

# RESEARCH ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AGAINST WOMEN

IN

PUBLIC PLACES, WORKPLACE AND  
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF AFGHANISTAN



Funded by



**TAWANMANDI**  
Strengthening Civil Society  
in Afghanistan



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## About Women and Children Legal Research Foundation

Women and Children Legal Research Foundation (WCLRF) was established in March 2003 in Kabul Afghanistan with the aim of fighting injustice and harmful traditions that hurts women and children in Afghanistan. WCLRF's longterm mission is to address all sensitive issues which affect Afghan women and girls' health and welfare.

WCLRF's objective goal is to empower women and children to defend and access their human rights especially respectability and pretige, and access to justice and equality. WCLRF makes every effort to identify women and children's demands across the country, and enhance their voice for advocacy; as well as encourage men to change households and public places as heaven for women and children. WCLRF's policy is based on strengthening women & children and establishing good coordination between social groups to dignify and respect human rights and prevent violence against women and children. The foundation strives to identify basic roots and causes of women and children's problems through researches and research based awareness raising and advocacy.

Awareness raising about negative effects of unfair social structures and systems that threaten Afghan women and children's lives is and important part of Foundation's program. Research based advocacy is considered in all activities of Foundaiton as an effective and efficacious strategy. Though advocacy is a time-consuming process, WCLRF is pleased that its advocacy campaigns had tangible results. For instance, Foundation's research based advocacy on extravagant expenses in weddings and their negative effects on families' economy caused a social campaign movement for decreasing these types of expenses. Such movements wouldn't be possible without coordination with social forces and local aothurities; so social groups and local authorities are considered as great supporters of WCLRF for such initiatives. Indeed, WCLRF's advocacy for girl's access to education in Parwan caused that local residents donate their lands for schools and government has built girls schools there. Different research reports of WCLRF are also used as resource in darfting Family Law and ERAW Law. Research based advocacy in Nangarhar and Balk caused people to make commitments on paying mahr and inheritance and respect women's right to property. From WCLRF point of view, cooperation and coordination with social groups improves their capacity to bring positive changes in the society.

This is not the first research WCLRF conducted and will never be the last. WCLRF has already published several research reports and opened the way for research based advocacy campaigns.

## WCLRF publications:

1. Women Access to Justice;
2. FAQs about Women' Access to Justice;
3. Violence against Women;
4. Beating wife (women);
5. Polygamy (multiple marriages) in Afghanistan;
6. Women Economic Independence in Afghanistan;
7. A glance on cases of "running away" from house in Afghanistan;
8. Living situation of under-aged girls in Afghanistan;
9. FAQs about Living situation of under-aged girls in Afghanistan;
10. Early marriages;
11. FAQs about Early Marriages;
12. Physical Violence Against Women in Afghanistan;
13. Women's Right to Access Heritage;
14. Review of Challenges and Obstacles of Women in Access to Propoerty and Heritage (brochure);
15. Women access to Heritage (brochure);
16. Baad a Painful Sedative in Afghanistan
17. Women Political Participation in Afghanistan;
18. The right to Access Identification and Birth Certification in Afghanistan;
19. Weddings Extravagant expenses in Afghanistan;
20. Study impact of proverbs against women in Afghanistan;
21. Violence against Women;
22. A look into the way of naming children in Afghanistan;
23. Waqeyat (Reality): a legal and research magazine;
24. "Jurmana" an advocacy film about reform of "Baad" in Afghanistan;
25. Violence against women (documentary film);
26. "Education" a spot about girls' education in Afghanistan;
27. "I am a woman", a local song clip reflects violence against women in Afghanistan;
28. Girls' Education, a musical clip of girls education;
29. "Baad" a radio drama on tradition of Baad in Afghanistan;

30. Women access to property and heritage;
31. Heritage and Mehr, two short video clips;
32. Strengthening women and girls' rights to access social safety under the framework of Law of Elimination of Violence against Women;
33. Right to Vote "women political participation in Afghanistan";
34. Training Manual "Gender in Economical National Policy";
35. Training Manual on Women Economic Empowerment and Allocation of Gender budget";
36. Training Manual "Heritage and Mahr";
37. Training Manual "Marriage Registration"
38. Training Manual "Preventing Sexual Harassment against Women and Girls";
39. A case study, "Identifying the causes and solutions for sexual harassment against women and girls in Afghanistan"

For more information please refer to: [www.wclrf.org.af](http://www.wclrf.org.af)

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## Introduction

Sexual harassment is one of the most ominous social phenomenon and a vicious element in Afghanistan and will fall the society into brick if not prevented. Sexual harassment, in any form, is against humanity and destroys social safety. Psychological relaxation, in particular social safety for women plays a critical role in advancement of women and brings positive changes to move forward. Creating safety and relaxation needs recognition of causes of its destruction and particularly in this case needs recognition of sexual harassment. However, a part of work is theoretical; but a major part of the issue relates to reality and should be recognized according to existing facts in Afghan society. The research is conducted on sexual harassment against women and girls.

This quantitative and qualitative research by WCLRF on sexual harassment covers different aspects of sexual harassment against women and girls in Afghanistan. The research identifies causes of sexual harassment through library studies and a data collection mainly focuses on sexual harassment phenomenon reality in Afghanistan. Data analysis evaluated different forms of sexual harassment; occurrence and consequences. Conclusion explains report summary and it ended with recommendations.

Generally, this report includes four chapters:

Chapter One: Overview

Chapter Two: library studies

Chapter Three: Data Analysis and

Chapter Four: Conclusion and Recommendations

# Chapter One

## General Overview

### Problem Statement

Sexual harassment against women and girls is a social deviation that disturbs social and cultural safety and Afghan women and girls are subject to this problem. These days, different political and social systems are following different ways, measures and steps to eliminate sexual harassment. Now adays women are violated by different means that the harshest of them is Sexual harassment increasing day by day.

Sexual harassment against women and girls is taken place by family members, close relatives (Mahram), and strangers. Close relatives (Mahram) include father, brother, uncles [father and mother's brothers], and husband. Sexual harassment can happen not only within family environment and homes of relatives, but also in any places where women and girls appear or work. Women can be sexually harassed by relatives and friends within their personal environment (houses); or harassers which comes into their personal environments or/and by employers, colleagues, and/or customers in workplaces. Women and girls might face sexual harassment in public and holy places including public parks, cinemas, streets & roads, supermarkets, hotels, restaurants, mosques, as well as education centers like private and public schools, training centers, and private & public universities. So, sexual harassment might be everywhere, where women and girls appear.

Given to the background of sexual harassment against women and girls in Afghanistan, this research aims to increase awareness about different forms of this phenomenon and seek proper ways based on the experiences of the victims of sexual harassment to combat harassment. It is worth to mention that this research's findings will help us to 1.) Provide better services to the victims, 2.) Advocate for creating preventive regulations, 3.) Suggest recommendations for law modifications, 4.) Increase awareness via social media, mosques and other public outreach resources, and 5.) Establish Watch dog Groups in educational institutions to combat this problem.

### Research Objectives

1. Identifying forms, causes, factors, and consequences of sexual harassment in different places and conditions to develop effective public awareness policies to prevent the increase of this social problem;
2. Study and consider the experiences of sexual harassment victims to find fair policies to decrease cases of sexual harassment against women and girls in Afghanistan.

### Research Limitations

Indeed, any research has some limitations, but due to the sensitiveness of the issue of sexual harassment, it is difficult to find person/persons to reveal information fearlessly on sexual harassment cases happen in educational institutions and workplaces. We can't anticipate finding adequate information about cases of sexual harassment in educational institutions and workplaces where the society is under domination of unfair tradition structures and conservative culture. Pervasive fear from harmful traditions and unfair customs causes that cases of sexual harassment remain hidden.

### Research Methodology

To achieve research's objectives we need to understand the level of society's knowledge about sexual harassment, study published documents and review relevant legal frameworks. For this purpose, in this quantitative and qualitative research we used two data collection methods: Library studies and Field Research Method.

## B) Library Research Method (LRM)

Sexual harassment against women and girls is a kind of sexual violence and discrimination against women. Sexual harassment frightens women to appear in the society comfortably and as a result, limits their freedom and decrease their participation in the society. Excessive presence of women in public places, educational institutions, and workplaces provides space for occurrence of sexual harassment cases; as far as, gender-dominated culture flames the fuel for this problem in the society. Silence of victims about cases of sexual harassment and fear from its revealing social consequences resulted in not to disclose this problem.

Consequently, all available documents on cases of sexual harassment in library including books, magazines, letters, research papers, and other resources to access information about causes, factors and consequences of sexual harassment are studied. This study helped us to develop research questionnaire, conduct interviews and collect necessary data on sexual harassment against women and girls in Afghanistan.

## B) Field Study

After reviewing all available national and international documents about sexual harassment during library study, it seemed necessary to explore information from the base of society to better understand the causes, forms, types, factors, and consequences of sexual harassment. As a result, we used field research method to collect necessary data. However, different tools, including questionnaires, interviews, and observations are used for data collection during field research method, we only filled questionnaires in this research. Our research team prepared four types of questionnaires with following specifications for data collection.

1. Questionnaire for Educational Institutions: This questionnaire included specific questions about (form, nature of occurrence, consequences, reaction of victims and relevant authorities at educational institutions and respondents) to study and assess the cases of sexual harassment in educational institutions comprehensively.
2. Questionnaire for Workplaces: Specific questions were presented in this questionnaire about (form, nature of occurrence, consequences, reaction of victims and officials at workplaces) to study cases of sexual harassment at workplaces and receive suggestions about preventing mechanisms from employees and employers point of view to tackle this phenomenon.
3. Questionnaire for Public places: It included similar questions about (forms, nature of occurrence, consequences, reaction of victims and people about sexual harassment and presenting preventing mechanisms from people and respondents point of view to tackle this phenomenon) to assess this problem in public places.
4. Questionnaire for Victims: Similar questionnaire with same specific questions about (forms, nature of occurrence, consequences, and reaction of victims about sexual harassment and presenting preventive mechanisms from victims' point of view) were composed to tackle this phenomenon.
5. Case Study: Moreover, we used case study method to enrich aspects of this qualitative research. We presented specific indicators during the case study to collect accurate data about cases of sexual harassment from beginning to end. By conducting this research, we understood about the nature of occurrence, intensity and tightness of sexual harassment cases; reaction of victims, their families and the society at all about victims and cases of sexual harassment; effects of sexual harassment on victims, their families and the society; level of awareness to distinguish sexual harassment victim from perpetrator; level of support to the victim; dealing and behaving of courts, prosecutors and lawyers about cases of sexual harassment and the victims.

Structure of the questionnaire was developed in accordance to research principles and given to the environment and respondents. This questionnaire included open, close, semi-open and semi-closed questions. During the research, 346 women of different type and category were interviewed in seven provinces (Kabul, Balkh, Badakhshan, Herat, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Kapisa). In addition to that, 14

case studies were reviewed for data collection.

- **Research Statistical Population:** Identification and determination of research coverage area was the initial step taken. Hereby, seven provinces including Kabul, Badakhshan, Herat, Balkh, Nangarhar, Kandahar and Kapisa were determined to conduct the research. The logic beyond selecting research coverage area originated from research objectives. Selection of the aforementioned provinces as research coverage area was in compliance with research principles to understand the level of sexual harassment cases against women and girls in public places, workplaces and educational institutions. These are the important provinces with similar situation existing in neighboring provinces and majority people from nearby provinces are coming here for settlement. Research in these provinces means having access to neighboring provinces. So, we can generalize the result of research to other provinces too.
- **Population Sampling:** Population sampling was decided based on research objectives and it seemed necessary to interview with those individuals who are victims of sexual harassment or to some extent have joint point with victims of sexual harassment. As a result, women and girls were selected as population sample and all respondents are women and girls.
- **Data analyzing Method:** Initially, a Database was created for data recording and analysis. Also SPSS Software is used for analyzing collected data to clearly determine and compare research findings. SPSS is the best for analyzing statistical data.

## Key Concepts Practical Definitions

### A) Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment may happen everywhere but its form and intensity varies in different societies and several variants including cultural, traditional issues, level of awareness, time and place of occurrence and social solidarity, affect this problem. Sexual harassment's circle begins from verbal harassment (the simplest one) to sexual assault (the harshest form); so we shouldn't mistake sexual assault with sexual harassment. Sexual harassment, in any form, imposes unpleasant circumstances to the victims and can limits their private freedom and deprive them of their civil rights. There so many definitions of sexual harassment, but we mention only some of them as bellow:

1. Sexual Harassment is any improper and unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person<sup>1</sup>.
2. Any sexual demand to be imposed on a person without his/her consent is sexual harassment and occurs when the power is imbalance. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favor, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person; when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment<sup>2</sup>.
3. Men and women both, and/or individuals from same stereotype, can be victims or perpetrators of sexual harassment. Perpetrators can be employers, colleagues, and/or customers. It seems necessary to know that:
  - Any manner or attitude of attempting sexual harassment has sexual nature; and any action to molest another person considers as sexual harassment. For instance, using embarrassing words to humiliate a woman is the simplest form of sexual harassment.
  - Dissatisfaction of victims of sexual harassment is one of the most important elements and shows that victims are not willing in any form of sexual harassment. However, victims (women) hate to be touched in public transportation; they prefer to keep silent due to the fear from the society.
  - Most importantly, that sometimes sexual harassment takes place as a repeated sexual request, but

1 UN Policy on Prohibition of Sexual Harassment, ST/SGB/2008/5, P1

2 Sadiqi Fesaei, Suhaila, Mehisa Larajani, Sexual Harassment in Workplace, a threat for social safety, Iran social study magazine, 7th round, serial no. 2, summer 2013

only the repetition of conduct is not the reason to consider it as harassment, one time occurrence of such behaviors are also sexual harassment.

- Openness is not the condition of sexual harassment alone.

## B) Sexual Harassment in National and International Documents

### 1- National Documents

- **The Constitution** of Afghanistan: Discrimination against women and girls is one of the most important obstacles for women empowerment and gender equality, and sexual harassment is part of discrimination against women. Afghan Constitution prevents discrimination against women. According to 22<sup>nd</sup> Article of the Constitution, discrimination against women is equal to violation of women equality and humanity. Article 22 stipulates: “Any kind of discrimination and privilege between the citizens of Afghanistan are prohibited. The citizens of Afghanistan both men and women have equal rights and duties before the law<sup>1</sup>”. So, its clear that sexual harassment against women is one of the examples of discrimination against women and is prohibited according constitution 22<sup>nd</sup> article.
- **According to National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA)**, the government of Afghanistan recognizes that security is a prerequisite to women’s overall well-being, their ability to enjoy their political, social and economic rights. It prioritizes to eliminate women-directed violence in public and private spaces, raise awareness on human rights especially women rights on gender based equality. Sexual harassment in public and private spaces is inconsistent with NAPWA.
- **Elimination of Violence against Women Law stipulates:** “Violence is a crime; no one shall be entitled to commit violence at residential areas, government or non-government institution, non-government organizations, public places, public transportation or all other public and private places. If committed, he/she shall be punished in accordance to the provisions of this law<sup>2</sup>.” Article no. 5 provision 1 and 15 of the EVAW Law explains sexual harassment and sexual assault as crime.

### 2- International Documents (Conventions)

- **Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, is the UN convention which Afghanistan has approved it, and define discrimination as “Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field<sup>3</sup>.”
- **UN Policy of Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, including Sexual Harassment, and Abuse of Authority<sup>3</sup>:** it is UN policy which approved by UN secretary General in 2008 and defines sexual harassment as: “Sexual Harassment is any improper and unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person. Sexual harassment may take place in the form of words, gestures or actions which tend to annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, humiliate or embarrass another or which create

an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment<sup>1</sup>.” This policy differentiates between Molestation and sexual harassment and defines sexual harassment as: “Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favor, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person.<sup>2</sup>”

1 The Constitution of Afghanistan

2 EVAW Law, Article 4.

3 Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, Article 1, UN 1979

1 UN Secretariat, Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, including sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority, February 2008, Article 1.2

2 Ibid, Article 1.3

# Chapter Two

## Library Studies

### A) Research Background of Sexual Harassment against Women and Girls in Afghanistan

The issue of “sexual harassment against women and girls” is rarely studied in Afghanistan because this is a very sensitive issue and victims prefer to hide the case; as well as they don’t receive family and society support and legal support from relevant organizations. Besides sexual harassment, violence against women and honor killings are other sensitive issues in the Afghan society. As much as violence against women increases and society is misogynist, sensitivity against women sexual harassment increases. However, conducting researches about these issues face many challenges; we should have a look to direct and indirect researches taken place in this regard.

WCLRF recently published a report of a “Case Study” on *“Identifying the causes and solutions for sexual harassment against women and girls in Afghanistan”*.<sup>1</sup> During this analytical research, several cases of sexual harassment against women and girls were studied in five provinces of Afghanistan with a special focus on sexual harassment and sexual assault. This research assessed forms, causes, and consequences of sexual harassment and suggested policies to tackle this social problem.

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) published a report entitled *“Causes of Sexual assault and Honor Killings in Afghanistan”*<sup>2</sup> in 2013. Based on AIHRC report, about 406 cases of sexual assault and honor killings were recorded with AIHRC’s provincial departments from Hamal (March – April) 1390 (2011) to Sawr (April – May) 1392 (2012) including 163 cases of sexual assault<sup>3</sup>. The report discloses the harshest forms of sexual harassment against women and girls recorded with AIHRC in Afghanistan. The report didn’t cover un-registered cases of sexual assault and honor killing. In 2014, The New Afghanistan Women Association (NAWA) published a research report *“Review and Assessment of Sexual Assault against Women and Children in six provinces of Afghanistan”*<sup>4</sup> in this research, sexual assault on women and girl children is analyzed which is one of the harshest forms of sexual harassment against women and girls.

In 2014, Modern Organization of Developing Education (MODE) conducted an assessment survey about sexual harassment in 10 universities. The assessment survey evaluated the existing challenges and problems of sexual harassment against girls in universities. 18-25 years-old girls were covered by this survey in academic environment. The survey shows that sexual harassment phenomenon is a widespread problem and doesn’t care age, human dignity and social & academic status. It is not limited to students’ category or any specific age category.

Civil Society and Human Rights Organizations (CSHRO) in a report in 2009 assessed the *“Causes and Solutions for Family Violence”*<sup>5</sup>. The report explained that sexual assault is the harshest form of sexual harassment against women and girls; the report didn’t assess other forms of sexual harassment. Despite of conducting many researches on identifying the causes of sexual harassment and suggesting proper solutions, the problem still exists and suffers Afghan women and girls.

We see everywhere in social media pages that there is a story about sexual harassment and this shows that this social phenomenon is increasing by the day. In spite of conducting many researches to identify the causes and consequences of sexual harassment against women and girls, all forms of this problem

1 “Identifying the causes and solutions for sexual harassment against women and girls in Afghanistan”; a (Case Study), Kabul: Women and Children Legal Research Foundation, 2014

2 Saramad, Mohammad Hussain; Latifa Sultani and others, “Causes and factors of sexual violence and honor killings in Afghanistan”, (national analytical research). Kabul: Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, 2013

3 Ibid, P.13

4 “Review and assessment of sexual assault against women and children in six provinces of Afghanistan” Kabul: New Afghanistan Women Association, 2014

5 . Munir Mohammad Daud, Wasema Baadghesi and others, “Causes and Solutions for Family Violence” Civil Society and Human Rights Organizations, 2009

are identified and need more work to fight this social phenomenon. It worths to mention that conducting researches is not the only responsive way to suggest effective preventive mechanisms to fight sexual harassment; we should hold comprehensive surveys and researches to assess sexual harassment from different aspects and establish proper strategies to solve this social problem.

Given to the reports and writings on cases of sexual harassment in social, mass and print media, people are feeling frightened about the increase of this problem. We witness that sexual harassment against women and girls happen everywhere in the country. There are different stories: “A group assault on a teenager girl”, “Sexual assault on a girl”; “Four men rape a girl”, “A 2-years-old girl dead as a result of raping by 22-years-old man”; “Sexual assault on a 12 years-old girl”, “A victim of sexual harassment became bride”; “A Mullah raped a 12-years-old girl”, “Female prisoners victim of sexual assaults”, and many more. Finally, we can say that women don’t feel safe in the society.

WCLRF considered it necessary to conduct a research to answer the voice of sexual harassment victims and find solutions to fight this problem. We tried to identify the causes of sexual harassment against women and girls in Afghanistan and suggest proper solutions to fight this dire phenomenon.

### B) Causes of Sexual Harassment (Library Studies)

Causes of sexual harassment vary against each person and in any situation. On the one hand, these causes are linked to each other and on the other hand, it is impossible to identify them theoretically. This research identified those causes of sexual harassment that further resulted in this problem. Also, these causes are connected to social and cultural values of the society. Men and women both could play key roles to decrease this problem. Causes of sexual harassment divided as follows:

#### 1. Socialization

Socialization is a social interaction through which individuals understand the ways on how to behave in the society, become accustomed with social culture and learn political elements in the surrounding environment. They keep these changes in mind and develop their personalities accordingly<sup>1</sup>. This process puts serious effectives on attitudes and living style of individuals. People might grow with nature to annoying others during this process and tend to cause sexual harassment against women and girls in the future. Following are the examples of socialization effects on discriminative attitudes.

- In a society where discrimination against others is accepted based on gender, ethnicity, religion, race, language, culture, and living style & political believes, abuse of power against women and humiliating them will be a normal issue. Humiliation of individuals based on gender, itself, is a type of sexual harassment<sup>2</sup>.
- Those men, who grow up with a belief that women are mentally deranged and tool for enjoyment, can transfer their belief to work place, public places and educational environment and cause sexual harassment. They can easily be changed to a threat to their colleagues, classmates and other women and girls in the surrounding area. They feel that their behavior and attitude will be acceptable for women and girls.
- Women are often obliged to accept this belief and think what they can do is to accept and comply with men demands. A belief among men that “women should be sexy” causes that people look at women as a tool for enjoyment.
- It will be difficult for women to complain or react against men if they feel they are less valuable, humble than men and/or affiliated to them. Even women, who undertake responsibility to afford their families, are vulnerable and frighten to lose their jobs if they reject men’s demands or complain about them.

#### 2. Social Power

Recent social and political changes replaced power relations in Afghanistan. Men feel that they are losing their jobs due to the positive discrimination against women. They are against women’s economic independence and don’t want women to compete men in families or workplaces. Those men, who

1 .Salimi and Dawari, 2006:144

2 . Khandaker, Mu. Mizanur Rahman, RESEARCH PAPER ON “GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN HEALTHCARE SPENDING IN THE HOUSEHOLD AND WOMEN’S ACCESS TO RESOURCES: PERSPECTIVE OF BANGLADESH”, The University of Tokyo, July 22, 2013, p. 24.



recently got power, might try to show off and stabilize their position by teasing women. Some men might consider sexual harassment as an advantage of their position. In some cases such as unsteady situation of business, fear of losing jobs, limitations on promotion, stress and load of work, risk of sexual harassment and sex business might change to a game of power. Such situation could happen in an office and a director can sexually benefit women because of keeping them in their position<sup>1</sup>.

### **3. Moral Values and Cultural Differences**

Sexual harassment can be called a form of moral deviation and discussed as a moral issue. When a “joint life without getting married” or “staying a night with a man” become a custom or when “a single life seems equal to married life” then this will be very easy that one or both-sides satisfaction change to a custom in sexual harassment cases. A person, who ignores the consent of opposite side, can easily become a perpetrator to harass his colleagues, classmates or other people. Prevalence of single or separated life in a society is meant that both men and women with baleful sense can harm the environment.

Cultural differences can also cause sexual harassment in the society. For instance, some behaviors might seem as a normal action within a culture, while it considers as a sexual harassment in other. A person may do an action, which seems a normal act in his/her culture, but the opposite side might consider it a sexual harassment.

### **4. Prestige and Blaming the Victim**

In some occasions, the reputation, prestige and credibility of women comes under question and they are accused of an action, which results in occurring sexual harassment against women and girls. For example:

- Most well-known men behave women respectfully and they don't think that their colleagues can be perpetrators of harassment.
- In a workplace the top management may listen to one who is at the top position rather than the one who is in the low position. The management might decide in favor of the one known by the management. A manager is more credible than a clerk in an organization. When the manager is a man in workplace, he might not understand the seriousness of sexual harassment or may scape to solve the problem.
- When a person, who handles sexual harassment case, is accused of sexual harassment, he will strongly try to hide the case or at least announce perpetrators innocent and consider information (reasons) inadequate.
- If perpetrator of sexual harassment is a skilled employee and is leading a top position and the victim is in a low position, it will be difficult to replace him; so that the case might be ignored.
- Public belief on “blaming the victim for the event” often result that victims withdraw to file a complaint. Living style of women and style of their clothes are more important than comparing to the reason of sexual harassment. However, women have the right to decide what to wear and what to do; they are always advised to wear suitable clothes and have good attitudes.
- The victim may prefer not to complain until the situation gets worse or she is afraid of being insulted or annoyed. In this case, she might be accused of not disclosing the case for a long time.
- Most of victims might blame themselves or feel guilty for sexual harassment. They might think that their action or words resulted in sexual harassment.

### **5. Aggression**

Men will behave in different way when they are in group rather than being alone. This can explain group sexual harassment and often happens when men are in a friendly environment. These men may not lead any danger to women when they are alone.

### **6. Lack of policy or preventive programs**

When there is no preventive policy or program to ban sexual harassment, the space for this problem will be existed. Perpetrators of sexual harassment are not brought to justice and there is no frame-work for punishment.

<sup>1</sup> .Journal of Business Management & Social Sciences Research (JBM&SSR) ISSN No: 2319-5614, Volume 2, No.4, April 2013, pp. 75 – 76.

# Chapter Three

## Research Findings based on Field Study

### Specifications of Respondents

Research's findings are based on sexual harassment cases in public places, workplaces & educational institutions; as well as interviews with the victims. During the research, 346 women and girls were interviewed in Kabul, Badakhshan, Balkh, Herat, Kandahar, Nangarhar, and Kapisa provinces. Respondents were segregated based on gender, age, level of education and marital status to provide space for better understating of the population.

Based on respondents' level of education and age, population sampling was determined between 17 to 48-years-old and most of them were educated. Majority of the respondents (56%) were singles and around 33% were married. Among the respondents, 11% didn't specify their marital status.

| No           | Province   | # Respondents | Marital Status |            |                | Level of Education |            |                | Gender |
|--------------|------------|---------------|----------------|------------|----------------|--------------------|------------|----------------|--------|
|              |            |               | Single         | Married    | Didn't mention | Educated           | Uneducated | Didn't mention |        |
| 1            | Kabul      | 50            | 28             | 18         | 4              | 48                 | 2          |                | Female |
| 2            | Herat      | 50            | 33             | 11         | 6              | 47                 | 3          |                | Female |
| 3            | Balkh      | 50            | 31             | 14         | 5              | 27                 | 22         | 1              | Female |
| 4            | Badakhshan | 48            | 21             | 22         | 5              | 43                 | 4          | 1              | Female |
| 5            | Kandahar   | 50            | 28             | 16         | 6              | 44                 | 4          | 2              | Female |
| 6            | Nangarhar  | 50            | 33             | 14         | 3              | 26                 | 17         | 7              | Female |
| 7            | Kapisa     | 48            | 22             | 18         | 8              | 32                 | 12         | 4              | Female |
| <b>Total</b> |            | <b>346</b>    | <b>196</b>     | <b>113</b> | <b>37</b>      | <b>267</b>         | <b>64</b>  | <b>15</b>      |        |
| <b>Total</b> |            | <b>346</b>    |                |            |                |                    |            |                |        |

### Awareness about Sexual Harassment

Similar and sometimes same questions were asked from the respondents during the research to understand their level of awareness about sexual harassment. Naturally, the contents of the questionnaire focused on sexual harassment and molestation in public places, workplaces and educational environment to understand the level of understating of interviewees about sexual harassment. 105 people in public places, 102 people, including teachers, lecturers, headmasters, deans, school & university students in educational institutions, 104 people including lawyers, government officials and employed women and girls in workplace and 35 victims of sexual harassment were interviewed during the research. Absolute majority of the respondents (90%) had information about sexual harassment against women and girls.

## Places of Occurrence of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment occurs everywhere, including public places, workplaces and educational institutions. Harassing women on streets is now changed to critical social problem and threats social safety of Afghan citizens, particularly women. This problem made girls family members [father, mother, brother ...] to be concerned about their daughter/sister while leaving home for work or education.

Streets & roads, bus stops, markets, supermarkets, shops, parks, entertainment centers and girls' schools surrounding areas are public places; where workplaces with limited space include government and non-government organizations, institutions, and private sector. Educational environment, on the other hand, covers schools, universities and all other training and educational centers. Research findings indicate that sexual harassment is happening in all abovementioned places.

Respondents in public places named streets & roads, bus stops, and girls' schools surrounding areas as most dangerous places for cases of sexual harassment against women and girls. 42% of respondents named streets and bus stops as dangerous places for sexual harassment; 28% of respondents named markets, 12% roads and 6% girls' schools surrounding areas as dangerous place for sexual harassment. Looking to the sexual harassment occurrence places, we understand that level of sexual harassment cases has close relation with level of presence of women and girls in the environment. In those places, where more women and girls are present, more cases of sexual harassment happen.

Absolute majority of the respondents (90%), who answered to the questionnaire referring to sexual harassment cases in public places, experienced these cases in public places. 91% of the respondents experienced sexual harassment in educational environment and 87% faced these cases in workplaces. These respondents witnessed these cases in the mentioned places. 90% of the respondents witnessed sexual harassment in public places, 71% in work places and 79% in educational institutions.

### Nature of Sexual Harassment

From respondents' point of view, forms of sexual harassment contain verbal, non-verbal and physical harassment. Verbal harassment includes whistling, teasing words, sexual suggestions, talking about women's appearance & clothes, sexy jocks, and teasing proverbs against women. Non-verbal sexual harassment comprises prolong watch, keep eye on women's body, winking, and gazing at women. Furthermore, physical harassment includes ramping, touching, blacking women's entrance and sexual assault.

It seems that sexual harassment's nature and place of occurrence link with a meaningful relation. This means where there is a crowd there is an opportunity for physical sexual harassment; non-verbal sexual harassment often occurs in less crowded places, while verbal sexual harassment could be seen everywhere in the society.

According to the answers we received from the respondents, the level of verbal harassment is high than other forms of sexual harassment. For instance, 43% of the respondents were witnessed of verbal sexual harassment in public places and 38% in workplace and educational institutions. Non-verbal sexual harassment was rated as 31% in public places, 25% in workplaces and 10% in educational institutions. Whereas more cases of physical harassment happened in public places rather than workplaces and educational institutions but their nature and intensity were different.

It reveals the fact that physical harassment intensity is less in public places and only limited to ramping and touching due to impossibility of sexual assault; however work place and educational environment pave the opportunity for serious physical sexual harassment.

Referring to sexual harassment in educational environment, a respondent from Kabul province explains that:

*"My university classmate was harassed by a lecturer. One day a lecturer asked my classmate to go to his house for preparing a lecture document. As she trusted the lecturer, she went to his house but suddenly received a sexual request from the lecturer. My classmate recorded his voice in her mobile phone and shared with us to help her. We went to Dean Office and played the record. The lecturer was absent for a week and when he returned he started*

teaching. We went to Dean Office again and said that it was difficult for us to listen to the lecturer but the university needed for the lecturer. What the Dean did was to tell my classmate not to attend his lecture and he must to give her complete number in the exam.”

A woman from Herat said:

“A student needed a book to write her monograph and asked her teacher to help her. The teacher told her to come to his house to give her a book to use. When she went to teacher’s house, he started touching her body and rubbing her hands. The student promptly escaped the house and shared the story with her friends. Now her family is searching for the teacher but he is missing. It is now revealed that the teacher did the same action with other students in the past but the kept silent to disclose.”

One of the respondents, who teach in a boy’s school, as saying:

“We encounter sexual harassment in school environment. Even our students tease us but we have to keep silent not to lose our jobs.”

### Time of Occurrence of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment against women and girls happen in different times but most of sexual harassment cases happen when women and girls leave home for work, schools or shopping in the morning, noon and afternoon. 72% of respondents believe that most of the cases occur in noon and afternoon; while 12% believe that morning is a suitable time for sexual harassment while most of women and girls are leaving their homes for schools, universities and work.

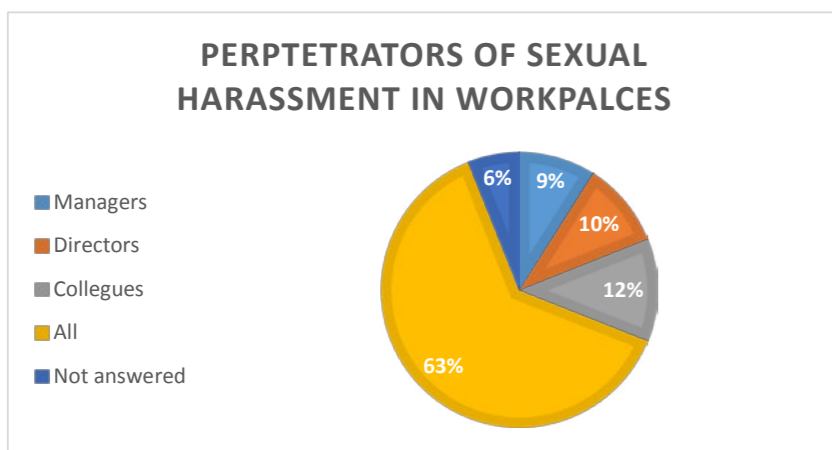
### Specifications for Perpetrators of Sexual Harassment

Based on research findings, most of the perpetrators of sexual harassment cases are rich and well-known people. They can continue sexual harassment against women and girls for a long time and are able to keep their crime easily. Suggestion for having sexual relation may propose with increasing privileges, getting promotion and other promises. In some cases, perpetrators try to convince the opposite site for having sexual relation in advance. They promise for giving money, buying jewelries... to satisfy the opposite side. Sometimes, these cases happen so smartly; perpetrators encourage as well as threaten the opposite side. For example they promise for promotion if agree and if not they are threatened to lose their jobs.

A woman, working in a private bank in Kabul, witnessed a similar case of sexual harassment against her colleague last year.

“Our former Director was an undisciplined man. He suggested one of our colleagues for sexual harassment and promised to appoint her as his personal secretary if she accepts but our colleague rejected his suggestion.”

These people use their power and reputation as a tool to cheat women and girls and can easily hide their sins. Apparently, they show to believe ethical principles, but in reality they tease and harass women.



From respondents’ point of view, perpetrator of sexual harassment cases in work place, leading the top positions and the victims run the low ones. In other word, perpetrators of sexual harassment in workplace have more authority and use their power to commit sexual harassment against women and girls. Responding

to the question that, “Who is committing sexual harassment against women and girls at work place?” 63% of the respondents selected the option “All”. They believed that male colleagues, officers, managers and directors commit sexual harassment against women and girls in workplace. They rated the perpetrators in series as colleagues (12%), officer and managers (9%) and directors at 8%.

A woman from Balkh:

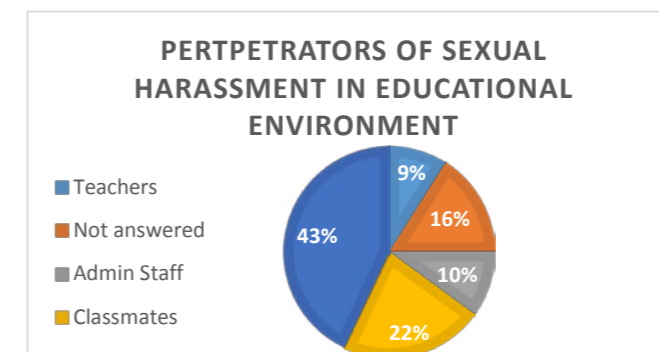
“She was appointed as Secretary at Education Department of Balkh Province for a short time. After two months she was receiving phone calls from her Director during night time talking for a long time. While she refused not to talk during night time her Director told that secretary should have close relation with her Director and be available all the time, or else there is no need for secretary in the office. Finally, she resigned.”

Another woman from Balkh with similar destinations:

“I was working in a police district in Mazar-e-Sharif. However, the Head of the district was an old man, he suggested me to have a sexual relation with him. When I rejected, he threatened to fire or replace me to a far district but I didn’t care. After a month or two, he replaced me to Sholgara District Police Headquarter. Despite of having many economic problems, I had to resign.”

A respondent from Balkh province:

“I was harassed by Finance Officer while I was working in a private company. One day I was cleaning a kitchen when the Finance Officer entered the kitchen and started touching my body. When I informed the Director he insulted me of being bad women and started defending the Finance Officer since he was his cousin. As a result, he fired me.”



In an educational environment, particularly in training institutions, teachers, admin staff and even male classmates are the active power to sexually harass women. Their engagement in sexual harassment cases differ from the respondents’ point of view. 43% of the respondents blame “all” (teachers, admin staff and classmates) for sexual harassment against women and girls. They rate teachers at the first grade with 16%, classmates at the second grade

with 9% and admin staff at the third grade with 7%

A student from Balkh province says:

“One of my friends was studying concur preparation course in a training center. Her teacher, about 30, was asking her for sexual relation but she quited the course. After a few days, the teacher called her but she didn’t answer. Then he sent a message threatening her for telling opposite story for her family if she doesn’t answer the phone. My friend didn’t care and only changed her SMS car and joint another course. But her teacher finally succeeded to tell her family the opposite story. With this, her family started insulting my friend rather than to trust her and forced her to stop going to course. She was very upset and getting mentally worse by the day and she finally poisoned to die.”

### Reaction against Sexual Harassment

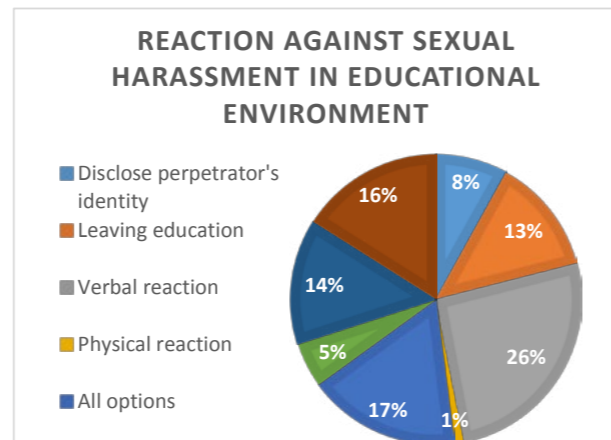
Interviewees have same or to some extent similar thoughts on reaction of the victims of violence against women. Majority of the respondents (63%) explained that victims don’t keep silent and show prompt reaction about sexual harassment. 21% to 25% of the respondents believe that victims of sexual harassment show no reaction.

A respondent from Herat says:

*“An old teacher in our school was touching students upon entering to the class. He was used to put his hands on girls’ shoulders, rub their arms and touch their lips. Girls were going to leave the class or at least go to the back of the class during his lesson. No one dared to inform the Office because he had already failed a student in the exam due to her complaint to the Office.”*

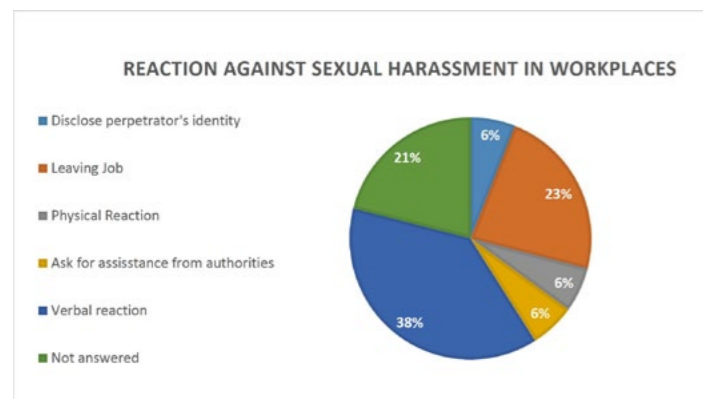
### Nature and Mood of Reaction against Sexual Harassment

Victims of sexual harassment show different reactions including verbal and physical reactions, and quitting the area. These reactions can be divided into active and passive reactions. Reaction against sexual harassment depends on the nature, time, and location of the event as well as number of perpetrators. Women often show passive reaction such as asking for assistance from Police, leaving the area and rarely physical reaction. 33% of the respondents believe that verbal reaction is the common form of reaction against perpetrators of sexual harassment in public places. 26% of the respondents believe that victims ask for assistance from Police. 23% of the respondents believe that women often react passively by leaving the area. However, 12% of the respondents talk about physical reaction by victims.



Also, reaction against sexual harassment varies in workplace. 38% of the respondents say about verbal reaction, 29% say that victims leave work and 6% of the respondents respond that victims react physically or at least reveal their identity.

Different reactions against sexual harassment happen in education environment. 34% of the respondents say victims show verbal reaction; 20% ask for assistance, 14% quit jobs and 11% informed police. 6% of the respondents believe victims show physical reaction against perpetrators.



### People’s Assistance with Victims of Sexual Harassment

From the respondents’ point of view, victims of sexual harassment receive assistance from people but its nature differs. However, 43% of the respondents believe that victims of sexual harassment in workplace receive assistance from people; some others disagree saying victims are not helped. Victims of sexual harassment in educational environment receive assistance to disclose perpetrators identity and advocate for their rights. Sometimes victims are helped to inform police, react physical against perpetrators, and receive assistance from others.

Some respondents believe that victims are not assisted and present different reasons to prove their ideas. They say that they might fall in problems if they help the victims. A number of respondents say that people keep silent and have no sense of helping others. They say that some people believe: “Victim is blame”, it is police duty to follow the case and...

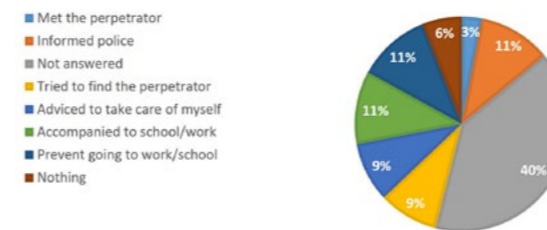
### Role of Families in Decreasing Sexual Harassment

Whereas both perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment grow in families, they play a key role in preventing and decreasing sexual harassment against women and girls. Children learn about code of ethics, socially suitable and unsuitable behaviors and lawful attitudes within the family environment. Families can help the victims to defend their rights rather than to blame them for the action imposed on them or stop them from going to school or work.

Research findings reveal that some victims of sexual harassment inform their families, but some don't. 48% of the respondents (victims) said they had informed their families; but 46% of the respondents didn't inform their families. Respondents gave different answers to the question: “What was your family reaction when you informed them about the event?” 40% of the respondents didn't mention any specific answer to this question. 11% said their families had helped them to continue work and education. 11% of the respondents said their families reported to police. 11% said their families stopped them going to school or work. 9% of the

respondents said their families tried to identify the perpetrators and 9% said their families advised them to take care of themselves in the future. Given to the answers by the respondents, it is difficult to say whether informing families provide support for the victims or create extra problems for them.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAMILY'S REACTION?



Regarding helping of families to victims of sexual harassment, a respondent from Balkh said:

*“I was sexually harassed by Dean of university, who is about 50-years-old. I failed twice in a subject and asked the Dean to help me. But he asked me for sexual relation to be passed. I rejected his suggestion and informed my father, who is a well-known man. My father reported to Attorney General Office and the Dean was sentenced to jail.”*

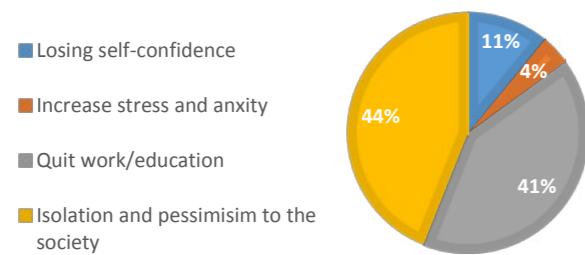
When respondents were asked about informing their families, they gave interesting answers. 83% of the respondents said they haven't informed their families due to the consequences of the event. 5% said they haven't informed their families because of family disputes. 4% said they were able to defend themselves. 4% said informing their families resulted in fighting between their fathers and mother. And the last 4% said that their families would have be threatened if they had do so.

### Consequences of Sexual Harassment

From respondents prospective, sexual harassment can happen everywhere and affects women's presence in the society. Fear from consequences of sexual harassment, sometimes, isolate women from society and they may face social disorders. One of the causes of stress that affects women's mental and physical health, is fear from sexual harassment cases in public places. Another consequence of sexual harassment is pessimism among women about the society. Victims of sexual harassment even experience social disorders in their daily life and it is difficult for them to delete these problems from their mind soon.

Given to the answers of the respondents, sexual harassment against women and girls in public places, work places and educational environment create wide range of consequences to the victims. Stress,

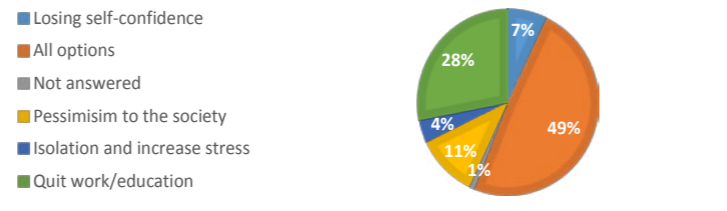
### CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC PLACES



isolation, pessimism to the society, leaving education or job, losing self-confidence are the most dangerous consequences victims experienced. It seems that level of losses and types of consequences of sexual harassment differ in public places, workplace and educational environment. 44% of the respondents believe that isolation from and pessimism to the society are the direct consequences of sexual harassment in public places. 41% of the interviewees believe that leaving

educational environment or job are the most negative consequences of the sexual harassment. 11% believe that losing self-confidence is the most dangerous consequences of sexual harassment. Range of sexual harassment consequences in workplace are different. 49% of the respondents by selecting the "All" option declared that sexual harassment imposes a package of consequences to the victim. 28% of the respondents believe that leaving education or work is a bad consequence; while 11% indicate pessimism to the society as a main challenge.

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT CONSEQUENCES IN WORKPLACES

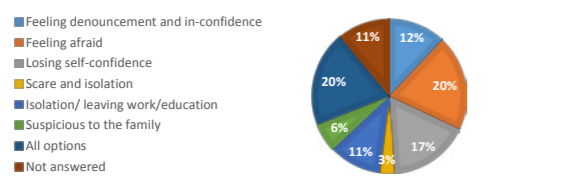


Respondents ranged consequences of sexual harassment in educational environment as follows. 55% of the respondents said that sexual harassment imposes a package of consequences to the victim. 16% believe on leaving work and education and 12% indicated losing self-confidence as a negative consequences of sexual harassment.

From victims point of view, sexual harassment has dangerous and fatal consequences. According to the experiences of the victims, sexual harassment consequences don't limit to the victims; but also affect their families and could change the social judgement against victims and their families. 20% of respondents said that the immediate consequence is creating the sense of fear to the victim. Also 20% of others urged that sexual harassment bring a package of consequences.

Based on their experiences, "fear, lack of confidence, sense of denouncement, leaving work or education, sitting home, and doubt of families about victims" are the most dangerous consequences of sexual harassment. 17% believe that losing self-confidence, 11% name sense of denouncement & losing self-confidence and 6% name families doubt about victims are the dangerous consequences.

### WHAT WAS THE CONSEQUENCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT TO YOU?

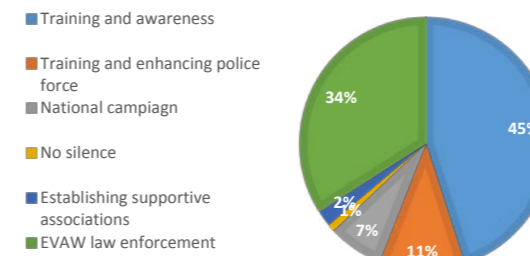


## Ways to Fight against Sexual Harassment

### A) From Respondents' Point of View

Respondents want to change the existing viewpoint of society against women through conducting trainings, raising public awareness and launching advocacy campaigns. Dominated gender-based culture in the Afghan society calls women as second grade citizens and ignores their role in the society. Some respondents insisted on role of police to fight and prevent sexual harassment against women and girls.

### WAYS TO COMBAT SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC PLACES



45% of the respondents in public places believe that training and public awareness are good approaches to fight sexual harassment. 34% of them suggested a legal framework to fight this problem and 11% insisted on role of police to tackle this phenomenon.

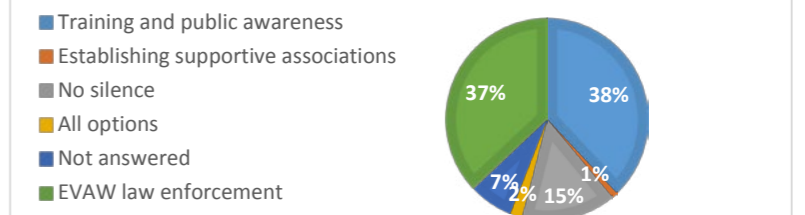
38% of respondents in educational environment believe on training & public awareness to decrease cases of sexual harassment; 37% pointed out developing a policy to prevent sexual harassment and 15% believe on raising voice as a proper tool to fight sexual harassment.

48% of the respondents in workplaces believe on training & public awareness as an effective tool to fight sexual harassment; 37% pointed out the establishment of a preventive policy and 12% believe on raising voice to tackle this problem.

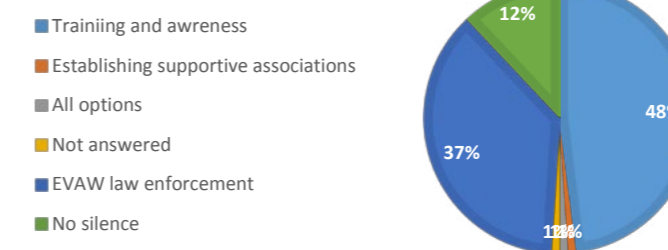
In general, respondents suggested two approaches as the most: training & public awareness and developing a preventive policy.

From the respondents' point of view, the following steps are necessary to be taken to fight sexual harassment against women and girls.

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT CONSEQUENCES IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS



### WAYS TO FIGHT SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN WORKPLACES



# Chapter Four

## Conclusion and suggestions

### General Analysis and Conclusion

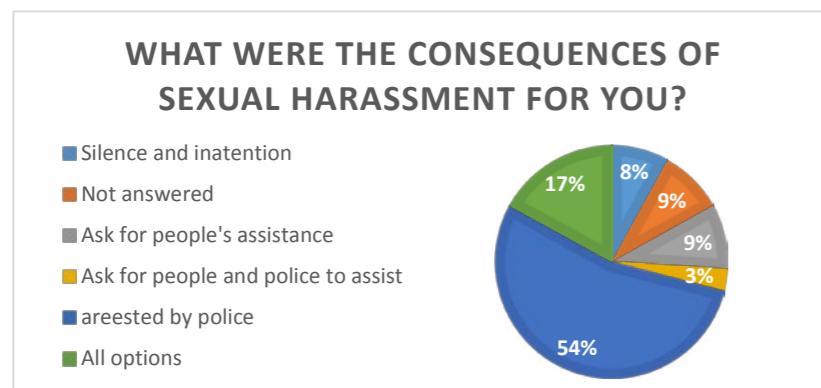
This research was conducted to identify the causes and solutions for sexual harassment against women and girls in Afghanistan. Research findings and data analysis is to suggest an effective mechanism of fighting sexual harassment against women and girls. Sexual harassment can happen everywhere in workplace, educational institutions & public places and now-a-days changed to a daily problem for Afghan women and girls. It has different forms and the joint point between all forms is the lack of consent of the victim.

In a glance, this research revealed the following findings from sexual harassment in workplace, public places and educational institutions.

- 1. Occurrence of Sexual Harassment:** Absolute majority of the respondents believe that sexual harassment takes place in public places, workplaces and educational institutions. 93% of the respondents name public places, 87% workplaces and 89% point educational institutional a place for sexual harassment. The data reveals the fact that no where is safe for women and girls and the situation is worse in public places & educational institutions than workplaces.
- 2. Places of Occurrence of Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment can occur everywhere including public places, educational centers and workplaces. Most respondents believe that no where is safe for women and girls in Afghanistan and streets, markets, bus stops and girls schools surrounding areas are the common places.
- 3. Observation of Sexual Harassment:** Absolute majority (90%) of the respondents are witnessed of sexual harassment cases in public places; 79% in educational organizations and 72% in workplaces. The data shows that sexual harassment is a widespread problem that all women and girls are subject to.
- 4. Nature of Sexual Harassment:** Forms of sexual harassment contain verbal, non-verbal and physical harassment. Verbal harassment includes whistling, teasing words, sexual suggestions, talking about women's appearance & clothes, sexy jocks, and teasing proverbs against women. Non-verbal sexual harassment comprises prolong watch, keep eye on women's body, winking, and gaping at women. Furthermore, physical harassment includes ramping, touching, blacking women's entrance and sexual assault. Most of the sexual harassment cases reported by the respondents are verbal harassment; however, verbal and physical harassment also report by them in public places and educational insitutions.
- 5. Perpetrators of Sexual Harassment:** Perpetrators of sexual harassment in public places can be different people. In respect to perpetrators of sexual harassment in educational insitutions all (teachers, admin staff and classmates) can be named. Leaders of top positions at workplaces can be sexual harassment perpetrators.
- 6. Reaction against Sexual Harassment:** Both men and women show different reactions against sexual harassment. Reaction by women and girls include verbal and non-verbal reactions, leaving the areas and often physical reactions; as well as askig for assistance. One of the reactions against sexual harassment is leaving educational or work environment which makes 8%.
- 7. Consequences of Sexual Harassment:** Given to the nature and place of sexual harassment, it consequences differ. In genral, sexual harassment in public places, work places and educational institutions will have the following consequences:
  - **Leaving education or work:** Women feel that they can do nothing against sexual harassment and the only thing they can do is to leave work or education. In many cases women faced lots of problems while leaving work and education.

- 1. Breaking Taboo:** It is necessary to break the existing taboo of sexual harassment against women and girls at the first stage. At the second stage, sexual harassment should be presented as a social problem in mass media to limit its cases.
- 2. Provide Legal Support to Victims:** The next step should be to provide the victims with legal support from the government and free legal consultations from other law enforcing entities.
- 3. Facilitation of Complaints Record Process:** A legal mechanism should be established for recording sexual harassment complaints. The mechanism should facilitate a sample complaints recording process for victims and provide them with legal support.
- 4. Consider Fighting against Sexual Harassment as a Public Responsibility:** Finally, fighting against sexual harassment should be considered as a public responsibility and all citizen [men and women] should undertake this responsibility to fight sexual harassment against women and girls in Afghanistan.

### B) From Victims Point of View



Fighting approaches against sexual harassment suggested by victims (the respondents) have big differences. Victims of sexual harassment pay less attention to long-term policies of fighting this problem; they want prompt actions. For instance, 54% of the respondents said that police should arrest the perpetrators of sexual harassment. 17% of the

respondents said that police and people both should help the victims and they should not be silent. 11% of the respondents said that police and people should support the victims.

- **Pessimism about society and increase stress and psychologic pressure:** As victims are increasingly under psychologic pressure on the one hand, and on the other hand, they are insulted by their relatives.
- **Isolation and losing self-confidence:** Those who leave educational and work because of sexual harassment prefer to escape from the society and keep isolated. Also, they feel unable to fight this social problem.

8. **Preventive Measures to Fight against Sexual Harassment:** Preventive measures to fight sexual harassment contains a package of actions including short-term and long-term mechanisms. Punishment of perpetrators, introducing and surrounding them to police is part of prompt and short-term mechanisms. However, compiling a preventive policy to avoid sexual harassment needs for a strategic viewpoint. Respondents presented two answers: some respondents urged that no preventive action is taken to eliminate sexual harassment in public places, work places and educational centers.

## Suggestions

### 1. Suggestions to Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoI), Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Attorney General's Office (AGO)

- MoI, MoJ and AGO shall introduce Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) Law to all their line central and provincial departments; so that they can act accordingly while encountering any cases of violence against women and girls. Copies of EVAW Law should be available in all police headquarters, prosecutions offices and courts at capital and provincial level and re-printed annually.
- MoI, MoJ and AGO shall include the “enforcement” of EVAW Law in staff TOR as a responsibility; as well as the enforcement of the law should be part of their policies and appraisal mechanisms.
- Provincial Departments of MoWA and High Commission of Elimination of Violence against Women shall establish an auto monitoring (training) mechanism to supervise attitudes and behaviors of authorities of line departments in respect to cases of Violence against Women, particularly sexual assaults and take disciplinary actions against those officials who pay no attention to the enforcement of EVAW law.
- MoI shall recruit more women in Family Reaction Units (FRU) of the ministry at central and provincial police headquarters and provide FRUs personnel with necessary trainings.
- Given to the provisions of EVAW Law, settlement of any cases of Violence against Women through tradition courts and cultural methods should be prohibited.

### 2. Suggestions to Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and High Commission of Elimination of Violence against Women

- MoWA should consult with the Commission and other relevant stakeholders and based on their comments and suggestions provide a standard training program on the enforcement of the EVAW Law. The training should focus on establishing effective communication between line departments, and the requirements for doing mediation in the cases of violence against women; when it is necessary to do mediation and when is not. The training should clarify that EVAW Law can be used to pursue the family members of victims of violence against women.
- Based on UNAMA suggestion, a TOR and a guideline should be developed for the Commission and its personnel on how to deal with cases of violence against women. The TOR should include all related terms and expressions of violence against women to help officials distinguish between sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexual molestation and etc.
- Duties and activities of EVAW Law enforcement entities should be monitored to ensure that files of cases of violence against women are recorded and accessible. Likewise, the accuracy, completeness, and quality of the data on cases of violence against women should be confirmed by these entities.

### 3. Suggestions to Ministry of Public Health (MoPH)

- MoPH should provide training in respect to sexual harassment to all health clinics and hospitals and provide them with legal document about this problem.
- MoPH should conduct public awareness programs about different forms of sexual harassment and make sure that medical personnel are aware that according to Penal Code, sexual violence is crime. MoPH should make sure that medical personnel are provided with copies

of ERAW Law in all medical care centers. Similarly, medical personnel should be provided with technical terms and expressions of violence against women.

- MoPH should invest on building the capacity of medical personnel to treat and behave the victims of violence against in a proper way; keep their files secret and if possible provide them with available services (legal representatives, shelters and etc.).

#### **4. Suggestions to Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE)**

- MoHE should provide Afghan people with necessary psychologic and therapeutic treatment services which could bring positive effectives on struggling to end violence against women. It should establish psychologic treatment departments in medical institutes; provide widespread information programs and training opportunities so that people can study psychologic treatment professionally.
- National Unity Government should include tackling violence against women in national strategy and the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education should include fighting violence against women in their education curriculums.

#### **5. Suggestion to Civil Society and Women Rights Organizations**

- Civil Society and Human Rights Organizations should ask Mullah Imams to convey Islamic quotes to the general public condemning sexual harassment against women and girls. They should convince Mullah Imams and religious leaders to end the prevalent culture of “blaming victim (woman) for sexual harassment” in the society.
- They should try widely to provide trainings for the general public to challenge the unfair culture of believing that “women themselves provide opportunity for sexual harassment”. These trainings should be based on the provisions of ERAW Law which calls sexual harassment as a crime. Also, individuals, families and society should be informed about the consequences of sexual harassment.
- Civil Society and Human Rights Organizations in cooperation with the Afghan Parliament should suggest reform to the ERAW Law. One of the suggestions should be to name any action under honor (Namus [any female member of family]) a crime. Also rape and sexual harassment should be distinguished from each other and perpetrators should be sentenced to jail accordingly. Those girls who scape home should be provided with legal protection and they should have the choice whether to return home or not. Not only the victims of sexual harassment and their family members and relatives but also police and prosecutors should have the opportunity to file these cases.
- A national wide research should be conducted to identify the causes of sexual harassment and find proper solutions to prevent this problem.
- People’s committees should be established in different areas and volunteers should be assigned on streets to prevent sexual harassment against women and girls.
- All shelters should be provided and equipped with psychologic treatment services so that sexual harassment victims can be promptly provided with these services. Also, ERAW Law should focus on the importance of provision of psychologic treatment services to sexual harassment victims and service provider entities should be obedient to this order.

#### **6. Suggestions to donor Organizations**

- Donor organizations should support more shelters and establish a long-term supporting strategy for shelters.
- They should help in providing necessary legal services for sexual harassment victims and help them to access justice and their civil rights.
- They should support and provide long-term technical cooperation to the High Commission of Elimination of Violence against Women at central and provincial level, prosecution offices and criminal courts.
- They should help to involve police and attract their support in referring sexual harassment cases to relevant entities.
- The area of donor organizations supported projects for women should be extended from first grade provinces to other provinces of Afghanistan since majority of population live in these provinces and several cases of violence against women and girls happen in these provinces but remain hidden.

#### **7. Suggestions to Ministries of Hajj and Religious Affairs and Information & Culture**

- Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs should send letters to all mosques and Takayias [holy places like mosques for shaia people] and ask Mullah Imams to inform people about negative consequences of sexual harassment.
- Ministry of Information and Culture should broadcast effective programs through media to aware people about sexual harassment and its consequences.



## References

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Streets & roads, bus stops, markets, supermarkets, shops, parks, entertainment centers and girls’ schools surrounding areas are public places; where workplaces with limited space include government and non-government organizations, institutions, and private sector. Educational environment, on the other hand, covers schools, universities and all other training and educational centers. Research findings indicate that sexual harassment is happening in all abovementioned places.

