

Sexual Misconduct Allegations (#MeToo) Movement

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Introduction

The #MeToo movement has raised awareness of the present sexual misconduct in organizations. The campaign highlighted the powerful men accused of sexual harassment, with several victims lodging accusations. Harvey Weinstein was the main target of investigations when over 80 women, including prominent actors, accused him of sexual harassment. Roger Ailes of Fox News was another well-known man with Gretchen Carlson and Megyn Kelly (Mohan, 2019). Les Moonves, the CEO of CBS, also faced sexual harassment allegations. The #MeToo movement has gained momentum and created pressure to prosecute these powerful men who take advantage of people in lower positions. Due to this campaign, society is more aware of the evident sexual misconduct at the workplace. In the prosecution of influential individuals, society has made a statement that change is necessary to tame this misconduct. Organizations are responsible for preventing and stopping sexual harassment at the workplace.

Socially and Ethically Responsible Actions of The Organization

After the rape, sexual assault, and sexual abuse accusations on Harvey Weinstein, the entire country reacted, demanding justice for the victims. Pressure on the organizations affiliated to Weinstein had to act by distancing themselves from the sexual harassment claims. Even after denying the allegations, Weinstein received a dismissal from The Weinstein Company's board (TWC). After this move, the company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2018. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences expelled Weinstein. Other professional associations where Weinstein worked distanced themselves from him, and he had to stay away from public view.

Roger Ailes was the CEO of Fox News and worked for Fox Television Stations and 20th Television at the time of the incident. The organizations forced Ailes to resign from his position.

The only CEO that Fox News has ever had resigned in disgrace amid sexual harassment accusations. The resignation came after more than 20 women accused Ailes of sexual misconduct. The women cited a toxic workplace due to Ailes' behavior. Les Moonves resigned as chairman of CBS after 12 women lodged sexual harassment accusations against him. Unlike fellow TV hosts Matt Lauer and Charlie Rose, Moonves was able to keep his job weeks after the allegations came to light.

The organizations' actions in handling Weinstein's case demonstrated social and ethical responsibility after the incidents of sexual harassment came to light. Also, in forcing Ailes to resign, the organizations acted both socially and ethically. The companies joined the society in protesting against sexual predators in the form of powerful men. These men seem untouchable, and this is why women shy away from making accusations and telling their stories. Over eighty women publicly came out as Weinstein victims, and the organizations had no choice but to join the #MeToo movement. The decision to distance the firms from the bad publicity was also for their excellent. An evil corporate image has a significantly negative impact on business. In protecting the organizations from a bad reputation, expelling Weinstein became necessary.

CBS's actions demonstrated a lack of social and ethical responsibility in handling Les Moonves's misconduct. The network failed to dismiss Moonves even after public reports of his sexual misconduct. Moonves got the opportunity to negotiate his exit package to avoid the consequences of his actions. In this package, the chairman received the opportunity to resign rather than undergo a humiliating exit. The network also agreed on a non-disparagement clause, meaning that Moonves would enjoy protecting his reputation despite the damaging accusations. Agreeing to maintain the confidentiality of the internal investigations further extended protection

to Moonves. These actions only reinforced the victims' claims that the network was working to cover up sexual harassment.

What the Organization Could Have Done Differently

After Les Moonves' allegations came to light, CBS had an opportunity to distance itself from the sexual misconduct accusations. The victims had provided statements indicating the network was in the habit of ignoring sexual harassment reports. Claims of settling with victims to cover up misconduct also surfaced. The network had the opportunity to demonstrate that the accusations were untrue and show its zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment. Instead, the network downplayed the incident and even gave Moonves the chance to save face. These actions demonstrated that CBS did not take the sexual harassment cases seriously, just as the victims have stated. CBS had the responsibility of showing support for the victims by expelling the perpetrator. Harsh measures against Moonves would have indicated this support for victims. The move would have discouraged other employees from sexual misconduct at the workplace. The network would have proved its commitment to providing a safe working environment for its employees.

Even with CBS on the spot for handling the incident lightly, other organizations could have done better. In addition to distancing themselves from the sexual predators, the companies should have given a public statement that denounced the actions. A report would be a demonstration of the organizations' attitudes towards the incidents. Joining the #MeToo movement could have been a demonstration of social responsibility. Helping other victims of sexual harassment get justice was the least that the companies could do to show support.

Who and What Was Responsible for The Incident

The perpetrators were individually responsible for the incidents. Weinstein had raped, sexually assaulted, and sexually abused over 80 women. Ailes had sexually harassed over 20 women while Moonves harassed 12 women. These men had a responsibility to behave responsibly by treating their co-workers with respect. Respecting other people is essential, and it is the duty of every person. When an individual commits a crime, they should take accountability for their actions. There is no excuse for bad behavior, and powerful men who mistreat others should pay for their crimes. These men cannot blame their actions on other people since they acted irresponsibly numerous times. Doing the wrong thing multiple times shows disregard for laws. The three men's arrogance is evident in their repeated offenses since they confidently harassed their colleagues without fear of consequences.

A poor organizational culture was also responsible for the sexual harassment incidents. These three men held senior positions within the organizations, meaning that they had substantial power to do whatever they wanted. Since numerous women lodged sexual harassment claims, it is evident that these incidents were ongoing within the organization. There is also a high chance that the management had information about these occurrences but chose to look the other way. CBS had a toxic working culture that tolerated sexual misconduct. The organizational culture determines the conduct of individuals at all levels within the organization. A poisonous culture encourages lousy behavior since the employees view this conduct as the norm (Keplinger et al., 2019). When everyone engages in a particular behavior, it becomes the norm for everyone to behave in the same way. The human resource department of these organizations failed to cultivate a positive culture that protected the employees. The department also failed in following up on sexual misconduct allegations and punishing the perpetrators. The dysfunctional

organizational culture failed the employees and provided a thriving environment for sexual harassment.

Lack of support from labor unions encouraged sexual harassment to continue in the media industry. The bodies should protect the members and offer legal representation. The accused perpetrators of sexual harassment are prominent men in the industry with substantial influence. This power protected the individuals and intimidated the victims. The organizations may have lacked the ability to act against these individuals, but labor unions could launch investigations. When the organization cannot protect its employees, they can run to labor unions (McLaughlin, Uggen & Blackstone, 2012). Without protection from the unions, the victims cannot speak out, and they continue facing victimization from the perpetrators. In failing to act, the associations created an environment where numerous women have become victims. Giving a voice to the victims is a primary function of the union. In isolation, one victim cannot succeed in making a case against such an influential person. However, collective action can emerge after rallying other victims to make a strong case of sexual harassment. The union should have been the founder of the #MeToo movement to encourage victims to come out and tell their stories. Instead, the victims had to stand up and demand the prosecution of the offenders courageously.

Best Way to Ensure That Such Incidents Do Not Recur

The best way to prevent the recurrence of sexual harassment is to have a zero-tolerance policy of sexual misconduct at the workplace. Changing the organizational culture is vital in preventing sexual misconduct (Buchanan et al., 2014). With such a policy, any wrongdoing triggers serious repercussions. Organizations must stop ignoring sexual harassment claims. Victims must have a voice and the courage to speak up when they feel violated. Ignoring accusations only sends a message that the company tolerates such behavior. In setting an

example, firms should fire employees found guilty of sexual harassment. Eliminating sexual predators at the workplace will ensure that the workplace is safe for work. Encouraging employees to speak up after harassment is essential. However, the firm must offer protection to the victims to avoid intimidation. Safety may be in the form of job security. Employees must have the assurance that they will not lose their jobs after launching claims of harassment. Encouraging victims to report sexual harassment will scare away perpetrators and force responsible behavior on people. Ethical conduct is a necessity rather than a luxury in organizations.

The organizational culture must ensure that organizations observe their social and ethical responsibilities. There is a need to emphasize that a company's success does not solely depend on its financials (Waikar, 2019). A healthy working environment is also an indicator of the firm's performance. Organizations must ensure that the employees feel safe at the workplace. Eliminating sexual harassment has a positive impact on the organization's performance. When employees are comfortable at the workplace, they work efficiently to attain organizational goals. Excessive emphasis on financials has made companies neglect the welfare of the employees. The firms expect employees to work tirelessly for the organization and persevere through the toxicity. Improving the organizational culture will create a positive attitude towards respecting others at the workplace since every individual deserves respect and offers a valuable contribution to the firm's performance. The management has to ensure all workers' respectful treatment, regardless of their position. Taking strict actions against violators will send a stern message that the firm does not tolerate harassment.

The Best Way for Society, And Stakeholders, To Prevent Future Incidents

Cultivating a healthy culture within society is vital in the fight against sexual harassment. The organization is only a reflection of society's toxic culture (Keyton et al., 2018). Shaming of victims is a common practice that stops women from telling their stories. Questioning the victims' dressing or morals has been an approach used to discredit the victims' accounts of harassment. Instead of acknowledging the experiences of the victims, society attacks the victims. An attack on the victims encourages sexual predators to continue with their actions. This toxic culture has moved into organizations where there is the silencing of victims. Victims face threats of losing their jobs, or the management forces employees to take monetary settlements as compensation for bad behavior. This culture must stop for the world to create a safe environment free from sexual harassment. It is time that society begins focusing on the accused persons and demanding that they prove their innocence. Instead of discrediting the victims, it is vital to maintain focus on the accused person's conduct.

Regulations help prevent future incidents. There is a need to focus on implementing laws that protect against sexual misconduct. The rules should protect members of society, but the implementation of these laws remains low. The government is a significant stakeholder that should facilitate the implementation of laws. Influential individuals rarely face prosecution for their crimes since they can manipulate the system. Through their power and influence, these individuals intimidate victims and pay off witnesses to kill the cases against them. Government and non-governmental bodies should pursue claims against these prominent persons to ensure that they pay for their crimes. Offering sufficient legal representation to low-income individuals can encourage them to build a strong case against the accused person. Making a solid case against the individuals will demonstrate that the law can protect the less privileged members of

society. Through this approach, sexual offenders will refrain from the crimes since there are clear consequences for their actions.

Shareholders of companies must demand transparency and accountability from the management. Responsibility must begin from the top of the organization (Hammond & Christensen, 2016). Leaders set an example for the rest of the employees. When leaders misbehave, they put a negative standard on the employees. The shareholders seek to lose from sexual misconduct allegations. Since shareholders are the owners of the company, they incur losses when such incidents become public knowledge. Funds used to pay for internal investigations also come from the shareholders' pockets. Shareholders must start demanding transparency from the management. Shareholders must keep track of internal affairs and ensure the expulsion of leaders associated with sexual misconduct. Protecting the firm's reputation is necessary to maintain a positive corporate image.

Conclusion

Organizations must provide a safe working environment for their employees to ensure productivity and efficiency. It is time for corporations to go beyond the financials and protect the welfare of employees. A healthy workplace is a vital indicator of success for organizations because it leads to efficiency and performance improvement. The relevant organizations were quick to respond to the sexual allegations scandals but had a duty to do better. Instead of a reactive approach to the issues, the organizations could have adopted a proactive approach. Cultivating a healthy organizational culture is essential to ensure that all employees commit to promoting all individuals' respectful treatment. Organizations such as CBS must stop protecting sexual offenders and instead focus on protecting victims. Society at large should also adopt a culture of protecting and supporting victims instead of perpetrators.

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