

Status of Harassment and Discrimination in Jamshoro Education City, Pakistan

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Abstract

This research focuses on identifying status of harassment and discrimination at higher education institutions (HEIs) in Jamshoro Education City (JEC). The constitution and government of Pakistan approved some acts and policies to give equal rights to both genders at work place and it is required to make these policies part of organizational management. However, whether HEIs in JEC has made it a part of their management and whether do they really need to make it a part of management is explored in this paper. The data is collected through close ended questionnaires along with some interviews. Results reveal that harassment and discrimination exist in HEIs in JEC but the level of occurrences is low. The mostly occurred discriminations identified are organizational politics and distributions of benefits. It was also identified that majority of females do not know about the existing acts and policies given by government of Pakistan to control harassment in working environment and there is no enforcement to implement these policies in JEC. The correlation test identified a positive relationship between awareness level and implementation of these acts and policies and a negative relationship was identified between these factors and occurrence of harassment and discrimination in JEC. It concludes that if management will implement these policies the harassment and discrimination in HEIs in JEC will further reduce.

Keywords

Harassment and Discrimination Types, Acts And Policies, Awareness Level, Jamshoro Education City, Higher Education Institutions.

Introduction

Harassment and discrimination is defined as any unwelcome remark or criticizing behavior on religion, gender, family or marital status, race, age, place of origin, political belief, ancestry, disability, personal characteristic, performance, sick leave, post and position, training and social skills, assigning benefits, compensation, assigning job duties and training (Allen, 2009; Hemphill and Haines, 1997). It is creating threatening, aggressive or offensive work environment, unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance and an employee's opportunities or compensation. The harassing behavior can range from less serious level to more serious level. The absence of complaints against harassment cannot necessarily be seen as indication that workplace is free from any no harassment or discrimination.

Females in work environment face discrimination but under normal circumstances they avoid disclosing it. Very recently, Government of Pakistan has offered several acts and policies to protect females at workplace. But so far the awareness level of these acts and policies are never calculated. It is observed that females are less aware about their rights given to them by constitution of Pakistan and by Islamic religion. There exist few acts and policies in Pakistan mentioning about the rights of female employees at their workplace. But as said females don't have much knowledge of these policies and therefore they avoid discussing their issues at workplaces. According to policies it is responsibility of all employees including teachers, bosses, and administrative staff who work with women to make it sure that the organizational environment does not possess harassing or discriminating behavior. The status of the awareness level and existence of harassment and discrimination is therefore studied in this article in Jamshoro Education City comprises of three main universities namely: Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET), Sindh University (SU) and Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS) with the help of following objectives.

- To identify the level of awareness of female faculty members in JEC about existing harassment and discrimination policies launched by government of Pakistan.
- To examine types and extent of work place harassment and discrimination faced by female faculty members in JEC.
- To analyze relation between mostly occurring harassments and discriminations in JEC with the awareness level and implementation of acts and policies.

Holy Quran Versus:

"Quran recognizes no distinction between men and women in terms of their obligations towards Allah and therefore their position and status in the eyes of Allah are not dissimilar" (Siddiqi, 1999).

Policies, Bills, And Acts By Government Of Pakistan.

According to sections 2(c) and 11 of Act (2011) titled "Code of conduct for protection against harassment of women at the work place" some guide lines for behavior of all employees, including management and owners of organizations are provided to ensure a work environment free of harassment and intimidation.

“Harassment” means any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors or other verbal or written communication or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or sexually demeaning attitudes, causing interference with work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, or the attempt to punish the complainant for refusal to comply to such a request or is made a condition for employment. According to Act (2010), three significant manifestation of harassment at work place exist.

Abuse Of Authority

A demand by a person in authority, such as a supervisor, for sexual favors in order to keep or obtain job benefits, be it a wage increase, promotion, training opportunity, transfer or the job itself (Act 2010).

Creating A Hostile Environment

Any unwelcome request for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which interferes with an individual’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, abusive or offensive work environment. The typical “hostile environment” has findings of a pattern of offensive conduct. In cases where harassment is particularly severe, such as in cases involving physical contact, a single offensive incident will constitute a violation (Act 2010).

Retaliation

The refusal to grant a sexual favor can result in retaliation, which may include limiting the employee’s options for future promotions or training, distorting the evaluation reports, generating gossip against the employee or other ways of limiting access to his/her rights. Such behavior is also a part of the harassment (Act 2010).

The religion Islam and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan constitution both focus on eliminating all types of exploitations of including liberty, reputation and dignity of men and women and on safeguarding them against gender discrimination. It is recognized in Acts that both genders must be treated equally in terms of work opportunities and must have right to earn without any fear of exploitation. It therefore became necessary to devise a law to guarantee the safe working environment for both genders. One of the bills was approved to guarantee that men and women feel safe in their work environment and if discrimination or abuse takes place then there must exists an accountability system to cater it (Bill, 2011).

The Policy 2, 2006 document contains details about types of work place harassment, procedure of making the harassment complaint, penalties on policy violations, institutional responsibilities and responsibilities of authorities in order to educate employees for recognition and prevention of illegal workplace harassment and for elimination of such harassment from the workplace,.

The Government of Pakistan is committed to ensure equal rights to men and women in accordance with the constitution (Bill, 2010). Sexual harassment is one of the biggest hurdles faced by working men and women, preventing many from working to get themselves and their families out of poverty (Bill, 2010).

Awareness Activities

The awareness activities included conferences and seminars. During one conference about women movement in Pakistan in 2013, three main things were highlighted. It started from historical movements and role of women in the movement of independence of Pakistan.

The major findings were women responded to several issues and they struggled for impartiality and equality. Pakistani women strongly participated in movement of Pakistan and therefore they deserve equality in every field. It is then followed by discussions about women rights, activities related to the women rights and politics and challenges for women at work place. Finally, discussions about distinct policies for women rights at work place were discussed.

In Pakistan, at present many females are engaged with jobs in various social fields. In private sectors, female are working approximately 16 hours a day without rest. Nearly, 72% women are engaged in labor work in the rural economy. But according to survey (2006) women workers earn 40% less in wages if compared with men workers. It shows that women doing jobs in various fields are credited according to their status and therefore prejudice becomes obvious in various social fields in Pakistan (Survey 2006).

Cases Of Harassment And Discrimination At Workplace

The issue of sexual harassment in Pakistan is gaining momentum no matter it is occurring at home, educational institution or at workplace. The representatives of civil societies have observed that about 70% of the women face sexual harassment at their work place. To cater such issues initially representatives investigated a few of harassment cases which were already reported. Resultantly, they suggested that educational institutions must be engaged in organizing seminars for creating awareness about harassment laws and policies. Naveed et al., (2010) discussed the overview of sexual harassment at work places in the Pakistani context and presented a few of case studies of sexual harassments already reported by working women in different organizations including Pakistan Television and Pakistan International Airline. In addition, some cases from largest newspaper and government educational institutions were also reported and discussed. During study author highlighted about the existing acts and bills to offer protection against harassment and discrimination. Sections 294, 350, 354 and 509 are also discussed in this article by Ahmad (2002) for protection against harassment. The gender discrimination in Pakistan and in the SAARC region was also discussed and how they are connected with community and religion in various stages of life. If man and woman are hired for same type of job, most of the time woman does not get equal pay of man. The gender discrimination in education and employment affect capacity of woman to freely participate in society (Aysha, 2012). According to one study from 24,119 of reported violence cases against women in duration of 2008-10 only 520 workplace harassment cases were filed. It shows that workplace harassment has poorly accepted in society. It is also evident from the fact that by 2010 there was no legislation to address this major social problem faced by women in Pakistan. However, some pressures were created by media who highlighted various workplace harassment cases in recent years (Parveen, 2010). How women perceive about sexual harassment at their workplace and how much do they possess knowledge about laws of protection against harassment at the workplace needs to be studied. According to an article negative responses are observed in filing a case by women against sexual harassment at workplace (Act, 2010). Thus further investigation is recommended to see the causes of this attitude in Pakistan. The inquiry is also required by examining the socio-economic status of the working women in adopting this attitude when the legislation has been done (Qaiser and Ishtaq, 2010). The Perception of Sexual Harassment at Workplace, Knowledge and Attitude of Working Women towards Workplace Harassment Act 2010 describes different kinds of harassment such as verbal: negative comments, nicknames, interference work

performance and Nonverbal: Unwanted emails, unwanted messages on cell phone and Psychological: Rejection of the work on the basis of gender, unnecessary meetings to attain sexual favor, Usage of authority, no possibility to communicate (Mehmood et al., 2011).

Non-Governmental Organization Working On Women Rights Aasha (Alliance Against Sexual Harassment)

AASHA was established in 2001 as an association against sexual harassment. This association worked on three precise objectives: first was to make it sure that issue of sexual harassment get wide acknowledgment in society, second to devise a concrete policy to control sexual harassment in society, and third to have rules, laws and legislations against sexual harassment. The objectives started to be achieved from beginning of 2010. The next two years were for the effective implementation of laws and legislations (December 22, 2011). The secretariat of AASHA movement named Mehergarh plays an active role in the implementation process of the AASHA movement (Pleshette and Suzanne, 2011). It maintains the data base and shared it with all the implementation partners in hope that there will be zero tolerance for the crime of sexual harassment at our work places (2010). The secretariat along with various universities in Pakistan is working to stop discrimination and harassment. The trend of harassment and discrimination has also been observed in universities and needs to be congested for making healthy working environment where teachers and students can actually focus on their work and studies. To achieve this objective the secretariat is working with the Higher Education Commission in Pakistan.

National Implementation Watch Committee (Niwc)

NIWC was established soon after two laws against harassment bill were passed. The committee is established at the platform of NCSW (National Commission on the Status of Women). The purpose of this committee is to monitor implementation of laws countrywide. The website shows those organizations where the code of conduct is being adopted or where it is not being adopted.

Table 1. Workplaces where code of conducted is adopted

| | Pakistan | Sindh | Universities under HEC |
|---------------------|----------|-------|------------------------|
| Total organizations | 1146 | 54 | 173 |
| Code adopted | 417 | 06 | 28 |
| Code not adopted | 729 | 53 | 152 |

Source: Data based on sexualharassmentwatch.org

Table 2. Performa details of three universities in JEC

| | | SU | LUMH | MUET |
|-------|--|-------|-------|-------|
| i. | Have you issued a directive or office memo informing the staff that code of conduct is a part of your policies? | NO | NO | NO |
| ii. | Code of conduct issue date. | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 |
| iii. | If no, reason for the delay? | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 |
| iv. | Who have you designated as the competent authority for this Act | NO | NO | NO |
| v. | Have you appointed your inquiry committee? | NO | NO | NO |
| vi. | Have you displayed the code of conduct in your office? | NO | NO | NO |
| vii. | Specify location where code of conduct is displayed in your office. | NO | NO | NO |
| viii. | Have you given a briefing to the members of the inquiry committee on the code? | NO | NO | NO |
| ix. | Have you conducted any seminar or an awareness session for your staff or related departments on the new legislation? | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 |
| x. | Date of seminar or awareness session | 00-00 | 00-00 | 00-00 |
| xi. | Did your organization have any policy to address sexual harassment before passage of this law? | NO | NO | NO |

These performs detail show that three universities in JEC have not adopted that code of conduct even in the presence of female employees in these organizations. It can be assumed that if management is not adopting this code of conduct the female employees of these organizations might not be aware of policies and acts being offered by government to control the harassment and discrimination in these universities. It is observed that if they are facing the discrimination they avoid discussing it with authorities. Hence it is, therefore, required to first measure the level of harassment and discrimination in these universities and then also relates it with the awareness level of female faculty members of HEIs in JEC.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A mixed methods research design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem". According to Creswell (2012) when both the quantitative and qualitative data are together it provides a better understanding of research problem. It is normally done when one type of research either qualitative or quantitative is not enough to address and answer the research problem. In this study the mixed method tool is used for data collection. Interviews related to qualitative data were conducted and closed ended questionnaire (Likert Scale) related to quantitative approaches was developed and filled by respondents. The flowchart in figure 1 is showing the data collection and analysis procedure.

Table 3 Shows unit of analysis and the population size

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|------------|--------------|
| Unit of analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SU • MUET • LUMHS | | |
| Population | SU 178 | MUET 76 | LUMHS 155 |
| Type of investigation: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview & discussion • Survey questionnaire (Likert Scale) | | |
| Data Analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPSS | | |

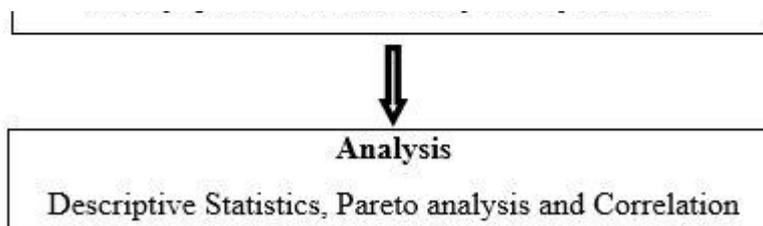


Figure 1. Flow chart of research procedure

FINDINGS

At first step three types of information were collected. The information about what policies, acts and bill related to work place harassment and discrimination exist in Pakistan was gathered. These documents were then reviewed. Additionally, information about organizational management including how management implements these policies at their work place was also collected. Then information about types of work place harassment and discrimination was also gathered. The literature relevant to three areas is collected from government and non-government websites and from the research articles. For organizational management practices three interviews with three universities were conducted.

At second step from gathered information the survey questionnaire was developed and the used for the primary data collection. The questionnaire was divided in three areas: first section comprises of questions to know about level of awareness of policies and bills; second comprises of questions to know about the management role in implementing policies and bills; third comprises of questions to measure the type of harassment and discriminations occurring in JEC. The quantitative approaches is applied in order to describe condition and to investigate relationships between phenomenon under study, including the cause and effect relationships (GAY, 1996). The first section listing existing policies, acts and bills to check the

awareness level of the female faculty members was based on “yes” and “no” options. The second section related to organizational and managerial policies for implementation of bills was based on “yes” and “no” opinions. The third section listing different types of harassment and discrimination was based on five point likert scale where 1 means never occurred, 2 means least occurred, 3 means occurred, 4 means often occurred, and 5 means mostly occurred.

At third step questionnaires were distributed and interviews were conducted in order to collect the primary data. In JEC having SU, MUET and LUMHS it took nearly three months to collect data. Initially, data was collected from SU because this university has largest number of female faculty members. Later on, LUMHS was covered which is related to medical field and have larger numbers of females. And then MUET was covered which also has good number of female faculty members. Most of the female faculty members appreciated the research work and offered data with full cooperation. They shared openly their harassment and discrimination related problems which they faced at their work place during their interviews.

At fourth step after data collection the data was analyzed to reach findings. A variety of tests including descriptive statistics, Pareto analysis and correlation test were adopted to measure the level of policy awareness, nature and extent of harassment and discriminations occurring at JEC and relationship between the level of policy awareness, its implementation and types of harassment and discrimination.

The first objective of this research is to measure the level of awareness of females in JEC about harassment acts, bills and policies. The survey questionnaire was filled by 339 female faculty members in JEC and the level of awareness is given in figure 2. The figure shows that on average 33% of faculty members are aware about different acts and policies but approximately 67% of them do not have any awareness. This overall shows lack of awareness about harassment and discrimination acts, bills and policies in the female faculty members in JEC.



Figure 2. Awareness level of female faculty members in JEC

According to table 4 most of the female employees do not know about the code of conduct being a part of their management policy at their work place. In case of JEC authorities never discussed these acts or policies. Government of Pakistan has not organized any awareness raising seminars related to harassment at their work place. Government of Pakistan seems not very interested in organizing seminars and raising awareness which are related to harassment and discrimination acts and policies and seems less interested to implementing them at JEC. However, NGO are participating in awareness seminars and workshops. Female employees agreed that these acts and policies can help in providing a safe and secure environment to female employees.

Table 4. Awareness level of female faculty members in three Universities in JEC

| | Questions | Options | SU | MUET | LUMHS |
|---|---|---------|----|------|-------|
| 1 | Do you know the code of conduct for protection against harassment at your workplace as a part of the management policy? | No | 30 | 23 | 16 |
| | | Yes | 09 | 12 | 12 |
| 2 | Do authorities discuss these policies or act at work place? | No | 31 | 33 | 24 |
| | | Yes | 08 | 02 | 04 |
| 3 | Has government of Pakistan organized awareness seminars related to harassment at your work place? | No | 29 | 32 | 24 |
| | | Yes | 10 | 03 | 04 |
| 4 | Do you think these acts and bills are helping in providing women employees a safe and secure work place environment? | No | 15 | 19 | 13 |
| | | Yes | 24 | 16 | 15 |
| 5 | Do female employees know who to approach in case of harassment and discrimination at workplace? | No | 19 | 18 | 19 |
| | | Yes | 20 | 17 | 09 |
| 6 | Do you think these acts or policies may cause positive change in the behavior of other employees? | No | 09 | 08 | 03 |
| | | Yes | 35 | 31 | 23 |
| 7 | All female employees understand what is harassment and discrimination? | No | 16 | 13 | 09 |
| | | Yes | 23 | 22 | 19 |

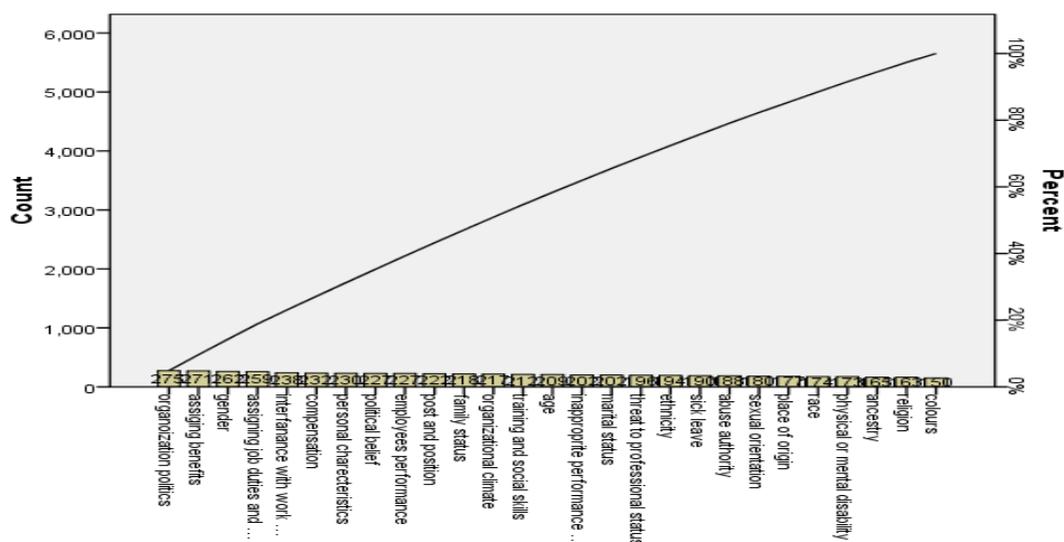
During interviews female employees emphasized that harassment policies must be implemented at JEC. The implementation of these policies by Government of Pakistan and management and authorities can enhance the productivity of organizations. Majority of females do not know that in situation of harassment and discrimination with whom they may contact. Females normally feel hesitate to disclose these type of cases and therefore they compromise with difficult situations. According to one of the female, *“harassment and discrimination is a common practice at work place but females do not disclose it. In extreme cases females resign from their jobs or even sometimes become victims”*. Female employees think that if these acts and policies will be implemented at their work place will cause improvement in behavior of all employees.

Table 5. Types of work place harassment

| | Types of workplace harassment | Min | Max | Sum | Mean | Std.dev |
|----|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|---------|
| 1 | Race | 1 | 5 | 174.0 | 1.705 | 1.104 |
| 2 | Color | 1 | 5 | 150.0 | 1.470 | .8525 |
| 3 | Ancestry | 1 | 5 | 165.0 | 1.617 | 1.015 |
| 4 | Place of origin | 1 | 5 | 177.0 | 1.735 | 1.116 |
| 5 | Political belief | 1 | 5 | 227.0 | 2.225 | 1.326 |
| 6 | Religion | 1 | 5 | 163.0 | 1.598 | 1.083 |
| 7 | Marital status | 1 | 5 | 202.0 | 1.980 | 1.297 |
| 8 | Family status | 1 | 5 | 218.0 | 2.132 | 1.327 |
| 9 | Sexual orientation | 1 | 5 | 180.0 | 1.764 | 1.136 |
| 10 | Physical & mental disability | 1 | 5 | 173.0 | 1.696 | 1.041 |
| 11 | Age | 1 | 5 | 209.0 | 2.049 | 1.172 |
| 12 | Gender | 1 | 5 | 262.0 | 2.568 | 1.270 |
| 13 | Assigning benefits | 1 | 5 | 271.0 | 2.656 | 1.323 |
| 14 | Compensation | 1 | 5 | 232.0 | 2.274 | 1.283 |
| 15 | Assigning job duties & training | 1 | 5 | 259.0 | 2.539 | 1.376 |
| 16 | Organizational climate | 1 | 5 | 217.0 | 2.127 | 1.182 |
| 17 | Training & social skills | 1 | 5 | 212.0 | 2.078 | 1.240 |
| 18 | Personal characteristics | 1 | 5 | 230.0 | 2.254 | 1.317 |
| 19 | Employees performance | 1 | 5 | 227.0 | 2.225 | 1.311 |
| 20 | Sick leave | 1 | 5 | 190.0 | 1.862 | 1.160 |
| 21 | Post & position | 1 | 5 | 222.0 | 2.17 | 1.22 |
| 22 | Inappropriate performance evaluation | 1 | 5 | 202.0 | 1.98 | 1.202 |
| 23 | Organization politics | 1 | 5 | 275.0 | 2.696 | 1.447 |
| 24 | Interference with work performance | 1 | 5 | 238.0 | 2.33 | 1.276 |
| 25 | Abuse authorizes | 1 | 5 | 188.0 | 1.843 | 1.272 |
| 26 | Threat to professional status | 1 | 5 | 196.0 | 1.921 | 1.294 |
| 27 | Ethnicity | 1 | 5 | 194.0 | 1.902 | 1.278 |

In order to investigate types of discrimination faced by females in JEC different research articles were explored and from literature 27 types of work place harassment and discrimination were identified. In addition to desk research four interviews were conducted to validate the list of types of harassment and discrimination. The task below shows the occurrence of these types of discrimination in JEC.

Figure 3. Pareto analysis of harassment and discrimination at JEC



According to figure 3 at 20% of Pareto analysis, it is visible that mostly occurred harassment and discrimination is on the basis of organizational politics, assigning benefits, gender, assigning job duties and training.

The table 6 shows a positive correlation between implementation and awareness level which means if acts and policies will be implemented at work place than awareness will increase.

Table 6. Correlation between mostly occurred types of harassment and discrimination and awareness and implementation of acts and policies

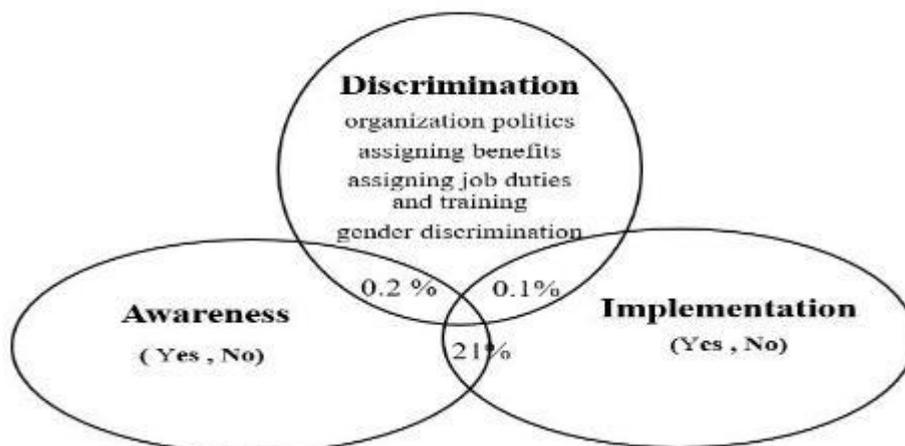
| | | Harassment & Discrimination | Awareness | Implementation |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Harassment and Discrimination | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.052 | -.033 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .606 | .742 |
| Awareness | Pearson Correlation | -.052 | 1 | .462** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .606 | | .000 |
| Implementation | Pearson Correlation | -.033 | .462** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .742 | .000 | |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

However, the awareness level is negatively correlated with occurrence of harassment and discrimination which means that if awareness level will increase the discrimination will decrease in JEC. The policy implementation at work place can increase the awareness level of female faculty members in JEC and ultimately reduce the occurrence of discrimination.

According to the correlation model in figure 4, awareness is negatively correlated with discrimination with Pearson correlation value of (0.052). This offers that the relationship between awareness and discrimination is only 0.2%. The result shows these variables

Figure 4. Three variables & its influence on each other



negatively influence each other and discrimination is due to the lack of awareness and vice versa. The discrimination and implementation are negatively correlated with Pearson correlation value of (0.033) with only 0.1% of relationship. However, the awareness and implementation are positively correlated with Pearson correlation coefficient of (0.462) and 21%.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study identifies the status of harassment and discrimination in the JEC. The study reveals that even in the presence of acts, bills and policies offered by the Government of Pakistan there is low awareness level in female faculty members in JEC. The majority of female employees were of opinion that harassment and discrimination exist at their work place and so far no action has been taken to implement these policies. From the list of 27 different types of harassment and discriminations, the four main types were identified the more effective through the Pareto analysis. According to female employees the organizational politics is causing harassment and discrimination. The gender biasing is identified as one of the harassment factors which affect the female employees. Then assigning job duties and training are also identified as one type of discrimination which is mostly occurring at work place in JEC. Females are facing difficulties at their work even in the presence of acts, bills and policies because so far they have not been implemented as part of the management policy in HEIs in JEC. The female faculty members have very little information about these acts and policies showing negligence on the part of management. The positive relationship has been identified between policy implementation and awareness level and a negative relationship have been identified in these two variables with occurrence of harassment and discrimination. The policy implementation at work place can increase the awareness level of female faculty members and ultimately reduce the occurrence of harassment and discrimination in JEC. The following recommendations are proposed to cater the problem of harassment and discrimination in JEC.

- i. For awareness the code (protection against harassment of women at work place) must be up loaded on websites of all three universities in JEC.
- ii. In addition the trainings and seminars must be organized to educate female faculty members about existing acts and policies in Pakistan.

- iii. The relevant policies must be implemented at work place in JEC.
- iv. The Female Faculty Association (FFA) may be established to educate and take complaints from female faculty members in situation of any discrimination.
- v. It must be ensured that every complaint be taken seriously and management act on complains in timely manner.
- vi. HEC must take serious steps for implementation of this policy in educational institutions.

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