

# ● SURVEY ON SCENARIO OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (HEIS) IN INDIA: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS



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## Abstract

*The aim of this study is to examine and study the scenario prevailing in various HEIs on pan India basis and arrive at an outcome in an objective manner. Specific focus of this study has been kept on whether there are cases of sexual harassment in HEIs; whether HEIs discourage filing of sexual harassment complaints to protect their image; whether HEIs impart awareness and constitute Internal Complaints Committees to prevent such incidents; whether POSH Act contains adequate monitoring provisions to enforce its implementation in HEIs; whether men indulge in sexual harassment to misuse his power to dominate the woman; whether there are areas under the POSH Act, which need amendment in order to enhance its effectiveness in Higher Educational Institutions.*

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## Key words

*Sexual Harassment in Higher Educational Institutions; Sexual Violence; Sexual Harassment; POSH Act; Gender Neutrality; Anonymous complaints; Challenges; HEIs; Students; Faculty; LGBT; Gender orientation*

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## 1. Scenario in HEIs

In regard especially to the Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), according to one study, female students dextrously observe and steer clear of the instructors having harassing attitude<sup>1</sup>. However, in respect of HEIs' it has emerged that when sexual harassment happens in student-teacher relationships, it is the woman who often loses her scholastic morale who as a result becomes disenchanting about the male professors, as a whole. Such pervasiveness of sexual harassment has the snowballing effect of

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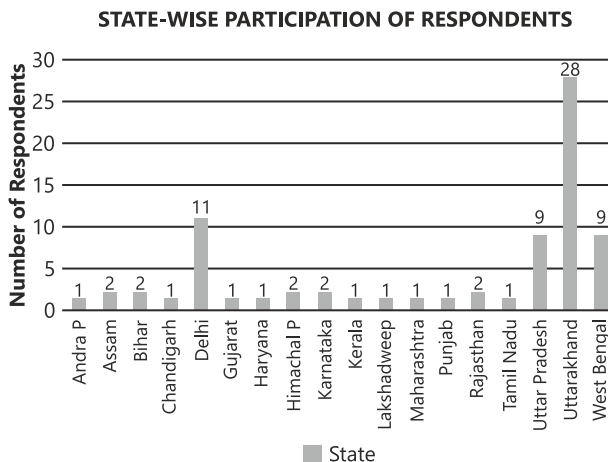
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<sup>1</sup>D. J. Benson and G. E. Thomson, "Sexual Harassment on a University Campus: The Confluence of Authority Relations, Sexual Interest and Gender Stratification," *Social Problems*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 236-251, Feb. 1982, doi: 10.2307/800157.

destroying the dedication of the female towards advancement of their goals in the male-governed environment<sup>2</sup>.

In this light, the Researcher surveyed during the year 2021, relying on Google forms technique. The main objective of the survey was to assess the prevalence of sexual harassment in HEIs. A questionnaire was developed based on the various challenges in various studies. Questionnaire thus designed was circulated among past and present students of HEIs. The researcher received responses from across India. The questionnaire contained initial five questions asking for personal details of the respondents while the remaining eight questions were asked on the aspect of sexual harassment in HEIs in India, as follows:

- 1) Does your institution discourage the filing of sexual harassment complaints to protect its image?
- 2) Have you heard about cases of sexual harassment in your institution?
- 3) Was any training or education imparted to you on the prevention of sexual harassment, when you were inducted into your institution?
- 4) Are you aware of an 'Internal Complaint Committee' existing in your institution?
- 5) Do you think a lack of awareness of the provisions of the POSH Act makes people fall victim to sexual harassment?
- 6) Is there any relation of power with sexual harassment by men with formal authority over women, in your Institution?
- 7) Does POSH Act contain adequate monitoring provisions to enforce its implementation in your institution?
- 8) Are there any areas under the POSH Act, which need an amendment to enhance its effectiveness in Higher Educational Institutions?



<sup>2</sup>B. Lucas-Molina, A. A. Williamson, R. Pulido, and A. Pérez-Albéniz, "Effects of teacher-student relationships on peer harassment: A multilevel study," *Psychology in the Schools*, vol. 52, no. 3, pp. 298-315, Mar. 2015, doi: 10.1002/PITS.21822.



The States wise and cities wise spread of the respondents is contained under Figures 1 and 2, respectively. A reasonable spread of study across various States (18 States in all) and cities thereunder was attempted to consider the legal challenges faced by HEIs at the pan India level. In all 76 responses from 18 different States have been received. The gender-wise break-up of the respondents was 60.53% males and 39.47% females.

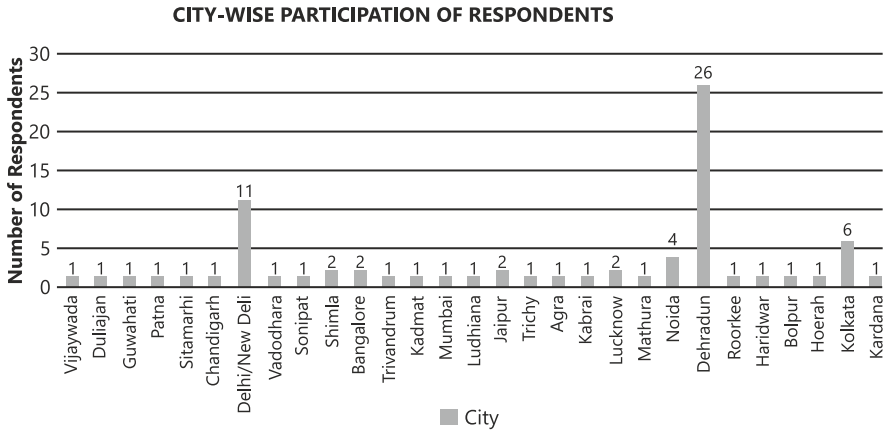


Figure 2. City-wise representation of Respondents.

2. Whether HEIs discourage the filing of sexual harassment complaints to protect their image?

According to regulation 2(k) (i) and (ii), of the University Grants Commission (Prevention, prohibition and redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2015 (UGC Regulations, 2015), sexual harassment has been defined, as follows:

"(I) An unwanted sexual act that has sexual undertones that are persistent and which demeans or humiliates one or more individuals. This behavior is often carried out with the intent of inducing submission or threatening submission.(whether directly or by implication), namely; -

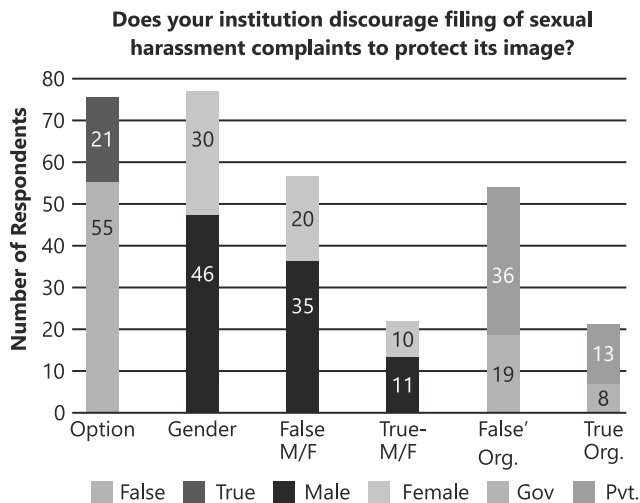
- (a) Any unwanted sexual activity, whether physical, verbal, or nonverbal;
  - (b) solicitation or demand for sexual favours;
  - (c) making sexually tinged comments
  - (d) Advances and physical contact; or
  - (e) Displaying pornographic material
- (ii) Any individual or group of people who has been subjected to or connected to any explicit or implicit sexual behavior is guilty of committing a crime.-
- (a) As a form of payment for sexual favours, the promise of preferential treatment is implied or explicit; ;
  - (b) The implied or explicit threat of detrimental treatment in the conduct of work;

- (c) The threat of retaliation in the workplace, whether implicit or explicit.;
- (d) Making a learning atmosphere that is intimidating, insulting, or unpleasant
- (e) Embarrassing treatment likely to jeopardise the person's health, safety, dignity, or physical integrity;"

Apparently, the provisions No. (a) and (b), as afore said, originate from a reality resting on a skewed power-structure in favour of the employer, supervising authorities as against the subordinates<sup>3</sup>. Spirit underlying these two provisions reflects expectation or demand of sexual favour by the superior from the one lower in the hierarchy, in lieu of academic or other benefits/decisions etc. . . The third provision addresses the existence of a hostile work environment where the hostility interferes with the satisfactory work performance of the victim<sup>4</sup>.

In view of the above, the researcher asked the respondents whether their institutions were driven by any prejudices while dealing with the grievances relating to the sexual harassment. They were specifically asked whether their institutions discourage the filing of sexual harassment complaints to protect their image. The study revealed that 72.37% of the respondents were of the view that their institutions did not discourage the filing of sexual harassment complaints to protect their image. The large differences between the two groups are seen as significant by the researcher. Thus, this was an interesting outcome of this study, which establishes the fact that today's HEIs are

Figure 3. Survey analysis on "Does your institution discourage filing of sexual harassment complaints to protect its image?".



<sup>3</sup>D. Smit and V. du Plessis??, "Sexual Harassment in the Education Sector," Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad, vol. 14, no. 6, pp. 173-217, Jan. 2012, doi: 10.4314/pej.v14i6.6.

<sup>4</sup>O. J. Ladebo, "Sexual Harassment in Academia in Nigeria: How Real?," African Sociological Review / Revue Africaine de Sociologie, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 117-130, Apr. 2004, doi: 10.4314/asr.v7i1.23133.



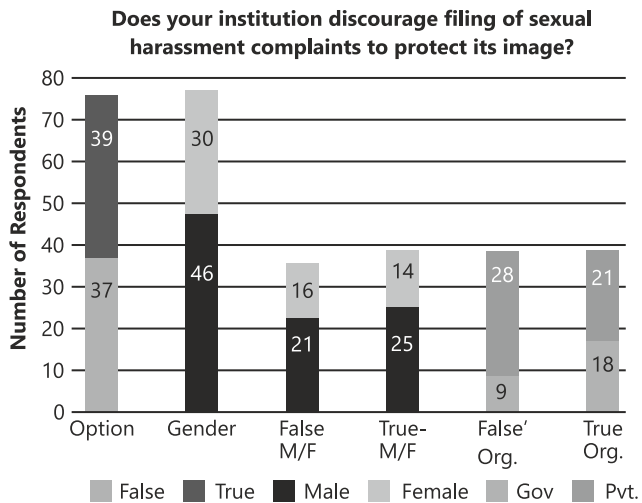


demonstrating a more positive approach towards encouraging the filing of sexual harassment complaints in their institutions. However, out of the total respondents who have given positive feedback majority belongs to males constituting a share of 46.05% while 26.31% of women respondents submitted their positive feedback. Thus, 27.63% of the total respondents stated that their institution discourage the filing of sexual harassment complaints to protect its image and among them 13.16% population were women. (Figure 3).

### 3. Prevalence of cases of sexual harassment in institutions

To study the existance of sexual harassment in HEIs, respondents were asked whether they have heard about cases of sexual harassment in their institutions. 51.32% of the respondents confirmed having heard about such cases in their institutions while the remaining 48.68% gave different feedback. However, when the responses were analyzed about Government vis-à-vis Private institutions, a significant outcome emerged. 66.67% of respondents from Government institutions stated that there were cases of sexual harassment in their HEIs while in Private HEIs 42.86% of the respondents stated the same. The response gives an obvious outcome that as compare to Private the Government HEIs register more cases of sexual harassment. (Figure 4)

Figure 4. Second survey analysis on "Prevalence of cases of sexual harassment in HEIs".



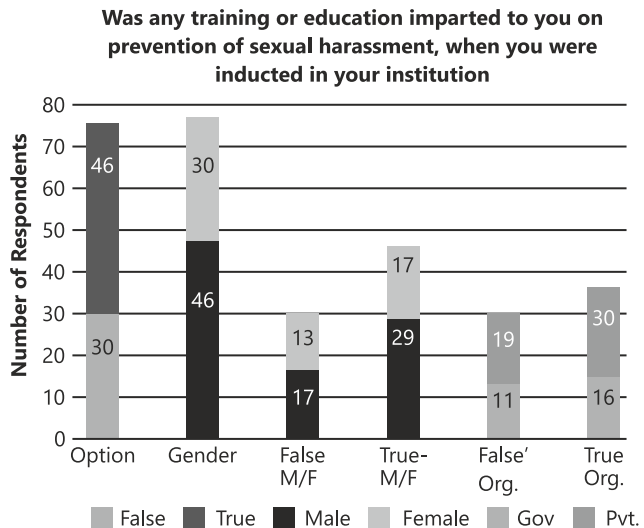
### 4. Whether any training or education imparted to you on prevention of sexual harassment, when you were inducted into your institution?

Section 19 of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act) prescribes for the duties of the employer. Sub-section (c) thereof provides that every employer shall organize workshops and awareness programs at regular intervals for sensitizing the employees with the provisions of the Act and orientation programs for the members of the Internal

Committee in the manner as may be prescribed. Similarly, regulation 3 (c) of the UGC Regulations, 2015 prescribes that every HEI shall organize training programs or as the case may be, a workshop for the officers for the officer, functionaries, faculty and students, as indicated in the SAKSHAM Report (Measures for Ensuring the Safety of Women and Programs for Gender Sensitization on Campuses) of the Commission, to sensitize them and ensure knowledge and wariness of the rights, entitlements and responsibilities enshrined in the Act and under these regulations.

In view thereof, the respondents were asked whether any training or education imparted to you on prevention of sexual harassment, when you were inducted in your institution. 60.53% of the respondents answered favourably while the remaining 39.47 denied any training or education imparted having been imparted to them on prevention of sexual harassment when they were admitted in their institution. Thus, the significant majority of respondents stated that HEIs were discharging their responsibility towards this aspect satisfactorily. Interestingly, out of the 60.53% of the respondents who confirmed the satisfactory performance of HEIs in this regard, the majority of 65.22% were belonging to Private Institutions. Thus, a little bit of complacency was seen on the part of the Government institutions when it comes to discharging their responsibility towards this aspect. (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Survey analysis on Whether 'Internal Complaint Committee' has been in place in the institution.



As per Section 4 of the POSH Act, establishing an Internal Committee (IC) is mandatory in every establishment, which has 10 or more employees. Similarly, it has been made mandatory under Regulation 4 of the UGC Regulations, 2015 for every Executive Authority to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) with an inbuilt mechanism for gender sensitization against sexual harassment. However, Fostering

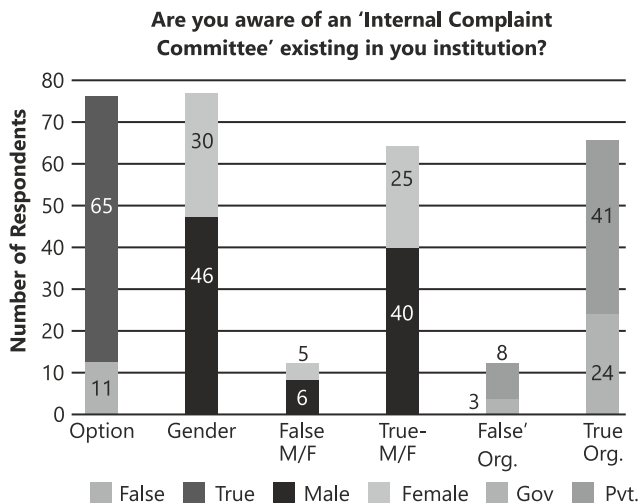


Safe Workplaces<sup>5</sup>, at the behest of the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry conducted a study during the year 2015. The study reveals that more than 35% of domestic companies and around 25% of MNCs had not yet constituted ICs in their respective establishments. The study further reveals that out of the 120 companies, about 50% admitted that their respective IC members were without any proper training. EY Fraud Investigation & Dispute Services conducted a survey titled 'Reining in sexual harassment at the workplace in India' to measure corporate India's perception of the transformation in the wake of the POSH Act. The key findings reveal the focus of the employers on driving an unfettering change, although uncertainty, caution and contemplation are still highly prevalent!

It is a fact that as per Section 4 of the POSH Act it is mandatory on the part of the employer to constitute an Internal Committee to adjudicate upon the complaints of sexual harassment. Similarly, regulation 4 of the UGC Regulations, 2015 makes it obligatory on the part of every executive Authority of the HEI to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee.

According to these statutory provisions, a need is felt by the researcher to assess the present scenario, especially in HEIs, because the study conducted by EY during the year 2015 was not focused on HEIs. The respondents, therefore, were asked a specific question, "Are you aware of an 'Internal Complaint Committee' existing in your institution?" In response significantly 85.53% of the respondents stated that there is an ICC in their institution, while a meagre population of 14.47% stated in negative. Out of this 85.53% of the respondents, 61.54% were belonging to the male category while the remaining 38.46% were females. Thus, the study proves that there was satisfactory compliance of Section 4 and Regulation 4 apparently. In the absence to further any query having been asked from the respondents as to whether the constitution of the committees was as per norms, there was no outcome in this regard in the present study. (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Survey analysis on "Are you aware of an 'Internal Complaint Committee' existing in your institution".

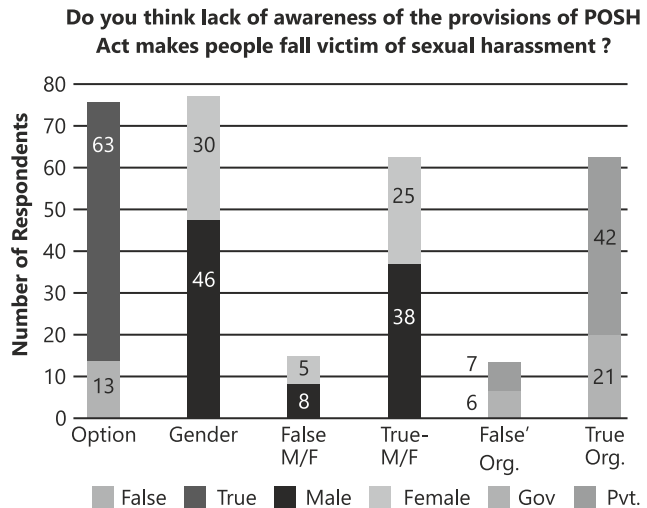


<sup>5</sup>FICCI, "Fostering safe workplaces," 2013.

## 6. Whether lack of awareness of the provisions of the POSH Act makes people fall victim to sexual harassment?

Further, the researcher has looked into the aspect of whether lack of awareness of the provisions of the POSH Act makes people fall victim to sexual harassment. The general pattern of response that emerged from the study was that notwithstanding whatever has been done, there is an alarming lack of awareness regarding provisions of the POSH Act. Thus, it can also be inferred that there is also a lack of awareness about extant UGC Regulations, 2015 among the students, faculty and non-faculty at HEIs. Out of the total respondents, 82.89% respondents have confirmed a lack of awareness of these provisions, out of which 60.32% are males and 39.68% are females. The majority of respondents giving negative responses belongs to males constituting a share of 60.32% while 39.68% of women respondents submitted their negative responses. Thus, 82.89% of the total respondents stated that there is an alarming lack of awareness regarding the provisions of the POSH Act. The large differences between the two groups are seen as significant by the researcher. Hence, the outcome is very relevant and credible. (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Survey analysis on "Do you think lack of awareness of the provisions of POSH Act makes people fall victim of sexual harassment".



## 7. Whether there is any relation of power with sexual harassment by men with formal authority over women?

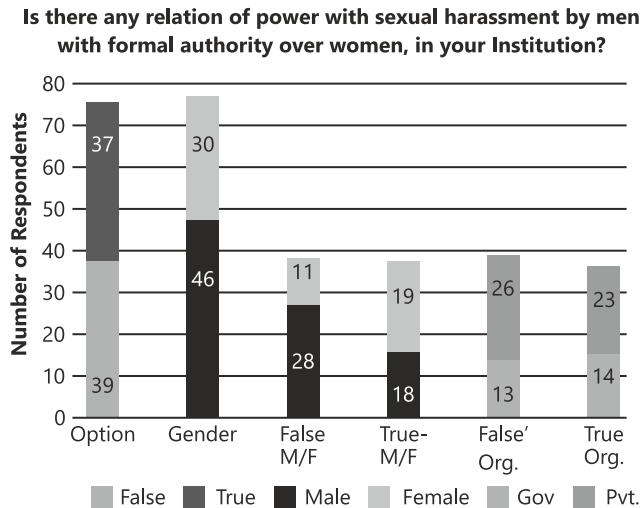
During a study it has emerged that it remains always the most popular defence that they are the students who harass the faculty. Nevertheless, there may be cases where students are found creating sexual annoyance but this cannot be treated as sexual harassment due to lack of power hierarchy with the students. However, such sexual annoyance cannot justify an act of sexual harassment. It has also been witnessed that the defence of mutual consent is rampantly used by male faculty. However, such a defence also could not withstand fair scrutiny mainly because the sexual harassment alleged to be based on a consensual relationship, is misplaced in the student-faculty



relationship. This again shall be because of the power imbalance and the extent of the role inequality<sup>6,7</sup>.

Apparent analysis of responses received against the question of whether there is any relation of power with sexual harassment by men with formal authority over women, reveals almost an equal distribution of responses from rival groups. As many as 48.68% of the respondents feel that there is a relation of power with sexual harassment by men with formal authority over women, whereas 51.32% of respondents feel otherwise. However, out of the 51.32% of the respondents who feel otherwise, an overwhelming 71.79% are males whereas a meagre 28.21% belong to the female category. Thus, the study reveals that most of the males do not support the idea that there is any relation of power with sexual harassment by men with formal authority over women. But when it comes to the females, they overwhelmingly support the idea. Significantly under the group who believe that there is a relation of power with sexual harassment by men with formal authority over women, the majority belongs to the female category. 51.35% of the females have confirmed their experience that there is a relation of power with sexual harassment by men with formal authority over women, while 48.65% of the male respondents were having a different opinion. Thus, the survey reflects the fact that the existing power hierarchy of males over females does not fade away in an environment of educational institutions, as well. (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Survey analysis on "Is there any relation of power with sexual harassment by men with formal authority over women, in your Institution".



<sup>6</sup>D. Smit and V. du Plessis??, "Sexual Harassment in the Education Sector," Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad, vol. 14, no. 6, pp. 173-217, Jan. 2012, doi: 10.4314/pelj.v14i6.6.

<sup>7</sup>D. Smit and V. du Plessis, "Sexual Harassment in the Education Sector," Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal, vol. 14, no. 6, pp. 172-217, Jun. 2017, doi:10.17159/1727-3781/2011/v14i6a2613.

## 8. Whether POSH Act contains adequate monitoring provisions to enforce its implementation in HEIs?

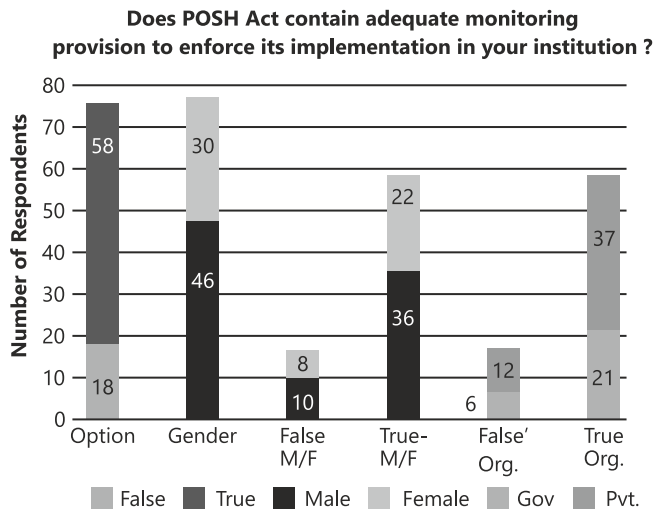
Chapter VIII of the POSH Act contains miscellaneous provisions from its Section 21 to 26. Section 21 requires the IC and LC to submit annual reports; Section 22 requires the employers to include information regarding the number of cases filed in their respective annual report; Section 23 mandates appropriate Government to monitor implementation and to maintain data on the number of cases filed and disposed of; Section 24 casts responsibility on the appropriate Government to take measures to publicize the POSH Act; Section 25 vests the power with the appropriate Government to call for information and inspection of record of any employer, if it is necessary for the public interest; and Section 26 prescribes for the penalty for non-compliance with the provisions of the Act.

Similarly, under UGC Regulations, 2015 its regulation 3 prescribes for the responsibilities of the HEIs and regulation 3.2 provides for Supportive Measures to be taken up by the HEIs.

Therefore, in this backdrop, a question was asked from the respondents, "Does POSH Act contain adequate monitoring provisions to enforce its implementation in your institution?"

As many as 76.32% of the respondents feel that POSH Act contains adequate monitoring provisions to enforce its implementation in their respective institutions. Only a meagre population of 23.68% felt the opposite of it. Out of the 76.32% who expressed their satisfaction about the adequacy of monitoring provisions in the POSH Act, 62.07% were males and 37.93% were females. Significantly, an overwhelming 63.79% of respondents from Private Institutions demonstrated their satisfaction with these provisions. (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Survey analysis on "Does POSH Act contain adequate monitoring provisions to enforce its implementation in your institution".

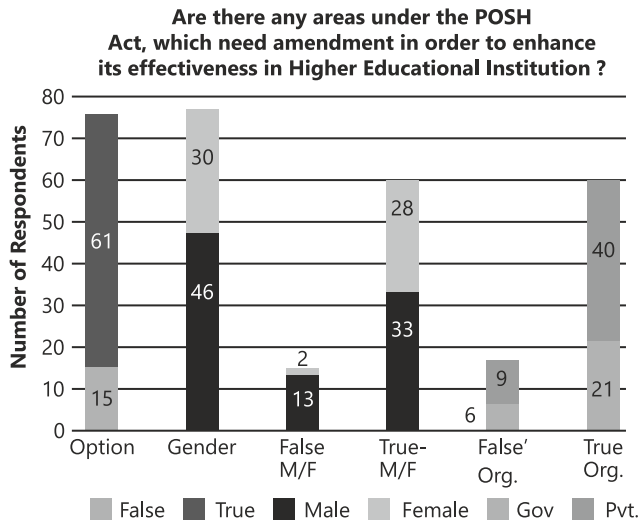




## 9. Whether there are any areas under the POSH Act, which need an amendment to enhance its effectiveness in Higher Educational Institutions?

Further, the researcher has looked into the aspect of whether there are any areas under the POSH Act, which need an amendment to enhance its effectiveness in Higher Educational Institutions. The outcome of the study is interesting, which is skewed in as much as 80.26% of respondents have stated that there are areas under the POSH Act, which need an amendment to enhance its effectiveness in Higher Educational Institutions. The large differences between the two groups are seen as significant by the researcher, which makes the outcome to be reliable. The study shows that out of the above said 80.26% of responses, 54.10% were males and 45.90% are females. Thus, it can also be inferred that there is also a need to identify the areas under the extant UGC Regulations, 2015 to make the provisions more effective for its implementation to derive the desired objectives. Interestingly, 65.57% of the respondents from private institutions have felt that there exists such a need. (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Survey analysis on "Are there any areas under the POSH Act, which need amendment in order to enhance its effectiveness in Higher Educational Institutions".



## 10. Challenges

### 10.1. Lack of Gender Neutrality of the POSH Act:

The researcher then stated that the POSH Act should be broadened to include sexual orientation and gender identity.

One of the questions before the researcher was whether there is a need to broaden the scope of the POSH Act to evolve it as a gender-neutral Act. A study conducted in 1982 stated that many accounts of sexual harassment experienced by women are often balanced with male examples of harassment. The study also noted that these accounts

are often labeled as gender-neutral<sup>8,9</sup>. According to a study conducted by the research firm PeW, in 2014, over 25% of women and 13% of men experience sexual harassment online<sup>10</sup>.

In 2019, India's legal framework did not allow women to be prosecuted for sexually harassing men. This report noted that even though there was a law against sexual harassment, it did not provide for prosecution for offences against men<sup>11</sup>. In 77 countries, including the U.S. and Australia, have gender neutral laws. This is despite the lack of data on sexual harassment. It is almost as if society still believes that women can't harass men. A 2010 survey revealed that 19% of male respondents experienced sexual harassment. A survey conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers in India revealed that almost half of the respondents experienced sexual harassment at work. The same study conducted by the company in 2013 had revealed that 43 per cent of male professionals experienced sexual advances from their colleagues.

While the data for sexual harassment of men in India is almost non-existent as most of such cases go unreported<sup>12</sup>, the same year i.e. in the year 2019, the corresponding data<sup>13</sup> from US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shows that about 16.5% of complaints of sexual harassment the commission receives annually are from men.

However, in the present scenario, one also needs to take into consideration the evolution of society and the diverse nature of our students, faculty and workforce today. Most importantly, with the removal of section 377<sup>14</sup>, a consensual homosexual relationship has been legalized. In addition, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019<sup>15</sup> prohibits discrimination against a transgender person in employment matters including recruitment and promotion. Hence, the scope of the Act may demand a broader perspective to promise a fair and secure workplace for all the employees

<sup>8</sup>D. J. Benson and G. E. Thomson, "Sexual Harassment on a University Campus: The Confluence of Authority Relations, Sexual Interest and Gender Stratification," *Social Problems*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 236-251, Feb. 1982, doi: 10.2307/800157.

<sup>9</sup>"Sexual Harassment Practical Strategies: How Do I Deal with Sexual Harassment? - Workplace Fairness," Accessed: Oct. 06, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://www.workplacefairness.org/sexual-harassment-practical-strategies>.

<sup>10</sup>"Sexual Harassment of Men." <http://www.legalservicesindia.com/article/2039/Sexual-Harassment-of-Men.html> (accessed Oct. 06, 2021).

<sup>11</sup>"Why India Inc. needs to protect Men against Sexual Harassment at Workplaces in India- case for gender neutral policies - Ungender | Empanelled by Gol." <https://www.ungender.in/why-india-inc-needs-to-protect-men-against-sexual-harassment-at-workplaces-in-india-case-for-gender-neutral-policies/> (accessed Oct. 06, 2021).

<sup>12</sup>"Gender Neutrality & Sexual Harassment Laws In India: An Overview - Employment and HR - India." <https://www.mondaq.com/india/employee-rights-labour-relations/988146/gender-neutrality-sexual-harassment-laws-in-india-an-overview> (accessed Oct. 06, 2021).

<sup>13</sup>"Charges Alleging Sex-Based Harassment (Charges filed with EEOC) FY 2010 - FY 2020 | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission." <https://www.eeoc.gov/statistics/charges-alleging-sex-based-harassment-charges-filed-eeoc-fy-2010-fy-2020> (accessed Oct. 06, 2021).

<sup>14</sup>Navtej Singh Johar vs Union Of India Ministry Of Law And ... on 6 September, 2018." <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/168671544/> (accessed Oct. 06, 2021).

<sup>15</sup>National Legal Service Auth vs Union Of India & Ors on 15 April, 2014." <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/193543132/> (accessed Oct. 06, 2021).





irrespective of their gender and sexual orientation. This becomes essential keeping in view the dynamics of modern India where the composition of the workplace has been evolved, which not only comprises women and men but also the employees from the LGBT community as well.

## 10.2 Non-admissibility of Anonymous Complaints

The other issue emerging before the researcher is regarding the admissibility of anonymous complaints of sexual harassment. Under the POSH Act, there is no provision to entertain anonymous complaints. According to one study<sup>16</sup>, in several cases the aggrieved women opt not to disclose their identity to save themselves from getting identified and to insulate themselves from any stigma being attached or facing any societal pressures. In order to address such issues a greater sensitivity shall be required on the part of the employers. Such situations shall rather warrant the employers to refrain from giving a cold shoulder to such complaints or to ignore or disregard the responsibilities bestowed on him under POSH Act. Needless to say that the employers while dealing with such complaints shall duly regard the confidentiality of the concerned parties. The approach should be to create an environment of confidence and security in the minds of the people that they shall be protected by the employers even in all such adverse situations. It is seen that in many situations the victim is afraid to file the complaint due to various constraints, pressures and or threats. In such a situation, the predator continues with the harassment with impunity, though many of the group members are aware of the act of harassment. Therefore, the study also focuses on the feasibility of making admissible anonymous complaints under the Act and the UGC Regulation, to further enhance their effectiveness. There is a need to realize that in many situations the victim is afraid to file the complaint due to various constraints, pressures and threats. If anonymous complaints are made admissible under the Act, it will further enhance the effectiveness of the same.

## 11. Concluding Remarks & Suggestions

In respect of HEIs it has emerged that when sexual harassment happens in student-teacher relationships, it is the woman who often loses her scholastic morale who as a result becomes disenchanted about the male professors, as a whole. Such pervasiveness of sexual harassment has the snowballing effect of destroying the dedication of the female towards advancement of their goals in the male-governed environment<sup>17</sup>. Thus, following conclusions & suggestions can be drawn after this study: firstly, on the part of HEIs, it requires a more focused and serious approach in implementing the provisions of the Act, and a zero tolerance while dealing with the complaints. Secondly, there is a

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<sup>16</sup>Challenges Faced by Employers in Addressing Sexual Harassment Complaints - India Corporate Law." <https://corporate.cyrilamarchandblogs.com/2016/08/challenges-faced-employers-addressing-sexual-harassment-complaints/> (accessed Oct. 06, 2021).

<sup>17</sup>B. Lucas-Molina, A. A. Williamson, R. Pulido, and A. Pérez-Albéniz, "Effects of teacher-student relationships on peer harassment: A multilevel study," *Psychology in the Schools*, vol. 52, no. 3, pp. 298-315, Mar. 2015, doi: 10.1002/PITS.21822.

need to broaden the scope of the POSH Act to evolve it as a gender-neutral Act including for the male & LGBT students in educational institutions. It is further needed because the present Act does not include other genders and sexual orientations.

This will further pave the way to promise a fair and secure workplace for all the employees irrespective of their gender and sexual orientation. The third conclusion is regarding the non-admissibility of anonymous complaints. It has surfaced during the study that in many situations the victim is afraid to file the complaint due to various constraints, pressures and threats. In such a situation, the predator continues with the harassment with impunity, though everybody knows about the act of harassment. If anonymous complaints are made admissible under the Act, it will further enhance the effectiveness of the same.

The analysis of the survey done by the researcher shows that though there is awareness about the POSH Act in HEIs, nevertheless, there exists a need for improving the law as well as practices for prevention of sexual harassment at Higher Educational Institutions.