

# LEBANON GENDER EQUALITY BAROMETER

*Sexual Harassment*

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS:

<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CBO</b>	Community-Based Organization
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>EEOC</b>	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GBVIMS</b>	Gender-Based Violence Information Management System
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>ISF</b>	Internal Security Forces
<b>LECORVAW</b>	Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women
<b>LGBT</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
<b>LHF</b>	Lebanon Humanitarian Fund
<b>MOSAIC</b>	MENA Organization for Services, Advocacy, Integration, and Capacity Building
<b>NCLW</b>	National Commission for Lebanese Women
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>SSI</b>	Security Sector Institution
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>VAWG</b>	Violence against Women and Girls
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UPW</b>	Union of Progressive Women
<b>WPL</b>	Women Platform to Lead

## PARTNERS AND WORKING TEAM:

### Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

The Lebanon Gender Equality Barometer was produced by the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. It is published within the framework of the project 'Preventing Violence against women and girls' P-VAWG and is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

### National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW)

The National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) was established under Law N°720 issued on November 5, 1998, by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. NCLW's General Assembly gathers prominent activists in the field of women's affairs. The General Assembly of NCLW is composed of 24 members appointed by the Council of Ministers by decree for a renewable three-year term. Women members of the Parliament and ministers are considered ex-officio members of NCLW during their term and have consultative status. NCLW has an Executive Board comprised of eight members elected by the General Assembly from its members. The President of the Republic appoints the President of NCLW. NCLW members work through permanent and ad hoc committees in submitting program proposals to the Executive Board, as well as following up and monitoring projects and activities that are being implemented. The permanent committees are the following: The Legislative Committee, the GBV Committee, the Culture, Education & Media Committee, the Economy, Labor & Sustainable Development Committee, Women Participation in Politics and Decision-Making Committee, and the Environment Committee. The budget of NCLW is allocated from the budget of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers as well as from financial aid and donations received from international organizations.

### The Commission is entrusted with three types of missions:

- 1. Consultative Tasks:** Recommendations to the government on policy and decision-making, development of strategies, and development of frameworks for activities related to women empowerment and gender equality.
- 2. Coordinative Tasks:** NCLW is the policy coordinator of gender-based issues between public institutions and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).
- 3. Executive Tasks:** Development of national strategies and plans in collaboration with different stakeholders of public institutions and civil society organizations; implementation of gender-sensitive projects; elaboration and publication of studies and researches addressing women issues; organization of workshops, conferences, and events on the national, regional and international levels.

## DEFINITIONS:

**Barometer.** In Meteorology a barometer is a tool to measure a change in the atmosphere. Gender Barometer is a tool to measure and monitor the development of gender equality in different fields.<sup>1</sup>

**Gender.** Gender tends to denote the social and cultural role of each sex within a given society and this concept should be integrated through all life sectors.

**Gender Mainstreaming.** In 1995, at the Fourth UN International Conference on Women held in Beijing, “gender mainstreaming” was established as the internationally agreed strategy for governments and development organizations to promote gender equality. This was in response to consistent lessons that have emerged from at least twenty years of experience in addressing women’s needs in development work. To understand what “gender mainstreaming” means and why it is important, it helps to understand the journey that has been travelled to reach this point.

**Gender Equality.** (Equality between men and women) refers to the idea that all human beings, regardless of sex, are free to develop their personal abilities, follow their professional careers and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, and prejudgments.<sup>2</sup>

**Gender Equity.** is used to refer to fair treatment of women and men, according to their particular needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, responsibilities, and opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

**Gender-based violence (GBV).** Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls or men and boys, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether they occur in public or private life. Gender-based violence is considered to be one of the most serious human rights issues. A countless number of persons in the world are being subjected to physical, sexual, and mental abuse.<sup>4</sup>

**Gender-responsive.** This refers to the articulate policies and initiatives addressing the different needs, such aspirations, capacities, and contributions of women and men. This is the translation of awareness into a change in perception and desired actions that ensure equality and equity, which is often achieved through gender mainstreaming. Gender-responsive policies respond to the needs, requests, and requirements articulated by men and women for policies that benefit one or both genders.

**Gender roles.** Assigned by society, examples in-clude teacher, farmer, driver, doctor, nurse, secretary, mother, father, husband or wife. Gender roles are clusters of socially and culturally defined expectations and activities that men and women undertake in specific situations. Gender roles are learned through socialization and may be institutionalized through education, political and economic systems, legislation, and culture and traditions. Gender roles vary and are shaped by age, class, race, ethnicity, religion and location of people culturally, socially and politically. When people’s circumstances change, as happens when they acquire power and wealth, their gender roles may also change. Women may be able to exert more power and authority over household members and neighbors as their wealth increases, while men could lose authority and power when their incomes decline within



the household. Women are frequently expected to play multiple roles simultaneously as wage laborers, child bearers and caregivers, domestic workers, and managers. These simultaneous and competing roles often take a toll on women's time, energy, and recreational opportunities.

**Gender disparity.** The difference in status held by men and women in society about opportunities, successes, and possessions. Gender disparity also refers to differences in income, status, opportunities, and power that exist between men and women in given settings. In many societies, men and women are conferred different roles, opportunities, and statuses. These gender differences tend to be systematic and institutionalized, requiring concerted action to eliminate them and bring men and women to parity. Devices and programs for affirmative action are used to bring about gender parity in many societies.

**Gender norms.** According to the gender statistics manual, Gender norms are ideas of how women and men should act in a specific community or society. They are used as expectations and standards that should be followed by women and men as a result of gender stereotypes.<sup>5</sup>

**Gender transformative.** Addresses the causes of gender-based inequalities and works to transform harmful gender roles, norms, and power relations.<sup>6</sup>

**Gender-specific.** A simple definition can be given to gender-specific. It is something referring only to one sex, either men or women.<sup>7</sup>

**Gender awareness.** Gender awareness means raising awareness and informing men and women about equality. It intends to provide accessible and reliable material to eliminate any misunderstanding of gender equality as a core value of democratic societies.<sup>8</sup>

**Gender stereotype.** It is a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics, or the roles that are or ought to be possessed by, or performed by women and men. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women's and men's capacity to develop their abilities, pursue their professional careers, and make choices about their lives.<sup>9</sup>

**Gender stereotyping.** It refers to the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men. Gender stereotyping is wrongful when it results in a violation or violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms.<sup>10</sup>

**Gender blind.** It is described as gender blind when no effort is made by institutional leaders and managers to become aware or sensitive to mainstream gender in the mission, vision, policies, programs, and everyday operations at all levels. More often than not, gender blindness is reinforced by historical, cultural, traditional, and religious factors, requiring more effort and advocacy.

**Gender-neutral.** Gender-neutral approaches, programs, and policies do not disrupt existing gender relations and may just sustain and/or reproduce them without any change. They may recognize the presence of gender equality issues but may not desire or aim to change or disrupt existing gender relationships.

**Gender gap.** Findings or results of a gender audit should reveal gender gaps indicating the differences in situations between women and men, as well as provide an assessment of prevailing knowledge, attitudes,

practices, and behaviors that need to be addressed. A gender gap can be said to exist when men's and women's scores differ on attitudes, interests, behaviors, knowledge, perspectives, and preferences on such issues as voting and support for specific policies, programs, or changes in society. Gender gaps can be attributed to differences between men and women in terms of perspectives, economic and social preferences, experiences, and autonomy. Gender gaps are influenced by race, class, age, marital status, and religion, among others factors. When men and women of the same social class and race share the same views and feelings about specific issues then one can conclude that there is no gender gap between them.

**Gender-sensitive.** Acknowledging that the differences and inequalities between women and men require attention. A gender-sensitive policy incorporates and translates actions into programs, strategies, and activities to improve gender relations and reduce gender inequalities.

**Gender parity in education.** (an indicator of the ratio of girls to boys). Gender parity is reached when there is equal representation and participation of male and female learners in education. It is a useful indicator, but on its own does not measure gender equality. The gender parity index (GPI) of the EFA Global Monitoring Report measures the ratio of a female-to-male value of a given indicator. A value between 0.97–1.03 indicates that gender parity has been reached.

**Feminism.** A collection of movements and ideologies for social, cultural, political, and economic equality. Feminism aims at defining, defending, and establishing equal rights and opportunities for women and men. Feminism campaigns against gender-based inequalities and provides women with information that enables them to make choices and free themselves from gender-based discrimination within their environments, cultures, societies, and communities. Over the decades, feminists around the world have developed theories in a variety of disciplines to respond to the social construction of gender. The earliest forms of feminism were largely criticized for only taking into account the perspective of white, middle-class, and educated women. This criticism led to more ethnic-specific and multicultural forms of feminism as a movement.

**Gender unequal.** Legal, social and cultural situations in which sex and/or gender determine different rights and dignity for women and men, which are reflected in their unequal access to the enjoyment of rights, as well as the assumption of stereotyped social and cultural roles.<sup>11</sup>

**Gender lens.** A "gender lens" means working to make gender noticeable in social phenomena; asking why some opportunities differ between women and men in the same society. In other words, it sheds light on gender inequality and the reason behind it in society.<sup>12</sup>

**Gender discrimination.** According to the European Center for Gender Equality, gender discrimination is the unequal treatment of an individual based on gender. It is any distinction that can face women in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field.<sup>13</sup>

**Gender empowerment.** It is a way of change, a process of gaining self-confidence for individuals, to make choices and convert these desires into empowerment. It is the ultimate goal of gender equality by promoting gender equity measures.<sup>14</sup>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Lebanon Gender Barometer for sexual harassment provides information on opinions, attitudes, and experiences related to gender equality in various areas of life and society. The gender barometer provides national and unique monitoring data on the development of gender in different sectors in Lebanon over a year timeline. The gender barometer also serves as a tool in the assessment of gender policy implementation and development needs. The gender barometer enables monitoring the development of gender equality in different sectors in life and society. The gender barometer provides reliable information about gender-related attitudes, opinions, and experiences that is unique in the national setting.

The current economic and financial crisis has drastically altered the situation in Lebanon, increasing the number of sexual harassment cases in 2022. Furthermore, the Beirut Port explosion on August 4, 2020, left thousands of people of all ages and nationalities, mostly from disadvantaged communities, including women and girls, with post-traumatic stress disorder, mental distress, and financial difficulties. Additionally, the pandemic negatively affected women with evidence across the country indicated in increased cases in domestic violence. Incidents of harassment, discrimination and verbal, physical and economic abuses had also been documented.

The sample structure of respondents took into consideration beneficiaries of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). A total of 251 women and girls were interviewed of which 185 were Lebanese, 2 were Palestinians, 20 were Syrians and 44 were from other nationalities, and the small sample took into account the short timeline for conducting the survey. The random selection of respondents included 33 participants from Beirut region, 70 from Mount Lebanon, 57 from North Lebanon, 54 from South Lebanon, and 2 from Bekaa. A larger sample must be selected in the next edition of the gender barometer. The random selection concluded a majority of married women with good educational backgrounds and the vast majority of respondents (92%) are from the middle and low classes, with only 8% from high class of rich people. Additionally, the majority of respondents belonged to the age group (26-35), followed by (18-25), and (36-45). Only 15.9% are over 45 years old, of which most of women were housewives or employed.

Results showed that the respondents said various definitions for sexual harassment which demonstrated a lack of understanding of sexual harassment and what constitutes harassment. The most common response, selected by respondents (74.9%) was "physical harassment", with 63.7% responses, "unwelcome touching or grabbing" was the second most popular choice, and 27.5% each for "hostile work environment" and "gender demeaning/discrimination" received the fewest votes. Moreover, the most frequent answers for the perpetrator were "stranger" and "manager/boss"; with 31.67% and 18.33% responses each. Regarding the place where the sexual harassment happened, "at an open public place" was the most common choice; with 37.07%. The least chosen answers were "at a private place" and "at school/university"; with 6.9% and 6.03% respectively. The main factor cited by respondents as the cause of their harassment was "gender/gender identity" (26.96%), specifically being a woman, which is the main cause of gender inequality in the country, and also 6.09% votes for "nationality" which is related to discrimination towards Syrians and Palestinian refugees.

A significantly high number of women survivors (96.52%) said they had not filed a complaint, mainly as a result of lack of awareness about sexual harassment and that reporting mechanisms are very weak in the country. Women survivors who had filed a complaint, 52.94% respondents stated that the case was resolved in favor of the victim, whereas 41.18% stated that it was not resolved. However, women survivors who did not file a complaint were due



"feeling of shame" (42.16%), "social pressure" (39.22%), and "nothing will change" (35.29%), which exposed the heinous social norms and attitudes that shame victims of harassment rather than perpetrators. The impact of sexual harassment affected in "depression" (46.22%) and "anger/rage" (45.38%). The least preferred response, however, was "indifferent" (6.72%) and more than half of women survivors did not seek help. Those who sought help, 65.38% told someone about their experience, 38.46% sought therapy, 7.69% reported to a governmental institution, 7.69% reported to an NGO, and 3.85% chose "other", and 73.08% indicated that the help was beneficial.

A very low percentage (15.94%) of women respondents were aware of Lebanese Law 205/2020 against sexual harassment. The fact that only 37.05% of respondents were aware of ISF's services related to sexual harassment also indicated that more awareness-raising efforts are needed. However, more than 60% did not trust the Internal Security Forces (ISF) services.

The respondents' top needs were psychological (73.49%), followed by needs for awareness and capacity building (42.17%), social support (33.73%), and legal support (25.3%). Additionally, the vast majority of respondents (97.97%) agreed that there should be greater awareness of sexual harassment.

To give accurate insights into the progress of gender equality and sexual harassment in Lebanon, the gender monitoring tool is anticipated to be assessed on an annual basis using the same indicators and data-collecting methodologies. The sample must be expanded during the future survey in measuring the indicators to target more beneficiaries in a better environment in the country than the current circumstances connected to the COVID-19 health crisis and political developments and the economic crisis.

## INTRODUCTION:

The NCLW developed its first two barometers for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Participation of Women in Politics in 2020 as two monitoring tools to measure the progress of the level of gender equality on a national level. In 2021 and 2022, NCLW has developed three barometers for Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Cyber Extortion and Cyber Harassment, and Sexual Harassment.

This gender barometer allows data to be accumulated on current issues of sexual harassment, such as experiences of verbal harassment, physical harassment, and mental health, among others on which information is not available elsewhere regularly.

Many international and regional instruments have drawn attention to gender-related dimensions of human rights issues, the most important being the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979.

## OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of the research is to develop a barometer on gender equality as a monitoring tool due to the limited knowledge on the situation of women in sexual harassment in Lebanon, under-reporting of cases of exclusion, and sometimes ignorance on whether certain acts are to be considered as purposeful acts of exclusion and political violence. The full research is expected to identify specific customized indicators, both quantitative and qualitative,

and develop data collection tools and methods, in coordination with NCLW and other partners, to report on violations of women's rights and gender equality.

The Gender Barometer aims at regularly aggregating and publishing gender indicators concerning international and national strategies and action plans, and serves to help citizens hold their governments accountable by being locally owned and produced. Without locally owned statistics produced regularly, national women machinery and experts' practitioners in related fields may not effectively monitor gender equality and weak accountability institutions where governments that are not held accountable will continue to persist. A Gender Barometer can therefore be used to enhance the role of national women's machinery as accountability institutions responsible for advancing the situation of women in the region raising awareness on existing gender discrimination in the private and public sector and increasing the national statistical centers' knowledge on gender mainstreamed data,<sup>1</sup> in line with National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011-2021 which mentioned the development of indicators to be measured to monitor the situation of women in the country, and also aligned with the first pillar with regards to the protection of women from violence of the National Action Plan on UNSC Resolution 1325 for 2019-2022 for Women Peace and Security.

The objectives of the gender monitoring tool are to **1)** Identify the main interventions in promoting gender equality issues; **2)** Monitor relative progress made in gender equality; **3)** Identify gender gaps in the targeted thematic areas on a policy level; **4)** Document good practices towards the achievement of gender equality; **5)** Identify thematic areas where gender equality will be measured; **6)** Identify the main interventions to achieve gender equality in the identified thematic areas; **7)** Measure perceptions of gender equality on a policy level; **8)** Measure the perceptions on the grassroots level; **9)** Identify CSOs' main interventions; and **10)** Assess the level of resources allocated and spent on gender mainstreaming and gender activities.

## BACKGROUND:

Women's rights in Lebanon continue to face numerous challenges and discrimination in the most basic human rights. The justice and equality in Lebanese laws, where sectarianism has taken control of personal status laws and secularism, which gives all citizens equal rights, particularly women, is absent. As a result, Lebanese women continue to face discrimination and gender violations.

Lebanon's economic situation has deteriorated over the last year, with figures indicating that more than 55% of the country's population is now impoverished and unable to satisfy basic needs. This occurred at a crucial time when the nation was registering a growing number of COVID-19 incidents. Furthermore, the Beirut port explosion on August 4th left thousands of people of all ages and nationalities, most disadvantaged communities, with post-traumatic stress disorder, mental distress, and financial difficulties.<sup>2</sup>

The COVID-19 outbreak increased the violence against women, in particular the risk of sexual harassment and sexual gender-based violence around the world. This trend was more evident in countries where strict lockdowns have been put in place to prevent the spread of the virus such as Lebanon. During the lockdown, tensions can easily mount within the household as families are confined to their homes and the dire economic situation of many families causes more stress and anxiety, leading to the increase of the risk of violence and sexual harassment.

## GENDER COUNTRY CONTEXT:

Lebanon is currently facing the imminent threat of an expanding budgetary and economic catastrophe, which is threatening the livelihoods of large segments of the population. The budgetary crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 epidemic and the Beirut Blast has expedited the slide into economic collapse, sending the Lebanese economy into a downward spiral of recession, skyrocketing inflation, widespread unemployment, import shortages, and government insolvency.<sup>3</sup>

The escalating socioeconomic unrest has resulted in a rise in severe poverty of about 50% across all areas and ethnicities in Lebanon. The economic downturn, along with the COVID-19 outbreak, has increased the loss of work and livelihoods among refugees and host communities. COVID-19 and accompanying containment measures resulted in 30% of Lebanese households losing their employment and 20% having their wages slashed. In a World Food Program study conducted in June, half of the Lebanese families and 75% of Syrian households indicated anxiety about food scarcity. Those who have lost their jobs, whether as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak or prior, have been found to be more upset than others, including women.<sup>4</sup>

### 1. Family Lives

The structure and values of traditional families in Lebanon's rural areas differ from those of families that have lived in cities or abroad. Regardless of family structure, family connection and unity are seen as vital by the Lebanese. The elder man is the family's head. The mother's primary responsibility is to conduct housekeeping and care for the children. Despite the fact that gender roles are shifting and women's rights to education and equal pay are improving, women still do not have the same amount of authority as men. There is still a social assumption that women are more likely than males to disgrace their family. As a result, women are still perceived as particularly weak and susceptible victims. The majority of well-educated households have fully accepted gender equality.<sup>5</sup>

### 2. Education

The educational sector in Lebanon has been struggling to overcome numerous challenges over the past two years, including the instability of the political situation, disruptive street demonstrations, repercussions of the Beirut Port blast, dramatic devaluation of the Lebanese currency, compounded with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a shift to online or virtual learning. Progress has been perceptibly improved in girls' enrolment at all education levels, yet wide gender disparities persist in some regions, particularly at higher education levels.

As a result of the demonstrations and civil disturbances that began in October 2019, at least 1.2 million kids in Lebanon have had their education postponed for more than a year.<sup>6</sup>

For many students in Lebanon, access to online schooling and digital infrastructure remains extremely difficult. Internet access is a significant concern, with inadequate internet connection in many regions of Lebanon, costly top-up cards for managing usage, and frequent power outages impeding access to learning.<sup>7</sup> Civil society expressed worries about children who are unable to pursue online learning and, as a result, expressed fears about a lost generation, in which students are unable to be taught due to cost and technical difficulties. They emphasized mothers' efforts to teach their children in the absence of schooling, but that this was difficult for mothers with lower levels of education themselves, underlining some of the long-term consequences of an unequal society.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Economic Lives

In Lebanon, the majority of women are unemployed. In addition to the 75 percent of inactive women, 10 percent of the 25 percent who are active and in the labour force are jobless, compared to 5% of males. North Lebanon has the highest unemployment rate in the nation, followed by Baalbek and Bekaa, where male unemployment is also higher than in the rest of the country.

Several programs exist in Lebanon that aim to add value to the economic empowerment of Lebanese women by strengthening women's access to stable and self-sustaining earnings and livelihoods, as well as boosting stakeholders' ability to appreciate women's particular economic needs and legislate policy changes to recognize them.<sup>9</sup> Women's contributions to economic growth and stability are critical, yet women in Lebanon confront a variety of cultural and structural barriers that limit their ability to start and run profitable enterprises. Local training and coaching programs, for example, are sometimes insufficiently adapted to the specific requirements and situations of women. Many women also have difficulty getting a loan or owning land, forcing them to conduct their companies on the side. All of these restrictions, taken together, prevent women entrepreneurs from making a significant contribution to Lebanon's economy.<sup>10</sup>

Women were already at a substantial disadvantage before the economic slump, making them more exposed to the catastrophic impacts of the economic crisis. Female unemployment is increasing, domestic abuse reports doubled in 2020, and the number of women killed as a result of domestic violence is also rising. A rising number of women and girls can no longer afford sanitary goods due to a 500% rise in price, forcing them to rely on newspapers, toilet paper, or old rags instead.<sup>11</sup> When women do find a way to overcome the obstacles and further their education, skill development, and pursue employment or business, they encounter additional hurdles such as access to financing only 3% of bank loans in Lebanon are given to women.<sup>12</sup>

The great majority, if not all, of employees, are exposed to labor exploitation in some form or another. However, women appear to bear the brunt of this prejudice. Official labor statistics, which state that just 23 percent of women over the age of 15 are in the formal work force, dilute such observations. Labor data suggest that most women are not economically active, considering that the informal sector is excluded. Female exploitation, on the other hand, cannot be evaluated simply by looking at pay and perks in the formal labor force. The great majority of working women are unnoticed, laboring in the informal economy or at home.<sup>13</sup>

Prior to the Beirut Port explosion, women workers and business owners were already in a vulnerable position because of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly those with school-age children who had to leave work to assist with online learning. According to a recent UN Women report, the unemployment rate among women has risen from 14.3% prior to the crisis to 26% as of September 2020.<sup>14</sup>

### 4. Legislation

Sexual harassment as a legally and administratively punishable offense was not recognized by the Lebanese legal system until December 2020. Prior to that date, actions falling under this context were targeted with a combination of administrative and penal articles that often left the victim without compensation or protection and the perpetrator free. There have been proposals for a law that penalizes and criminalizes prior to 2020, spearheaded by a number of women's rights organizations in Lebanon. The first was submitted in 2014 and the second in 2017 but neither one of them was ratified at the time. The final version of the law, submitted in December 2020, was ratified and published in the official Gazette in its first edition dated January 2021.

Although this in itself can be considered an advancement in ensuring safety and protection in public institutions as well as workplaces and personal spaces, the promulgating of this law was not accompanied by a concrete complaint mechanism to be installed within the public institutions and local authority representatives.

On 27 December 2020, the Lebanese parliament took a quantum leap in human rights by criminalizing forms of sexual harassment, bullying, as well as ratifying parts of the Family protection act.<sup>15</sup> Law 205 dated December 2020 featured on page 14 of the January 2021 edition of the Public Gazette,<sup>16</sup> provide? the provisions take to criminalize actions falling under the above-mentioned definitions. The newly ratified Law 205/2020 is 3 pages long comprised of 7 main articles. the first article is the definition of sexual harassment and other forms of bullying.

Article 1 defines sexual harassment as any repetitive, out-of-the-ordinary, unwanted, behaviour with an underlying sexual tone that may constitute violation of the victim's body, privacy, and emotions at any given place. This can be done for action signals sexual innuendos or any other means that constitute harassment including use of cyber methods.<sup>17</sup> Article 1 continues that any action, even if non-repetitive, that uses psychological, mental, financial or discriminatory pressure with the intention of seeking gain of a sexual nature is also considered sexual harassment.<sup>18</sup>

Article 2 of the law dictates the penalty for those engaging in sexual harassment. The article makes sure to take into consideration the situation of the victim, the position and role of the perpetrator, as well as age and general physical ability into consideration when specifying the punishment. The legislators make sure to include jailtime and a fine to penalize sexual harassment. Personal complaints are given a jail sentence that might range from 3 months to 1 year, including which may include a fine ranging from the equivalent of a minimum 3 times the minimum wage or 10 times the minimum wage.<sup>19</sup> In cases where the sexual harassment act is committed on public grounds or in public institutions like municipalities or in schools or military bases to name a few or if the act is committed by a public employee then the jail time penalty is then escalated to 6 months to one year of jail time combined with the fine mentioned above.<sup>20</sup> In the event where the sexual harassment act targets a minor or a disabled person or if the act had been committed by a person of authority or by using extreme mental, financial, or emotional pressure then the jail time penalty is escalated to 2 years and can go up to 4 years with an accompanying fine of up to 50 times the minimum wage.<sup>21</sup> The article also notes that the penalty is doubled for repeating an offense and that the fine can be added alongside the jail time as per the escalating circumstances mentioned above.<sup>22</sup>

Article 3 stipulates that persecution follows the victim's complaints and can be suspended and dropped at the victims request unless the sexual harassment act took place under the escalating circumstances mentioned in article 2.<sup>23</sup>

Article 4 prohibits retaliation against victims or reporting actors whilst stating that the penalty for violation ranges from 1 to 6 months of jail time and a fine of up to 20 times the minimum wage.<sup>24</sup>

Article 5 discusses the possibility of simultaneous administrative and penal action against the perpetrator by the legal system and his or her place of employment.<sup>25</sup>

Article 6 discusses the creation of a social pension box at the ministry of social affairs to help victims of sexual harassment as well as defining the means of funding.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, article 7 stipulates publication in the official Gazette.<sup>27</sup>

Sexual harassment is mostly recognized as physical interference, sexual favours, and displaying sexual material,



according to an exploratory workplace research, but less so as sexual jokes and prolonged gazing (Hejase 2015). Sexual harassment was reported by 8% of the participants in the research (12% of males and 16% of women). Only 7% had taken action; the majority of those who had not taken action were allegedly afraid of not being taken seriously, not getting promoted, receiving a warning and having it recorded, being dismissed from their work, and being ashamed (only females).<sup>28</sup>

One impediment to the law's implementation is that the complainant bears the burden of proving that sexual harassment 'really' occurred, which is sometimes very difficult.<sup>29</sup>

Sexual harassment is a new concept under the recently implemented Law 205, so a comprehensive approach to combating sexual harassment is required, with four fronts: legislative, organizational, social and educational.

**Legal:** It is critical that the combatting of sexual harassment be included into other legislation, such as the Labour Code. In order to reduce the burden of proof, victims must understand how to document legally admissible evidence of sexual harassment in a secure manner. Raising awareness and offering training to judges and lawyers is critical for implementation.

**Organizational:** Institutions and businesses must hop on board and implement customized internal policies, such as internal dispute resolution methods, reporting channels, grievance procedures, investigations, and proportional disciplinary penalties. The Ministry of Labour's involvement in motivating firms to enact such regulations and enforcing their execution is critical. Workplaces should implement zero tolerance and a "speak out" culture through training and awareness campaigns.

**Education and social norms:** Awareness and education are critical, and they should begin at an early age, when ideas about gender roles and guilt are formed. Young girls and boys should be taught about body acceptance, mutual respect, and personal safety boundaries. Young girls and boys should be taught good coping mechanisms as well as the ability to advocate for themselves. Creating and maintaining sexually harassment-free workplaces is a protracted battle that will require the combined efforts of many stakeholders in Lebanon to overcome.

Before the legislation of law 205, this topic was still considered as a taboo. However, there is also no denying that the law still has gaps that need to be addressed before actual change can be seen. To begin, numerous lawyers have argued that the use of the word repetitive to define sexual harassment allows for one-time incidents to go by unnoticed.<sup>30</sup> There are also those who have noticed that linking the action to something out of the ordinary offers a very wide range of what might be considered ordinary and not ordinary as per the circumstance and the local customs.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, it should also be noted that the fact that these types of cases are handled by the penal courts and the penal law means that these cases will be public trials for all those who want to attend and this is another deterrent factor since victims may fear public censure retaliation filled with shame and embarrassment.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), sexual harassment includes unwanted sexual approaches, demands for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual character in the workplace or learning environment. Sexual harassment does not necessarily have to involve sexual activity or be directed at a specific individual.<sup>32</sup>

The following definitions have been agreed upon by different United Nations' fractions and has been adopted for the purposes of their annual code of conduct training for its staff and affiliates. These definitions have been cross-referenced with a translation of the Law 205 on Anti-Sexual Harassment Measures and Victim Rehabilitation <sup>33</sup> to consolidate a definition that could be later on used when writing the policy.

- A specific type of prohibited conduct. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation. Sexual harassment may involve any conduct of a verbal, nonverbal or physical nature, including written and electronic communications, and may occur between persons of the same or different genders. <sup>34</sup>
- Any improper or unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person. Harassment or bullying in any form because of gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, physical ability, physical appearance, ethnicity, race, national origin, political affiliation, age, religion or any other reason is prohibited at UN system events. <sup>35</sup>

### 1. Female Victims of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment might be deemed to be, for instance, comments made negatively about women. <sup>36</sup> Women prefer to classify comments as verbal sexual harassment only if they are filled with overtly sexual words, despite the fact that they often report feeling embarrassed, disturbed, and uneasy as a result of comments that are not obviously sexual. In all public interactions, male desire outweighs women's feelings of unease and uncertainty. <sup>37</sup>

### 2. Male Victims of Sexual Harassment

Men who are not regarded as conforming to dominant masculine ideals may be targeted for sexual harassment at Security Sector Institutions (SSIs). Placing sexually provocative objects in the target's personal space, such as lockers or restrooms, is a common method of sexual harassment directed towards males. To 'prove' his heterosexuality, the victim's strength or virility is sometimes put to the test by physical actions or by forcing the guy to perform or suffer humiliating sexual activities. <sup>38</sup>

Male victims of verbal or physical sexual harassment frequently find it difficult to disclose occurrences since it risks supporting the perpetrator's allegations that he is weak, effeminate, or even gay, as well as the fear of losing his job. <sup>39</sup>

### 3. Forms of Sexual Harassment

In general, there are three forms of sexual harassment: (1) verbal sexual harassment, (2) non-verbal sexual harassment, and (3) physical sexual contact. <sup>40</sup>

#### 3.1 Verbal Sexual Harassment

Verbal sexual harassment is defined as saying anything sexual to someone who is not willing to receive it. However, not every sexually charged word counts as sexual harassment, and the perpetrator's intent can play a role in some circumstances. Some words might be jokes and not meant to be offensive. However, there is a fine line that may be easily crossed, and those who believe they have been victims of verbal sexual harassment should seek legal counsel as soon as possible. <sup>41</sup>

#### 3.2 Non-Verbal Sexual Harassment

Any form of unwanted sexual behaviour or communication that does not involve verbal interaction but stops short of physical sexual contact is referred to as nonverbal sexual harassment. Sending emails and texts that are explicit

### 3.3 Physical Sexual Contact

Unwanted physical contact can be classified as sexual harassment or sexual assault depending on the nature of the interaction. Any unwanted touching, patting, grabbing, rubbing, or pinching, as well as hugging or kissing, may be considered sexual harassment or may cause the line between sexual harassment and sexual assault to become hazy.

## 4. Sexual Harassment at Workplace

There are two types of sexual harassment at workplace:

**1. Quid pro quo harassment:** In the workplace, quid pro quo sexual harassment frequently involves a manager, supervisor, or executive giving a subordinate a job in exchange for consent to sexual advances, contact, or action. This can appear as a direct request or as suggestive language or actions that show the superior is ready to offer a job opportunity in exchange for a subordinate's or applicant's offer of a sexual favor. <sup>42</sup>

**2. Hostile work environment:** A hostile work environment is one that is brought on by sexually explicit acts committed by managers, supervisors, coworkers, or subordinates. For instance, when sexual remarks and innuendos are tolerated in the workplace, it makes the environment dangerous for those who are the targets of these remarks. <sup>43</sup>

According to Article 75 of the Code, an employee has the right to resign from their job and receive "dismissal compensation" if their employer or their agent violently treats them. Since the early 1950s, Lebanese courts have interpreted these crimes to include verbal acts of violence (harassment could be one of them). <sup>44</sup>

Due to the use of drugs and alcohol in bars and hotels, sexual harassment is often mistaken for flirting. The distinction between appropriate hospitality and unwanted attention is hazy in this case. <sup>45</sup>

Unsolicited and unwelcome contact is more common among women who work in hotels, bars, and transportation services. Workplaces that are mobile, entail substance usage, or have night shifts are particularly dangerous for women. <sup>46</sup>

According to a 2018 research by the Arab Foundation for Freedoms and Equality, only 15% of businesses in Lebanon have policies that safeguard against sexual harassment in the workplace. <sup>47</sup>

## 5. Sexual Harassment Effect on Mental Health

Sexual assault and harassment are widespread in our society and have grave repercussions. In addition to being physically damaging, sexual harassment and assault also have long-term effects on one's physical health, according to a recent study. <sup>48</sup>

Harassment is associated with lower levels of self-esteem, self-confidence, and psychological well-being as well as higher rates of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Women who had gone through this trauma were more likely to have high blood pressure, poor sleep, and severe depressive and anxiety symptoms, according to research. <sup>49</sup> The World Bank claims that sexual harassment can have a negative impact on the economy by fostering toxic work environments that can lower productivity, increase turnover, and increase absenteeism. <sup>50</sup>

Although teasing and offhand comments are not typically covered by sexual harassment legislation, they can be unpleasant and have a negative emotional impact. <sup>51</sup>

## 6. Services against Sexual Harassment

Survivors of sexual harassment and violence who seek justice through the criminal justice system often face re-traumatization and stigmatization as a result of discriminatory attitudes at police stations and from prosecutors and judges; the survivors' high burden of proof; and the public nature of criminal hearings. Many barriers in the administration of the Lebanese criminal system obstruct women's access to justice for sexual and gender-based assault, according to the International Commission of Jurists. They include a lack of competent gender-sensitive investigations, a lack of expertise and resources among those conducting them, and judicial officials' biased policies, practices, and gender stereotypes.<sup>52</sup>

The only governmental hotline available is that of the ISF, however it merely deals with domestic violence.

The two main NGOs that provide helpline services regarding violence and harassment are KAFA and ABAAD.

KAFA is a feminist, secular, Lebanese, non-profit, non-governmental civil society organization aiming to eliminate all forms of exploitation and violence against women since its establishment in 2005.<sup>53</sup>

ABAAD is a non-profit, non-politically affiliated, non-religious civil association founded in June 2011 with the aim of promoting sustainable social and economic development in the MENA region through equality, protection, and empowerment of marginalized groups, especially women.<sup>54</sup>

What is directly noticeable when searching for mechanisms of reporting sexual harassment in other countries is that any use of the term "Sexual Harassment" will directly link the seeker with information. In addition to giving hotlines for actual and direct specialized feedback and assistance, information about legal guidelines, as well as legal processes and mechanisms for filing complaints are readily available online. Typing the term reporting sexual harassment in the UAE in a search box directly yields information how to act if you are facing a hostile environment, where to submit the complaint, and how to best proceed to ensure safety. The same search term for France yielded results showing processes and mechanisms on how one is to report sexual harassment crimes and bullying as well as offering actual centers and affiliated partners that could actually assist in this matter in the victim's own locality. A comparative search of Canada, UK, and other European and international Communities reflected a similar pattern in terms of reporting mechanisms.

The websites were easily accessible with simple search terms that could be reflected in any language. Furthermore, the websites offered hotline numbers to call alternative options if the victim was afraid of contacting local authorities, as well as affiliated organizations offering protective services, steps to take to pursue legal and administrative action, in addition to the assurances of protection, anonymity and professionalism.

A system or structure that exists within the scope of the government to help monitor, track and address these incidents of misconduct under a strict 'Do not Harm' policy that offers full protection to those who are victims of these acts.<sup>55</sup>

## RESEARCH FRAMEWORK:

The approach focused on profiling of the respondents that included personal information, family life, economic life, level of education, employment, etc.

and was disaggregated by age, geographic location (Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, South Lebanon, and Bekaa). This was followed by experiences and witnesses in the thematic area of the research, psychological impact, knowledge and access to available services pertaining to the hotline by ISF and helplines by NGOs and reporting. Moreover, the report explored to what extent services provided to women and girls' beneficiaries and survivors have affected them (positively or negatively) or improved women's mental health and psychological well-being. The report included the women and girls' needs and their recommendations.

The report's focus was a survey using quantitative approach with a comprehensive literature review providing findings examining multiple sources of available information in the country. In organizing the survey questionnaire, the survey followed the framework of the previous year's gender barometer for GBV.

The survey was conducted through online platforms like WhatsApp, Skype or simply by phone. A team of a number of surveyors from various NGOs was designated to call several interviewees in parallel for fast collection of data. The data was entered directly by the interviewer to an online survey platform which was carefully managed and validated by the consultancy team before the data analysis.

Finally, the report provided a set of recommendations for policy-makers presenting current challenges facing women and girls in Lebanon, highlighting best course of action for potential adjustments and integration in programming and up-scaling the implementation approach with regards to awareness, trainings and advocacy, with the aim to address violence against women and girls and their immediate and long-term needs.

It is worth noting that the political, economic and COVID-19 health implications were emphasized in the findings and data analysis, in particular COVID-19 health crisis which increased GBV and sexual harassment in the country as it is crucial to highlight the setbacks that affected assistance provided to women and girls in the country by the government as well as by local NGOs.

Another important note to add is that the available data collected and the analysis that will be provided in the barometer reports, along with the women and girls' database that will be provided to NCLW with the procured survey platform by end of research, have broader coverage that will offer NCLW with useful information that can be used for cross-cutting to identify new gaps and collect new types of data to improve quality in future programming.

To conclude, findings and recommendations from the gender barometer for sexual harassment are expected to play a major role in determining the focus of NCLW in government implementation of laws and in shaping future programming.

## METHODOLOGY:

The study followed a flexible, dynamic, comprehensive and participatory approach that upholds the expectations of NCLW and key project stakeholders. Given the short timeframe of the study and given the tense socio-political situation, simplified methods were employed for more flexibility, efficiency and analysis from a sequential perspective. The methodology used by the consultant entails:

### Literature Review

The review of literature provided an overview of the existing situation of sexual harassment, along with existing legal provisions that are put in place to combat such issues. The research was also based on extracting data from



secondary resources such as articles and reports done by United Nations bodies (United Nations Women, United Nations Development, United Nations Development Fund, ESCWA, etc.) accumulating literature review that were relevant and delving into secondary data that shows both vertical and horizontal cleavages when tackling the issues of the three thematic topics. In addition to these reports, some data will be collected from studies done by local organizations such as ABAAD, KAFA, Arab Center for the rule of law and integrity, the Legal database of National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) and other reports.

**Research Survey:**

The quantitative data collection tool or survey, served to gather actual statistics of the situation in Lebanon. The survey included collecting and analyzing primary data through a quantitative approach by using questionnaires. The methodology had been developed to ensure covering all relevant aspects related to sexual harassment.

**Working Team:**

The team working on the gender barometer included the consultant Dr. Gulnar Wakim, with 1 Senior Analyst, 1 Database Officer, and 1 Research Assistant.

**Collaboration of Community-Based Organizations:**

The following NCLW partner community-based organizations (CBOs) took part in the gender barometer by conducting the surveys in regions across Lebanon:

- Fe-male
- Shifaa – Collaboration for life
- Overcome
- Union of Progressive Women (UPW)
- Women Platform to Lead (WPL)
- The Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women (LECORVAW)
- Sama for Development
- Justice without Frontiers

**Training of the CBOs:**

The training of the CBOs was conducted at the NCLW HQ over an entire day; explaining requirements, the 'Do No Harm' principles, the gender concepts, and ethics for conducting a survey. A pilot survey followed the training sessions by surveyors and a session of Q&As followed the pilot for all organizations to be ready. After termination of the survey, surveyors from various CBOs stated the challenges they faced as well as recommendations for future surveys.

**LIMITATIONS:**

There are a number of actual limitations to the research:

**General limitations:**

- The report took place over the month of July –August 2022, during which the COVID-19 pandemic was a major limitation for meetings and data collection. Physical meetings with women and girls were very challenging, with the rising numbers of coronavirus cases in Lebanon and with the ongoing governmental discussions of potential

lockdown. To mitigate this challenge, the survey relied on virtual meetings using online platforms to conduct the survey as well as phone call conversations.

- Due to the ongoing and overlapping socioeconomic crises, most people's priorities have shifted to earning a living and ensuring food security; thus, violence and sexual harassment are sometimes viewed as irrelevant in the current country context.
- Information regarding sexual harassment in Lebanon was extremely limited on online sources. The main topic available was gender-based violence; which is different from sexual harassment.
- There is a lack of awareness regarding what is considered to be sexual harassment, for this reason, studies on the topic may not be holistic.

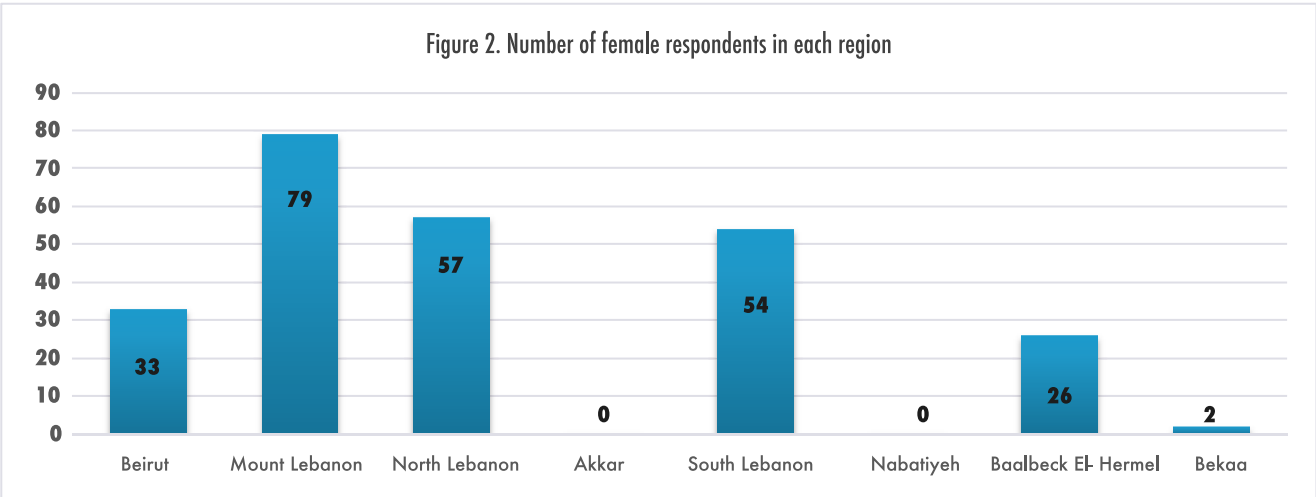
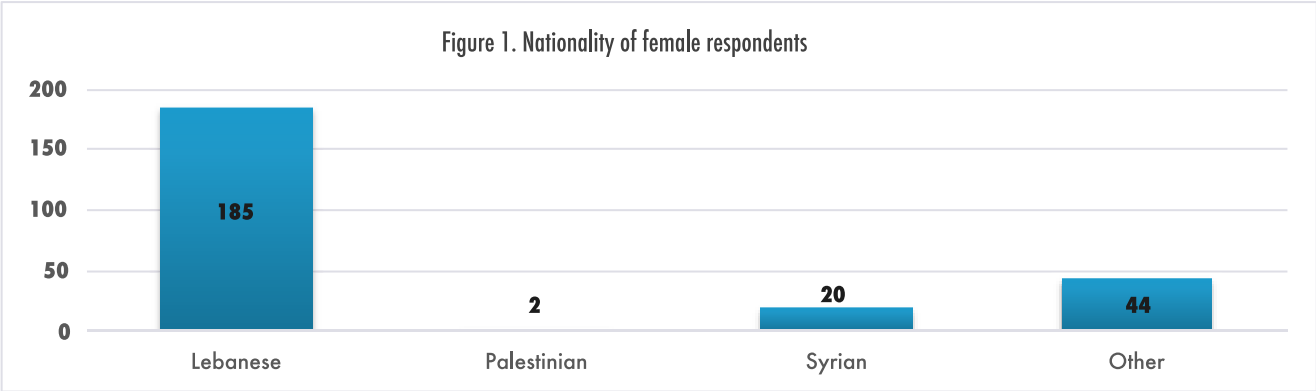
### **Challenges faced by CBO surveyors:**

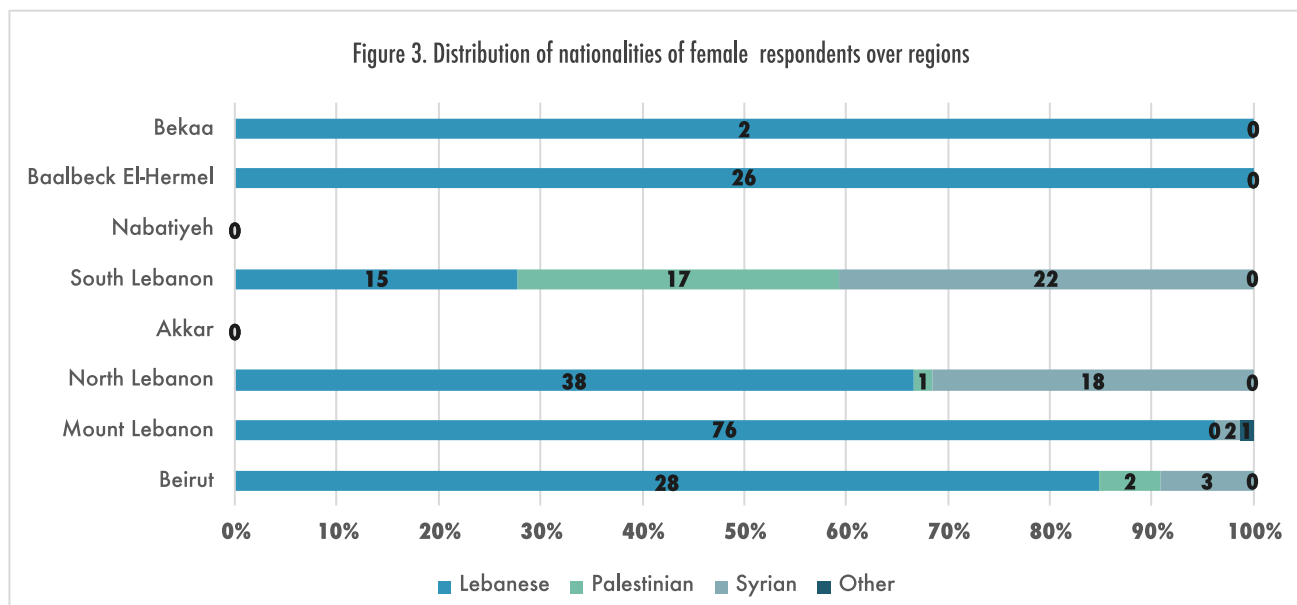
- Many enumerators stated that they faced difficulties when asking about personal information, as many of the surveyed were hesitant, especially at the beginning of the survey. Some stated that there was fear from having personal information shared; however, that was resolved after surveyors reassured them that all information collected was confidential.
- Some of the survivors refused to answer certain questions as they did not want to re-experience the traumatic event. When asked questions related to psychological – or other types of – support, some of the respondents seemed aggressive/defensive. Furthermore, it comes as no surprise that most survivors were emotional (anxious, stressed, sad) when answering questions related to their sexual harassment experience. Some respondents even started crying, especially after reliving the disturbing events.
- Even after requesting to call when they feel most comfortable, some respondents feared answering certain questions due to the presence of a male family member.

KEY FINDINGS:

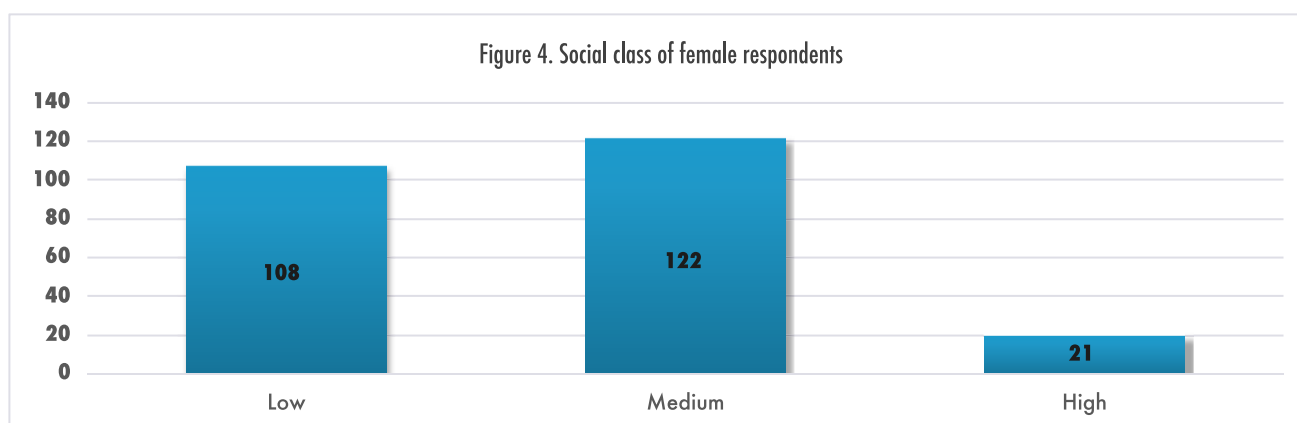
1. Demographics

A purposive sampling approach was used to assess the living conditions of women in Lebanon, their knowledge of sexual harassment, their exposure to sexual harassment, and their level of awareness of the laws and services available to victims of harassment. The targeted areas included Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, Akkar, South Lebanon, Nabatiyeh, Baalbeck El-Hermel, and Bekaa. The total of 251 respondents participated in the survey. The graphs below provide information on the respondents' nationality and the region they are residing in.





The vast majority of respondents (92%) are from the middle and low classes, with only 8% from high class of rich people.



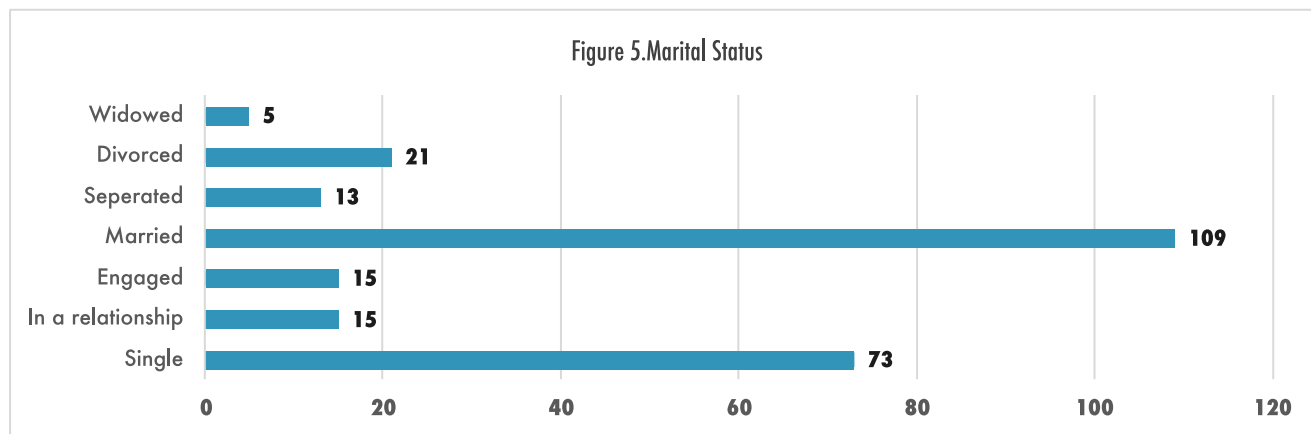
## 2. Personal Information

The sample clusters the age groups into four categories 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, and above 45 years old. The majority of respondents belonged to the age group (26-35), followed by (18-25), and (36-45). Only 15.9% are over 45 years old. The table at the right details the percentage of participants for each age group.

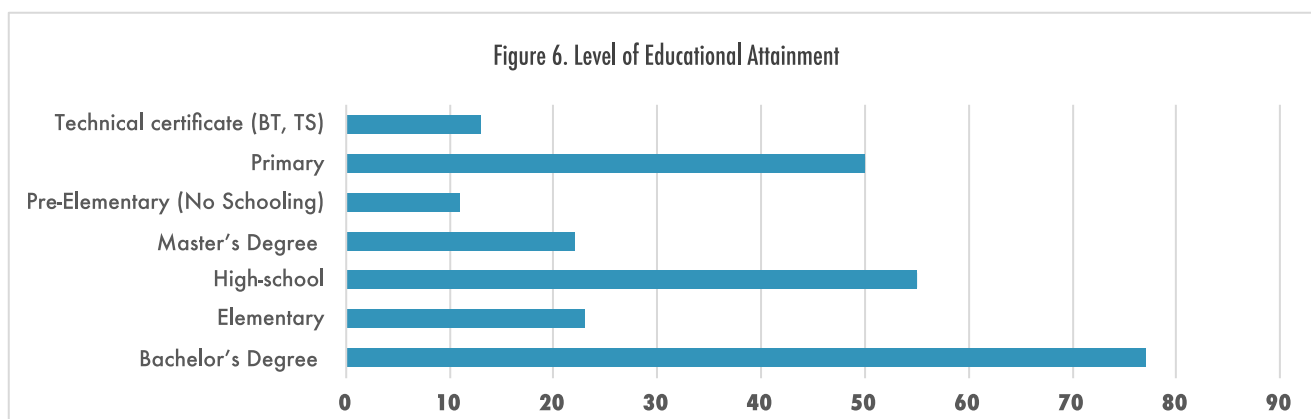
Age	Frequency	Percentage
26-35	80	31.8%
18-25	71	28.3%
36-45	60	24%
>45	40	15.9%

Table 1. Percentage per age of respondents

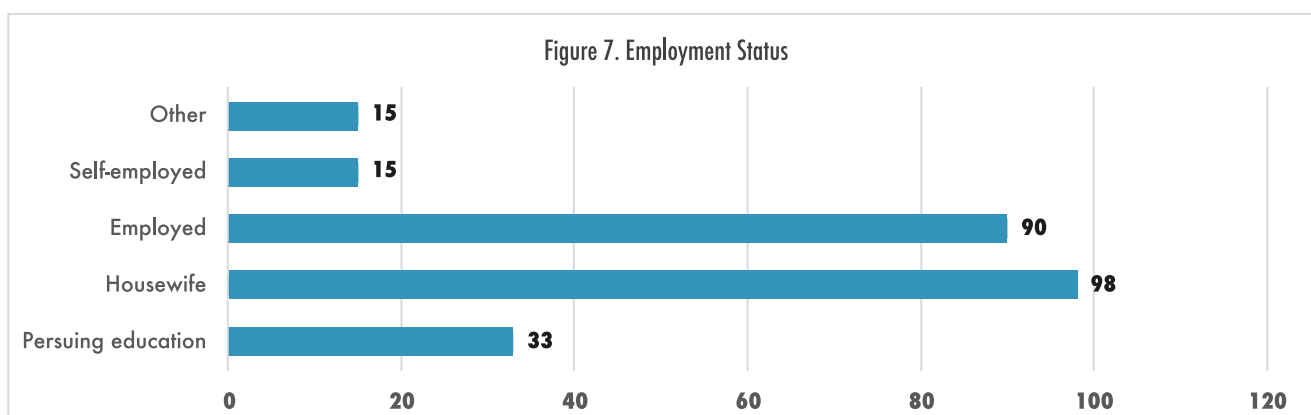
The majority of respondents (109) were married, followed by those who were single (73), divorced (21), engaged (15), in a relationship (15), separated (13), and widowed (5). This distribution is very important as it portrays sexual harassment trends for women of all marital statuses. The graph below details the results:



With respect to their level of educational attainment, the majority of respondents (77) had a Bachelor's degree, followed by a high school diploma (55), primary education (50), elementary education (23), Master's degree (22), Technical certificate (13), and pre-elementary education (11). Given that the majority of respondents were educated, the findings will shed light on factors other than education that contribute to increased sexual harassment. Below are the graphed results:



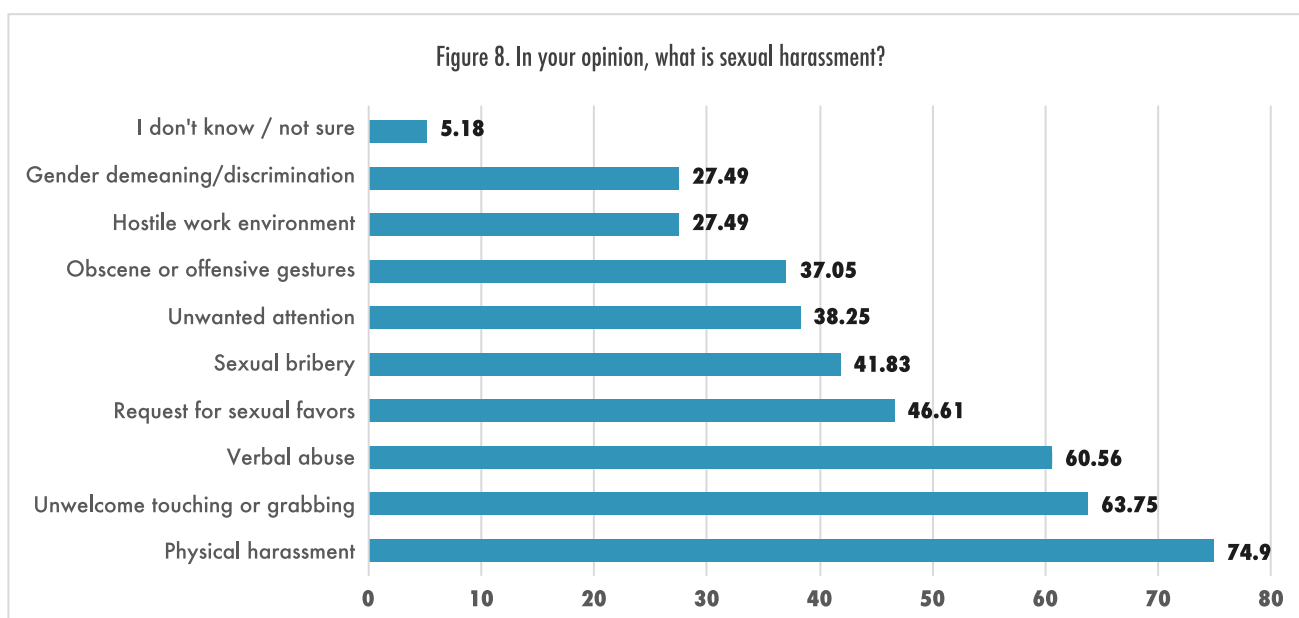
Regarding the employment status, the majority of respondents were housewives (98), followed by employees (90), followed by employees (90), students (33), self-employed (15), and other respondents (15). Understanding women's diverse perspectives and experiences requires this variety (whether employed or not). The results are shown in the graph below.





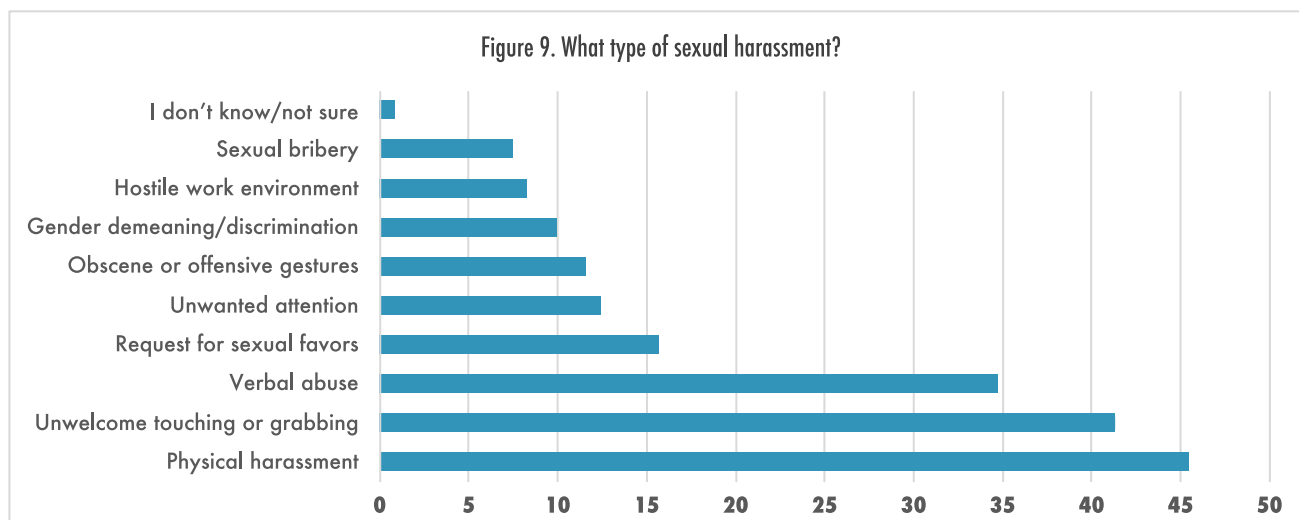
### 3. Knowledge on Sexual Harassment

Most of the respondents (90.04%) said "yes" when asked if they could define sexual harassment, while the remaining respondents said "no", (9.96%) nearly 10%. There were various definitions. The most common response, selected by 188 respondents (74.9%), was "Physical harassment". With 160 (63.7%) responses, "Unwelcome touching or grabbing" was the second most popular choice. With 60.56% responses, "Verbal abuse", 46.61% for "Request for sexual favors", 41.83% for "Sexual bribery", and 37.05% for "Obscene or offensive gestures". Only 69 responses (27.5%) each, "Hostile work environment" and "Gender demeaning/discrimination" received the fewest votes. It is significant to note that respondents were given a choice among numerous definitions, and the proportion of those who had previously stated they knew nothing about sexual harassment dropped to 5.18%. This demonstrated a lack of understanding of sexual harassment and what constitutes harassment. The percentage of each response that participants chose is displayed in the table below:

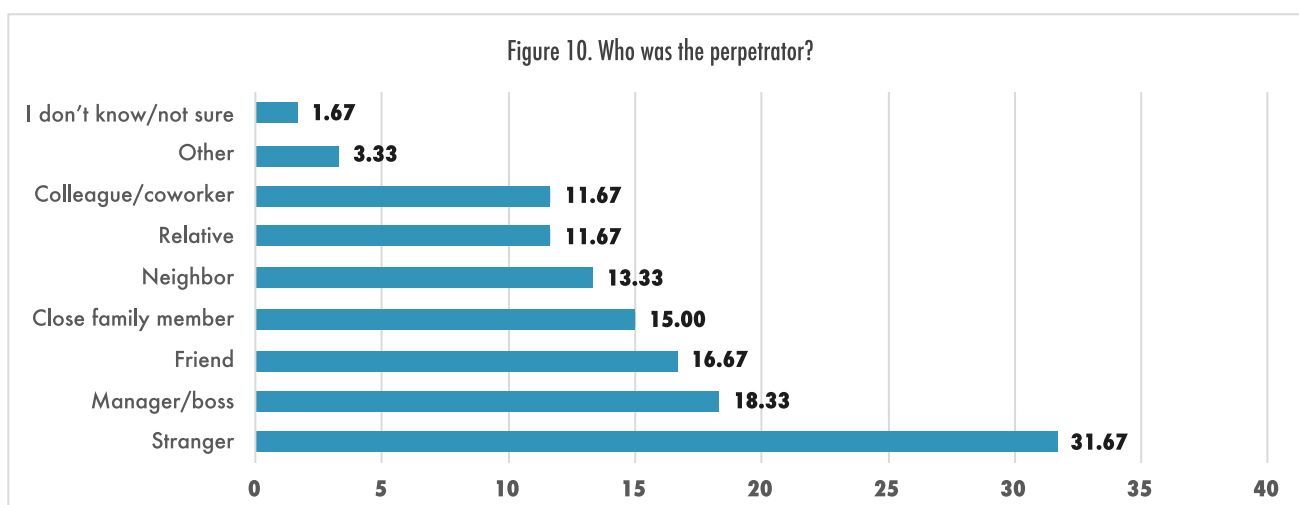


### 4. Knowing Someone Exposed to Sexual Harassment

It should be noted that respondents frequently refer to themselves when they talk about someone they know who has experienced sexual harassment. When asked if they knew someone who had experienced sexual harassment, 121 respondents (48.2%) gave positive responses and 130 respondents (51.8%) gave negative responses. The most typical form of sexual harassment experienced by someone they know, according to those who indicated yes, was "physical harassment," which was frequently selected by respondents, with 55 respondents (45.45%) opting for this response. "Unwelcome touching or grabbing" and "verbal abuse" came next, receiving 50 (41.32%) and 42 (34.71%) responses, respectively. "Hostile work environment" and "sexual bribery" received the fewest responses, with 10 (8.26%) and 9 (7.44%) responses, respectively. As was already mentioned, the types that were least preferred might be as a result of a lack of knowledge about the subject and what constitutes harassment. The percentages of each type selected are listed below:



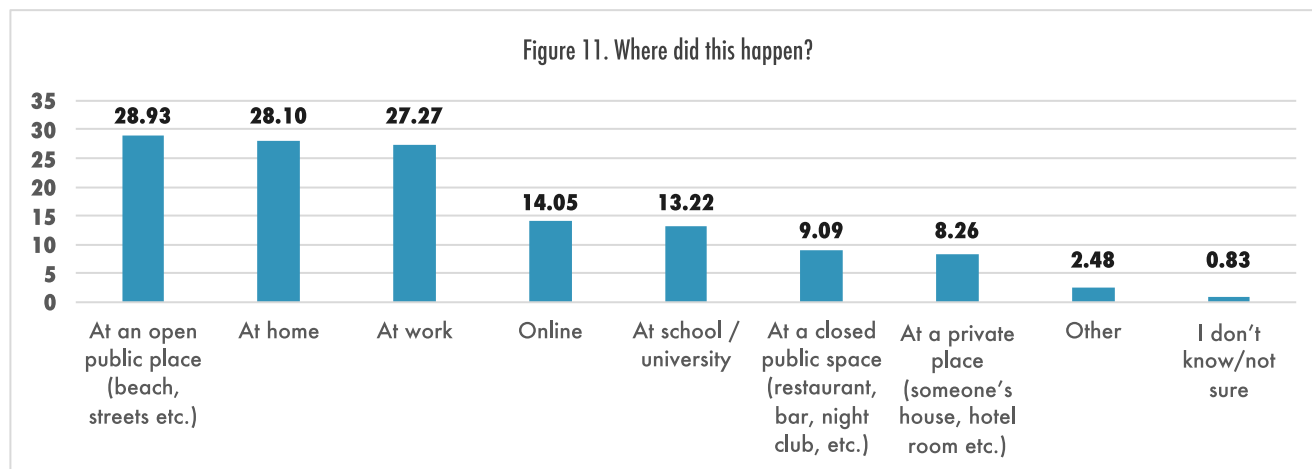
When asked who the perpetrator was, the most frequent answers were “stranger” and “manager/boss”; with 38 (31.67%) and 22 (18.33%) responses each. The remainder of responses were as follows:



As for the location of the incident, 35 respondents (28.93%) answered “at an open public place,” 34 respondents (28.1%) answered “at home,” and 33 respondents (27.27%) answered “at work.” These responses demonstrate the severity, lack of security, and scope of danger in the country. Other locations included the following:

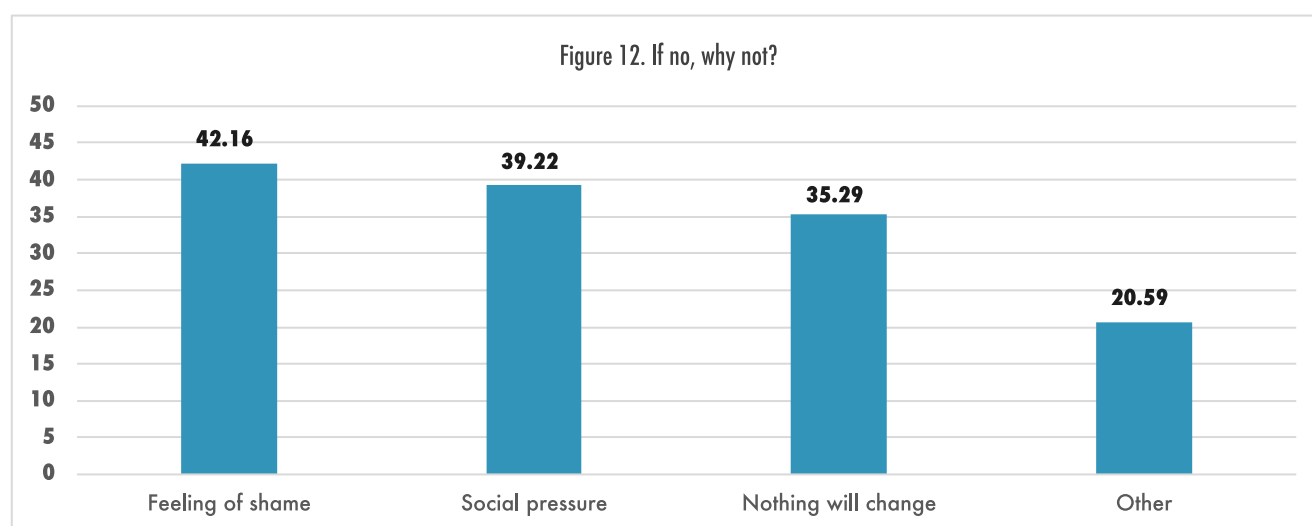
When asked how they know about the case, 100 respondents (82.64%) answered “from the victim,” 12 respondents (9.92%) answered “from talks,” 8 respondents (6.61%) answered “from the victim’s family,” and 3 respondents (2.48%) answered “from the perpetrator.”

When asked whether they ran a case against the perpetrator, 13 respondents (10.92%) answered “yes,” whereas 106 respondents (89.08%) answered “no.” When asked whether the survivor filed a complaint, 17 respondents (14.29%) answered “yes,” whereas 102 respondents (85.71%) answered “no.”



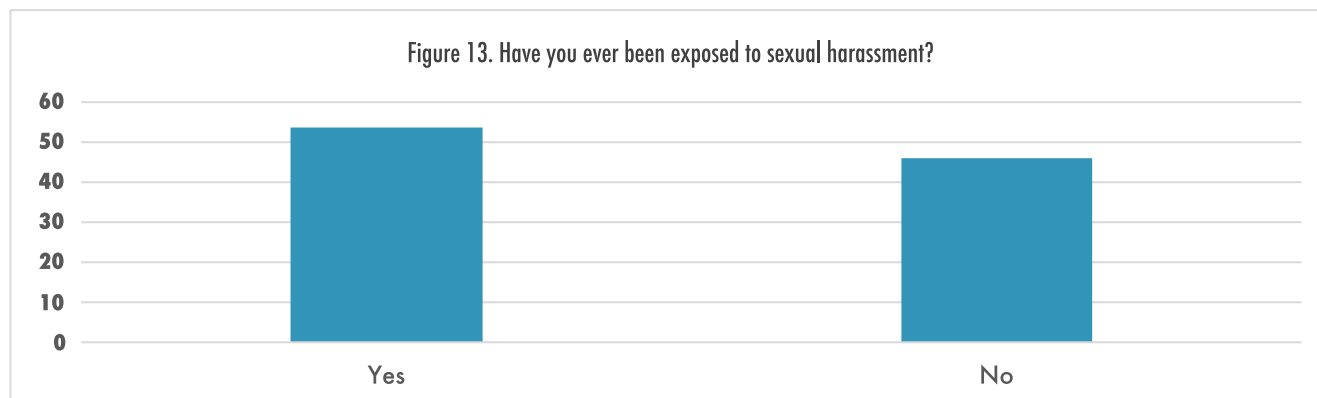
For those who had a complaint filed, 9 respondents (52.94%) stated that the case was resolved in favor of the victim, whereas 7 respondents (41.18%) stated that it wasn't, and 1 (5.88%) did not know. The cases that were resolved were through "work specialized unit" (40%), police (30%), tribunal (10%), and other (20%).

When asked why the survivor did not file a complaint, the majority of answers were "feeling of shame" (42.16%), "social pressure" (39.22%), and "nothing will change" (35.29%). This exposes the heinous social norms and attitudes that shame victims of harassment rather than perpetrators.

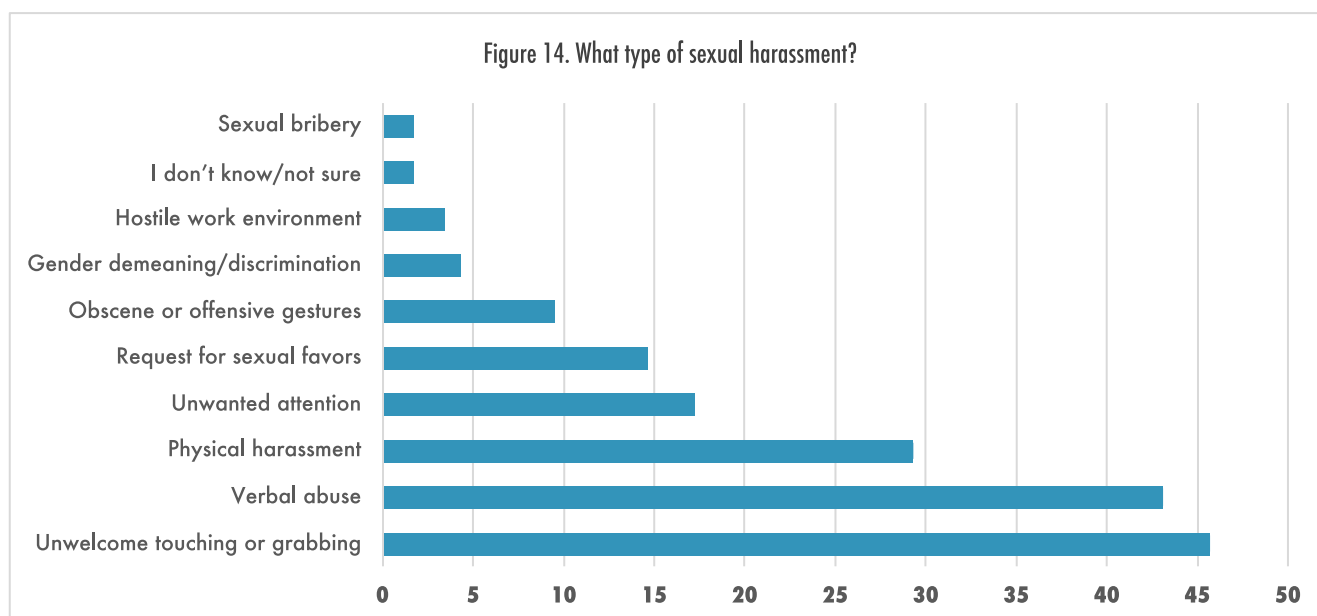


## 5. Being Exposed to Sexual Harassment

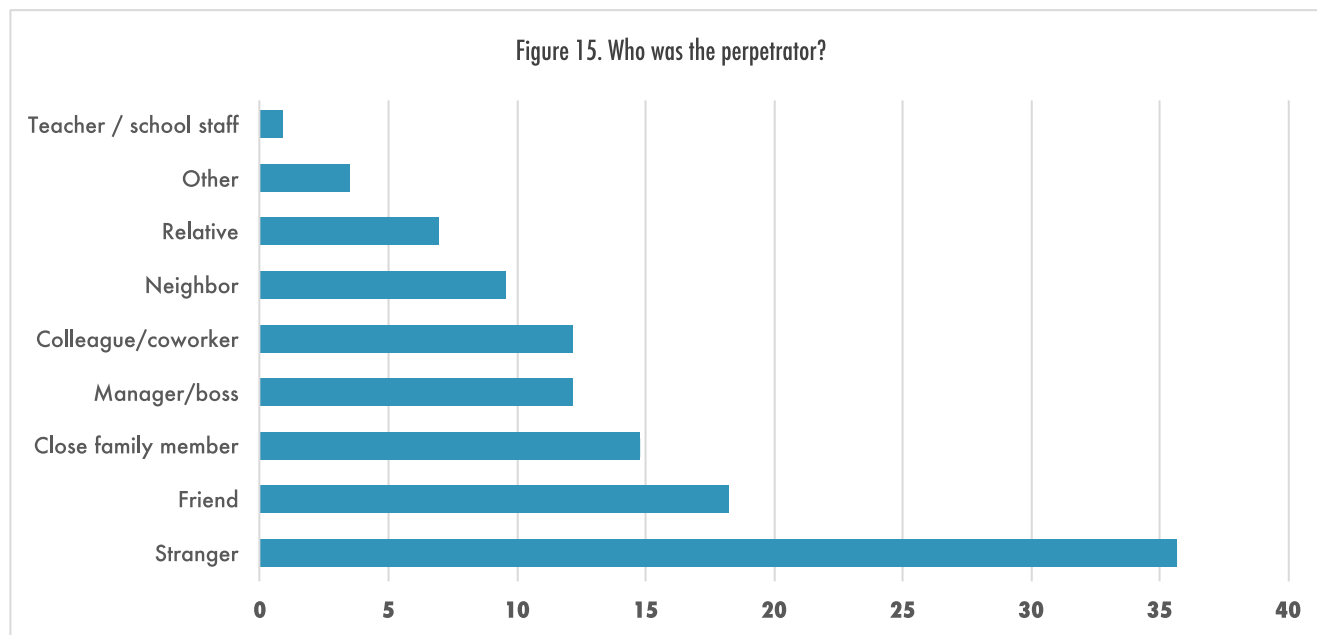
When asked whether they, themselves, had been exposed to sexual harassment, 116 respondents (46.22%) answered "yes," and 135 respondents (53.78%) answered "no."



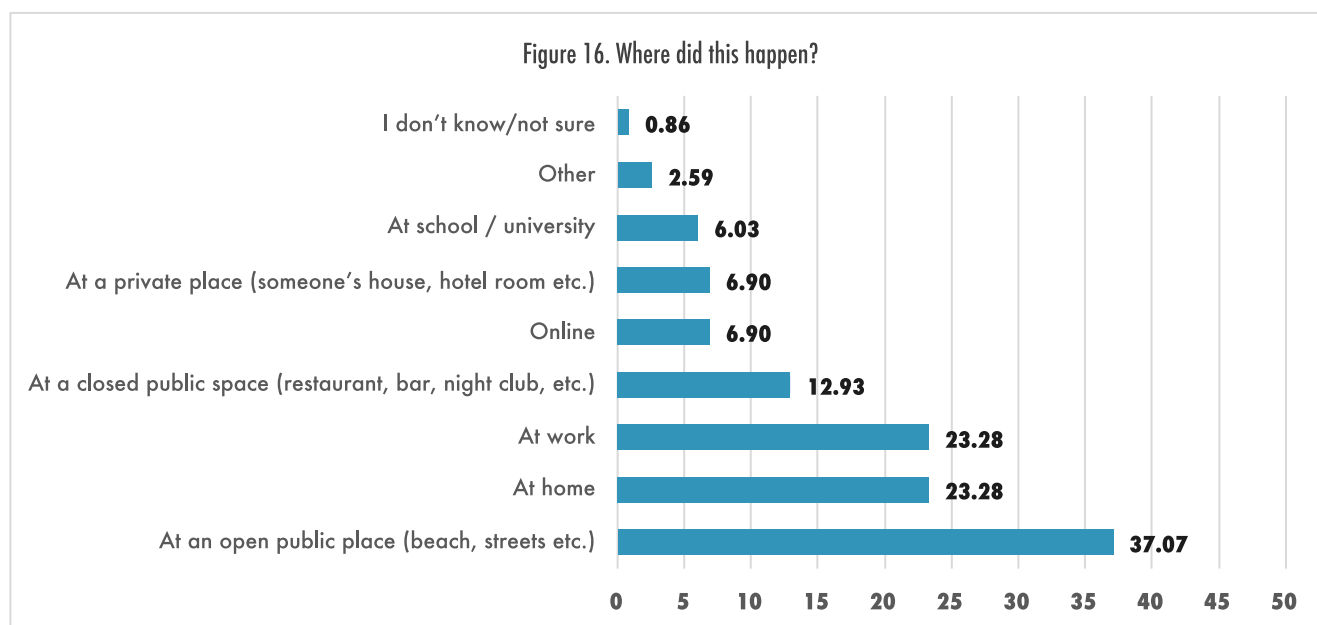
Regarding the type of sexual harassment, the two answers most chosen were “unwelcome touching or grabbing” and “verbal abuse”; with 45.69% and 43.1% respectively. The answers least chosen were “hostile work environment” and “sexual bribery”; with 3.45% and 1.72% respectively. It should be noted that responses differed from those of someone they know who had been subjected to sexual harassment, which could be attributed to feelings of shame or embarrassment. The graph below portrays the remainder of answers.



When asked who the perpetrator was, the most common answer was “stranger”; with 35.65%. The least chosen answer was “teacher/school staff”; with 0.87%. When analysing both results – knowing someone exposed and being exposed – it is evident that strangers are the main perpetrators. This could be attributed to the culture where harassing a stranger is considered more acceptable than harassing someone known; especially that reporting mechanisms are very weak in the country. Below are the detailed results:

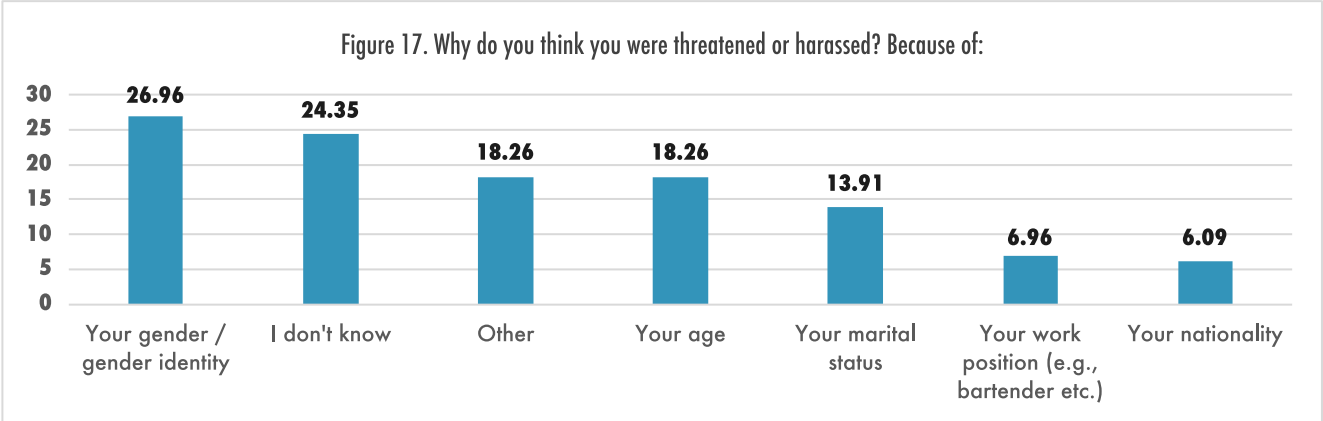


Regarding the place where it happened, "at an open public place" was the most common choice; with 37.07%. The least chosen answers were "at a private place" and "at school/university"; with 6.9% and 6.03% respectively. Similar to the section of knowing someone exposed to harassment, these results show the lack of security in the country. The graph below shows the remaining answer percentages:



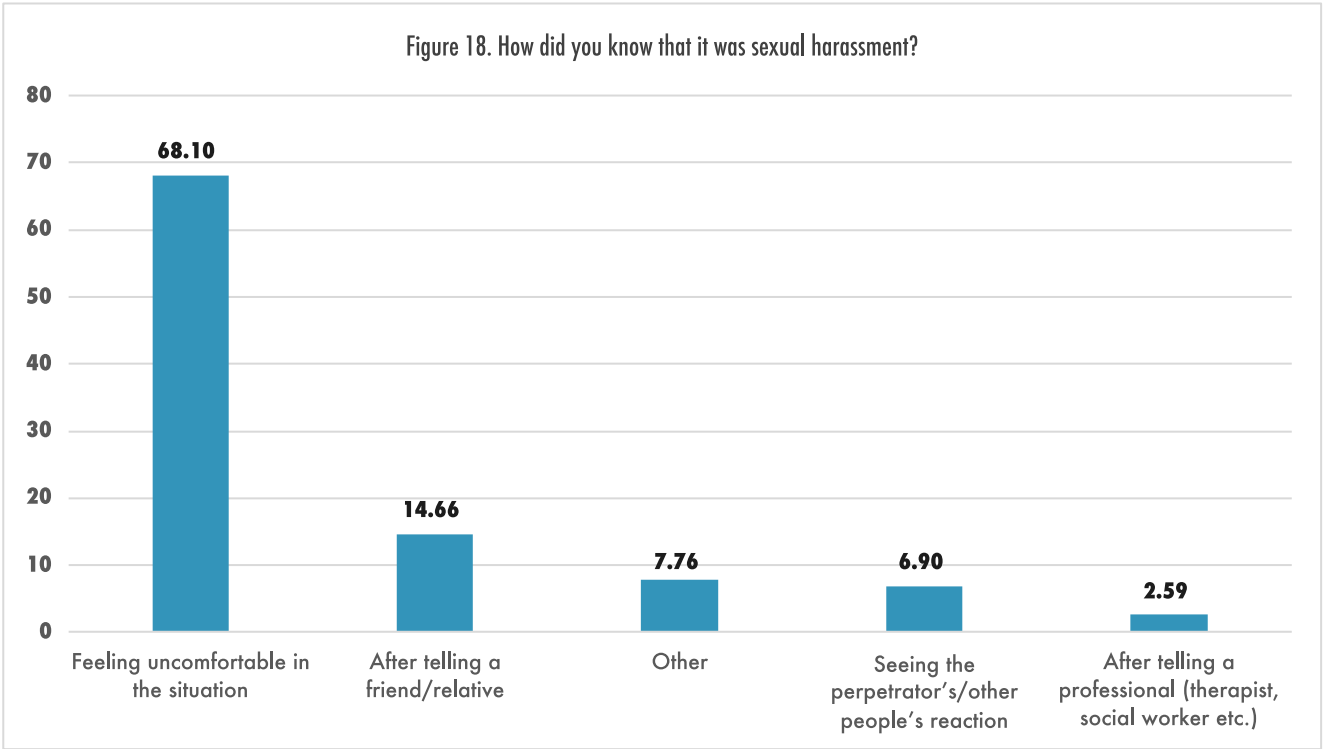
The main factor cited by respondents as the cause of their harassment was "gender/gender identity" (26.96%), specifically being a woman. With 6.09% of votes, "Nationality" received the fewest votes. This demonstrates how severe gender inequality and abuse are in the country. Other justifications given by respondents are shown in the graph below:



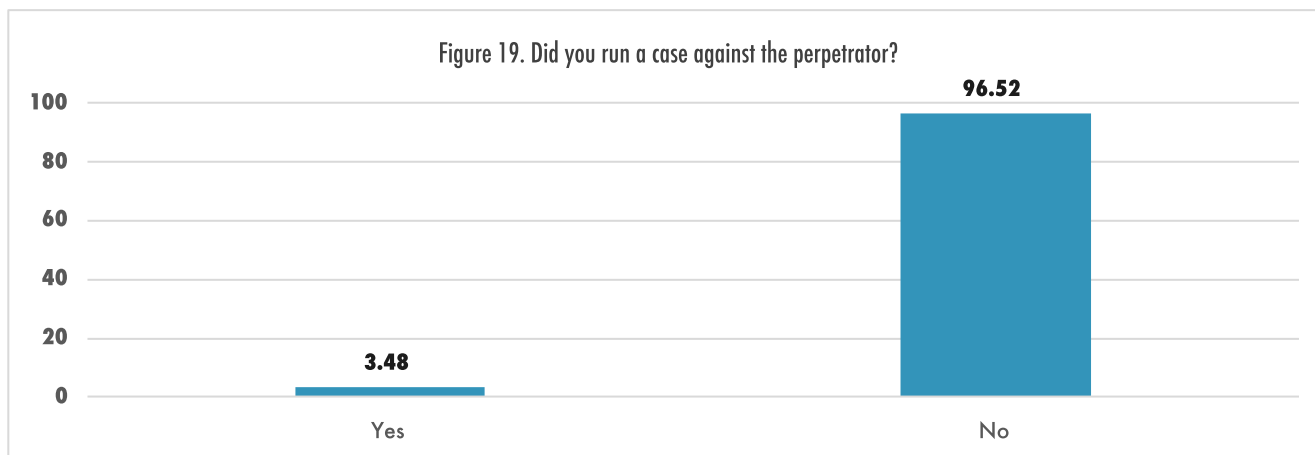


The majority of respondents (33.62%) chose "at a normal setting," followed by 28.45% "during work," 25.86% "on the road," 9.48% "through social media," 6.9% "at a party," 5.17% "using public transportation," and 13.79% "other" when asked where the incident occurred.

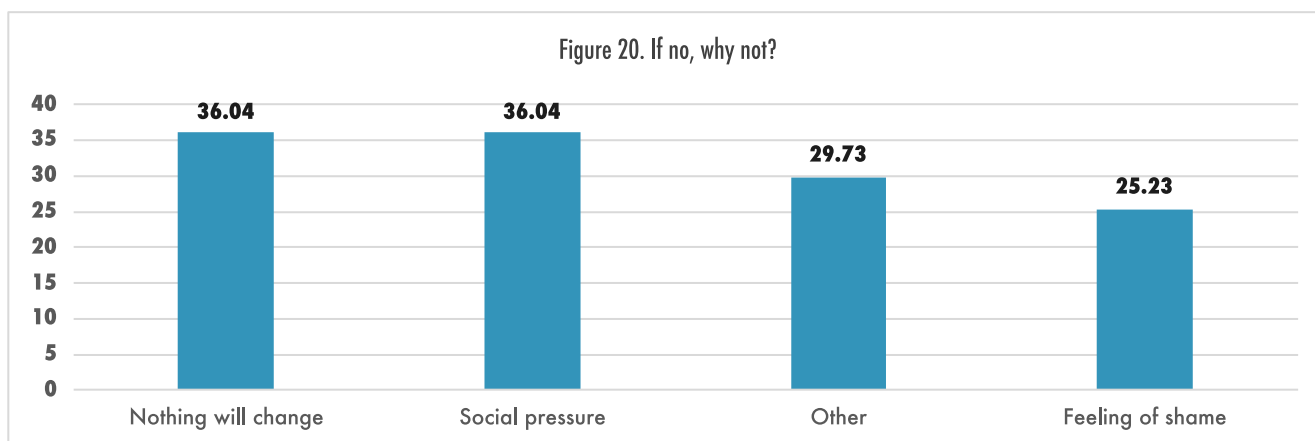
The majority of respondents (68.1%) gave this response when asked how they knew it was sexual harassment: "feeling uncomfortable in the situation." Only 2.59% of respondents indicated that they had told a professional, demonstrating the shame-based culture that prevents people from seeking professional help or therapy.



Only 3.48% of respondents said they had filed a case against the offender, while 96.52% said they had not. Again, this demonstrates the culture of the country, where it is shameful to report harassment.

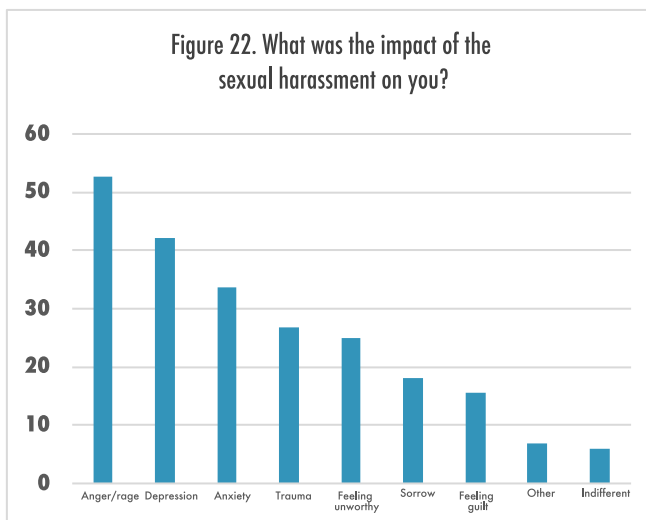
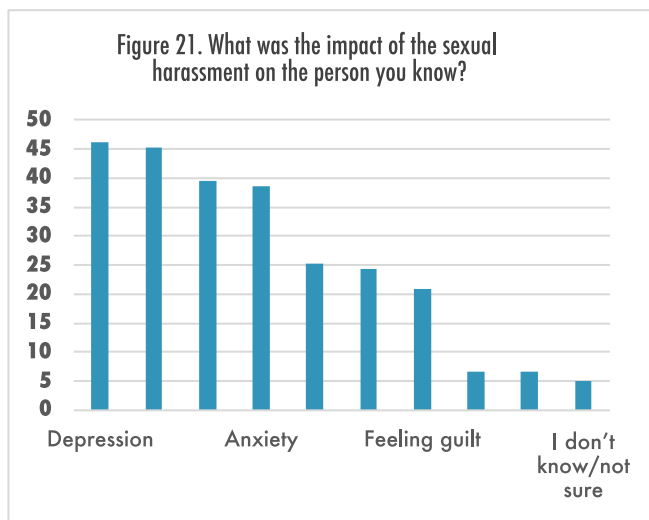


50% of respondents said "police," 25% said "work specialized unit," and 25% said "other" when asked where they handled the case. In response to the question of whether the case had been resolved, 50% said "yes" and 50% said "no." Police was the location where it was resolved, according to those who claimed it had been resolved. The two main reasons for not filing a case were "nothing will change" and "social pressure" (36.04% each), with "feeling of shame" (25.23%) and "other" (29.73%) following closely behind. These findings demonstrate both the system's lack of trust and the pervasiveness of cultural shame.

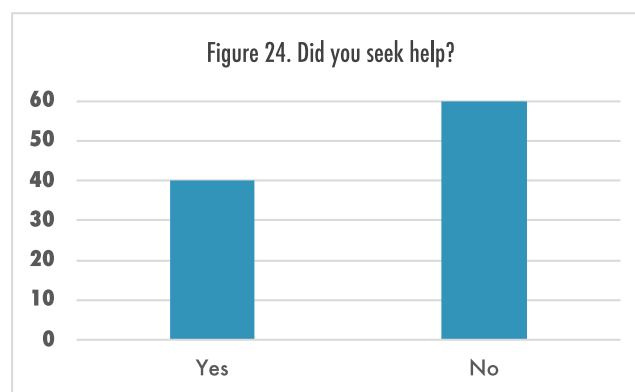
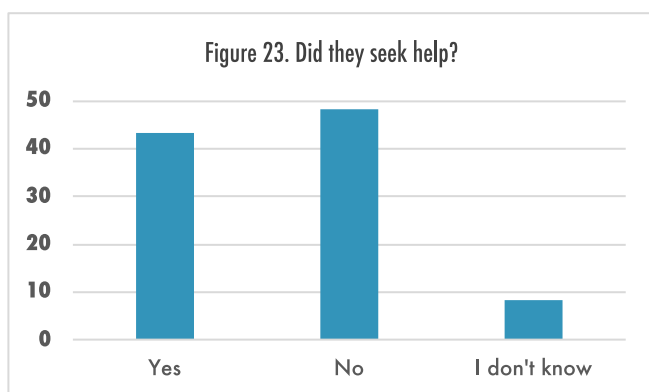


## 6. Impact of Sexual Harassment

The most frequently given responses when asked how sexual harassment has affected a person they know were "depression" (46.22%) and "anger/rage" (45.38%). The least preferred response, however, was "indifferent" (6.72%). Similarly, the most frequently given responses when asked how sexual harassment affected them were "anger/rage" (52.59%) and "depression" (42.24%). Also, "indifferent" (6.03%) was the least preferred response. These findings highlight the serious risks associated with sexual harassment.



When asked if the person they know sought help, 43.33% answered “yes,” whereas 48.33% answered “no,” and 8.33% answered “I don’t know.” Likewise, when asked if they, themselves, sought help, 40.18% answered “yes,” whereas 59.82% answered “no.” As previously mentioned, this shows the shame culture, where people prefer to keep information to themselves rather than seeking help from a professional.



For those who sought help, 65.38% told someone, 38.46% sought therapy, 7.69% reported to a governmental institution, 7.69% reported to an NGO, and 3.85% chose “other.” When asked whether the help was beneficial, 73.08% answered “yes,” 9.62% answered “no,” and 17.31% answered “I don’t know.”

Similarly, for participants who sought help, 75.56% told someone, 22.22% sought therapy, 13.33% reported to an NGO, and 2.22% chose “other.” When asked whether the help was beneficial, 86.67% answered “yes,” 11.11% answered “no” and 2.22% answered “I don’t know.”

## 7. Reporting Mechanisms

The percentage of respondents who are aware of Lebanese Law 205/2020 against sexual harassment is only 15.94%. As a result, there needs to be greater public awareness of this law. The fact that only 37.05% of

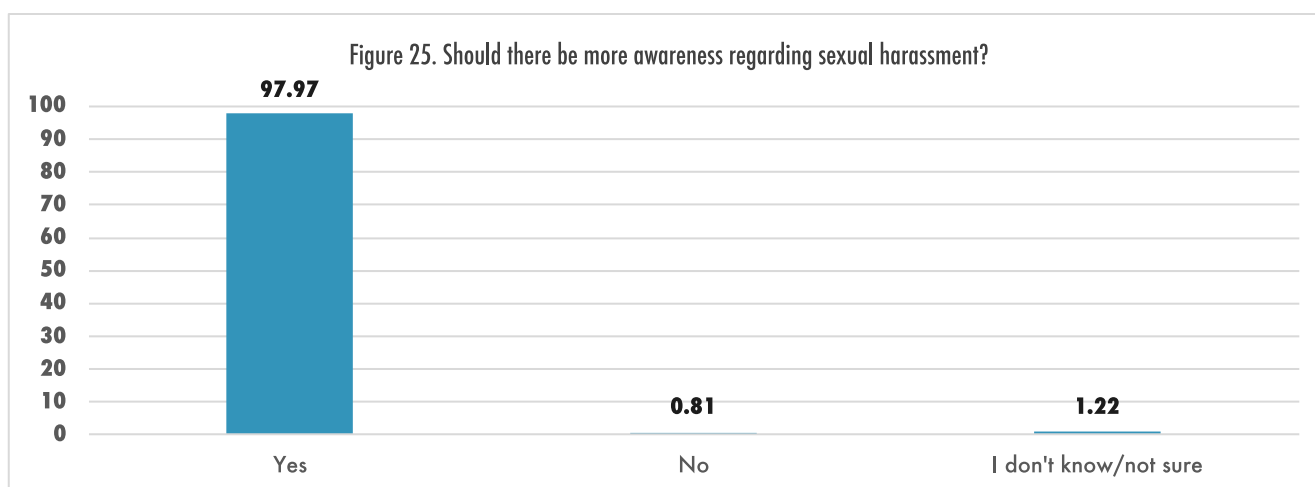
respondents are aware of ISF's services related to sexual harassment also indicates that more awareness-raising efforts are needed. Respondents were asked if they trusted the ISF's services, and 60.96% of them gave negative response.

The majority of respondents (77.5%) claimed that the harasser was not reported by a person they knew. Similarly, 91.38% of those surveyed failed to report the harassment. "Unaware of reporting mechanisms" and "lack of trust in the system" ranked as the top two deterrents to reporting (33.02% each). This once more demonstrates the significance of spreading knowledge about reporting mechanisms.

When asked about Lebanon's shortcomings in combating sexual harassment, respondents listed "lack of awareness of the sexual harassment law" (59.76%), "no proper implementation of the law" (48.21%), "unawareness of reporting mechanisms" (43.03%), and "organizations lack policies and procedures to solve cases of sexual harassment at workplace" (29.08%) as among the problems.

## 8. Needs

The respondents' top needs were psychological (73.49%), followed by needs for awareness and capacity building (42.17%), social support (33.73%), and legal support (25.3%). 97.97% of respondents agreed that there should be greater awareness of sexual harassment.



## RECOMMENDATIONS:

### *Recommendations for the future gender monitoring tool:*

1. Maintain and institutionalize efforts for greater impact to reach equality as women continue to consider that men are in a more privileged position in society.
2. Statistical and empirical data about gender equality in various sectors is needed. The barometer demonstrates that achieving gender equality calls for deliberate action to be taken by the main stakeholders working on advancing women's rights on a national level.
3. Maintain a national gender monitoring tool with indicators tailored to the Lebanese context that oversees and informs national gender advancement:

#### **For NCLW:**

- The gender monitoring tool is expected to be measured on a yearly basis using the same indicators and data collection tools to monitor progress of gender equality.
- The gender barometer can be conducted with different sampling and based on the needs, national cultural dynamics, projects, or other study levels.
- The barometer must involve advanced assessment of potential prospective topics in the hopes of gaining further insight on gender equality dynamics.
- The questionnaire must be reviewed and tested before conducting a survey for the different topics and from different perspectives.
- The sample of women and men respondents from different regions is advisable to be diversified and expended for the next survey in order to be more inclusive and representative of the society.

#### **For CBOs:**

- CBOs should keep training on the data collection tools and data entry. The barometer is key to expanding expertise on data entry and collection.
- CBOs and NGOs can develop programs based on research findings in addition to research data and barometer graphs.
- Interventions should be coordinated across the stakeholders to avoid duplication and should be complementary in terms of activities, programs, and events.

4. Increase cooperation between the state actors and civil society actors through:
  - Developing a unified mechanism to respond and protect against GBV to be disseminated to all public institutions, municipalities, and ministries.
  - Developing a unified Sexual Harassment policy to be disseminated to the private and sectors.
  - Strengthening the collaboration between CSOs/CBOs and governmental institutions so that CSO/CBO services that respond to GBV would complement the government's available services.
5. Emphasize the government's interventions and increase public trust in the government by documenting and disseminating the primary governmental interventions.
6. Ensure free legal assistance to encourage recourse to the judicial system despite the economic crisis.

7. Provide adequate and accessible safeguards and protection mechanisms to prevent violence.
8. Build the capacity of frontliners and service providers to respond to crises, especially in difficult situations.
9. Strengthen the referral systems, improve services, and boost service providers' credibility along with funding increases and institutional guidance at the national level.
10. Improve coordination between all service providers to promote the importance of mental health and encourage seeking mental health services to girls, women, boys, and men.

***Recommendations from the Lebanon Gender Equality Barometer on Sexual Harassment:***

- Raise awareness on the ISF's services related to sexual harassment.
- Ensure proper implementation of the anti-sexual harassment law (no 205/2020) by training and organizing roundtables for lawyers, judges, and public prosecutors.
- Organize ongoing meetings with judges on how criminal cases of sexual harassment and GBV can be addressed.
- Develop and consolidate Sexual Harassment reporting mechanisms and tools.
- Create an efficient follow-up system for the Sexual Harassment complaints filed.
- Improve security in public areas to reduce sexual harassment cases.

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## ANNEXES:

### Data Entry and Analysis

The data collected was entered to Kobo Toolbox Online Survey platform to design and gather the data online and to proceed with analysis from a gender lens perspective. Kobo Toolbox software was used for data entry and analysis to be used by NCLW which will build a knowledge database for further development and regular yearly updates.

After ending the survey, the Database Officer examined the data and cleaned the database before starting the analysis.

### Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for confidentiality of sources, respect for the beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environment; for human rights and gender equality; and for the 'do no harm' principle for humanitarian assistance. The consultancy team will respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence, will ensure that sensitive data is protected and that it cannot be traced to its source and will validate statements made in the report with those who provided the relevant information.

\* The Barometer data was collected by a team of experts, in collaboration with various CBOs. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the consultant and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Commission for Lebanese Women.