



Workplace Sexual Harassment: A Survey on University Students' Perspective

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Youth Researchers, The Gendered Price of Precarity

Summary

“Sexual harassment” is unwelcome sexual behaviour that is offensive, humiliating, or intimidating. It can occur anywhere, including the workplace, public transport, classroom, or home. Workplace sexual harassment (WSH) includes unwanted touching by coworkers, supervisors, customers, or clients and it can take the form of inappropriate comments or jokes, or promotion in exchange for a sexual favour.

It is only recently since sexual harassment in the workplace has begun to be understood as a punishable offence. Many people still lack an understanding of workplace sexual harassment and what should be done to prevent it.

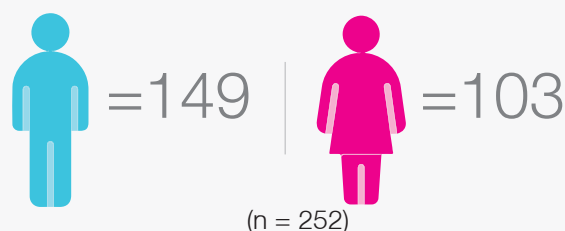
Objective

The objective of this policy brief titled “Workplace Sexual Harassment: A Survey on University Students' Perspective” is to explore the perspectives of university students on workplace sexual harassment. This will help improve the youth's perspective of inclusion in designing solutions in order to prevent workplace sexual harassment.

Methodology

The survey was conducted through email, Facebook, and WhatsApp, with a questionnaire designed to bring out the variation and comparison of views and opinions about workplace sexual harassment depending on the respondents' gender, age, profession, and educational background. It also contained some short, close-ended questions as well as descriptive, open-ended questions with options.

Survey Participants



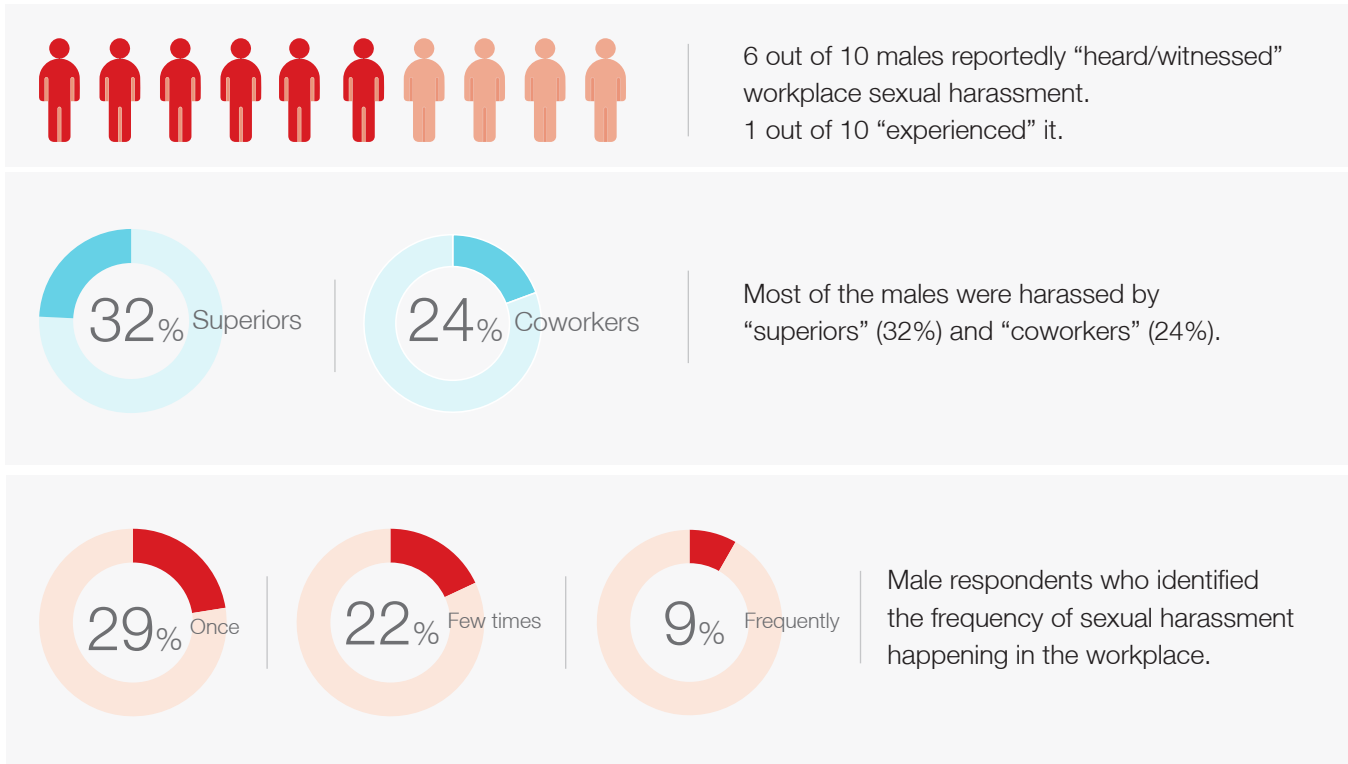
Participants were mostly students, teachers and various service holders, and belong to the middle-class or higher middle-class society.

Age: 18–30

Analysis and Findings

We asked each of the respondents a number of questions on their views and experiences of workplace sexual harassment. The next pages analyze some of the responses from the male and female participants of this research, and presents an overall perspective that has been found from the answers.

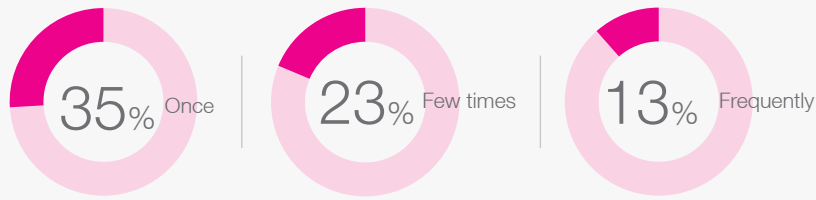
Male Responses



- ▶ As a response to whether the issue got solved, almost 50% replied “did not know,” while 30% said “yes” and 25% said “no.”
- ▶ 30% of males agree that domestic workers face sexual harassment the most.
- ▶ They also believe that female security guards (5%) and senior members of the staff (6%) are least likely to get sexually harassed.

Female Responses





Females respondents who identified the frequency of sexual harassment happening in the workplace.

- ▶▶ 36% of females said the issue got resolved, while another 36% said they “do not know;” 28% responded with “no.” This indicates that a majority of females do not know the results.
- ▶▶ 42% of females also opined that domestic workers are most sexually harassed in the workplace, whereas female security guards (6%) and female senior members of the staff (3%) are the least likely to get sexually harassed.

Reasons Behind Workplace Harassment



Lack of sex education



Absolute power exercised by employers



Helpless due to low income and social status



Society's perception of men about sexual harassment



Unequal consequences of crimes



Unequal respect for women



Lack of strict law enforcement



No punishment or compensation



No regulation or law for domestic workers

Recommendations



A specific law should be enacted



A transparent complaints process should be in place



Women must raise their voices against sexual harassment



Society should change its perception of women



Reporting mechanisms for harassment should be easy and accessible to all



All staff should get frequent training on preventing sexual harassment

Conclusion

Workplace sexual harassment is not a new phenomenon; it has been going on for ages. Women themselves conceal it because of parental upbringing, fear of family's reputation, being shunned by the community, etc., and as a consequence, remain vulnerable.

To reduce the occurrence of sexual harassment in the workplace, the respondents suggested the need for legal actions by government parties, strict rules regarding the punishment of harassment, mass education of general people, and safeguarding policies for workers, employers, and employees.