group of people who responded was 20-30. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted on different females. There were seven structured questions in the interviews thematically connected with the objectives and research questions of the study. This research is expected to find that harassment is still present in Pakistan's Educational Institutions. This harassment is mostly verbal, including name-calling, using insulting words, and passing bad comments. The harassment of females in EIs has become very common and negatively influences students' minds and causes many micro and macro issues. So, students' inadequate knowledge, lack of awareness, and informed opinion about harassment, which

causes micro and macro problems, is investigated in this research at the level of discourse analysis in communication practices and patterns.

3.2 Data Collection:

Data was collected through both primary and secondary methods. Primary data was collected through an e-questionnaire and online interviews, while journals, references, and the internet were used for gathering the secondary data.

4. Data Analysis:

4.1 Interview— The Data Analysis of the Qualitative Tool:

For the motive of understanding the topic under study more closely, on a broader level, eleven females belonging to different educational institutions were interviewed online. Among them were five university students, four of them faced harassment at the university level, while one was a victim of harassment during school times. A school going girl, two college going girls, and three teachers were also included. Seven questions and some subsidiary questions were asked from all of them about the effects, types, and solutions of harassment.

We started with a very general question, 'How would you delineate the experience of being bullied?' The responses were quite similar. The most frequent response was that being bullied was the most painful and distressing experience of their life. They shared how they suffered and how some of them resurrected themselves while some were still in a trance of trauma. One of the university students said, 'It was so hurting and at the same time astounding for me when I had to face it for the first

time. We all join any institution with many fantasies, but we never expect to be bullied, especially in educational institutions. I felt so pathetic because, in the educational institution, we go for educational purposes and build up our personality and groom ourselves, so such behavior is painful. Does our education teach us to be so ignorant? 'It may put a question mark on the educational institutions' paramount position because educational institutions are considered to be the most sacred centers for the development of human personality. Another student said, 'It was the most horrible and awful phase of my life because after being bullied, I felt like I am good for nothing person whom anyone can humiliate and mortify'. Her response shows her helplessness and how deeply harassment has wounded her personality. Another victim said, 'I have been bullied several times in the past. Sometimes people called me names because of the way I look, and they made inappropriate comments on my clothes. It was an aching experience'. One of the students who were being bullied by her class fellows said, 'It was something that really made me feel that I didn't belong there. Because I had changed my school, and everything was new to me. There was a group of girls like really mean and arrogant type species who made me feel like they were so superior, and I was nothing. In short, they crushed my confidence'. Being a victim of the irrational behaviour of people, the sufferer usually feels inferior. When a teacher asked the same question, she said, 'It was the worst phase of my life because one expects to be independent in her practical life, but such evils

restrict our growth. To me, harassment is no less than despotism'.

Once we got to know the victims' overall experience, they were asked, 'What have been the detrimental effects of harassment on your physical and mental health?' A university student who was a victim of harassment during her school times responded as 'I mentally suffered because I was unable to answer the stupid questions of my class fellows. I stopped talking to others, and I was afraid of standing between two girls because of their offensive comments on my height. So, I suffered from low self-esteem. Their questions were so hurting that I used to ask my mother, 'why am I so tall?' Another intimidator said, 'I became ill at that time and had constant headaches even I still suffer frequently from severe headache. 'One of the victims' answer was, 'Sometimes I tried to change the way I look like by putting more makeup or thinking about it during nighttime. But the truth is it, however, not affect me that much. I don't care about what people say or think about me. 'One responded as 'I was mentally tortured to such an extent that I avoided sitting in my fellows' company. I thought if I was like that, it was my fault'. Another student answered, 'I was totally overwhelmed by the inferiority complex. I felt nervous while talking to others. I lost self-confidence, and it led to depression. I became an introvert, and my heart squatted with torment. 'Another girl said, 'I suffered a lot, and I was so depressed that even I had to visit the psychiatrist. I spent sleepless nights and suffered from insomnia. I also lost much weight'. One of the girls who was facing harassment at college level replied, 'I stopped

eating altogether due to severe stomach problems, due to which my skin colour became even darker. My anger is out of my control now, and despite a lack of apparent aggravation or reason, I usually explode into a rage. But afterward, I regret over it'. When we asked this question from a teacher, the lady said, 'I suffered from insomnia and had constant headaches and pain in my eyes. After doing a little work, I felt tired. It was so nerve-wracking for me. 'Constant stress and fatigue can cause a loss of control over nerves. Overwhelming feelings of fear of being bullied inflicts emotional pain upon the victim, as evident from the above-stated responses. Out of eleven females, ten were severely affected by harassment, while one was not much affected.

Our next question was, 'Has harassment affected your academic performance?' 'We got mixed responses. A student said, 'Yes, it did affect my academic performance. I lost interest in studies and started performing below average. 'One responded in this way, 'No, I suffered through depression, but it was temporary. I recovered soon and maintained my performance. 'Another said, 'All the time, I used to think about the negative comments of the people. I was unable to concentrate on my studies. There was a time when I thought of quitting my studies, but my father gave me much courage. But the fact is academically, I suffered a lot and even still suffering. 'One of the girls replied, 'No, I don't let such bad things invade in. 'An interviewee said, 'The girls not only made offensive comments on my height, face and voice but also mocked my handwriting and creative writing. They used to say that I deliberately wanted to seek the attention of the

teachers. So, I quit creative writing and tried to cram the notes. Due to which I fell back academically.'

Then we asked the teachers how harassment has affected their teaching performance. A teacher said, '-----So I think it affected my performance up to 80% -----' Another lady said, 'Harassment has killed my creativity. Whenever my seniors bullied me, the negative thoughts prevailed on my mind to such an extent that I started getting angry with my students. I was unable to deliver my best during that time.'

It is evident from the above analysis that mental health problems affect a person's energy level, concentration, dependability, mental ability, and optimism, hindering performance. Research suggests that depression is associated with lower grade point averages and that co-occurring depression and anxiety can increase this association. Overall analysis shows that nine females' performance was much affected while two recuperated soon.

Later we asked pointedly, 'Which type of harassment did you face?' Most of the girls were victimized due to their skin colour, height, weight, etc. A girl said, 'I clearly remember that my fellows used to make my fun by saying, 'hey, why are you so tall? Why you have a very big face?' In our family, we all are heightened and have round, chubby faces, so I was also like that. I was always the tallest girl in my class, so everyone used to call me "Telenor ka khamba" (Telenor tower). They also targeted my voice by saying, 'Why do you speak so low?' and 'Why doesn't your voice come out?' Also, they looked at me so furiously as if they would eat me up. 'An interviewee responded, 'My seniors used

to pass taunting comments on me. They also spread rumours about me in our department. 'One of the students said, 'Some girls used to come and ask the irrational questions. They also used to threaten me and called me names.'

Another female said, 'people bullied me due to my dark skin colour. Even my close friends had hurt me a lot by taunting on my skin colour. A college-going girl replied, 'Living in northern areas of Pakistan, it is considered as a sin to have a dark skin colour. People here only prefer fair-colored persons. My skin colour is comparatively darker, and that's why I'm not only a victim of harassment in my EI, but I've to face it in my everyday life.' A university student said, 'Male students of my institution used to pass offensive comments on me and my clothes. They used to harass the girls whenever they got an opportunity, and they made us feel by saying inappropriate things about us that we were inferior to them. The teacher said, 'The male colleagues used to pass discouraging comments on my work. I had to face sexual harassment, as well. It is thus as clear as crystal that the women in our educational institutions mostly suffer from verbal harassment. Out of eleven interviewees, ten were the victims of verbal harassment. While some of them also faced social harassment, non-verbal harassment, and sexual harassment.

Our next question was, 'From which type of harassment do you think women suffer the most?' 'The most common response was verbal harassment. Others included non-verbal harassment, social harassment, cyber harassment, and sexual harassment. One of the students mentioned, 'In my

opinion, most of our society's females suffer from verbal harassment like people pass mean comments on their facial appearance, clothes, height, and weight, etc. Now cyber harassment is also rapidly becoming a popular type of harassment due to advancement in technology'. Another said, 'Women suffer mostly from body shaming, and people spread rumours about girls like that she is a slut or gold digger.' One of the ladies said to this extent that, 'Women in our society are being bullied in all the possible ways only because they are women. Male-dominant society considers women as an inferior creature.'

After receiving responses about the effects and types of harassment, we were interested in asking the appropriate solution to this evil. So, we asked, 'In a society like ours, do you think that sharing your problem may provide a possible solution?' 'One of the responses was, 'No, it is so problematic to share your problem. Because people always tend to give their opinions rather than understanding someone. But anyways, some trusted people can lift you. You can share your experience with them.' Our society proves this saying right that 'As many chronicles as there are bards'. Sometimes giving your opinion without understanding the actual case can exaggerate the issue and create confusion. People suffering from such traumas need to be consoled and motivated. So rather than giving an opinion, giving motivation may prove beneficial for the intimidator. Another opined, 'No, it mostly makes the situation worst. Most parents do not understand this issue, sometimes teachers do not take it seriously, and our fellow students take it as fun. Nobody understands the

condition of a sufferer until he/she commits suicide.’ While talking on this matter, a student said, ‘To be very honest, topics such as depression, sexual abuse, harassment, etc. are considered taboo, and no one talks about such topics openly because of the fear of criticism. I tried to share my problem with my parents and friends, but everyone advised me to mind my own business and let others do what they want’. All this happens due to the lack of awareness. In our society, people think that these issues do not exist at all. One of the girls said, ‘Sharing your problem with your family members and some loyal friends may provide you a possible solution or the course of action. Constantly being bullied affects your mental capacities and I think one can't make the right decision in such a state of mind.’ The general response of four females was that sharing the issue with some reliable persons might provide a solution. So, five out of eleven women were in favour of sharing the issue. While six agreed at the point that sharing is not a solution.

Lastly, they were asked, ‘What do you expect from your institution to do to control or eradicate this evil?’ One of the students said, ‘I don't expect anything from the institution because teachers can control small kids, but they cannot control the grown-ups. Grown-ups are responsible for their sayings and actions. Moreover, institutions don't pay heed to such kind of deeds.’ Two of the students held this point of view, and they were right in saying that adults are responsible for what they say and do. That is why they do not expect anything from their institution. Here we have a little disagreement with them because when you enter the institution's

premises, you are under the supervision and control of that institute. So, the individual issues become collective issues that should be solved by the supervising authorities. An intimidator said, ‘My institution actually takes strict actions. They fine the bullies heavily and expel them. But the situation is still the same because very few of us raise our voice against this evil. People do not talk about it because of the fear of dire consequences. I think awareness workshops should be held to eradicate this issue.’ Giving her opinion on this point, a student said, ‘Raising awareness is a need of the hour. Moreover, anti-harassment courses should be offered to students by educational institutions.’ Another student said, ‘Favouritism is one of the root causes of harassment. Usually, the favourite students of teachers take advantage of and bully others, especially at the school level. I think teachers should remain impartial and unbiased to eradicate or at least control this issue.’ One of the teachers said, ‘Institution should provide equal opportunities to all regardless of gender and other parameters of discrimination. I think there should be no tolerance for a bully in an educational institution so that no one can dare to harm any other person either directly or indirectly.’ Most of the women were in favour of raising awareness through seminars, workshops, and anti-harassment courses.

4.2 Data Analysis: Online Questionnaire

An online questionnaire was designed to gather data from respondents. It had 15 questions, five questions for each research question. Three open-ended questions were included, along with seven closed-ended questions and five multiple-choice questions.

84 was the total number of respondents. The analysis was done using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The table, bar graphs, and percentage distribution have been used. The first open-ended a few people added physical harassment is verbal harassment. Out of 84 respondents, 95.2% defined it in the most precise and intelligible way, while 4.76% confused it with physical and non-verbal harassment. A few responses are narrated below:

- ‘Verbal harassment is when words are hurting someone on purpose, usually more than once, feels bad because of it and has a hard time stopping what is happening to them’.
- ‘Forcefully criticizing and insulting another person.’
- ‘Verbal abuse is the act of forcefully criticizing, insulting, or denouncing another person.’
- ‘Insulting or using abusive languages to mock, embarrass, or insult another person.’
- ‘Verbal harassment is when an individual uses verbal language (e.g., insulting, teasing, etc.) to gain power over his/her peers.’
- The second open-ended question was, ‘How does harassment affect the mental capabilities of a victim?’ All the respondents seemed to agree that harassment seriously deteriorates the mental capabilities of the victim. Some responses are stated below: question was, ‘How would you define verbal harassment?’ The majority of the respondents defined it as hurting someone through words, while ‘Harassment disturbs the mental health and emotional state of a person, causes headache, depression, and severe stress

and also reduces a person's ability to focus on his/her work.’

- ‘It causes harm to the brain and becomes the reason for depression, which affects a person's thinking ability.’
- ‘The victim of harassment is more likely to suffer from stress, anxiety, and worst depression.’

When the respondents were asked to give their view to uproot this evil, mixed responses were put forward. The majority of people were in favor of ignoring the bully. In contrast, some of them described the penalty as a solution. Agreement and behavioral changes were other popular responses. Others included framing policies, raising awareness, etc. The next question was, ‘In your opinion, what would be the possible solution to this threat?’. It was responded in a variety of ways. Some of the responses are given below: ‘Negotiation and also laws made by the government are the best solution to this threat.’ ‘A bully’s comments should be ignored, and people must be made aware of it.’

- ‘The possible solution to this threat is providing counseling at the school level’.
- ‘Serious actions must be taken against the bullies.’
- ‘One must take action against it without any fear.’

So out of 84 respondents, 18.96% of people opined that ignoring the bully is the best solution. 17.24% females asked for the maximum penalty for the bully, 15.5% people showed their consent that through negotiation, this evil could be extirpated, the same percentage of women went for behavioral

changes, 12% ladies chose awareness through seminars, lectures, courses as a solution to harassment while remaining 20.8% people provided framing policies, counseling and showing reciprocal

behavior towards bullies as the possible solution to this threat. The closed-ended questions included in the questionnaire, along with the responses are shown below in the table:

Table1: Shows Responses from the questionnaire

Closed-ended Questions	Yes	No
Is it easy to spot out verbal harassment?	60%	40%
Have you ever been a victim of verbal harassment?	56.30%	43.80%
Does harassment cause serious health issues?	92.50%	7.50%
Does harassment in educational institutions affect working efficiency?	97.50%	2.50%
Do you think zero-tolerance policies are effective against bullies?	55.60%	44.40%

As indicated in the table, the major findings are:

1. Given the generality of females, verbal harassment can easily be detected as it involves the use of words.
2. This shows that the majority of the females of our society are the victims of verbal abuse. More than half of the respondents suffered from verbal harassment.
3. 92.5% of the participants hold that harassment is the cause of severe health issues. Harassment affects mental and physical health because both cannot be thought of as separate.
4. It is evident that harassment affects the working output. 97.5% of people supported the stance that either its academic performance or teaching

performances both are profoundly altered by harassment. It is observed that mental and emotional health issues especially lack concentration, considerably reduces the working efficiency.

5. 55.6% of the respondents adhered to the point that there should be zero-tolerance policies against bullies provide no solution. Penalty may cause to suppress the issue for some time, but it may also cause it to emerge in another or even more prejudicial form while 44.4% of people reckoned that there should be no leeway for a bully.

Then we moved towards the gist of the study and asked: Q1: Which is the most common type of harassment faced by women in educational institutions?

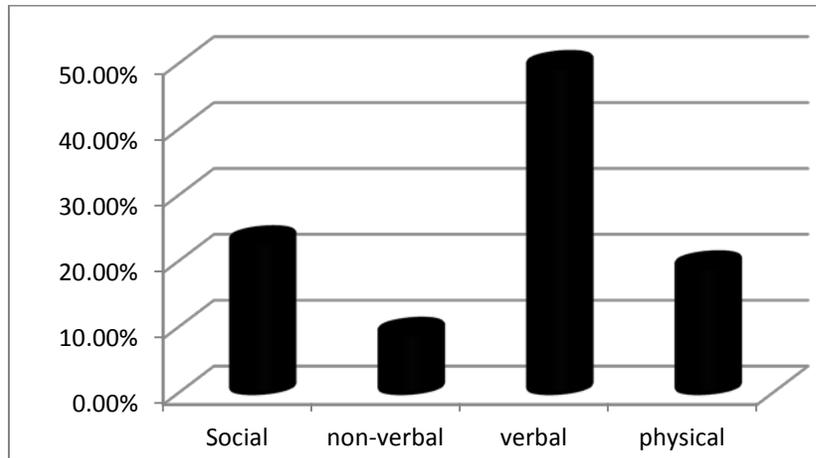


Figure-2 Harassment faced by women in educational institutions

Figure-2

Referred to figure-2, verbal harassment is the most common type of harassment faced by women in educational institutions. In educational institutions, people mostly aim to demoralize the others as a part of the competition, so they do not harm others physically to be on the safe side. People in educational institutions injure others through words, so verbal harassment is the most popular type of

harassment in educational institutions while spreading rumors and gossips is the second common type in EI.

To get a more in-depth insight into the effects of harassment, this question was included in the questionnaire:

Q2: Did you suffer from any kind of disease after being bullied?

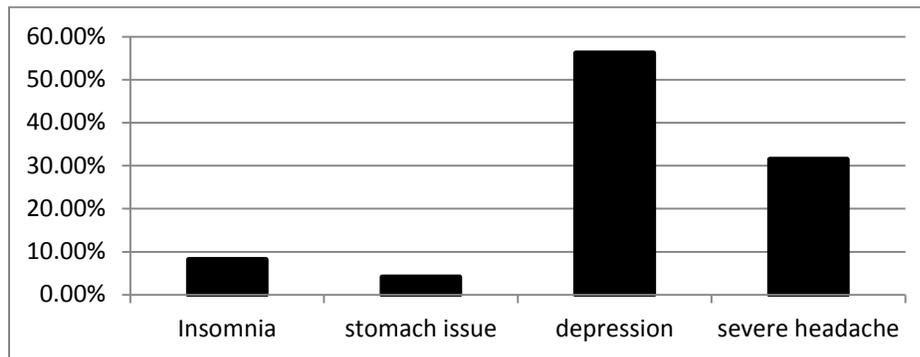


Figure-3 Harassment leads to life-threatening

As illustrated above in figure-3, it is apparent that harassment leads to life-threatening issues, depression being the most common health issue

faced by the victim. As the effects of harassment are wide-ranging, so the intimidator also faces headaches, insomnia, and stomach problems.

Q3: Which of the following is a possible solution to harassment?

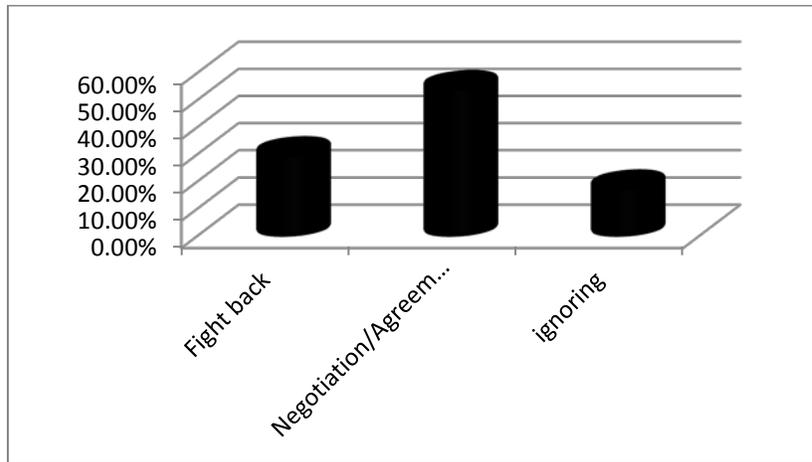


Figure-4 Respondents toward bullying

Figure-4 indicates that 53.7% of the respondents were in favor of bringing the bully to the table of

negotiations because it is considered the most peaceful way of eradicating this evil.

Q4: Counseling must be provided to:

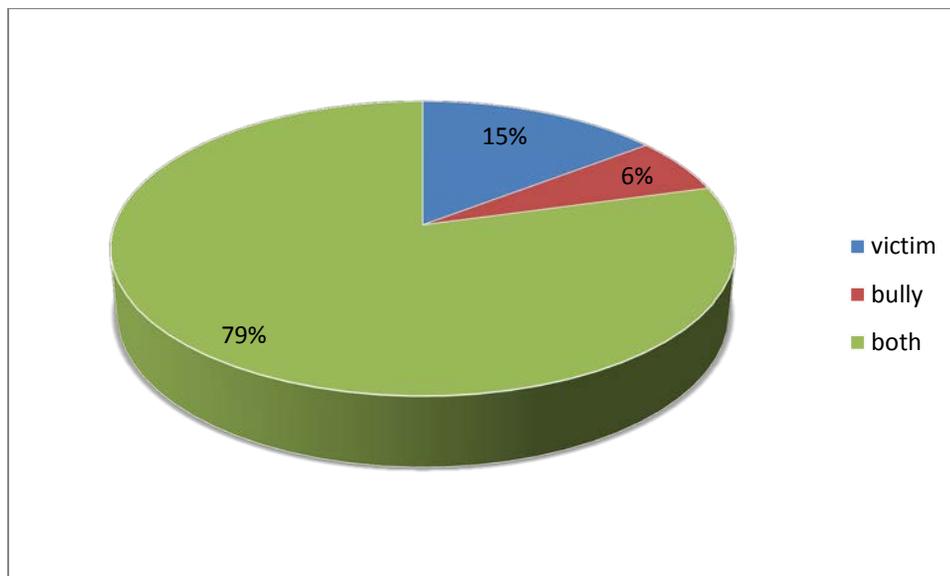


Figure-5 Shows the percentage of victim, bully and both

Harassment can be controlled or uprooted by providing counseling to both victim and bully because both suffer in their own way (as illustrated in figure-5). The response shows that this evil can only be wiped out by guiding both sufferers because risk factors are involved on both sides. To get the idea about the general understanding of the respondents, we asked, "Under which category does

verbal harassment fall"? Three options were provided, and 72.5% responded that verbal harassment is in the category of direct harassment, while 20% put it in both the categories, and 7.5% categorized it in indirect harassment. Here it must be made conspicuous that some of the people confused social harassment with verbal harassment. Respondents were asked in the questionnaire that

'Did you feel inferiority complex after being bullied'? 60.5% chose the option 'sometimes', 19.8% chose 'every time' and 19.8% 'never'. When someone is being bullied repeatedly, his/her mind makes him/her think that he/she is inferior as compared to others. This thinking is then turned into an inferiority complex over time and can cause mental illness. It can be considered as one of the earlier symptoms of a victim of harassment. When they were asked whether they strongly agree, agree are neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree with the statement "Educational institutions should frame rational policies against harassment:" 73.2% of females strongly agreed with the statement, 18.3% agreed with this, and 8.5% were neutral. It has been observed that a vast majority of the respondents expect that educational institutions should frame noetic policies to stem the spate of harassment. However, some people hold this standpoint that individuals must change their conduct to bring an efficacious impact.

5. Conclusion:

After analyzing the primary and secondary data, the researchers came up with the following conclusions: Although harassment exists in many forms in our EIs like non-verbal, social, direct, and indirect harassment, the females in EIs face chiefly verbal harassment. It has been discernable that harassment in any form leaves terrible impacts on victims. It causes damaging health difficulties and sometimes even irreversible losses. It also affects the students' academic performance to a great extent and the

functioning of working ladies. There are many recommended ways of eradicating this issue. Counseling of victim, bully, and witness is one of the ways. Negotiation with the bully, formulating policies by EIs and raising awareness through lectures, seminars, and anti-harassment courses are suggested means to root up this evil. Nevertheless, it must be mentioned here that recognition of the problem is crucial in this regard. A prevention program can only be fruitful if the problem is identified correctly and at the right time.

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