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Adikaram, A. S. & Kailasapathy, P. (2022). What not to do: (In) justice enactment in handling sexual harassment complaints. *University of Colombo Review*, 3(1), 100-118

### Abstract

This article aims to explore and identify how Human Resource Professionals (HRPs) act unfairly/unjustly in handling complaints of sexual harassment by applying the principles of organizational justice theory. Following qualitative research methodology, 35 HRPs from 30 companies in Sri Lanka were interviewed. The findings indicated the numerous ways that procedural, distributive, and interactional injustices take place in handling complaints of sexual harassment. Under procedural injustice, it was found that HRPs sometimes took judgmental and biased actions and decisions, dismissed complaints due to lack of evidence, over relied on evidence, gave the responsibility of finding evidence to the complainant, and mandated an initial written complaint to proceed with the handling of the complaint. Under distributive injustice, the HRPs sometimes have not taken any action against the perpetrators, taken unfair, unethical, and biased actions that were not consistent with the severity of the sexually harassing behavior, had asked the perpetrators to resign rather than terminate their services and taken action against the complainant in the pretext of protecting them or resolving the situation. Breaching the interactional justice, HRPs, at times, appear to have not treated employees with respect and care and had not provided sufficient information to the parties of the complaints. These unfair/unjust practices point towards the pitfalls that HRPs knowingly or unknowingly encounter, which will help HRPs to avoid them and thereby handle sexual harassment complaints fairly.