Breaking the Cycle: Addressing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the pervasive and deeply entrenched issue of sexual harassment within Bangladeshi universities. This research followed a qualitative research approach and was conducted on the female students of Pabna University of Science and Technology of Bangladesh. Data were collected from 20 female students through In-Depth Interviews, utilising a convenience sampling method. This study reveals that female students face both verbal and non-verbal sexual harassment on campus and outside the campus, which significantly disrupts the academic environment. Although there are legal requirements for the university to implement complaint mechanisms, institutional responses remain inconsistent, often hindered by stigma, fear of retaliation, and distrust in the justice system. Therefore, the Sexual Harassment Prevention Committee has to work effectively to punish the perpetrators and make a safe and secure environment for all.

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is defined as an unwelcome sexual behavior or forced sexual engagement in which an individual causes discomfort and maltreatment to another person (Krebs et al., 2016). Treating someone sacrilegiously, degrading their honor, or creating an objectionable environment is the primary goal of sexual harassment (UN Women, 2019). Conceptually, it is a type of discriminatory behavior that encompasses a variety of harassing activities as well as verbal or physical harassment (Cosentino & Banerjee, 2017). The most common type of sexual harassment is gender-based, and it includes insults or jokes about sexuality, sexist remarks, unwanted sexual advances, threats, and physical contact (Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2014). Women are continuously harassed by coworkers, bosses, and even teachers, classmates or acquaintances (Kahsay et al., 2020; Rosenthal et al., 2016). The incidence of sexual harassment is not limited to face-to-face encounters; anonymous social media sites have become increasingly conducive to this type of behavior (Nova et al., 2019). In accordance with the EU Gender Directive, sexual harassment is defined as any unwanted sexual verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior that violates someone's dignity, especially when it creates a hostile, threatening, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment (Hoel & Vartia, 2018). It seems to be harassment for both people who directly experience the aforementioned actions and those who witness them indirectly in their surroundings. However, these behaviors can take place in physical spaces (in a range of social circumstances) or cyberspaces (Johnson et al., 2018; Kasdagli & Mourtzaki, 2020).

The phenomenon of sexual harassment in academia is a multifaceted and intricate problem that affects everyone in the academic community and poses a multitude of challenges, especially when it comes to seeking solutions. Nowadays, such harassment in higher education institutions has become an alarming and widespread problem in Bangladesh, generating severe worries about the safety and well-being of university students. According to findings outlined in the report by Plan International (2021), a non-governmental organization, a significant percentage of girls and

young women (73.8%) reported experiencing incidents of violence and harassment within educational settings in different districts in Bangladesh. So, sexual harassment, especially targeting female students, persists despite a number of institutional policies and legal frameworks that seek to advance gender parity (Islam & Ferdous, 2023). It frequently takes place in classes, residence halls, or during campus events and can take many different forms, including as verbal abuse, physical approaches, and online misconduct (N. Ahmed et al., 2023). A culture of silence among victims is exacerbated by the absence of extensive support networks, institutional indifference, and fear of social stigma (Rezvi et al., 2021). In addition to impeding the victims' access to justice, these obstacles impede their intellectual and mental growth.

The manifestation of sexual harassment in Bangladeshi universities encompasses a spectrum of behaviors, including inappropriate comments and gestures as well as physical transgressions. Within educational environments, inappropriate touching and discussions regarding physical appearance frequently constitute common forms of such harassment (Shahriar & Ferdous, 2023). Thus, it can be said that one of several forms of actual and prospective gender-based violence that occur in higher education systems ranges from bullying and sexist jargon to sexual assault and rape. However, over the last two years, 27 incidents of sexual harassment have been documented at the country's top five universities (M. Ahmed, 2024). According to the University Grant Commission (UGC), 45 of 53 public institutions and 71 of 109 private universities have anti-sexual harassment cells; however, these appear to exist solely on paper. After conducting a poll of students from 15 public and private institutions, this paper discovered that while virtually almost all of them had experienced sexual harassment or knew someone who had, 31.5 percent of students were unsure where to file a complaint. When asked if they knew of any cells where harassment reports could be submitted, 77.4 percent said no. There are no seminars, conferences, or other awareness programs about where and how to file complaints in compliance with the Sexual Harassment Prevention Guideline of Bangladesh High Court at their universities, according to 59.1% of respondents (The Daily Star, 2023). This presents an awful picture of our educational system, which has to be addressed.

Sexual harassment on university campuses is most commonly initiated by students; however, teachers or other staff may also perpetrate it, and the victim may be female students, teachers, or other staff. It is nearly difficult for a woman to defend herself from mocking on a university campus due to the rigid patriarchal social structure. Such harassment are painful experiences that can cause severe psychological distress for women, which has detrimental effects on the larger community (Ackard & Neumark-Sztainer, 2002; Gouws & Kritzinger, 1995; Lenhart, 2016). Anger, low self-esteem, loss of confidence, despair, anxiety, psychological trauma, and helplessness are examples of problematic reactions (Schneider et al., 1997). It has been a regrettable aspect of the educational process, impacting pupils' emotional health, sense of self, and capacity for their academic success (Abe, 2012; Davidson & Fielden, 1999; Imonikhe et al., 2011).

In the recent past, sexual harassment of female students in educational institutions in Bangladesh has been a burning issue. Three-fourths of the female students faced at least one type of sexual harassment during their study period in the universities inside and/or outside campus by campus-related people. More than half (53%) of the female students who experienced sexual harassment experienced distress, followed by anger (29%), and severe mental shock (11%). 90 percent of the students reported that the harassed female students remained largely silent and did not protest the acts in any way. Just 3 percent of the female students are fully aware of the Bangladesh High Court's Sexual Harassment Prevention Guideline, and over one-third are unaware of the regulation (Barkat et al., 2013).

Worldwide, one in three women experiences physical and/or sexual abuse at the hands of a partner or another individual (UN Women, 2019; WHO, 2013). In a comprehensive study of Latcheva (2017) on prevalence in EU member states, roughly half of all working women have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15, albeit there is significant variance between nations and sectors. A similar variation in getting exposed to sexual harassment is reported in the study of Fnais et al., (2014) on the situation of medical students, for

example, where sexual harassment shows a prevalence of 3 to 93%, while exposure to sex discrimination is stated to be between 19 and 92% of all respondents. When reviewing studies on the prevalence of sexual harassment in higher education, we conclude that well-cited, international studies also show a large variation in prevalence, from 2 to 93 percent, depending on a variety of factors. Approximately 20–25 per cent of female students in the USA have experienced sexual harassment, according to several major studies. Henning et al. (2017) in their study revealed that the number is slightly lower for female staff in general. Moreover, studies of Bondestam & Lundqvist (2018), McDonald (2012), and Till (1980) on the experiences of the marginalized groups with limited influence over their situation result in a higher reported incidence of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment has reached epidemic levels in the world's higher education systems (Bondestam & Lundqvist, 2020; Dziech & Weiner, 1990). In the study of Telfils et al. (2024), 36.9% of higher education students experience sexual harassment globally, with women at 43.7% and men at 16.8%. A thorough investigation of Klein & Martin (2021) into sexual harassment among college and university students worldwide found that harassment rates were consistently high, especially when it came to unwelcome sexual attention and gender harassment. Then, the consistent underreporting of harassment occurrences is frequently ascribed to institutional mistrust, fear of reprisals, and stigma. It also highlighted the substantial effects victims face in terms of their academic performance and mental health, including academic disengagement, anxiety, and depression. More specific issues are addressed by Morley (2011) frequently, such as the male lecturers demanding sexual services from female students for them to acquire a legitimate examination certificate. Furthermore, based on the study of Fedina et al. (2018); Voth Schrag (2017), 22% of college women have suffered relationship violence, and nearly 20% have experienced completed or attempted sexual assault since starting college.

In the context of Bangladesh, which is a low-middle-income country and a society with a patriarchal mindset and conservative attitude towards women (Ahmed & Sen, 2018; Chowdhury, 2009), the prevalence of sexual harassment against women is startling. And, the spread of such harassment is quite vast, and the majority of girls are the victims of it directly or indirectly in the country, according to Odhikar (2019). However, Sexual harassment is an ongoing concern in Bangladeshi universities, with research indicating a high prevalence of such incidents. Rezvi et al. (2021) reported that sexual harassment was extremely common in higher education, with male students, strangers, or faculty members committing verbal sexual harassment at a rate of 60% greater than non-verbal sexual harassment at a rate of 51.4%. Similarly, Parvej et al. (2020) found that 12.3% of participants experienced sexual harassment regularly, while 91.4% of participants had experienced it at least once in their lives. A sizable fraction of harassment cases remains unreported. The study found that 89% of University of Dhaka students who were harassed in the early days did not notify any official authorities about the occurrence.

The reasons for not speaking up were fear of social stigma, mistrust of the judicial system, embarrassment, and dread of scholastic challenges. Especially in the conservative groups, the victims are frequently discouraged from seeking legal action due to social stigma and character assassination. In similar terms, Roy et al. (2023) conducted an inquiry at Khulna University, where female students are routinely subjected to verbal and nonverbal sexual harassment, and many of these incidents go unreported due to an extensive lack of confidence in the potential for legal institutional action against the perpetrators. Furthermore, Mukherjee & Dasgupta (2022) explained that the dynamics of power significantly influence this phenomenon, such as faculty members occasionally exploiting their authoritative positions to perpetrate harassment against their students.

The ramifications of sexual harassment on students are intricate, influencing their psychological well-being, academic achievement, and overall university experience. In this regard, Burn (2019); Langhout et al. (2005) assessed that the incidents can affect the psychological as well as the physical well-being of a person, and there are several negative effects related to it. Kalra & Bhugra (2013) also said that it makes the victims

feel helpless and powerless, which affects their self-esteem. However, Ullman & Brecklin (2003) found some traumatic consequences of sexual harassment, anxiety, mood disorders, and Brown et al. (2009); Najdowski & Ullman (2009) found post-traumatic stress disorder. According to Shahriar and Ferdous (2023), victims often experience mental stress, which can lead to poor academic performance and an inability to focus on their academic endeavors. Similarly, Roy et al. (2023) investigated on Khulna University and found a strong correlation between harassment and academic withdrawal. The female students often skip classes or avoid specific areas of the campus, leading to diminished academic engagement. It can disrupt a student's academic trajectory; as a result of the hostile environment, some victims decide to discontinue their attendance or alter their career aspirations.

This trend is echoed in a psychological study by Nigar et al. (2025), which links fear of sexual assault to chronic anxiety and decreased their academic focus. Also, Athanasiades et al. (2023) examined that psychological stress brought on by harassment may result in chronic psychological consequences, including depression and anxiety. In their research, Johnson et al. (2016) discovered that victims of sexual harassment experienced psychological effects on their academic careers, performance losses, and lifelong trauma. They also disclosed that the event caused the victims' career focus to shift, and several of them barely managed to make it through their academic path. In similar terms, Parvej et al. (2020) said that it might be difficult for students to participate in extracurricular activities or freely connect with their peers because of the widespread sense of uneasiness and fear that harassment fosters. In a recent survey conducted in Bangladesh by Jannite et al. (2024), which focused on university students, almost half of the participants (46.1%) said they had experienced sexual harassment made possible by technology. Of those impacted, 78.2% expressed stress, 36.9% reported anxiety, 47.7% indicated moderate to severe distress, 34.9% reported suicidal thoughts, and 59.8% reported depressive symptoms. It also showed that the students who had been sexually harassed had a considerably higher chance than those who had not been harassed of reporting negative mental health consequences.

The legal framework addressing sexual harassment in Bangladesh is principally grounded in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013. However, it is still unclear how effective this law is with regard to universities. According to a study of Khan & Halder (2022) on the legal aspects of sexual harassment in Bangladesh, current regulations are insufficient to address the changing form of harassment, especially in educational institutions. To handle such cases, Bangladeshi institutions have established sexual harassment complaint committees; nevertheless, power disparities and a lack of accountability usually compromise these bodies' effectiveness. According to Shahriar & Ferdous (2023), these committees frequently fail to address complaints, and falsifying crime reports is a common problem. Ahmed et al. (2023) contended that power imbalances and institutional inertia support harassment and foster a hostile learning environment. Postcolonial power systems, restricted student agency, and bureaucratic resistance are identified as significant hurdles to justice in. Also, Islam & Ferdous (2023) pointed out that internal complaint committees are inefficient as they are frequently understaffed, politically motivated, or lack gender sensitivity training. Additionally, Roy et al. (2023) concluded that the insufficient awareness regarding these committees and the apprehension of retaliation deter many victims from reporting their experiences.

At present, there is a notable absence of qualitative research in Bangladesh that investigates the various forms of harassment encountered by female students in higher education institutions, the effects of such harassment on these individuals, the existing legal mechanisms available for lodging complaints, and the level of awareness regarding these mechanisms among the student population. This research definitely fills the gap.

This study investigates the prevalence, impact, and responses to sexual harassment within higher educational institutions in Bangladesh, with a particular focus on Pabna University of Science and Technology, a prominent public university in the country.

METHODS

This research used a qualitative research approach. Data were collected from 20 female

students of Pabna University of Science and Technology (PUST). Participants were selected using convenience sampling, allowing easy access to individuals who were willing and available to participate. This approach was chosen due to the sensitivity of the topic and the challenge of gaining access to a broader respondent pool. The primary data collection method was the In-Depth Interview (IDI). Interviews were conducted face-to-face at a location convenient and comfortable for participants, ensuring privacy and reducing the risk of discomfort or distress. Each interview lasted between 20-30 minutes, depending on the participant's willingness to elaborate and the depth of discussion achieved. An interview guide with open-ended questions was used, covering topics related to experiences, perceptions, reporting barriers, institutional response, and suggestions for improvement. Before data collection, participants were informed about the study's objectives, their rights, and the confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was obtained from each participant. The researchers ensured that individuals could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. To maintain anonymity, unique codes were assigned in place of participant names, and all identifiable information was excluded from transcripts and reports.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Demographic Profile of the Respondents

IDI number	Faculty	Age (Years)
01	Faculty of Humanities and Social Science	20
02	Faculty of Science	23
03	Faculty of Science	19
04	Faculty of Engineering and Technology	22
05	Faculty of Humanities and Social Science	19
06	Faculty of Business Studies	22
07	Faculty of Business Studies	20
08	Faculty of Humanities and Social Science	26
09	Faculty of Engineering and Technology	26
10	Faculty of Engineering and Technology	24
11	Faculty of Humanities and Social Science	19
12	Faculty of Humanities and Social Science	20
13	Faculty of Life and Earth Science	20
14	Faculty of Engineering and Technology	18
15	Faculty of Humanities and Social Science	19
16	Faculty of Humanities and Social Science	21
17	Faculty of Humanities and Social Science	24
18	Faculty of Life and Earth Science	23
19	Faculty of Life and Earth Science	21
20	Faculty of Business Studies	20

The table above illustrates that a total of 20 female students from PUST participated in the interviews. Within this group, 10 students fall within the age range of 18 to 20 years, 6 students are aged between 21 and 23 years, and 4 students belong to the 24 to 26 age group. Among the 20 participants, 8 were from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, 3 were from the Faculty of Life and Earth Science, 3 were from the Faculty of Business Studies, 4 were from the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, and 2 were from the Faculty of Science.

Types of Harassment faced by the students

Verbal Harassment	Unsolicited comments on clothing
	Sexist jokes
	Persistent unwanted flirting
Non-verbal Harassment	Display of sexually explicit content
	Stalking, prolonged staring
Physical Harassment	Unwanted touching
	Standing too close
Cyber Harassment	Sending sexual messages/images
	Online stalking

The table above shows the types of harassment faced by the female students. The students faced verbal, non-verbal, physical, and cyber harassment. "Many seniors of university have been reaching out to me through messages in online. They consistently stalk my story, my profile in Facebook, attempting to initiate conversations with me on a range of topics. Some of them even reached out to me directly through messages with their proposals. However, I find myself lacking interest in this matter. However, I have concerns about the potential repercussions of blocking them." (IDI 2, Faculty of Science, 23years).

Several students stated experiencing harassment from people walking by and rickshaw pullers while on the road. They expressed that the manner in which people passing by and rickshaw pullers look at them creates feelings of discomfort, leading them to minimize their outings as they do not perceive their environment as safe. One of the respondents stated, "I travel to campus and back home via rickshaws due to difficulties I experience with the bus, which is why I don't use the university bus service. As I stand alone on the road, searching for a rickshaw, I notice that numerous passersby gaze at me intently for an extended period. It is also a common experience for us that when we visit the bazaar, we often have to deal with unwanted touching and the sexual gazes of men." (IDI 4, Faculty of Engineering and Technology, 22 years).

Another student remarked, "With the ongoing construction work on campus, many female students have expressed feeling uncomfortable due to the workers' tendency to stare at them. While giving flirty glances, workers engaged in hushed conversations among themselves. It appears that they engage in gossip regarding the girls they look

at." (IDI 14, Faculty of Engineering and Technology, 18years). Two students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences expressed that they were harassed by their male faculty member which they did not even thought of their dream.

Safe Environment on the Campus

A secure environment is undeniably necessary for the prevention of assault, harassment, and gender-based violence, which predominantly impact female students. If a safe and secure campus cannot be guaranteed, it certainly impacts their mental well-being. Their academic performance, as well as their participation in extracurricular activities, will also be impacted (United News of Bangladesh, 2024).

The female students reported experiencing harassment from their peers, senior students, faculty members, and construction workers. Nine students expressed that the campus environment is perceived as somewhat unsafe and disrespectful, citing instances of harassment from construction workers and even faculty members towards students. Eleven students indicated that the campus environment has significantly improved, now characterized by a sense of safety and respect. In the past, female students often lived with fear, concerned that if a political leader took an interest in them, it could lead to harassment, including intimidation of their male friends to stop communication. So now they think that the current state of the campus environment has reached a level of security.

Sharing the Incident of Harassment

Sharing incidents of sexual harassment with trusted individuals is essential, as it may provide significant emotional relief. The individuals can convince them that it was not her fault. It is evident that following instances of harassment, individuals

who have been victimized often engage in self-blame. A total of 14 respondents reported that they communicated the incidents to their friends, whereas 6 students indicated that they discussed the incidents with their family members.

It is evident that the incident was not communicated to their faculty members. When enquired about the reasons for not disclosing the incidents to their female faculty members, one respondent articulated, "I shared with my friends. They urged me to share with the female teachers of my department. However, I did not find any female faculty member who appeared sufficiently approachable for me to discuss the incidents of harassment. It may be beneficial for me to initiate contact with them, as they are likely to be receptive to collaboration." (IDI 8, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, 26 years).

Fearing about gossip, another student said, "I did not share as I was worried that if I told any female faculty, the news would spread and every one of the department would know about it. Furthermore, she might blame me or tell me to stay silent. She might not act because it could harm the department's reputation." (IDI 16, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, 21 years).

Other students articulated similar perspectives. The students who communicated the incidents to their families conveyed that, upon sharing these experiences, their families advised them to exercise caution, refrain from remaining on campus after class, and return to their residences as early as possible. Another study has also revealed that parents restrict their daughters' mobility as a means to minimize their exposure to harassment.

Awareness of Sexual Harassment Prevention Committee

In 2009, the High Court of Bangladesh issued a significant and thorough directive addressing the issue of sexual harassment, aimed at safeguarding women from instances of sexual abuse and harassment within workplaces and educational institutions. In accordance with this directive, it is mandatory for educational institutions and workplaces to establish a Sexual Harassment Prevention Committee. The committee will consist of a minimum of five members, led by a woman, and will ensure that women comprise the majority of its members. The primary function of this committee involves receiving complaints pertaining to sexual harassment, executing thorough investigations, and recommending appropriate disciplinary measures (Farhin, 2018; Khondaker, 2019). A considerable portion of students in Bangladesh remains ignorant about the existence of these committees. Educational institutions fail to implement awareness campaigns regarding this matter, resulting in a significant number of students remaining unaware of this committee (Chaity, 2017).

Similar findings have also been observed at PUST. Out of the 20 individuals interviewed, a mere 8 students demonstrated awareness regarding the existence of the committee established to address and prevent incidents of sexual harassment. The remaining twelve students are completely unaware of it. All the interviewees concurred that the university does not engage in any awareness campaigns related to this matter. Even their course teachers also do not discuss about it and its functions in the classroom.

Reporting Sexual Harassment to the Committee

Despite the presence of Sexual Harassment Prevention Committees, the phenomenon of underreporting remains a significant concern. The reasons behind students' reluctance to report incidents of sexual harassment they have experienced is an issue of importance that calls for a careful look. A considerable proportion of female students refrain from reporting incidents due to concerns about social stigma, a lack of confidence in institutional responses, apprehension regarding academic retaliation, potential blame directed at them, and feelings of shame. A significant number of students believe that once they report incidents, no retaliatory actions will be carried out, which undoubtedly discourages them from coming forward with their experiences (Humayra, 2024).

The eight students who possess awareness of this committee at the university have not reported the incidents of sexual harassment that have occurred. One of the individuals interviewed expressed, "I chose not to report this incident because I was concerned that if I did, it would become known to all students and faculty at the university, potentially harming my reputation and my family's honor." (IDI 20, Faculty of Business Studies, 20 years).

Influence of Power on Sexual Harassment

In the educational institutions of Bangladesh, power dynamics play a central role in sexual harassment. When the harasser is influential himself or connected with someone powerful and influential, the victim does not report incidents of sexual harassment due to the fear of academic result, social stigma and threats. Even universities fail to take appropriate measures against the perpetrator when he is powerful or connected with someone powerful (Humayra & Hossain, 2025; Humayra & Nashita, 2024).

Among the 20 interviewees, 12interviewees agreed that power dynamics definitely play a central role in sexual harassment at their university, while the other 8 students do not agree with this. One of the interviewees expressed, "Political leaders or activists harass female students knowing that punitive actions will not be taken against them easily. Even if female students report against them, they will not face any punishment as they hold political power. Though it is true that when a harasser is powerful, female students do not get the courage to report as they know they have to face severe consequences." (IDI 8, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, 26 years).

Impact of Sexual Harassment

The effects of sexual harassment on female students are significant and far-reaching. The consequences extend to their academic performance, involvement in extracurricular activities, mental well-being, and, in general, their overall educational experiences. The victims of sexual harassment do not regularly attend classes at the university. They fail to submit their assignments on time and do not participate in class tests. They experience mental health challenges such as anxiety and depression. At times, they may experience interruptions in their studies as a result of incidents involving sexual harassment. Over time, they tend to diminish their engagement with peers due to concerns about potential judgment or the possibility of experiencing additional harassment (Gyawali & Karki, 2023; Molstad et al., 2021; Roy et al., 2023; Shad et al., 2023; Sharma et al., 2023).

The participants in this study provided consistent responses. Female students who experience sexual harassment encounter a range of mental and physical health challenges. They often find themselves diverted from their academic pursuits. They too experience enduring repercussions. Their personal and professional lives are significantly affected as a result of the harassment they have endured. One of the females interviewed disclosed, "One of my classmates had to withdraw from a semester." Confronted with harassment from a senior on our campus, she experienced serious mental trauma. Her attendance in classes was inconsistent." (IDI 18, Faculty of Life and Earth Science, 23 years).

Another interviewee expressed that, "As a result of experiencing harassment on my own campus, I was constantly engulfed in fear. That diverted my attention from my academic pursuits. I had considered participating in extracurricular activities; however, I ultimately couldn't follow through with that intention. In my thought, I realized that minimizing my presence on campus would be more advantageous for me." (IDI 10, Faculty of Engineering and Technology, 24 years).

CONCLUSION

The issue of sexual harassment has emerged as a significant concern within the universities of Bangladesh, characterized by its troubling prevalence and the systemic inadequacies in effectively addressing the matter. Despite the presence of Sexual Harassment Prevention Committees in higher educational institutions across Bangladesh, the incidence of sexual harassment remains unchanged. Even those who commit the offences often evade punishment due to their connections with political parties. Consequently, a pervasive culture of silence has taken root in our nation. The prevailing culture of silence must be dismantled. The apprehension surrounding social stigma significantly hinders women from coming forward to report instances of sexual harassment. It is essential to confront this fear to encourage individuals to report incidents of sexual harassment and to guarantee that appropriate consequences are imposed on the offenders. The committees must operate effectively to ensure that before engaging in any form of harassment against a woman, men are reminded of the serious consequences associated with such actions.

It is essential to establish a safe and secure environment for females, enabling them to thrive and reach their full potential. For this, workshops, seminars have to be conducted on a regular basis to

educate students, faculty, and staff about sexual harassment, its consequences, and reporting procedures in order to create a safe and respectful campus environment. Additionally, universities should provide counseling services to the victims of sexual harassment and help them cope with the psychological impact and facilitate their recovery. Zero tolerance against sexual harassment has to be promoted on campus. The harassers have to be provided with strict punishment so that no one dares to harass any woman further. Last but not least, the culture of silence regarding sexual harassment and victim-blaming has to be stopped.

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