



**FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN**  
**For Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace**  
**Islamabad**

**J U D G M E N T**

1. Complaint Number: 1(296) / 2016-FOS (Reg)
2. Date of Institution: 19-10-2016
3. Date of Decision: 02-12-2016
4. Complainant: Rubaba Shafiq  
House No. 73, Street No. 5,  
E-11/2, Islamabad
5. Opponents:
  - i. Professor Dr. S.M Saqlain Naqvi  
Dean, Faculty of Science, PMAS-UAAR  
Rawalpindi
  - ii. Dr. Mazhar Qayyum  
Chairman, Department of Zoology  
PMAS-UAAR  
Rawalpindi

**Justice (R) Yasmin Abbasey,**

**Ombudsman:**

**Complaint No. 1(296)/ 2016-FOS.**

1. Mst. Rubaba Shafiq Research fellow of PHD degree, department of Zoology under faculty of science, Arid Agriculture University has filed this complainant against dean of Faculty of Sciences Dr. S.M Saqlain Naqvi and Dr. Mazhar Qayyum of very university.
2. It is alleged that after resuming charge as dean Dr. Saqlain Naqvi with his bias and illegal behavior is delaying process of examination of her thesis for last 10 months and because of that she has not been awarded degree of PHD. According to complainant Dr. Saqlain has created such atmosphere that she had to give up degree and had to left the university. He is not only humiliating her by attacking her dignity, but is also creating hurdles in her thesis process. He insulted complainant by using abusive language and behave rudely. It is expressed by opponent Dr. Saqlain that he will teach complainant lesson by making it as difficult as possible to get degree, through his authority and power.
3. According to complainant during her PHD degree she has studied only one course from Dr. Saqlain Naqvi but due to extra ordinary attention given by him to her she was uneasy. However ignoring attitude of opponent she kept her focus on studies. Opponent used to take unnecessary interest in her research work though neither he was part of her supervisory committee nor from her field of research, therefore his interest was irrelevant, baseless and unwelcome.
4. It is stated that whenever he go to report Dr. Farhana her research supervisor, she direct her to meet and discuss her work with Dr. Saqlain. Whenever she went to office of opponent she felt discomfort as he deliberately made her to sit late till everyone is left.

5. Finally complainant completed her research. It is stated that international publication which she has produced during research became another ground of conflict between her and opponent. Dr. Saqlain. In an email to Dr. Farhana he had shown his displeasure for not including his name as author in that research paper. From that day onward Dr. Saqlain indirectly through Dr. Farhana and directly through his own action is creating hurdles and has a cause of harassment to her in most insulting and humiliating way so that either complainant should quit PHD or do as he pleases. As soon complainant thesis reached to last stage of sending it for foreign review, opponent made false allegation of having forged signature of Dr. Azra Khanum which in fact were not her signatures, but a note of "on leave" written by Chairman department of Zoology the opponent no. 2 in place of Dr. Azra Khanam's signature. Without making inquiry from complainant adverse note was put by Director QEC Dr. Riaz Ahmad which was endorsed by opponent No. 1. As this all happened because of misunderstanding, therefore complainant was advice to explain her position before Director QEC Dr. Riaz Ahmad, but in a meeting with him Dr. Riaz Ahmad used abusive language and raised question on her integrity. In that scenario complainant visited Vice Chancellor, he heard her sympathetically and directed concerned officer to change supervisor as whole problem was because of absence of supervisor. Such instructions were also communicated to Chairman opponent No. 2, but on her visit to the university after week she found that file is still lying in Dr. Saqlain's office. Dr. Saqlain deliberately delayed her thesis for four months pretending that he tried to analyze the matter. All time whenever complainant tried to inquire about her thesis opponent insult her and used abusive language. Staff of Vice Chancellor and Chairman are witness of it. In spite of calling of meeting of members of her supervisory committee by Chairman opponent No. 2 which was scheduled on 07-10-2016 opponent No. 1 deliberately with ill intention moved email to all concerned about cancellation of meeting. Language used in that email is enough to

disclose opponent no. 1's intention. Another application moved by her for change of her supervisor moved on 08-09-2016 is still lying in opponent No. 1's office. He is not forwarding same just to delay complainant's degree. Opponent No. 1 is defaming her in university through false stories about her unethical conduct because of that complainant is in a lot of psychological pressure. Her juniors had done their degree and left university, but complainant is still facing these tortures. It is alleged that because of position of opponent No. 1 no one is in position to stop him from this harassment act towards complainant, hence this complaint for seeking justice.

6. Opponent Dr. Saqlain Naqvi in his defense has denied that he ever called complainant or tried to contact her at any time during her stay in university. It is correct that complainant had taken course from him which was compulsory for PHD students of faculty of sciences, but he never graded her as extra ordinary student. Complainant is student of department of Zoology, therefore she should consult her department instead of coming to his office. During her stay for 9 months at Charles Sturt University Australia as visiting scientists complainant had dispute with her supervisor and because of that supervisor resigned from her service. During that period opponent No. 1 was never consulted. After joining university in January, 2016 complainant through an email requested confidential meeting with him. If she was afraid of any undue attention of him to her then why did she request confidential meeting with such person. Opponent is a supervisor of 62 research students of PHD, M.Phil and Msc degrees and most of them are female students, but they had never any such complaint. Opponent had a tall claim of his moral standard which according to him complainant has tried to smash in the last year of his career. Vice Chancellor had never given him any verbal instruction to change complainant's supervisor. Issuance of notification single handedly as stated in Para-7 of complaint is baseless. It was issued with approval of competent authority. Two copies of complainant's thesis

were forwarded to Director advance studies on same day when they were received. It is denied that opponent No. 1 retained them for many days just to harass complainant. Due to lack of approval of one member of supervisory committee previous process has become null and void so certainly "ab initio" processing of thesis was required. Chairman works under opponent No. 1 administrative control, therefore he cannot call any meeting at his own with prior consultation of opponent No. 1 and that is why opponent No. 1 refused to attend meeting and later on explain situation to all concerned as good gesture. After completion of thesis supervisory committee has no role except towards any change suggested in contents of this thesis. Therefore meeting called unnecessary was cancelled. Opponent No. 1 did not agree with change of supervisor due to lack of sufficient ground, without which that change would be illegal / unethical.

7. Opponent No. 1 has informed his view about change of supervisor to Chairman opponent No. 2. Complainant was advised through Chairman to send email to her supervisor followed by two reminders at one week intervals. In case no response is received from supervisor. Opponent No. 1 will go ahead with change of supervisory committee of complainant. As on every contact of complainant to her supervisor she responded, therefore there was no question of change of supervisor of complainant. Opponent No. 1 is disposing of his duties according to rules and regulations. Complaint be dismissed as it has baseless allegation against respectable university offices.
8. Opponent No. 2 has stated that in July, 2011 complainant started her research work and completed same in January, 2014 followed by PHD thesis. First copy of her thesis submitted on 15-06-2015 was sent through different offices for routine processing. As complainant's supervisor had resigned from her office, complainant requested him to process her thesis for foreign evaluation which was done by opponent no. 2.

9. It is stated by opponent No. 2 that he extended his full support to facilitate smooth processing of complainant's thesis. On 11-01-2016 Director Advance studies told to submit three copies of thesis, while submitting these three copies on 18-01-2016 on information provided by complainant / student that Dr. Azra Khanam is "on leave", he wrote word "on leave" on thesis submission certificate in place of Dr. Azra Khanam's signature. Director of QEC misunderstood word "on leave" and had taken it as forged signatures of Dr. Azra Khanam. This state of facts was also confirmed by opponent No. 2 on 09-11-2016 before controller of examination that there is no forgery of signature.
10. During process complainant informed him that one copy of her thesis is missing to which opponent no. 2 informed her that he is unaware of whereabouts of that copy. As complainant was upset about missing of her thesis copy, therefore to resolve issue opponent No. 2 called a meeting of supervisory committee and Dean Sciences, but the same was cancelled on advice of Dean Sciences as he expressed to resolve issue himself. As opponent No. 2 tried to get thesis processed at early date, therefore he had exchanged several emails in between him and supervisor of student Dr. Farhana Riaz. However from email of Dr. Farhana Riaz he opined that she had some reservations about student i.e. complainant. It is prayed by opponent No. 2 that complaint be dismissed up to extent of him as being Chairman of department he played his role and no shortcoming or genuine grievance has been pointed out by complainant against him.
11. Both parties do not want to make statement on oath and had relied on documents produced by them on record. Arguments heard.
12. After going through file it is found that misunderstanding stood in between complainant and opponent no. 1 particularly when on documents of certification produced by complainant on 17-08-2015 a note of "on leave" written in place of signature of Dr. Azra Khanam was taken as signatures of Dr. Azra Khanam. Clarification was sought from opponent No. 1 about

signature of Dr. Azra Khanam, with a note "could you please verify these signatures". In response of that opponent no. 1 has stated "certainly not of Dr. Azra Khanam. Another document placed at Page-25 Annexure-4 by opponent no. 1 further show that on submission of thesis of complainant for foreign examination when document was forwarded by Controller of examination Arid agriculture university on 09-11-2015. Again a note was put by Director Quality Advance cell on 03-02-2016 that because of fake signature of Dr. Azra Khanam matter needs investigation and if found so a strict disciplinary action should be taken. Matter was investigated. During investigation a note at Page-28 of file is material, wherein on request of COE Chairman Zoology department Professor Dr. Mazhar Qayum, opponent No. 2 visited his office and explain matter that as Dr. Azra Khanam was on leave so he wrote word (on leave) on certification Page-2 of thesis. With this clarification of opponent No. 2 on 09-02-2016 matter should have been resolved, but it appears that opponent No. 1 Professor Dr. S.M Saqlain Naqvi kept it alive by letter dated 31-05-2016 stating that complainant had misinformed her chairperson that Dr. Azra Khanam is on leave and avoided presentation of thesis to her. According to complainant that word used by opponent No. 1 towards her as "despite an unethical concern the competent authority looking into it a long hard work put in by students..... taking lenient view she is allow to submit her thesis ab-initio". Same term of unethical ditch has again been used by opponent no. 1 towards complainant in his email of 07-10-2016 sent to Dr. Mazhar Qayyum opponent No. 2. It is argues by complainant that as she during her studies in research work of PHD had not compromised with opponent No. 1 as he desired, therefore outcome of that non compliance is coming up in this thesis process with indecent word of unethical ditch by opponent towards her which is an act of harassment.

13. Professor Azra Khanam was also called to verify note and she has stated that thesis does not bear her signature as it was never presented to her. After all this clarification opponent no. 1 kept pending thesis paper of

complainant for a long with him for no reasonable cause till 25-05-2016 when Vice Chancellor intervene in matter on request of complainant. It is thereafter it has been reported by opponent no. 1 that he had compared writing as "on leave" in place of signature of Dr. Azra Khanam on complainant's paper with an another student's paper at Annexure-2 and found that said writing tele with word written as "on leave" in place of Dr. Azra Khanam's signature. Hence it become clear that it is not case of false signatures. In spite of his own observation that no forgery has been committed by complainant note of opponent no. 1 with reference to alleged differences in between complainant and her supervisor that "despite sub-standard behavior of student it would be hard to establish verbal statements uttered long ago, are nothing, but an anger of opponent no. 1 towards complainant. Why so, the same either be because of allegation alleged by complainant in Para-4 of her main complaint or otherwise is not clear, but attitude adopted by him towards complainant and aggression shown is not expected from teacher towards his student.

14. I do not want to comment any further on opponent No. 1 who belong to a noble profession of teachers but he is the main person behind all this difficult situation, therefore I am forced to say that in future opponent no. 1 Dr. S.M Saqlain Naqvi should avoid such attitude and forming an opinion without investigation against a person who is under his direct subordination or supervision.
15. In view of above, all indecent words such as unethical ditch or substandard behavior used against complainant would be considered, to have been deleted from record. Because these words no doubt are cause of harassment to person who is doing hard work on her research paper which has been appreciated by Professor Dr. Azra Khanam in her email dated 27-04-2016 at Page-29 of file.



16. Neither complainant has specifically alleged any allegation against opponent No. 2 nor it is appearing from record that he ever was cause of hurdles or harassment towards complainant.
17. Upshot of above discussion is that complaint is hereby disposed of with direction to opponent no. 1 to be careful in future. He is imposed with a minor penalty of censure under section-4 of sub section 4-1(a) of Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010.
18. Letter be issued to concerned university for implementation of this order within 15 days on receipt of this judgment and informed to this office of FOS.
19. Announced in open court.

**JUSTICE (R) YASMIN ABBASEY**  
**Federal Ombudsman**