

Sexual Attitudes and Sexual Harassment - An Evil at Academic Institutions

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Sexual harassment has been viewed as one of the major setback by many institutions throughout the world. It is always an expression of unhealthy human relationship.^[1] Workplaces and educational institutes have got a long history of sexual harassments. This has been no longer a phenomenon against the women; many studies recently addressed the sexual harassment against men. Both genders have been strongly affected by the sexual harassment. Earlier the sexual harassment at the workplace was considered as most common phenomenon, but nowadays many studies have presented that, educational institutes have also become common place for sexual harassment. Hence, the author has tried to focus on the sexual harassment at the educational institutes in the rural setup of the country. The major reason behind focusing on the rural setup is the lack of sex education in the rural areas. The academic institutions in the urban areas are able to provide the sex education which reduces the gender gap in the colleges and this helps to reduce the acts of sexual harassment. There are many grey areas regarding sexual harassment perceived by adolescent peers. They are mostly presumed as normal teenage behaviors in order to experience what gender is and to explore the development of gender roles.^[2] The study conducted by the author revealed that, the sexual harassment is not limited to the adolescent peers, but it is extended to the different groups including the teachers, administrators, family members, relatives as well as friends. Sexual harassment generally takes place when there is power or authority difference among persons involved.^[2] The public parks and entertainment places are the common places where sexual harassment occurs.

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It has been also reported that, these are not only the individuals who are involved in the act of sexual harassment but it has been observed in the groups that too of different gender. The attitude towards the opposite sex has been one of the major reasons for the sexual harassment.

Due to lack of clarity about sexual harassment, many of the acts which are supposed to be regarded as sexual harassment are ignored by the victims. Many of such cases are either ignored by the victim or they are only discussed and left within the friends and family. It also happens that, most of the times the cases of sexual harassment are dissolved by the authorities just to maintain repute of the institute. The action against sexual harassment is only limited to displaying the boards by many higher educational institutes, hence most of the acts of sexual harassment are unreported. The apex bodies of the higher educational institutes are serious about the ragging and initiated the welcoming steps to prevent it, but the measures to prevent sexual harassment are left to the respective educational institutes following some laws and guidelines being enforced from time to time. Looking in to the seriousness of the issue, all the educational institutes specially the higher education has to initiate the necessary steps and prevent the sexual harassment among the college students and make their life beautiful. This can be only possible by changing the attitudes towards opposite sex.

References

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