

A Study on Awareness of Female Teachers of Saurashtra University Regarding Various Committees and Organizations which Work for their Rights and Protection against Sexual Harassment at Workplace

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ABSTRACT

Recently, women are getting more prone to abuse. Hence, Supreme Court implemented an Act against Sexual Harassment at Work Place Act-2013. And under those guidelines, UGC assured safety of women at Higher Education Institution. Here the researcher has carried out a survey regarding the awareness among female teaching staff working under Saurashtra University and regarding the organizations and committee providing them safety and security. The main aim of this survey is that if these female teaching staff will be aware regarding their safety at workplace then only they will be able to aware the female students. And they will also be able to guide the female students to complain and where to complain regarding the same. The researcher has done questionnaire based survey and further analysis is carried out using Microsoft Excel taking 75 female teaching staff of Saurashtra University.

Key Words : Sexual, Harassment, Rights, Saurashtra, University, Female, Workplace

INTRODUCTION

If we take a look on the Indian history, we can come to an idea that the struggle of women was unbelievable. The women of the country where are facing many problems like to kill a girl child on her birth, practice of dowry, practice of widow burning, child marriage and hesitation in remarriage of widow, parda system, polygamy etc. Many decisions had been taken during 'British East India Company Rule' (1757-1857) and during 'British Raj' (Rule) (1858-1947) like Bengal Sati Regulation (1829), Hindu Widows Remarriage Act (1856) and Female Infanticide Prevention Act (1870). The right of freedom and independency was given to the women under 'equality, dignity and discrimination' with the reference of Constitution of India.

Further, the important workings for women awakening were taken place during the British rule and in those workings; Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra

Vidyasagar, Jyotirao Phule, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Mahatma Gandhi etc. were remain on the front.

Very first time in 1917, the committee of women met, taking the issue of women independency and demand the political rights for Indian women. Indian National Congress supported that demand also. Then all India Women's Education Conference was organized in Pune in 1927, which became a major organization in the movement for social reformation.

Laws for women:

After getting independency, the women moved ahead in the various fields like education, sports, legal sector, politics, research area, media, art and culture, service sector, travelling sector and social sector etc., and also got success. There are many changes, which had been taken place in our Constitution to support the success of women. Like as Indian Women Equality (Article-14), No Discrimination by the state (Article-15

(1)), Equality of Opportunity (Article-16), Equal pay for equal work (Article-39 (d) and Article-42). In addition to those, there are so many acts like; Law against Dowry-1961 (amendment-1984), Hindu Marriage Act-1956, Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act-1956 (amendment-1987), The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act-2012 and Act for the Sexual Harassment at Workplace-2013 have been framed for the women salvage and protection and many revisions have been taken place as per the requirement.

Subject Oriented Genesis:

If we talk with the reference to harassment at the national level, first of all; the 'Mathura Rape Case' (1979 – 80) happened by the police in which many women committees and associations became together for justice. In this regards, media has played an important role and it brought the pressure on the Government to revise the Criminal Procedure Code and Indian Penal Code and also form the new laws regarding this.

In addition to that, it was the demand to take action on the issues of abortion of girl child, gender bias and also on women's health, safety and literacy.

On 'Bhanwari Devi Rape Case' of Rajasthan (1992), the Government, the society and the women organizations were forced to think about the harassment of women at the workplace. With reference to the same case, Vishaka and group admitted PIL in the Supreme Court in 1997. As a result, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act-2013 came into existence on 9th December 2013 to protect the women from the harassment at workplace. According to this law, the rule of penalty and punishment of jail for three years were framed under 'The Criminal Law (amendment) Act-2013 which introduced changes to the Indian Penal Code making sexual harassment an expressed offence under the section 354 -A.

The amendment also introduced new section making acts like disrobing a woman without consent, stalking and sexual acts by person in authority an offence.

However, the several matters were come into the notice of Government regarding frequent incidents of harassment of women in country and that's why the strong and the remarkable steps were required to be taken compulsory by the Government. It is a notice by the Government that the age of the victims of harassment is decreased even after the increase of sufficient laws and

periodical revision of them. It was the biggest issue that even after the formulation of essential laws, the decrease in the age of victims could be noticed. The society is forced to rethink on the issue of women's safety with the most discussed 'Nirbhaya Rape Case' of Delhi (16/12/2012). As a result, Ministry of Women and Child Development started many organizations and programs. The fundamental aim of these is to aware women and girl children against various persecutions and to make them aware about various Government scheme, organizations, programs for them and under this aim; the following organizations, schemes and helping centers are active:

1. Jilla Kanuni Seva Satta Mandal (Regional Legal Services Authority).
2. Mahila and Bal Vikas Vibhag (Department/Ministry of Women and Child Development).
3. Sakhi One Stop Center, Civil Hospital Campus.
4. Nari Sanrakshan Gruh (Women Shelter).
5. 181 Abhayam Helpline, Mahila Police Station (Police Station for Women).
6. Police Station Based Support Centre (PBSC).

The above organizations which are working in Rajkot and also working in all other cities.

Each of the above organizations provides the help free of cost to a woman who becomes victim of any atrocity (victim of dowry, victim of domestic violence, victim of sexual harassment, molestation, chasing, cyber crime (for an example; to do missed call, to send messages, to upload photos and recorded videos), black mailing, rape, sexual assault, gang rape, child marriage, acid attack, sexual abuses after giving the promise of marriage etc.). Besides these, the above organizations help without any cost to any common woman who became a victim of any atrocity, to make abnormal and mentally ill women get the justice, to provide them shelter, to provide them treatment and counseling, to provide them legal advisor (advocate) to register FIR and to admit a case in court etc. and to keep secret their identity. Each organization takes follow up for the longer period of time with patience and on the basis of humanity.

In addition to these, so many applications about women safety are available on Google Play Store, which are essential according to the demand of time which are totally free of cost and which can be downloaded in Android mobile phone with too ease manner. Some of the applications are provided by the Government itself and some of the useful applications are as under:

1. 181 Abhayam Mobile Application (From Gujarat Government)
2. 112 India (From Indian Government)
3. Surakshitha (From Rajkot police)

Above all the three applications are useful for women protection and they can get help, safety and protection by ease usage of them.

Role of University Grants Commission (UGC) in Sexual Harassment in Higher Education:

UGC formulated so many rules to protect women who work in the higher education and female students from the sexual harassment under the Act of Sexual Harassment at Workplace-2013. So many revisions were also declared from time to time.

UGC instructed the institutions which work at the higher education level that it is their responsibility to give all kind of protections to their female employees and students and to stop the sexual harassment under the circular of Dt. 27/01/2015 of UGC. It is even their duty to organize the programs on gender equality. It was also suggested to make the institutional campus as zero tolerance campus and to make the cell where these kind of complaints can be registered. In addition to that, it was recommended that each institution of higher education should upload a link or page on the official website in which female employees and students can register their complaints against sexual harassment. It is advised further to make the arrangements under which a victim can directly complain the Registrar of University and Principal of college and if these kinds of case will be come to the notice of higher authority, they are also instructed to take necessary action under this circular.

As per the circular of UGC of dated 15/06/2015 and 23/07/2015, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) demands the statistical information of the cases of sexual harassment between 01/04/2014 to 31/03/2015 of the higher education institute. In this reference, as per the report of 'Indian Express' dated 14/12/2015, Human Resource Development Minister Smt. Smriti Irani informed Loksabha that 75 cases (out of responses from 82 universities) of sexual harassment of female employees (lecturers, professors) and research scholars by academic heads were reported in the annual return on cases of sexual harassment between 01/04/ 2014 to 31/03/2015 (UGC report).

It is also intimated to each institute of higher education in the same circular under the Act of Sexual Harassment

at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), 2013 that the institute has to form the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) and to organize regular meeting of the committee. It is further informed to display the information regarding committee and its workings at the proper place, so that the students can consider the poster easily. It is even required to mention the names of the members of committee, contact numbers and the system of admitting a complaint in the poster.

According to the enclosure of this circular and office memorandum of 02/02/2015 of Department of Personal and Training; Ministry of Personal, Public Grievances and Pensions, "As regards provisions for protection of women, it was suggested that the complaints committee mechanism provided under Vishaka guidelines relating to sexual harassment should be strictly in accordance with the judgment and action should be taken to ensure that the committee is effective and functional at all the times. It would also be desirable for the committee to meet once in a quarter even if there is no live (running) case and review preparedness to fulfill all requirements of the Vishaka judgment in the Department/Ministry/Organization concerned.

In addition to this, it was introduced to the universities and colleges to form a special cell and ICC, where the complaints and procedure against gender based violence can be taken place according to the circulars of UGC of 28/07/2016, 06/06/2017 and 02/07/2018 with reference to previous circulars. It was also instructed in the same circulars that higher education institutes should provide the information about the registered case of sexual harassment on the available Performa on UGC websites.

Thus, the Government, Court and UGC have begun to frame the rules and regulation regarding the sexual harassment of working women and begin to collect the information regarding number of complaints of sexual harassment, the detail of the case and the actions which have been taken in each year.

Saurashtra University Harassment Cell:

Saurashtra University has established Anti Sexual Harassment Cell in 2002 (Now ICC). There are 11 complaints in total have been registered from 2009 to February 2020; from which 7 complaints could not be proven because of the absence of evidences or they have been proven wrong. Whereas in one case, it was proven that former student had done the harassment and police complain was also registered. In another case, the

professor and guide were suspended and then dismissed. In the last 2 cases, the hearing process is being continued.



Operational Definitions:

Harassment:

The Supreme Court defined sexual harassment as any unwelcomed, sexually determined physical, verbal or nonverbal conduct. For example, sexually suggestive remarks about women, demands for sexual favours, showing pornography and sexual offensive videos at the work place.

Educational Institution:

An educational institution is a place where the people of different ages gain an education. They provide a large variety of learning environments and learning spaces.

Objectives:

- To study on the knowledge of female professors of Saurashtra University about the organizations, which are working for women.
- To study on the knowledge of female professor of Saurashtra University about formulated laws with the reference of sexual harassment at workplace.
- To study on the knowledge of female professors of Saurashtra University about the awareness of Internal Complaints Committee.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher collected the data or information from 75 female professors, who are working at Saurashtra University, Rajkot; with the medium of questionnaire method. In addition to that, the researcher

visited Anti Harassment Cell (Now ICC) of Saurashtra University and collected the essential information. The primary data or information were collected from Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, Gazette of India, website of Mahila Ayog (Women’s Commission), Mahila Police Station, PBSC center, Sakhi One Stop Center, Nari Sanrakshan Gruh (Female Conservation Home), Lohana Stri Vikas Gruh (Women Welfare Home of Lohana Community), 181 Abhayam Office and UGC website.

The researcher analyzed the data with the help of ‘Microsoft Excel’, which have been collected from respondents with the help of questionnaire method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result obtained from questionnaire filled by female teaching staff of Saurashtra University, Rajkot can be concluded as follows:

Primary information is-

- 30.67% teachers are 21-30 years old, 25% teachers are 31-40 years old, 14.66% teachers are 41-50 years old and 30.67% teachers are above 51 years of age.
- If we see their academic qualification then, 38.67% teachers are post-graduate and 61.33% teachers are doctorate.
- If we see their teaching experience then, 56% of them have 0-10 years of teaching experience, 10.67% have 11-20 years of experience, 20% have 21-30 years of experience and 13.33% have more than 31 years of teaching experience.
- Their job types goes as 22.67% of them are visiting faculties, 30.67% are contract-based, 10.67% are Ad-hoc, 4% are temporary and 32% are permanent teachers.
- Looking upon the main part of research, 42.67% are unaware, 26.67% are partially aware and 30.67% are aware regarding Bhanwari Devi case which provides base for Vishaka guidelines and Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act-2013.
- 44% are unaware, 30.67% are partially aware and 26.67% are aware regarding Vishaka guidelines.
- Around 23.66% of teachers are unaware, 33.33% are partially aware and 43% are fully aware regarding Sexual Harassment at Workplace.
- Helpline 181 Abhayam [(Helpline number, Van and App.) is an initiative of Government of Gujarat for women to provide them all types of help, protection and

Q. No.	Questions	Not unaware	Partially aware	Aware
1	Are you familiar with Bhanwari Devi case?	42.67	26.67	30.67
2	Are you familiar with Vishaka guidelines?	44.00	30.67	26.67
3	Do you have any idea about Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal) Act, 2013?	23.66	33.33	43.00
4	When where the last amendments done in the Laws against Sexual Harassment?			
5	What are the penalties for sexual harassment?			
6	Where can you file a complaint against Sexual Harassment?			
7	Are you aware of 'Abhayam' Helpline 181?	8.89	20.89	70.22
8	Are you aware of 'Abhayam' 181 Mobile Application?			
9	Are you familiar with working method of 'Abhayam' 181?			
10	Are you aware of role of Mahila Police Station?	13.33	37.33	49.33
11	Are you aware of 'Sakhi One Stop Centre'?	58.67	16.00	25.33
12	Are you aware of functions of National Commission for Women?	26.00	36.00	38.00
13	Do you know that National Commission for Women can be helpful to women regarding their sexual harassment at workplace?			

rescue]. 8.89% of teachers are unaware, 20.89 % are partially and 70.22% are fully aware about this facility.

– Regarding Mahila Police Station, 13.33% of teachers are unaware, 37.33% are partially and 49.33% are fully aware.

– Sakhi One Stop Centre is an initiative of Government of India for women to provide them all types of help and support. 58.67% are unaware, 16% are partially aware and 25.33% are fully aware about this support system.

– Around 26% teachers are unaware, 36% are partially aware and 38% of teachers are fully aware about functioning of women commission.

1. 48% teachers are aware regarding ICC, 44% of them are unaware and 8% of them are unable to say anything.

2. 82.67% think that their institute have ICC for complaining regarding Sexual Harassment, 14.67% think that don't have ICC and 2.67% cant say. 58.67% think that it is active, 18.67% think it is not active and 22.67% cant say anything.(Actually from 2002 Harassment Cell

was established and it is active)

3. 48% teachers are aware regarding the setup of ICC, 38.67% don't know regarding the setup and 13.33 teachers cant say.

Thus, finally it was found out that less than 40% of teachers have information and awareness regarding Bhanwari Devi case, Vishaka guidelines, last amendments, and penalties against Sexual Harassment, Sakhi One Stop Centre, working method of State's Women Commission and free of cost legal support to the victim.

Apart from this, approximately 50% to 82% of teachers are aware regarding Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act-2013, where to complain first regarding one's Sexual Harassment, 181 Abhayam Helpline, working method of 181, 181 Mobile app and Mahila Police Station.

Conclusion:

Thus, it was observed that the female teachers working at Saurashtra University are aware regarding

Q. No.	Questions	Yes	No	Can't Say
1.	Do you know about the order of Supreme Court regarding constitution of Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)?	48.00	44.00	8.00
2.	Does your institute have an Internal Complaints Committee where a woman can complain about her sexual harassment?	82.67	14.67	2.67
	If yes, is it active?	58.67	18.67	22.67
3.	Do you know about the setup / members of this committee?	48.00	38.67	13.33

Sexual Harassment at Workplace. Along with awareness, the working method of Harassment cell at Saurashtra University is quite satisfactory. Plus, the Government and Laws are quite helpful to victims due to their proper guidance, awareness and support to the victims. Talking about Higher Educations, UGC have played a major role by passing various and strict circulars against Sexual Harassment at Higher Education. Thus, this has played a strong role in providing awareness and safety to the female teachers.

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