

Chapter 9

Gender Violence in Academia

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ABSTRACT

This is an exploratory research conducted in three universities of Delhi – University ‘X’, University ‘Y’ and University ‘Z’. The objective is to study the scope and incidence of various types of sexual violence behaviors experienced by women on campus: undergraduate women; postgraduate women; research scholars; and faculty. This chapter explores types, kind and nature of sexually harassing behaviors; sexual harassment, rape, sexual assault, stalking, and intimate partner violence, experienced by women in campus; the occurrence of different type of behavior among women in age group of 18 to 65 years. Finding indicates 80 percent acknowledged sexual and psychologically offensive behavior. About 70 percent of total sample acknowledged that they were sexually assaulted. A very small percent 2 percent acknowledged of being attempted raped and 89 percent underwent stalking.

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women alternatively referred to as gender-based violence. Gender violence include physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women occurring at different points in their life. Many women experience multiple episodes of violence in their life cycle that may start in the prenatal period and continue through childhood to adulthood and old age. Therefore violence against women is a serious health and human right issue condoned throughout the world, but this Violence operates as a means to maintain and reinforce women’s subordination.

Lawry (2011) has broadened the definition to include any harm including sexual violence to an individual that is perpetrated against their will and is a result of power imbalances. Gender-based violence on campus includes rape and sexual assault, but also dating and domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment. Person affected by gender-based violence are women and girls, because of power disparity between women and men. They also suffer a series of consequences on their sexual and reproductive health, including forced and unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions and resulting deaths, traumatic fistula, and higher risks of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV.” (UNFPA Strategy and Framework for Action to Addressing GBV, 2008-2011, p. 7).

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Violence against women owes much to poverty, deprivation and social exclusion made worse by globalization, and commodification of women. Although it is a gross violation of women's human right but it is present in all social and economic class, every religion, race and ethnicity. In a male dominated society men perceive women as objects, and that legitimizes violence as a tool to achieve personal goals. In early childhood, boys and girls first learn that women are expected to perform the domestic roles, and men's responsibilities are associated with strength and power. MacKinnon (1979) stated that the hierarchy of gender: men dominate women, not just in traditional male hierarchies, but by virtue of their being men. This is visible in workplaces where sexual harassment by supervisors of subordinates is common; in education, by administrators of lower level administrators, by faculty of students. But it also happens among coworkers, from third parties, even by subordinates in the workplace, men who are women's hierarchical inferiors or peers. Basically, it is done by men to women regardless of relative position on the formal hierarchy. Gender violence is most underreported crime with horrifying rate and unsatisfactory conviction rate.

Definition

"Gender-based violence is the general term used to capture violence that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with each gender, along with the unequal power relationships between the two genders, within the context of a specific society." (Bloom 2008, p14). UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in year 1992 adopted General Recommendation No. 19 on VAW (GR 19). This clarifies that GBV against women is a form of discrimination and therefore covered by the scope of CEDAW. GBV is defined as "violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately", thereby underlining that violence against women is not something occurring to women randomly, but rather an issue affecting them because of their gender. Further, GBV is defined as including "acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty." GR 19 also specifies that GBV may constitute a violation of women's human rights, such as the right to life, the right to equal protection under the law; the right to equality in the family; or the right to the highest standard attainable of physical and mental health. (Source: CEDAW General Recommendation No. 19 on Violence against Women)

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW) adopted by the UN General Assembly in year 1993 has been influenced by CEDAW General Recommendation No. 19. It defines VAW as: "Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life." (Article 1) The declaration encompasses all forms of gender-based violence against women (physical, sexual and psychological), no matter in which context or setting they occur:

- Family (such as battery, marital rape; sexual abuse of female children; dowry-related violence; ; female genital mutilation/cutting and other traditional practices harmful to women);
- General community (such as rape, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in school and elsewhere; trafficking in women; and forced prostitution), and

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