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HARASSMENT AND VIOLATION OF THE RIGHT OF EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Abstract
Object of this study is to examine issue of harassment in the universities of Pakistan and its effects on the right of education guaranteed in the Constitution of Pakistan 1973 and remedies. Analysis focused on issue of harassment faced by female students and existing legal frame work within the universities and higher educational institutions and anti-harassment measures. Harassment is a global issue causing adverse effects on the growth and development of the females specifically and society and country generally. Though laws have been enacted to prevent harassment and provide safe environment for the females; however still country could not get rid from this evil completely. In this regard doctrinal research methodology has been applied. Through the examination of available research and other material including anti-harassment laws this researcher addressed the objectives. It appeared that in educational institutions harassment exists and in consequences of the harassment there are adverse impacts on the victim including suffering of constitutional right of education. It has been suggested through the recommendations that Government should take effective measures to ensure the safe and harassment free environment in the universities and other higher educational institutions to uphold the right of education with dignity.

Key words: *Harassment, Violation of Education, Constitutional Right*

1. Introduction

To create future intellectual and professional leaders of the society and country higher education is offered and this job is done through the universities and higher educational institutions established by the government (Omer, 2023). In Pakistan universities across the country are offering higher education in the field of medical science, engineering, social sciences and other fields. In this regard to maintain uniform policy, keep check and balance and to provide funds to the public universities High Education Commission has been established (Wajahat, 2022). However, object to provide higher education without discrimination as guaranteed in the constitution of Pakistan is incomplete in absence of safe and dignified environment specifically for females. Education which in addition to constitutional is also a social, cultural, economic and political right being violated due to various reasons (Zaidi & Sultana, 2023; Imran, 2022). Discrimination and violence are the main causes of this violation of the right of higher education for females; also eradicating the potential of the affect's students (Gul, 2022). This is also an institutional failure to provide environment free from violence and harassment consequently intellectual space of students becomes transformed into trauma and exclusion (Imran, 2024).

A behavior not welcomed in nature and causing an environment where an individual feel frightened, disgraced and shameful is called as a sexual harassment. There might have been various definitions and kinds of the sexual harassment provided by the law and researchers. Decades before sexual harassment were a problem without name; however currently it has been named and framed problem. There are various modes of sexual

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harassments (i) gender harassment includes sexual remarks and professional hostility, (ii) unwanted sexual attention includes unwelcome sexual advances, propositions or request for dates and lack of mutual understanding, (iii) sexual coercion (Quid Pro Quo) includes demand for sexual favors in exchange for academic benefits. To stalk, bully or circulation of nonconsensual sexualized contents is considered as cyber harassment. Whereas unwanted following and physical intimidation restricting mobility and freedom of female is called as public and environmental harassment.

Harassment of a female either she is a student or working lady is global issue and its effects are felt by all concerned. In every society either in the developed country or under developed country harassment exists in different shapes; however, causes nature and extent may vary (Munawar, 2020). To curb this issue nations have taken various measures through legislation. In this regard at International and national levels laws have been enacted but still cases of harassment are heard from various corners (Garcia, 2020). Harassment is not limited to physical abuse but embarrassing words, body gestures, actions, deliberate work load and threat of termination, demotion, deprivation of benefits in case of refusal to comply desire of perpetrator are also its kinds (Latif, 2024). As being more vulnerable; often victims of the harassments are women specifically those who works in different fields with men.

2. Literature Review

It is explored through research studies conducted in various countries including Pakistan that women experienced sexual harassment. In Pakistan poor implementation makes the laws ineffective and violence is encouraged consequently due to lack of enforcement of law society is not just with women. Besides other factors lack of awareness, non-submission of harassment complaints and mindset are biggest challenges in implementation of laws. Exploiting this drawbacks culprit continue harassment. It is for this reason that in Pakistan harassment at public places and street harassment is common. It appears from the existing literature that street harassment is a routine matter faced by the women. The most common form of street harassment is verbal. Due to stress women neither respond nor report such harassment and even women don't expect any result of the complaint of such harassment which makes the culprit more encouraged. Initiatives are needed to give social, moral, and legal support (Asif., 2023). Singing song, calling by nicks and touching by pen and hand are frequent modes of harassment. Sometimes situation is created to harass them.

Regardless of the occupation and workplace; incidences of harassment which is a usual crime in our society happen wherever women work. Sexual harassment is a usual crime in our society. It is a kind of violence that mostly targets women (Butt, 2023). People do not like to intervene or stop the harasser but rather advise girls to stay home or change their routes. Lack of knowledge and mistrust on the law enforcement agencies are causes of not reporting such incidents of harassments (Omer, 2023).

The Protection against Harassment of Women at Work Place Act 2010 provides that in addition to an unwarranted sexual advance, demand of sexual favour or sexual demeanor, creating intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, threat to punish for noncompliance or verbal assault amounts to harassment (Wajahat, 2022). As women participation in various fields have been increased and females are performing their role in the development and prosperity of the society and country there are also certain hurdles faced by them and sexual harassment is one of the tops most hurdle (Riipa, et al., 2026; Hossain, et al., 2025). People holding negative mental approach or opposing female participation in the process of development promote violence and create disturbance against them in various shapes causing mental, social, financial and intellectual growth (Gul, 2022).

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In Universities and higher educational institutions due to the harassment and discrimination students felt anxiety, frustration and depression (Imran, Khan, & Rani, 2025; Imran, Sultana, & Jat, 2023). Due to lack of institutional mechanism for the resolution of complaints female students quit higher education where as many of the female students lose confidence. Sometime they face harassment in the shape of marks awarding (Munawar, 2020).

Concept of sexual harassment is persistent dilemma around the world; various types of violence are carried out against women and constant efforts have been made to make the laws and policies for elimination of this evil of harassment (Imran, Akhtar, & Khan, 2026; Zaidi, et al., 2024). When the world is competing in the field of information technology and artificial intelligence; attitude frightening females causes significant harm and inhibits their capacity to perform and contribute in the development and growth of the society and country. It is the requirement of time to adopt zero tolerance for workplace harassment and comply law with its true spirit (Ali, 2022). Though laws are in existence but still there are gaps in the implementation and enforcement of legislation (Imran, 2024).

In Pakistan harassment at public places is a social problem. To move freely and take part in the social, official, academic and economic development women need social and legal support however irrespective of education level or marital status females face sexual harassment at public places and lack of social support put them in more stress. High ratio of victimization is from physical, verbal and nonverbal harassment (Imran, Akhtar, & Khan, 2026; Haider, et al., 2025). Nonverbal harassment is most common in all these three types. Market places are most common for sexual harassment as perpetrator is stranger there. The most common reaction by the victim is to run away. In this regard education can play an important role to bring awareness about the issue so those females get courage to report the case (Anwar, 2019). Education is economic, social and cultural rights and has been guaranteed in the constitution of Pakistan 1973. State is required to make education available and accessible with dignity. By harassment this right of education is violated (Coomans, 1994).

3. Research Methodology

To explore the objective of this research study doctrinal research methodology has been applied. In this regard primary legal sources were analysed in detail including the provisions of the Constitution of Pakistan and anti-harassment laws and HEC policy to prevent harassment and relevant case laws. To contextualize the legal framework within the socio educational environment of Pakistan secondary sources were also reviewed which included legal commentaries, academic article and report. Through this methodology gaps and inconsistencies in the protection against harassment in the universities and higher educational institutions were identified. This doctrinal study aims to provide understanding of the available legal protection, challenges and suggest reforms to safeguard the right of education of the females.

4.1 Harassment at International Level

Systematic review of comprehensive literature and summaries of existing research reflects that reporting ratio of sexual harassment is one out of four female students, also shows dysfunctional academic culture and inability of every current higher education system to address its own shortcomings. It also enlightens the need for effective preventive methods (Bondestam, 2020). Students of various Muslim countries willing to pursue their higher education in foreign look towards Malaysia but there also harassment is an issue (Faisal., 2019). The reinforcement of male dominance and heterosexuality are often the cause of sexual harassment of female students at the institutions of higher learning across Africa (Kheswa, 2014). In Kerala India women are subjected to sexual harassment in institutions. Tolerance against injustice, lack of confidence, fear of disgrace and blames are causes of not fighting against the evil consequently

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perpetrators are encouraged (Thomas, 2015). Sexual harassment does not respect contexts, ages, or social classes. Victims can be married or single. At initial stage harasser uses sweet and loving words to gain the trust; in second phase it starts with low violence by looks etc and in third phase adopt high level of violence, like touching and pinches even reaching rape through coercion, pressure or threats. Also, when the victim answers negatively they are threatened with adverse consequences (Garcia, 2020).

4.2 Harassment at National Level

In Pakistan research indicates an alarming situation of harassment in educational institutions, though it often remains shrouded in silence. It has been explored that due to various reasons including cultural restraints majority of the victims do not disclose the incidents of harassment and suffer in silence to protect themselves from being blamed as immoral or bringing shame to their families. This leads to a phenomenon where women self-censor, abandon cyberspace, or withdraw entirely from academic and social activities as a primitive, desperate form of self-defense.

In Islamabad and Peshawar to prevent harassment comprehensive support systems, including counseling, academic advising, and stress management resources, proactive measures such as workshops, training programs, and awareness campaigns, inclusive and supportive learning environments, fostering a culture of respect, empathy, and understanding is required (Islam, 2023). In Gomal University Dera Ismail Khan Khyber Pakhtun Khwa 2 professors and 2 staff members were dismissed from their jobs after allegations of sexual harassment were proved (Danish, Akhtar & Imran, 2025; Mankash, et al., 2025; Hafeez, Yaseen & Imran, 2019). Though women in Multan city are not willing to expose issues related to intimidation, however here is a need of measures to protect females from harassment (Gul, 2022). In Lahore female students are verbally harassed inside university premises and some of them face other types of harassment. Most of the female students have no awareness of dealing, reporting, and meeting the challenge of sexual harassment (Kiran, 2022).

Alleged recovery of mobile from a senior official of the Islamia University Bahawalpur with obscene material of various employees and students also raised so many questions. Though legal advisor of the university declared it as a conspiracy and denied police claim; in consequence of the issue many of the female students were stopped by their parent from continuing the education in the University (Khoso, et al., 2024; Sultana & Imran, 2024; Ahmad, Bibi & Imran, 2023). The information Islamia University Bahawalpur was sad and worrying (Latif, 2024). In DG Khan significant number of female students experience various forms of sexual harassment however there are institutional shortcomings in addressing such issues (Raza., 2025). Asif, (2023) explored that in the higher educational institutions of Quetta sexual harassment is prevalent with all its forms. In Jamshoro education city females are facing difficulties at their work due to low awareness level and non-implementation of laws and policies designed to protect females. Harassment and discrimination happen by (i) organizational politics (ii) gender biasness (iii) assigning job duties and training (Khan., 2017). In the University classmates, teachers, administration and staff harass female students whereas outside the university strangers harass them. Harassment and increased stress and anxiety, poor academic performance cannot be separated from each other. In combating these challenges there is poor institutional support (Ahmed., 2025). Suicide due to harassment by a female medical student in the Mirpurkhas and suspension of a faculty member of the Mehran University Jamshoro on accusation of harassing a research scholar female student are evidence of this fact that harassment is in existence in very dangerous form.

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4.3 Cyber harassment

In higher education either it may be physical or online information or communication technology has become part of routine activities for teachers, students and staff and is used for various purposes. Life has become changed through information technology, daily tasks of the students and teachers are addressed efficiently and effectively. Digital tools are used to access required updated law, other information and communication in addition to the entertainment. Internet is used by young people as a forum for social networking for expressing themselves freely; moral, ethical, cultural values and norms become affected and lives of the individuals become more complex. Besides advantages there are disadvantages of the use of internet; one of them is online or cyber harassment which is a global issue and women are the common victim of it. In Pakistan due to flaws in the cyber laws online harassment cases are increasing (Shahid, 2018).

These digital modes are also being used for cyber bullying. Exclusion and Flaming are the two topmost forms of cyber bullying. It has been observed that as compared to virtual university it is more common in conventional university. However, no significant difference has been observed between the male and female students (Mirza., 2020). Cyber bullying is the updated form of harassment and discrimination by the use of technology. Peer harassment is also an important social problem negatively affecting a large number of our student population (Munawar., 2020).

Research shows that many females are unaware to deal with such situations therefore they are reluctant to report the formal complaints (Shahid., 2018). Cultural stigma, distrust of authorities, and fear of retaliation are also causing of not reporting the harassment. Same is the exploration of Kondhar., (2023) it has been revealed in this research that higher education institutions are currently facing cyber harassment, which is a contemporary difficulty. Cases of cyber harassment are increasing and have resulted in a digital dilemma, frustration, depression, and insecurity among students. Cyber culprits are very sharp and don't leave any clue implicating them. Increase in the cyber harassment is evidence of this fact that there is a gap in the implementation of cyber harassment laws, policy and procedure of the institutions.

An overview uncovered that youth spend up to 9 hours every day on the web, with most of time being spent via web-based networking media sites from cell phones. Because of the misuse of information technology cyber-space has no more remains a place of positive discourse. Muhammad, (2019) explored that females face online rude and mean comments, their personal information, pictures, and videos are shared on social media without their consent. It is also admitted position that mean and rude comments are shared to unknown people because there is no likelihood to face them in their lives. Some of the internet users harass others just for fun. In Balochistan's unique cultural context online harassment directly threatens gender equity (Ahmed., 2025).

4.4 Anti-Harassment Law

To create safe working environment for women with dignity Protection against Harassment Act 2010 was been enacted which complaint/appeals mechanism (Yaseen., 2019). The Act, 2010 in harassment cases provided different forum for acting which included:

i. Internal Departmental Complaint system,
ii. Filing of direct complaint before the office of Ombudsman,
iii. Appeal before the Office of Ombudsman, and
iv. Representation before President or Governor as the case may be and
v. Filing of complaint in District Court if Ombudsman office is not available.

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Under Section 3 of The Act, 2010 an inquiry committee was required to be constituted but in most of the institutions it does not exist. As a rule of practice inquiry committee are either constituted as on a paper work or constituted upon the reception of complaint submitted twice or thrice (Wajahat, 2021). Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 contained glaring jurisprudential lacunae when applied to higher education. It required the harassment to be strictly sexual in nature, ignoring other aspects.

Flaws in the previous law have been rectified by the landmark Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Amendment) Act, 2022. In this law jurisdiction has been expanded and education institutions has been brought in the definition of workplaces. Gender discrimination has been included in the definition of harassment. Expected defamation suit by the perpetrator against the victim has been made subject to the disciplinary notice by the Ombudsman or inquiry committee.

The Supreme Court and High Courts of Pakistan have also fortified these protections. In notable precedents, such as *Asif Saleem v Chairman BOG University of Lahore*, the courts upheld the dismissal of a university professor for harassing a student, noting that a hostile work environment fundamentally hinders women's constitutional rights to dignity (Article 14) and equality (Article 25). The courts recognized that in a male-dominated society, failing to curb such acts with an iron hand compromises the prestige and safety of female students. An analysis of the laws providing protection to the women shows that for combating harassment it is required to display anti-harassment law at conspicuous places of the institute/department/organization.

4.5 HEC Guidelines and Challenges

Although HEC has made compliance of anti-harassment laws mandatory none of the university has implemented it in accordance of its spirit; consequently, perpetrators become more consistent and daring. Lack of State and organizational control leads women to be silent (Yousaf, 2016). However, HEC has issued a Revised Policy on Protection Against Harassment in Higher Education Institutions (2025) is a comprehensive, binding document designed to bridge the gap between statutory law and daily institutional governance. The policy mandates the formation of dedicated, trained Inquiry Committees, outlines clear jurisdictions, and places the ultimate onus of compliance on Vice-Chancellors. It also embeds strict anti-retaliation clauses, ensuring that any reprisal against a complainant whether academic or professional triggers separate, severe disciplinary proceedings.

Academic institutions must actively work to diffuse the hierarchical and dependent relationships between faculty and students. The traditional academic model, where a single principal investigator or supervisor holds absolute, unchecked sway over a student's funding, research progression, and future career prospects, creates a captive environment highly susceptible to abuse. Institutions must implement structural changes such as committee-based advising, diversified funding streams that follow the student rather than the professor, and independent ombudsperson offices to dilute concentrated power.

Award of grades, research funding, recommendation letter, publication opportunities, and access to elite academic networks is an operative currency in an academia often controlled by the perpetrator faculty or administrators and this position is exploited to coerce vulnerable students. It is an admitted position that poverty is curse and abuser exploit it; it appears to the victim that compliance of the desire can be the only for survival while resistance may result in destruction. Lack of institutional mechanism to address the complaints, smooth and efficient process of hearing and decision disappoints and discourage the victim.

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In Pakistan, despite federal laws and Higher Education Commission (HEC) regulations mandating the creation of such committees, many universities fail to establish them, or do so merely to achieve surface-level compliance. Composition of the committees is not impartial and independent and is often controlled by peers who share similar structural advantages and may harbor implicit biases favoring the institution's reputation or the career of a "superstar" researcher. Administration actively protects "blue-eyed faculty" members to protect the institution's reputation or the career of a favored academic. Even if a victim dares to submit a complaint; she faces retaliation in the shape of threat of expulsion and failing grades. The expectation that a marginalized, traumatized student will successfully navigate a hostile process against a faculty member backed by institutional resources is a fundamental flaw in reporting mechanisms. When students are not unilaterally dependent on a single individual for their academic survival, the leverage required for sexual coercion is substantially weakened. Furthermore, university leadership must elevate the tackling of gender harassment to the same level of severity as sexual assault, recognizing that an environment polluted by everyday sexism will inevitably breed severe physical and psychological violence.

In the criminal cases prosecution is required to prove its case beyond reasonable doubt however in the cases of harassment same principle is not applicable. International human rights adjudication and progressive institutional policies increasingly advocate for the "preponderance of the evidence" requiring to determine in view of evidence produced that whether harassment occurred or not. The adoption of the preponderance standard in academic inquiries is essential for creating equitable procedures that do not inherently disadvantage the victim while maintaining administrative fairness.

Tolerance by an educational institution has two adverse effects: (i) perpetrator becomes more encouraged and (ii) affected female student becomes more scared causing other females' students frightened. On the contrary if an institution acts against the perpetrator it has also two impact: (i) Perpetrator discouraged and becomes careful in his behavior and (ii) female students feel safe, secure and satisfied encouraging other female students to actively take part in self growth and development which is also growth and development of the society and country.

4.6 7P Model

To achieve genuine institutional change, policy frameworks must be exhaustive and holistic. The UniSAFE project proposes the 7P Model. Educational institutions must integrate all seven pillars to be effective:

1. Prevalence: Establishing intersectional data collection mechanism
2. Prevention: Tackling root causes through awareness
3. Protection: Ensure physical and psychological safety of victims
4. Prosecution: Enforcing strict measures against perpetrators
5. Provision of services: Provide support, counseling, care and legal guidance
6. Partnerships: Engage external actors
7. Policies: Effective policies

4.7 Discussion and Findings

In view of above discussion, it appears that environment of the higher educational institutions of Pakistan is not safe and free from harassment and discrimination. There is a gap in the legal framework and enforcement mechanism. Following five types of sexual harassment have been classified.

i. In appropriate remarks amounting to sexual.
ii. Physical and verbal conduct.
iii. Sexual bribery involving promise of promotion and other benefits

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iv. Sexual coercion
v. Sexual assault

In consequences of the harassment there are following adverse impacts on students specifically females' students.

i. In male-dominated societies, reporting harassment carries an immense risk; blame is shifted entirely onto the victim. Concept of honor is used as weapon against the victim and in the name of honor, family standing, marriage issues, social stigma and reputation she is forced to remained silence. Absence of moral and institutional support, fear of retaliation deters students from availing remedy. The lack of digital literacy and advanced forensic capabilities further compounds this issue when the harassment occurs in cyberspace, leaving women feeling completely defenseless and unable to prove their victimization.
ii. Academic stress and harassment can contribute to negative emotional states such as anxiety, depression, psychological distress, feelings of isolation and a general sense of insecurity. These emotional challenges can further detract from students' ability to focus, concentrate, and perform academically, creating additional barriers to success.
iii. The academic consequences of sexual harassment actively subvert the fundamental purpose of higher education. Victim female students actively disengage from classes, avoid specific departments, and alter their academic majors solely to evade harassers, professional and educational attainment becomes undermined and systematically show lower Grade Point Averages (GPA).
iv. When students are harassed by faculty or peers, the campus transforms from a site of learning to a site of recurring trauma. For women who persist into academic careers or graduate studies, the trauma often prompts them to give up tenure-track positions, step down from leadership roles, or abandon research teams entirely just to avoid perpetrators. This phenomenon severely damages research integrity and results in a costly loss of talent.
v. Students facing academic stress and harassment may experience a decline in motivation and engagement with their studies. The constant pressure to perform well, coupled with negative experiences of harassment, can diminish students' enthusiasm for learning and participation in academic activities, ultimately affecting their academic performance.
vi. Academic stress coupled with experiences of harassment can negatively impact students' self-esteem and confidence in their academic abilities. Verbal harassment and discriminatory remarks may undermine students 'belief in their capabilities, leading to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, which can hinder their academic performance.
vii. Experiencing academic stress and harassment causes anxiety and distraction, consequently lack of focus on studies may result in decreased academic performance, as students struggle to absorb and retain course material effectively (Islam, 2023).
viii. There are also economic effects of harassment on the victim, when women exit their institutions or careers to escape harassment; they suffer the loss of firm-specific tenure, severed professional networks, and severe financial insecurity. In developing economies like Pakistan, the socio-economic strangulation caused by workplace and educational harassment actively impedes national development.

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Depending upon the facts of each case following actions can be taken step by step.

- Issuance of Warning
- Demanding written apology
- Requiring bond of good behaviour
- Adverse remarks in the Confidential Report
- Debarring from supervision
- Exclusion from statutory bodies
- Denial of re-employment
- Stopping of increments/promotion
- Reverting, demotion
- Suspension
- Dismissal

5. Conclusion

It appears that though modes may be different but harassment is exercised in all institutions. The sexual harassment of female students in higher education is a systemic, institutionalized manifestation of structural gender inequality and power abuse. The devastating impact of this harassment is multifold and life-altering. It inflicts profound psychological trauma, systematically drives women out of educational pathways and perpetuates long-term socio-economic disparities. Anti-harassment laws have not been fully implemented which has encouraged perpetrator and females still feels unsecure. Victims neither report to the concerned authorities nor share with their family the incidents of harassment due the stigmatization and mistrust on the relevant agencies and complication of procedures. The complicated trial process is also big hurdle in filing cases by the affected female. However, recent legislative advancements, notably the 2022 Amendment to the Workplace Harassment Act and the comprehensive 2025 HEC guidelines, mark a critical, paradigm-shifting step toward comprehensive legal accountability. There is severe need to adopt effective measures to provide safe environment or the working women and seeking education in the universities and higher educational institutions. Ultimately, eradicating gender-based violence in academia necessitates a profound, structural, and cultural transformation. Only through systemic, unflinching intervention universities can fulfill their fundamental mandate as safe, generative harbors of intellectual advancement for all students.

5.1 Recommendations

In order to combat sexual harassment following recommendations are suggested.

1. Awareness lectures, seminars, workshops and training programs should be arranged for female students along with sharing of material including the anti-harassment laws. Parents should also empower their daughters to be brave and submit complaint if harassed. Students should be informed about their rights and be trained to defend themselves against sexual harassment
2. Establishment of a mechanism at university/institution/department and organization level be ensured to investigate and deal with the complaints of harassment and cyber bullying by maintaining dignity, satisfaction and protection to the victim. Anti-harassment committees should include qualified legal, psychological experts and female faculty or staff members. Such committees should be given training. It must be ensured that every complaint be taken seriously and action on complaint should be taken timely.
3. In Universities and higher education institutions paper checking process should be modified and an independent committee should be constituted to check the answer copies of complainant student. A monitoring cell should be established at universities to

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generally evaluate the results of each semester and take necessary steps to redress if there appears any injustice.

4. Through digital citizenship education students should be guided about the use of technology and maintain ethics and morality. Awareness workshops and seminars on digital literacy and safe internet use should be conducted.
5. Fair and confidential reporting mechanisms should be established and arrangements should be made to provide psychological support within institutions.
6. Complaint procedure should be made easy and it should be online, so that aggrieved females may file their complaint easily and without any fear. In this regard a hotline should be arranged.
7. Separate courts should be established atleast at district or division level with special jurisdiction of dealing cases of harassment. There should be simple and speedy process of filing complaints and trial of the case.
8. There should be separate female police wings to deal such cases and helpline on the pattern of 15.
9. An alumni association of female students studying at University level should be established for getting moral support from each other.

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