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Author Note

**Being your best self**

**Introduction**

The issue discussed in the previous submissions is Microsoft’s in-house sexual harassment. Most women at workplace go through a situation where they face harassment over the course of their professional life. Recently, a female employee at Microsoft reported an issue of sexual harassment within the company and a well-known newspaper, the Daily Mail UK published it on April 5, 2019. It raised awareness about the most important issue and talked about it in today’s global business market. Afterwards, a lot of female employees decided to break the silence and started sharing their stories of harassment through emails. The story was covered by one of the leading newspapers in the country and it grew into a huge corporate issue.

**Discussion**

In a recent past, a story was published in Quartz regarding sexual harassment and inappropriate work environment at Microsoft. Individual Employees reported stories of demeaning comments by co-workers, inappropriate wishes (one employee was ordered to sit on another’s lap), and death threats. One of the female ex-employee disclosed that women are frequently called names in the company. Managers mostly overlook such issues due to the lack of evidence. The Head of Microsoft Human resources took these stories very seriously and stated that it’s very hurtful to see women facing such behavior at workplace. She also added that anyone who had been dismissed by the management at the company regarding harassment must report directly to her regarding such cases. (kolakowski, 2019)

Over the past few decades, around 250 harassment and discrimination cases were filed but the company only took the blame for one. These stats represent a highly unprofessional and unfriendly working environment at Microsoft. The recent case about years of inappropriate behavior is a big question mark on company’s vow to do better. Sadly, Microsoft is not the only leading company that faced such allegations by the employees, Google and Uber are also in the list. So far, google has worked in the most efficient and effective way to acknowledge and deal with these issues.

**Corporate Governance and Ethical leadership**

If weevaluate the reasons for the failure of some of the leading global companies we realize that it was due to the total disregards of Ethical leadership. Corporate governance is based on standard principles, guidelines, values and morals within an organization. Norms that the company follows to generate profit define their course of action. Keeping a balance between maintaining an accountability and perusing market opportunities is a big challenge in the business world. Ethical leadership plays a crucial role in maintaining company’s moral standards. However, sometimes their inability to manage risks and to forecast challenges prove disastrous for the organization. (Clarke, 2016)

**Principles of Corporate conduct**

For any organization to run smoothly, it is important to follow some principles of corporate conduct. No one in the organization is above company’s code of ethics, every person must follow the legal regulations. Each member of the company is responsible for the social reputation of the company so their actions should be appropriate as per company’s code of conduct. Microsoft’s reputation suffered a great set back due to unethical behavior or some employees and their lack of action against such behavior made the situation worse.

**Self-serving Bias**

Employees have a tendency to make decisions based on their thoughts and opinions rather than evidence. Self-serving biases can affect a person’s ability to evaluate problems and deal with them which leading to an unhealthy workplace. In the case of Microsoft, the company had been trying to dodge any harassment claims rather than acknowledging and dealing with them. It showed their bias towards their reputation and standing in the market. (Brenner, 2018)

**Incentive Gaming**

Human beings are opportunist by nature and companies exploit it by using the incentive gaming techniques to keep their employees motivated. They use commissions, extra allowances and bonuses in order to make sure that employees put an extra effort to reach their targets. The negative side of using these techniques is that employees start to focus their efforts on sabotaging their coworker rather than improving their own performance.

**Ethics Unwrapped**

There are 4 ways to act morally i.e. moral awareness, moral decision making, moral intent and moral action.

Ethics unwrapped helps understand the moral and ethical actions to be taken in a situation of crisis. How an effective leadership can prevent the situation from getting worse.

Implicit bias makes people treat others in a particular way which is a very harmful culture in a workplace. It affects their decision making and judgement of the situation. Dealing with a crisis heads on requires an ability to look at things with an unbiased view point.

**Proper Moral action to be taken in this case**

Dealing with harassment allegations strategically can reduce the risk of such incidents in future and also improve the work place environment. The proper moral action in this case would have been the HR dealing with complains as soon as they heard about them. They delay in action against employees made the victims feel unsafe. Instead of trying to neutralize the situation the company should have taken quick and strong action, so that female employees felt comfortable in reporting such incidents in future. The HR initially discarded the allegations with statements like “It’s just a harmless flirting”. It is about time that employers build strategies and implement mechanisms that address sexual harassment cases at workplace. They should make sure that workplace is free from any kind of toxicity, including sexual harassment.

# References

Brenner, R. (2018). Self Serving Bias in organizations. *Chaco Canyon*, 187-198.

Clarke, T. (2016). Ethics, Values and corporate governance. . *Open Mind*, 311-320.

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