

Dated: July 24, 2023

To
The Vice Chancellor,
University of Okara.

Subject: Request for an Investigation and prompt Action against Dr. Khalid Saleem due to his Unethical, Non-professional, and Harassing Attitude and against Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi for Instigating and Supporting Dr. Khalid Saleem

Dear Sir,

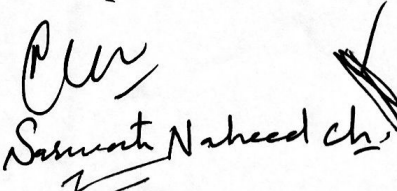
I, Ms. Sarwat Naheed Chaudhary have been serving as a Lecturer in Education for the last 17 years at the University of Okara (Since it was a campus of UE). I am also a Ph.D. Scholar (Session: 2019-2023) in the Department of Educational Research and Assessment chaired by Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi. My thesis is supervised by Dr. Nadia Gilani, Assistant Professor of Education and co-supervised by Dr. Syed Abdul Waheed, Assistant Professor of Education. In this connection, a meeting of the Ph.D. Committee was held on July 13, 2023. Since the Ph.D. Committee solely consists of Ph.D. Faculty of Education Discipline from the University of Okara, three academicians from other universities were also invited to attend this meeting.

In the above-mentioned Ph.D. Committee meeting, I was called along with other Ph.D. students for the "Pre-defense" of the Ph.D. thesis before its formal submission for evaluation. During this "Pre-defense" (which is not mentioned in the Ph.D. Rules and Regulations of the University and just aims to target specific co-workers and students), the presentations of Ph.D. theses and Research Proposals by all the students went well without insulting or humiliating anyone. They were encouraged by Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi, Dr. Khalid Saleem supported by their friends and colleagues Dr. Shehzad Ahmad, Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Arshad and three external non-members of the Ph.D. Committee.

Nevertheless, during my presentation, Dr. Khalid Saleem, Associate Professor of Education, showed a highly prejudiced and biased attitude full of anger, and lunacy. Whenever I (Ms. Sarwat Naheed Chaudhary) tried to clarify my point of view, he not only shouted/raised his voice in a manner to scare and threaten me but also passed teasing remarks like *dekho g ay faculty member ay*. He was not behaving like a teacher or colleague to me, rather he showed immense hostility and aggression. He was not ready to listen to me at any cost and continuously yelled at me in a taunting way. He was like hitting my head with a hammer all the time by bullying me and my supervisor (Dr. Nadia Gilani). He treated a Ph.D. student in an inhumane manner, which broke me emotionally, mentally, and physically, due to which my family is also in severe tension and pain since that day.

I, along with my supervisor Dr. Nadia Gilani, was personally targeted and **publicly humiliated and harassed** by Dr. Khalid Saleem who used **abusive language** and derogatory gestures during my thesis presentation. During the whole presentation, Dr. Khalid Saleem kept taunting, teasing us, and passing unethical remarks like *Teri tay research ee fraud ay*. He addressed us with the words like *Tu Tu, Tera, Aainy ki keeta ay* (Punjabi). He raised his fingers at my qualification (MA English) and remarked *Ye apnay apko MA English kehti hay*. **He harshly reacted with physical gestures and body language while jumping up from his chair** and when we both tried to politely respond to

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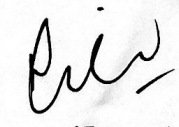

his illogical arguments, he showed a ruthless attitude and shouted many times with bad comments despite being his colleague for the last 17 years or so (It is pertinent to mention here that I am seriously suggesting your good self to Dr. Khalid Saleem's mental health examined as it is not about me only but also the future of the faculty, staff members and thousands of students who will be at stake). Eventually, I started weeping and crying in front of all participants and it was so embarrassing and immense psychological torture for me. It is to state here that I am a patient of Hypothyroidism so, a stressful and emotionally harassing environment was very detrimental to my health which may result in serious health issues. Due to this, at that moment, I was about to faint at the end of this hostile and torturing unlawful "pre-defense" of the thesis as per the rules and regulations of the university.

The Convener of the Meeting/Chairperson of DERA, Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi continuously gazed at us with anger and anguish, gave *inappropriate gestures*, and did not stop/intervene during this harassing attitude by Dr. Khalid Saleem. Instead, Dr. M. Tahir Farooqi kept observing, supporting, and enjoying the situation initiated by Dr. Khalid Saleem throughout the presentation. I (Ms. Sarwat Naheed Chaudhary) cried and wept bitterly while trying to explain the irrational and unscientific questions in a begging way but Dr. Khalid Saleem continuously blamed and abused me in front of Ph.D. Committee, three external non-members and more than 20 Ph.D. Scholars most of whom have been our students. Also, the other two members of the Ph.D. Committee i.e., Dr. Shehzad Ahmad and Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Arshad supported the embarrassing attitude of Dr. Tahir Farooqi and Dr. Khalid Saleem and did not intervene. Nevertheless, the three external non-member academicians tried to stop Dr. Khalid Saleem, but he did not listen to them. The purpose was also to embarrass and harass the student audience so that future M.Phil. & Ph.D. students could not choose Dr. Nadai Gilani and Dr. Syed Abdul Waheed as their supervisors and/or co-supervisors.

All these facts suggest that Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi and Dr. Khalid Saleem pre-planned to humiliate me and my supervisor in a formal setting, as the latter did not step in to stop the former. Most crucially, Dr. Khalid Saleem was not interrupted by the other two male members and their friends Dr. Shehzad Ahmad and Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Arshad.

Please note that before this presentation, I (Ms. Sarwat Naheed Chaudhary) expressed my concern to Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi, the chairperson of DERA, that Dr. Khalid Saleem might humiliate and discredit me and my supervisor at the time of my presentation because I was receiving such gestures from the Department (DERA). Although I spoke, the chairperson did not bother to consider my apprehension. I came to know afterward that Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi had threatened to watch *how Ms. Sarwat will complete and pass her thesis because being the Chairperson, I am the authority, and I will see who will save her.*

It is also mentioned here, that about two years ago, I (Ms. Sarwat Naheed Chaudhary) was not allowed to speak during the thirty-minute presentation of my Ph.D. proposal except to announce the title of the research proposal, but I tolerated it. At that time Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi invited an external non-member academician to insult us both. That was also a pre-plan of Dr. Tahir Khan Farooqi supported by Dr. Khalid Saleem and their friends, and it was a heinous mistake on my part that I did not raise my voice at that time against them. I should have raised my voice earlier to avoid such humiliation in the future.


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It is the habit of Dr. Khalid Saleem that he interrupted almost every previous Ph.D. Committee proceedings and the Chairperson of DERA was asked to take action every time but he himself had been involved.

Moreover, it is to bring to your kind notice that Dr. Nasrin Akhter (A senior Associate Professor of Education and witness of this event) has also been harassed many times by Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi and Dr. Khalid Saleem on several platforms in the last four years and for this reason, an inquiry was held against them (vide letter No. UO/ADDL-REG/2020/2126, dated: June 20, 2020). As a result of that inquiry, they were "put under observation for a period of one year ... with the approval of the competent authority" (letter No. UO/DRA/2020/01, Dated: July 09, 2020).

Dear Sir,

We have an honorable place among our students and faculty which is irreparably damaged due to the egoistic attitude of the said persons towards us. We, the applicants, are intensely depressed, have lost our prestige and confidence as professionals, and are passing through tough times from the day this incident happened, and it is haunting us every day. We are spending sleepless nights despite taking medication and not being able to recover from the mental torture caused by Dr. Farooqi and Dr. Khalid. **We believe that this event was planned to defame us, damage our professional reputation and honor, and stop us from academic, professional and career progression in the future. The workplace does not seem to be a safe place anymore, particularly for the female community of UO which seems a violation of the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010.**

It may please be noted that as co-workers, we, Ms. Sarwat Naheed and Dr. Nadia Gilani along with our colleague Dr. Syed Abdul Waheed who is my co-supervisor and Head of the Department of Educational Studie where I (Ms. Sarwat Naheed Chaudhry) am working, are seriously being threatened by Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi, Dr. Kahlid Saleem, and his female Office Assistant at public forums. Therefore, we, the following four females (undersigned) and our colleague Dr. Syed Abdul Waheed, may please be assured that the accused will not harm us personally, physically, psychologically, socially, professionally, or in any other way during the investigation and after the decision. Most importantly, Dr. Khalid Saleem and Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan and their allies Dr. Shehzad Ahmad and Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Arshad may not be involved in any promotion or selection process of the applicants (Dr. Nadia Gilani & Ms. Sarwat Naheed Chaudhary) and witnesses (Dr. Nasrin Akhter & Ms. Farzana Iftikhar) and our colleague Dr. Syed Abdul Waheed (Co-supervisor of Ms. Sarwat Naheed Chaudhary and her HoD) to safeguard our professional progression in future.

It is requested that our Ph.D. students including Ms. Sarwat Naheed Chaudhary, Ms. Farzana Iftikhar, Mr. Muhammad Asif Saleem, Mr. Rab Nawaz, Mr. Javed Iqbal, Mr. Muhammad Muneeb, Ms. Asia Shaheen, Mr. Fareed-ul-Hasan, Mr. Farooq Ahmad, Mr. Muhammad Ramzan, Mr. Muhammad Saleem, Mr. Ghulam Mustafa Kanwal, Mr. Muhammad Rizwan Saeed may please be assured that they will not be targeted in future using various malpractices intending to fail them in the Defense or during their research journey due to the reason that *we are supervising them and they are our students.* We

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request that both Dr. Tahir Khan Farooqi and Dr. Khalid Saleem should not be engaged in any academic matter of the above-mentioned students to protect their academic career and progression.

It is important to note that all the Ph.D. students including the above-mentioned students who were present during this unpleasant event may be pressurized to give witness against us because they are all under the direct academic control of Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi who is the chairperson of the DERA/Convener of Ph.D. Committee and can influence them or other students negatively. It is, therefore, requested that Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi may please immediately be stopped to work as Chairperson of the Department of Educational Research and Assessment (DERA), as a Convener of the Ph.D. Committee and at any other position at UO to further prevent the faculty members, non-teaching staff and other M.Phil. and Ph.D. students from his *bad intentions and malice*.

Dear sir,

It is requested that the said matter should be investigated, as per the rules and regulations of The Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010 and any other law for the protection of women at the workplace and most importantly until the inquiry in its due process, we demand that both the above mentioned accused persons (Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khan Farooqi and Dr. Khalid Saleem) may be made INEFFICIENT to make this inquiry real and transparent and to set an example under your good and kind regime that there is justice and accountability for the so-called "powerful people" too.

CC for information and necessary action please:

1. Honorable Chairperson, Punjab Higher Education Commission (PHEC), Lahore
2. Syndicate Problem Solving Committee, University of Okara.
3. Honorable Governor of the Punjab, Lahore

Applicants:

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Ms. Sarwat Naheed Chaudhary
Lecturer in Education
University of Okara

Nadia Gilani
Dr. Nadia Gilani
Assistant Professor of Education
University of Okara

Witness:

Nasrin Akhter
Dr. Nasrin Akhter
Associate Professor of Education
University of Okara

Farzana Iftikhar
Ms. Farzana Iftikhar
Lecturer in Education
University of Okara