HARASSMENT OF WOMEN; A BIASED APPROACH; NEGLECTING OF OTHER GENDERS

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Abstract:
Unfortunately, there is no universal definition of sexual harassment which can be agreed by all countries and is at the same time adequate in nature¹. One of the reasons is cultural diversity, certain kinds of behaviors which are acceptable at one place but are abhorred or detestable at other places². Still, sexual harassment may be defined in three different ways namely a legal perspective, the social-psychological point of view that is broader in nature than legal one but with some exception and the third approach is general masses and a layman’s point of view³. Still, the debate is the same; what does actually harassment is constituted of?

Keywords: Harassment, culture, discrimination and physical violence.

Introduction
If it has been defining and implementing whether in any country, place or a city the approach is biased; most of the concept revolves and giving major importance to one group that is women. But the reality is; we are now in the 21st century where women are equally participating in a social life, enjoying positive discrimination (A phenomenon where any particular group is preferred more in a competition to reach specific target i.e women seats instead of general quota). Harassment is the question of dignity, and being a human we all are equal and we all are having the right of dignity irrespective of sex. But again, unfortunately, we made the sexual harassment limited to feminist approach. Even in real world men and transgender are equally harassed in one or other way but most societies are reluctant to recognize such kinds of acts

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because they are not falling in the group of vulnerability (in practice, not theory); because society and various culture have myths that “men are strong”. Is it not a biased approach? The problem is also in the recognition of acts of harassment with such genders by themselves. They are unable to complain; and if they complain who is going to believe women or same gender (men to men, women to women, transgender) is involved in harassment of men or same gender (lesbian, gay), transgender? And if complained so, the way they treat is discriminatory in nature; for instance, when the victim of harassment is a female, people are used to being more empathetic and in action as compared to dealing the same scenario with other genders. In 1970’s when first the concept of sexual harassment was recognized in the US; it was indeed a mere problem of women but now a day with the dynamic developments it is equally challenging for men/same gender and transgender. This concept also needs a development in regards to gender regime approach (women, men, transgender) not limited or narrowed to feminist approach only.

Harassment of Men
The first ever documented issue of sexual harassment of men in the history is, the story of Hazrat Yousaf, reported in the Holy Quran in which the victim was man and perpetrator was a woman. The two most important issues were addressed; unwanted sexual attention a kind of sexual harassment and the response of society toward Aziz’s wife an influential lady of that time named Zulaikha. There was also a third element involved sexual coercion when Zulikha ran toward Yousaf (A.S) and compelled him to fulfill her sexual desire which he refused. Although Yousaf was a man still he was sexually coerced, mentally and physically tortured and instead of getting justice; it was Yousaf who was penalized.

It is not only women but men as well who are experiencing harassment, as men identified the sexual coercion the most intimate form of harassment; but the behaviour which a man identifies as harassment is different in nature and is not identified for women. There was a survey that took place in 1994 by the US Merit Systems Protection Board from the Federal employees where it was found that if 44 % of women are
harassed than 19% of men are also experiencing unwanted sexual attention on the job in the previous two years.

This is not a less number of ratios if we are making a comparison of the data of that time. Just assume it was a time when men were more in power still 19% of men experienced harassment; so what would be the result if that survey takes place in a present time; surely there will be a day and night difference.

Harassment Power Or Sex
After a lot of reading one thing, I assumed, that all the authors have agreed sexual harassment is not primarily related to sex but it is something deals with power. It is about the predominance of position where one wants to feel superior and other ultimately become subordinate.

“SEQ; Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995; Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1985; Fitzgerald et al., 1988” is a developed measure that is constructed for the male to female harassment in organizational places. And this scale was challenged by other new researchers “Popovich, Campbell, Everton, Mangan, & Godinho, 1994; Vaux, 1993” who have focussed and stressed that the sexual harassment of male employee may also be an important problem.

Subordinate male employees also face sexual coercion by their female executive bosses. These kinds of incidents show that sexual harassment is more involving gender power issues. Here power means the ability to control or persuade. Some people alternatively call harassment as an abuse of organizational power. That is the reason it was popularly expressed that men are facing a lot of grievances and are rising because women are now holding more power and good positions; so they do harassment. According to a layman’s perception men victim suffer less than women but Clinical study proofs that men are facing same mental and emotional pain as the women do. This stereotype perception needs to be changed. Actually the real problem is in giving extraordinary attention to the cases of women over the men, like for instance a very popular case in Poland named “sex scandal in Samoobrona” in which a female clerk was harassed by Mayor of Olsztyn or case of Frito Lay
factory in which again male was perpetrator and women was victim but these cases were highlighted and discussed for a week and weeks on the contrary when the young male clerk was harassed by his old female executive; and the other case when the Public Relation officer of company harassed by his director Female boss and the male worker of the company harassed by male supervisor in Sauna does not publish nor given any attention; such case also needed to get attention like a Sex scandal in Samoora by giving it catchy name sex scandal in Sauna. But in such cases male were victims and unfortunately doesn’t have any attention nor thought about the scenario that men can also be harassed.

Well, there is a concept of distribution of equality of power. There are two poles; men and women. When this equilibrium of power disturbs and focuses on the extremeness of any one pole among the two, it gives rise to many other problems. Excess of anything is a curse.

**Backlash:**
In a survey when men have to define that what actually constitutes a harassment of men then they described two themes in which one was unfair and unnecessary favours to female employees while giving perks and privileges, they were of sayings women are more employed than men and most men are being neglected. This discrimination and organizational favoring women were called as harassment of men by women. The second type of harassment which men recognized was giving serious attention to the women’s complaints as compared to men, and that was called as women abuse power privilege.

So this is how men identify harassment in a different manner as compared to women. These two types are the developing changes within the organizational setup. Men were harassed one or other way. But mostly society even the workplace is reluctant to take it seriously; this is actually latter making a problem especially psychological and emotional. The consequences of harassment at workplace is; disturbance of quality work so if men are facing such situations and such actions are considered valid without recognizing it wrong; then it will ultimately affect him and his way of working. This is another proof that sexual harassment is more related to power than only sex. By these ways, men masculinity is challenged.
Sexual Harassment of Young Gay/ Lesbian And Bi Sexual (Sexual Preferences):
David M. Huebner, Ph.D., MPH, Gregory M. Rebchook, Ph.D., and Susan M. Kegeles, Ph.D. scholars worked on this vary subject with the name of “Experiences of Harassment, Discrimination, and Physical Violence Among Young Gay and Bisexual Men”. Their objective was to examine the discrimination, harassment, violence against young gay and bisexual its negative effects on their physical and mental health. For this purpose, they examined gays/ bi-sexual from three cities of Southern West United States with the help of self-administered questionnaires. The result was; in the previous six months they experienced:

- Anti-Gay verbal Comments: 37%
- Discrimination: 11.2%
- Physical violence: 4.8%  

In their work they highlighted to very important issue i.e. when such genders are reporting the ill-treatment with them, they are coming with lower self-esteem and with increased ideas of suicides.

This work came up with the conclusion that there is a need for policy making to prevent such kinds of behavior with them. Create safe social settings by prevention of anti-gay/ lesbian/ bisexual mistreatment.

Encouraging them with empowerment, community building programs and helps those to recover from such adverse psychological effects because of negative actions like discrimination, violence, and sex based comments.

This is another very important regime of gender based violence which needs full attention. As it was earlier mentioned; this is the 21st century where there is diverse nature of people are living within a society on the basis of a gender perspective; there are not only two poles men and women which are generally recognized but also Transgenders. Lesbians, gays, bi-sexual (sexual preferences) who are facing more sex base comments and mental torture. Sex- based comments are one of the forms of harassment and this is another reason that the concept of harassment needs important transformation from the feminist approach to gender-based approach. When this approach will be gendered base than any of
the gender whether women, men, transgender faced such scenario then it will respond equally without impartiality. Now a day it is unfortunate that female harassment cases are taken into consideration with full empathetical way but others were sympathetic.

**Is Sexual Harassment Research Biased?**

Iddo Landau is another researcher who debated on the topic that sexual harassment in researches is a biased approach by various feminist notions. Fitzgerald et al in 1988 “Academic harassment” wrote that most of the studies which are documented are on the basis of reported behavior by the victims, but none of the studies examined any harasser directly. After this study, no improvement took place to identify the percentage of how many men are involved in harassment? Whether the 10% of a minor group or 45% of men or majority of 90%? According to author this relative scarcity of inquiry is not a coincidence. There is a reason behind it, they do not want to complicate the perspective in which men try to dominate women and men are only hostile to women.

In this research the authors identify another issue which is the violence in the relationship of lesbians; that is the very serious phenomenon. [Lesbian is a homosexual relationship between woman and woman]. He further mentioned that it is very difficult to find any study which examines the relationship of lesbians and even women in general. He suggested that such kind of scarcity is because if there will be a percentage of lesbian sexual harassment proof than it will make the statement questionable that, men are aggressive and domineering but women are not. Well, the author is having a teaching career who himself had faced three cases of sexual bribery by the female students for the improvement of marks. He shared his experience by writing that: “The proposals, if they were such, were ambiguously phrased, all of them including the word “everything” (e.g., “I am ready to do everything for . . .”). By “everything” the students may have simply meant scholarly chores (such as writing a longer paper), or sexual activity. Deciding this issue depends, among others, on the type of clothes worn, body language, and the way the sentence was uttered, especially the word “everything.” To this day I am not completely sure how these three suggestions should have been interpreted. Discussions with some other male professors revealed that I am not the only one who has been
exposed to such experiences. However, inquiries into cases in which women are the initiators of sexual bribes, even of proposals which are not actualized, are rare. Again, he mentioned that such scarcity of researches are not a coincidence but intentional as feminist does not want to complicate the idea that men are the wrongdoers evil while the women are mere victims.

This is the very important research work ever done describing a very important issue that most of the harassment researches are done by feminists who showed only one side of the picture and had been neglected many other issues just to prove that; in the area of harassment there is one evil that is men and victims are only women. But it is also a bitter reality that aggression does exist in men only; even women are sometimes involved in the sexual bribes directly or indirectly but are hardly reported and that is the reason no one gives that much importance to the issue or the other reason is sensitivity of the issue because if a man is going to claim he has been sexually bribed whether anyone is going to believe? Or may be he will face the adverse situation. There will be no empathetic approach toward him. Writing is the medium which influences the human ideas and are constructing indirectly social norms. If the writings are biased than society thought will also biased. This idea needs a development and concept of harassment needs gender approach by recognition of the equal importance to all the genders and their issues of harassment. One suggestion which I can mention is to prepare a questionnaire which is not biased and have recognition to the issues of all gender and does not focus on only one gender and its problems. By this way, a proper percentage will come into notice and according to that recognition, precautions, policies can be made. Until and unless the problem is not identified as a problem that will be not given with importance and no such serious actions will be taken.

Small Example of Biasness In Pakistan:
In Pakistan, there is only one law which deals with the protection against harassment at workplaces. It came into force in 2010 with the title of “The protection against harassment of women at workplace 2010”. Now the point of biases needs to be discussed here. This title clearly indicates that it is for the protection of women against harassment but if we give look to the section 2 clause e it defines complainant as “Complainant”
means a woman or man who has made a complaint to the Ombudsman or to the Inquiry Committee for being aggrieved by an act of harassment. Now if the statutory law is recognizing men as a Complainant then, why the statutory name shows biased approach which is only claiming the protection of women?

I am coming to the conclusion that with the development of time there is need of development in the concept of harassment by giving recognition and full equal attention to other genders. This is not only women who are harassed but men, transgenders and other heterosexual too. They are suffering from the same pain as the women do. As the consequences are the same, mentally and physically. It disturbed them and ultimately affect the way of their working. Harassment is not specific for the reason of satisfaction of a sexual need but there is a lot of influence of powerful position. Irrespective whether male or female is in power they one or other way try to abuse their power by manipulation. Such abuse is recognized and publicized by people when the men are evil wrong doer and female is a victim. This is the very biased approach. It is also noticed that a lot of sexual harassment research has been conducted by a feminist. Their research work also influenced by biasedness in which they try to avoid such statement which can make the female status of victimization questionable. Harassment is a social construct evil; it is an attack on the men’s dignity whether its women, men, Transgender, sexual preferences {lesbian, Gay, heterosexual, same sexual} any of the kind all of them are require equal attention. Precautionary measures are also required to be taken and policies should be created to avoid biasedness and try to get rid of this evil by giving equal recognition and protection.

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