39 lecturers indicted for sexual harassment in five years – Report

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No fewer than 39 lecturers in the nation’s tertiary institutions have been indicted and dismissed over sexual misconduct in the past five years, analysis of media reports by The PUNCH has revealed.  
  
Sexual harassment has been recurring in Nigerian higher educational institutions with a survey conducted in 2018 by the World Bank Group’s Women revealing that 70 per cent of female graduates from tertiary institutions in the country were sexually harassed in school, with the main perpetrators being classmates and lecturers.  
  
Although the Senate had in 2021 passed a bill stipulating 21 years imprisonment for randy lecturers, The PUNCH reports that most of the lecturers indicted and found guilty after the bill was passed were simply sacked.  
  
In April 2018, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, announced the indefinite suspension of a professor of Accounting, Richard Oladele, over sexual harassment.  
  
In 2021, the university also dismissed three lecturers from the Departments of English Language, International Relations and Accounting over sexual harassment.  
  
In February 2020, the institution also announced the suspension of a lecturer at the Centre for Distance Learning, Monday Omo-Etan, for sexually molesting a 19-year-old female student.  
  
In 2019, Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, announced the suspension of an associate professor, Monday Igbafen, over allegations bordering on sexual harassment of female students.  
  
Igbafen, who was the chairman of the AAU branch of the Academic Staff Union of Universities at the time, had accused the vice-chancellor of the institution of trying to frame him.  
  
The senior lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at the university, in a letter written to the school by his lawyers, Osahon Irebhude & Co, demanded a written apology from the school.  
  
In September 2020, the management of the Imo State University announced the suspension of two lecturers, who were alleged to have been involved in sexual misconduct with female students.  
  
In February 2021, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, announced the suspension of a lecturer in the Department of Archaeology and Tourism, Dr Chigozie Odum, over allegations bordering on sexual misconduct.  
  
The Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, similarly suspended a lecturer in the Department of Media and Theatre Arts in June 2021 for sexual misconduct.  
  
In the same month, the management of the University of Lagos announced the dismissal of two lecturers over similar offences.  
  
In August of that year, the University of Port Harcourt announced the dismissal of a lecturer in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature for sexual misconduct.  
  
In October 2021, the Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi, also announced the dismissal of two lecturers from the departments of Nutrition/Dietetics and General Studies over sexual misconduct.  
  
A lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education was dismissed for impregnating a female student.  
  
In December 2021, the Kwara State University, Malete, announced the dismissal of a lecturer for harassing a student in the Department of Pure and Applied Sciences.  
  
In January 2022, the Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rivers State, announced the dismissal of a lecturer for harassing a female student.  
  
In April 2022, OAU again launched a probe into allegations of sexual harassment against a professor in the Department of Linguistics and African Studies. So far, two professors have been affected in the institution.  
  
In June 2022, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Abuja, Prof Abdul-Raheed Na’allah, announced the dismissal of two lecturers for sexual misconduct. Both of them are professors.  
  
Earlier in 2023, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission arraigned Dr. Balogun Olaniran of the Tai Solarin University of Education, who was said to have allegedly demanded sexual gratification from a female student to alter her results in 2021.  
  
In March 2023, a lecturer at the Kogi State Polytechnic, Abutu Thompson, was dismissed on account of sexual harassment and victimisation of a female student in the Department of Computer Science.  
  
In May, the management of the Ambrose Alli University in Edo State reportedly dismissed an unnamed lecturer over allegations bordering sexual harassment.  
  
Reports noted that the lecturer was dismissed on the recommendations of the institution’s Staff Disciplinary Committee, which found him guilty of the offence.  
  
According to AAU’s Vice Chancellor, Prof. Asomwan Adagbonyin, the dismissed lecturer had claimed to only make advances, yet he went to the girl’s church to plead for forgiveness.  
  
In July 2023, the VC of UNIABUJA, Na’allah, said two lecturers were dismissed following allegations of sexual harassment.  
  
In August, the management of the University of Calabar suspended the embattled Dean, Faculty of Law, Prof. Cyril Ndifon, over allegations of sexual harassment. Ndifon is currently being held by security operatives.  
  
On September 7, 2023, the University of Lagos suspended a lecturer, Kadri Babalola, who was accused of raping a 21-year-old student.  
  
Similarly, in October 2023, the Federal College of Forestry, Plateau state announced the suspension of four lecturers over allegations bordering sexual harassment of female students.  
  
Speaking with our correspondents on the matter, the Director of Programmes, Reform Education Nigeria, Ayodamola Oluwatoyin, urged President Bola Tinubu to sign the sexual harassment bill into law.  
  
Oluwatoyin said, “The President signing the bill will be a game-changer. We need to make schools safe for our students. The most unfortunate part of the issue is that some of these students even when harassed are scared to come out in the open for fear of victimisation and other issues.”  
  
Former Programme Manager, Gender Justice at the Shehu Musa Yar’Adua Foundation, Nafisa Atiku-Adejuwon, urged institutions to prevent survivors from being further victimised into silence and provide safe anonymous pathways for them to report such incidents.  
  
Atiku-Adejuwon also called for the building of a system of trust between university management and the student population.  
  
“The response system has to be survivour-centred and holistic; mental and physical health concerns must be taken seriously. The response system shouldn’t be created to make the university look good; it should be to take care of the survivors,” she added.