

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT DOMESTIC PLACES

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ABSTRACT

Sexual harassment is the sexual act against the will of another person who feels uneasy. It can be verbal, non-verbal, and physical. Sexual harassment can occur with both males and females, As it is witnessed how sexual harassment against males has risen after the pandemic but This paper studies mainly the sexual harassment faced by females in their domestic households. Sexual harassment in the workplace or any public environment is majorly addressed but sexual harassment in domestic places is also a complex issue that needs to be looked at and it is often less discussed. It is a more serious issue because many minor girls face such sexual assault from their uncle, cousin brother, or so on, which has a bad impact on their mental health. It is necessary to teach all the girls to be bold and speak up about the problem so that it can be prevented or the same man may assault another girl again and again.

Keywords: Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Harassment Against Women In Domestic Places.

INTRODUCTION

The meaning of Harassment is abusing someone by means of verbal or non-verbal that makes the other person feel uncomfortable or hurts their feelings. Sexual harassment is a complex issue and mainly focused on workplace or public places however sexual harassment at domestic places is also equally significant. Sexual harassment means unwanted sexual acts against the consent of the other person. Sexual harassment can be against women or men. It has been witnessed how females have been facing sexual assault from a young age, but at present it is also seen that the rise of sexual harassment against the will of men is also rising. This paper mainly aims at women facing sexual harassment in domestic places. It has been seen that women are facing sexual assault at the workplace every day but it is also important to draw attention towards the women who are also facing sexual assault in their own domestic

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households. Some women also face sexual assault at the workplace place men who have a traumatic past also face the same in their workplace.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT INCLUDES

- Any undesirable physical closeness
- Requesting sexual favors
- Difavoursnng inappropriate photos or videos without permission

THERE ARE THREE PRIMARY CATEGORIES OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Verbal

This includes making inappropriate remarks, inappropriately talking about sexual desires, and making remarks about someone's attire or body in a sexual way that crosses consent lines.

Non-Verbal

This type of harassment occurs when someone makes the victim feel uneasy through their actions, gaze, gestures, and body language. For instance, moving from top to bottom while making eye contact, sending sexual signals with hands or body, or displaying sexual images to others in a sexual manner.

Physical

Anything that leads to unwanted physical contact is considered physical harassment. This includes actions such as touching, rubbing genital areas, patting or rubbing shoulders, and kissing.

These are the categories of sexual assault that are faced by almost every girl once in life. Sometimes these women were so little that they knew that what was happening to them was right or wrong but they have always felt something discomfort and that becomes a trauma after they grow up, things come up in their minds again and again and they realize what they had gone through.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN DOMESTIC PLACE

Domestic Place means the household where one lives. Almost every woman has faced sexual assault in her life at least once. But how does it feel when she faces assault from her own

bloodline or someone who is related to her in her own family? There are many examples where women have faced such discomforts. Women who face such assault from their own uncles, cousins brothers, stepdad, grandfathers, guests, and so on at their own house are known as sexual harassment in the domestic place. Types of harassment include unwelcome sexual advances, inappropriate remarks, and coercive sexual behavior, encompassing acts of subtle intimidation or breach of personal space.

A key feature of harassment within the home environment is the indistinct lines between one's personal and private matters. This lack of clarity can complicate the process for victims to recognize and voice their experiences, frequently resulting in under-reporting and ongoing torture in isolation. Often when a girl at young faces such assault and confronts someone very close to them whether it is her mother, sister, father, or brother they often instead of expressing this they chooses to tolerate and keep silent in order to maintain a family relationship that does not lead to any family issue. And then they choose to live with such trauma. Many of the girls who cannot bear such traumas are ending their lives by themselves.

POWER DISPARITIES AND INEQUALITIES

The root cause of sexual harassment in the domestic household or intimate environment is the issue of power disparities. This disparity may come from differences in age, gender, financial condition, or cultural practices due to which sexual assault takes place. For example, a girl of 12 years may face sexual harassment from her 37-year-old uncle and she is unable to say anything because of the age difference as well as the power disparity due to the difference in the age.

Furthermore due to social norms and beliefs the roles of men and women have always been discriminated against and never treated equally. It also results in sexual intent in households where men think themselves superior to women and treat them abusively by harassing them with sexual acts.

IMPACT ON VICTIM

¹The impact of sexual harassment in home environments is deep and complex. Victims might face psychological distress, lowered self-esteem, and trust issues in their close relationships.

¹ "Sexual Harassment at Home" (*Intimately Yours*, May 5, 2022) <<https://blog.thesirona.com/intimate-talk/sexual-harassment-at-home/>> accessed July 24, 2024

When minors are targeted, the impact can be especially severe, possibly altering how they view relationships and sexual identity as they grow older.

Moreover, the subtle and hidden aspects of harassment in homes can push victims away from people who could offer help, worsening their feeling of being powerless and extending their time spent in harmful situations. This feeling of being cut off can be made worse by financial dependence or societal values that emphasize the reputation of the family over the happiness of the individual.

Due to such emotional depression, many women take time to recover from such traumas and some really take a long time and are insecure about every man around them, while some end their lives by failing to bear such pain in their hearts.

The impact on women or minors of sexual assault has always resulted in severe depression for the victim.

ACTIONS VICTIMS CAN TAKE FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Many people feel uneasy about discussing instances of sexual harassment, especially when it happens among family members.² They might feel embarrassed or think others don't trust them. Nonetheless, it's crucial for victims not to stay silent about their experiences.

Immediate steps victims can take if they experience sexual harassment include

- Calling out the offender right away and Discussing the impact of the harassment and the reasons it should stop, also warn them of possible consequences.
- Reaching out to someone that can be trusted, such as a family member, relative, or close friend or any individual victim has confidence who will provide support.
- Make a formal complaint or pursuing legal action, or can always contact the women's helpline (7827170170) or start a legal case against the harasser.
- Collect evidence secretly when facing repeated harassment. Recording inappropriate phone conversations and messages can be used as evidence.
- The Sexual Harassment of Women Act in India

² "Sexual Harassment at Home" (*Intimately Yours*, May 5, 2022) <<https://blog.thesirona.com/intimate-talk/sexual-harassment-at-home/>> accessed July 24, 2024

WOMEN FACING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT HOME HAVE LAWS FOR SEEKING JUSTICE, INCLUDING

- ³Initiating an initial report at the closest police station. The officer assigned is required to document the incident and take appropriate action.
- The Domestic Violence Act of 2005 addresses all forms of domestic abuse, ranging from physical to mental, emotional, and sexual assault.
- According to section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, assault by a spouse or in-laws can result in a conviction for up to three years.
- Under section 294 of the Indian Penal Code, the public display of obscene songs or indecent acts can lead to a prison sentence of up to three years.
- Despite numerous legal protections in place for women, the reality often reflects a distressing situation.
- Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code excludes the crime of marital rape from being considered as long as the wife is below the age of 15. An important detail is that the law views marriage as granting permanent consent. It is crucial for these laws to be revised to better align with the needs of survivors of domestic violence.
- Unfortunately, women continue to endure sexual attacks by their partners, family, or relatives. Yet, women should not remain silent about their experiences. It is only through the successful prosecution of offenders that we can inspire more positive societal change.

REAL-LIFE INCIDENTS

One of my friends shared how she was sexually assaulted by her brother living in her neighborhood when she was just 7 years old and him being 20 years old. He assaulted her by inappropriate touch again and again for many days and asked her not to say anyone as this was only a game that they both played. The same friend again at the age of 12 years faced inappropriate touch from her own uncle.

A minor girl from a metropolitan city took her life because of the trauma she got from sexual assault from her own uncle.

³ “Sexual Harassment at Home” (*Intimately Yours*, May 5, 2022) <<https://blog.thesirona.com/intimate-talk/sexual-harassment-at-home/>> accessed July 24, 2024

A girl from my hometown is still unmarried and everyone blames her for speaking about the sexual assault she faced from her uncle.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

I being a girl have also faced sexual assault when I was 16 years old. My own cousin's brother tried to say uncomfortable things to me, and when I confronted my mom she told me to keep silent and asked me to capture proof next time so that I could speak out. That is such a trauma for me and I am still unable to get over it.

SUGGESTIONS

It is essential to create a safe and supportive environment where victims feel empowered to speak out and seek help without the fear of judgment or reprisal.

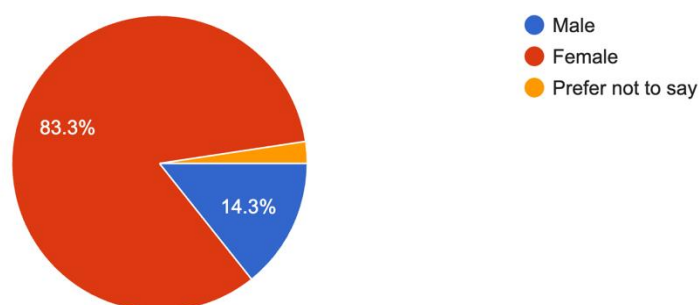
It is also essential to teach every girl to fight for their own and speak instead of teaching them to stay silent. I think every girl should learn self-defense which will help them to protect themselves on their own. The basic need is the support and cooperation from their parents or with whosoever they share the problem, instead of telling her to be silent it will be better if they support and stand with her to address the problem because such people who cause sexual harassment and their own household deserve to be punished.

DATA ANALYSIS

Journal of Legal Research and Juridical Sciences

Are You a male or female?

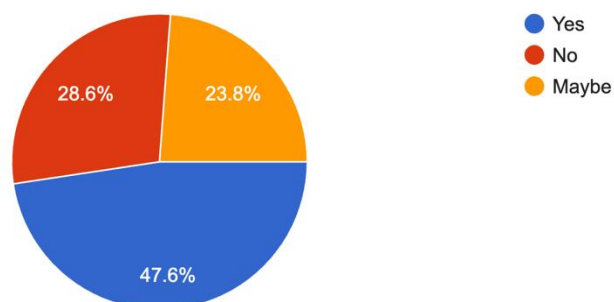
42 responses



- It is confirmed that the form is filled by more females than males.

Have you faced any sexual assault at your domestic place?

42 responses

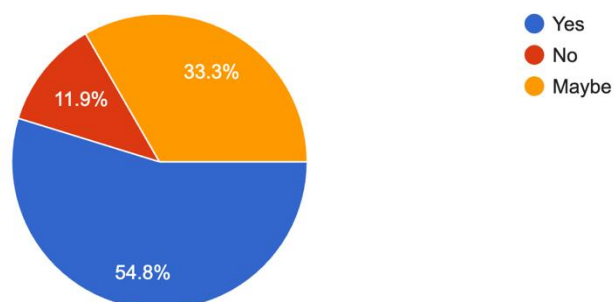


Approximately many of them faced sexual assault in their domestic household where many have said that “maybe” which clearly indicates that they minorly faced sexual harassment and they are not sure about whether it should be considered as sexual harassment or not.



Have You felt traumatized about it?

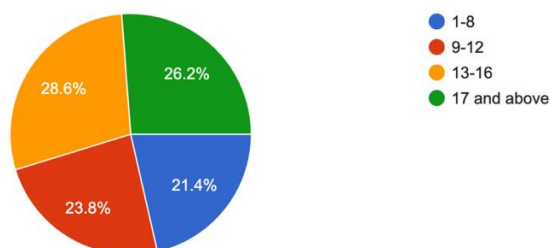
42 responses



It can be seen that many of them felt traumatized y such incidents that occurred to them.

How old are you when you faced such assault?

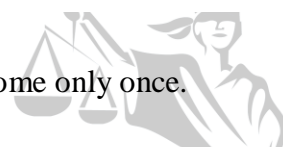
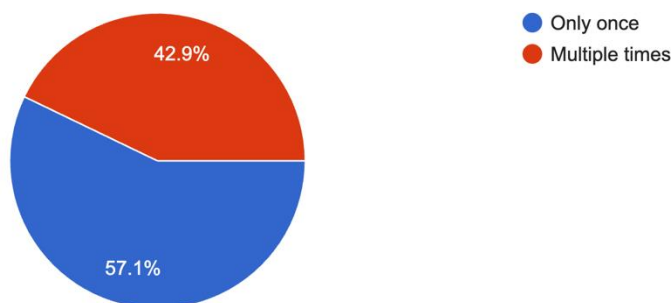
42 responses



It is approximately all equal percentage where the respondents have faced sexual harassment in their own domestic place. Even the ages of 13-16 have the highest percentage where a person faced such trauma. It is also seen that these teenage girls face such assaults often.

How many times did you face such assault?

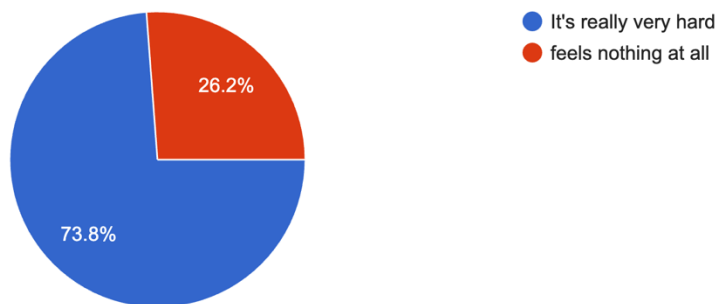
42 responses



The data shows that few of them face it multiple times and some only once.

Even after such assault you need to face them everyday or in any occasion of family. Is it easy to face them for you or you just don't care about it anymore?

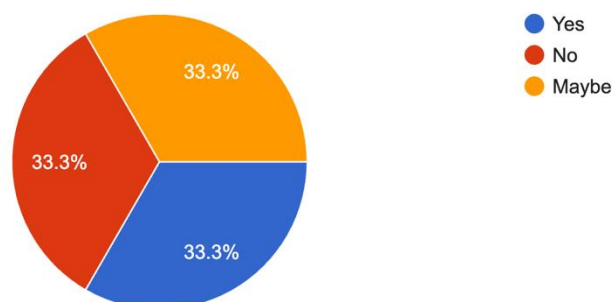
42 responses



The data shows that when they face any sexual assault from someone who is their relative or neighborhood it is very hard for them to face them and feel easy in front of them.

Do you still get that as a dark nightmare?

42 responses



The data shows some still get those assaults as nightmares whereas many have moved on from those incidents.

CONCLUSION

As it can be seen many of the women have been facing sexual assault for a long and it has been raised during a pandemic and still not stopped. It can be prevented by addressing and giving significant importance to bringing laws and protection to the sexual assault caused in domestic places. To teach all the girls not to keep silent on such matters instead speak out and fight for their justice in order to prevent such cases from happening in the future.

Support systems, counseling, and legal support ought to be easily available for those victims who are seeking help to explore their choices and heal from their traumas. It is crucial to nurture a society that values dignity and agreement in every kind of connection, be it inside the household or in other settings. By tackling and dealing with sexual harassment at their own domestic places, the community can strive to develop more secure, fair spaces where everyone can exist without experiencing fear or being taken advantage of.