STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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Wondering how this world will be if men just suddenly stopped objectifying women? Where harassment and violence against women and children ceased to exist—what a wonderful world it could probably be.

The Philippine Law and Constitution protects each of her citizens but the case on point in this writing will be Republic Act 7877 Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995.

In Layman’s term this law protects everyone under its jurisdiction as stated earlier, be it in the workplace, school, training environment or anywhere wherein sexual harassment occurred. A great law, indeed—only if misogyny is not normalized in our culture. As it already took effect 24 years ago, it’s not highly observable due to the massive cases of sexual harassment for the past years in this country. Yes, sexual harassment is wrong. Actually, everyone knows that but apparently, people do not seem to know that sexual harassment is sometimes invisible—that we assume that is fine without possibly knowing the effects of this to the victims.

With RA 7877 not being able to utilize its full control to the people who still commit the same mistakes over and over again, these people just progress their crimes into something more inexcusable. Sexual harassment is normalized and the victims just tend to blame themselves or just look at the “brighter side”. Even denying the fact that they got sexually harassed and assaulted. Isn’t that messed up? Relevant to the aforementioned is toxic masculinity or machismo. So how is this problematic and relevant to sexual harassment and assault cases?
According to Dr. Isabel Molina-Guzmán, associate professor of Latina/Latino studies and associate dean of the Graduate College, U of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, “Toxic masculinity is the culture. It’s the way we (men and women) raise little boys to think of themselves as emotionally and physically tough, as inherently different from little girls, as powerful and strong.” She also added that, “These gender and sexual norms are reinforced through the media, which is predominately produced by white, straight, men. It’s reinforced in our film, tv, video games, political, and religious culture.”

With that being said, it’s widely observed that men are not supposed to show seemingly weak emotions like being sad or even cry and that it’s gay to dodge by which is being amplified by varied media like computer games, movies and TV series.

By which, it’s highly alarming that there are professional teachers who still knowingly harassed, assaulted and raped their own students. Putting themselves in upper hand because they are these students’ teachers and they should be obeyed or even more vile, forcing the student against her will by threatening her with low marks or a failing grade.

As several cases of teachers harassing or assaulting their students headlined, it tarnished the credibility and dignity of a teacher. It’s painful to read comments and opinions from different netizens regarding these cases—saying hurtful words and condemning teachers. What’s even more painful is when teachers are being generalized with the immoral act of some.

Sexual harassment does not only occur in school—it happens anytime and anywhere. Women and children live in constant fear of being harassed, assaulted and the worst, being found dead by their loved ones. Women and children shouldn’t live in a country like this. They do not have to be scared walking alone in that dark alley, they do not have to change their clothing because they’re afraid that they could be raped, they do not have to keep that stern face just to intimidate men on the streets, they do not have to
just get over it when they felt violated by their boss who touched them without consent, they do not have to endure those malicious photos being sent to them because they’re afraid that their teacher might fail them in our subject and lastly, they do not have to keep on blaming ourselves that it’s their fault why they got harassed. Let’s draw that line.

We should put an end to normalizing this toxic masculinity and quit victim blaming. Rape exists because of rapists. We are not animals who have this constant crave for flesh and of all, we are given the ability to think. It’s just a shame if your moral compass needs an overhaul calibration.

References:

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