

## **The Impact of the #MeToo Movement on Sexual Harassment Law and Policy: An Analytical Study**

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### **Abstract**

The #MeToo movement has created a significant impact on the way sexual harassment (SH) is perceived and addressed in society. This analytical study aims to investigate the influence of the movement on SH law and policy. The study will analyse the changes in legal and policy frameworks in response to the movement and assess their effectiveness in preventing and addressing SH. Through a comprehensive review of literature and case studies, the study will explore the extent to which the #MeToo movement has contributed to the evolution of SH law and policy. The study findings are expected to provide insights into the strengths and limitations of the current legal and policy frameworks and suggest areas for further improvement to address the issue of SH more effectively.

**Keywords** - #Metoo Movement, Sexual Harassment (SH), Law, Policy, Analytical Study, Legal Framework, Policy Framework.

### **Introduction**

Sexual harassment (SH) is a widespread issue that affects people in a variety of businesses and areas. The #MeToo movement has created a significant blow on the way SH is perceived and addressed in society. The movement began as a social media hashtag in 2017, where individuals shared their experiences of SH and assault. The hashtag quickly went viral, and the movement gained momentum, resulting in widespread public discourse and increased awareness of the issue. The #MeToo movement has created a seismic shift in the way SH is viewed, with more people now recognizing the severity and ubiquity of the issue. The movement has brought about a sense of empowerment among survivors of SH and assault, providing a platform for their voices to be heard. The increased visibility of the issue has led to greater awareness and understanding of SH's devastating blow on individuals and the wider society.

However, the movement has also raised questions about the adequacy of current legal and policy frameworks in preventing and addressing SH. The movement has highlighted the failures of existing structures to adequately protect individuals from harassment and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. As such, the movement has spurred significant changes in SH law and policy, with governments, organizations, and institutions responding to the call for action. The movement has brought to light the pervasiveness of SH and the need for action to prevent and address it. As a result, SH law and policy have undergone significant changes, aimed at providing

better protection to individuals from SH. This analytical study aims to investigate the blow of the #MeToo movement on SH law and policy.

The study aims to provide a critical assessment of these changes, examining the extent to which they have addressed the issues highlighted by the #MeToo movement. By analysing the evolution of SH law and policy, the study will provide a comprehensive understanding of the changes that have been made and their effectiveness in addressing the problem. Through a review of case studies and literature, the study will provide insights into the strengths and limitations of current legal and policy frameworks, identifying areas for improvement and future research. The study is essential, given the significant blow that the #MeToo movement has had on society. While the movement has resulted in a shift in public opinion towards SH, there is a need to understand the extent to which this shift has translated into action through changes in law and policy. The study findings will provide insights into the effectiveness of current legal and policy frameworks in addressing SH and suggest areas for further improvement.

In conclusion, the #MeToo movement has created a significant blow on society's perception and response to SH. The study aims to analyse the blow of the movement on SH law and policy and provide insights into the effectiveness of current frameworks. The study's findings are expected to contribute to the ongoing discourse on SH and guide the development of more effective strategies to prevent and address it.

## **Literature Review**

The #MeToo movement has generated 4.5 million postings and 1.7 million tweets on the subject, and it has revolutionised women's rights advocacy. Due to its reliance on non-physical behaviours that might be challenging to interpret, SH is a complex phenomenon that is difficult to describe and study. Since the age of 15, one in three women worldwide have reportedly experienced physical or sexual abuse. Outside of the workplace or school, it is more challenging to gather information on harassment because it is harder to prosecute and typically under observation there (Radai, 2017).

To assess trends in searches for SH and assault, reporting, and training following the #MeToo movement, a study of US internet search statistics was done. According to the survey, once the #MeToo movement started, internet searches for SH and assault rose by 220% and 265%, respectively. The survey also discovered that after the #MeToo movement started, internet searches for reporting SH and assault rose by 370%. Finally, the study discovered that after the #MeToo movement started, internet searches for training on SH and assault rose by 90% (Caputi, 2018). An article examines the expanding sociological and interdisciplinary literature on sexual violence, including its blow on social movement activism, legal developments, and policy outcomes. Sociologists who focus on gender, law, and culture are in a unique position to further the understanding of sexual assault on college campuses. Additional information about #MeToo and campus sexual assault is also provided in the article (Gronert, 2019).

According to a poll, 53% of Indian working women have experienced SH. The number of SH complaints reported rose by 54% between 2014 and 2017 according to reports (Sarkar, 2019). But even before India gained its independence, there were several feminist and women's rights groups in the country. Earlier, these were a component of anticolonial battles and provided women with education, political engagement, and "modernization". The Indian women's movement, which

The Impact of the #MeToo Movement on Sexual Harassment Law and Policy: An Analytical Study encompassed several activities from the 1970s through the 1990s, had an blow on legislative developments such as reservations in locally elected authorities and the establishment of the National Women's Commission in 1990 (Roy, 2015).

According to research, putting into practise 11 changes created to assure the #MeToo movement's push for justice is the greatest approach to defend and maintain its growth. These reforms can be divided into three categories: procedural reforms to safeguard all parties involved in SH investigations, eliminate disparate treatment of those found guilty, and ensure punishments are appropriate to the crime; structural reforms to address the power imbalances that support SH; and cultural reforms to alter cultural perceptions of SH and gender relations (Monroe, 2019). The #MeToo campaign can sustain information seeking on Google inquiries into sexual violence. The #MeToo campaign was associated with an increase in Google searches for sexual violence-related terms and that this increase persisted over time (Kaufman et. al., 2019). In comparison to decades of legislation and organisational rules, the #MeToo campaign has been more successful in altering social norms and raising awareness about the prevalence and destructiveness of SH. In comparison to decades of legislation and organisational rules, the #MeToo social movement has been more successful in altering cultural norms and raising awareness of the frequency and devastation of SH (Leopold et al., 2019).

According to a survey, since the #MeToo movement went viral in October 2017, HR professionals and the federal government have seen an increase in SH allegations. According to HR professionals that participated in a 2018 SHRM study, more SH claims were made against them in 2018 compared to 2017. Additionally, the report showed that the #MeToo movement had an blow on corporate culture because businesses noticed clear differences. The most often mentioned aspects of this improvement were improved communication, awareness, and procedural review (Boyle & Cucchiara, 2018). The #MeToo movement and the rising volume of information regarding women's experiences with it in the Indian news broadcast media have spurred a public conversation about SH and a larger rape culture (Mendes & Ringrose, 2019).

Although print media's coverage of the #MeToo movement in the UK was generally favourable (De Benedictis, Orgad, and Rottenberg, 2019), it individualised and depoliticized SH by concentrating on individual cases. Hassan et al.'s study found that while supporting the #MeToo movement online, many Bangladeshi women stayed away from it. According to the study, there were several important factors that contributed to their decision not to engage, including cultural barriers, patriarchy, a sense of futility and lack of optimism, dependency on alternatives, and a lack of hope. Certain women generally refrained from joining the #MeToo movement for reasons related to due process, such as the belief that the movement disregards due process or that people should be presumed innocent until proven guilty. Others believed that women are waiting too long to come forward and that many accusations are outdated. Additionally, there were discrepancies regarding who is held accountable (Hassan et al., 2019).

### **Objective of the Study**

Research the impact of the #metoo movement on sexual harassment law and policy

### **Methodology**

This study utilized a structured questionnaire to conduct a survey, and statistical methods such as mean & t-test were used to analyze the responses from 221 participants. The sampling method used in this research was convenience sampling, where individuals were selected based on their accessibility & willingness to participate.

**Table 1 The impact of the #MeToo movement on sexual harassment law and policy**

Serial No.	Statement of Survey	Mean Value	t-value	p-value
1	The #MeToo movement has helped to bring sexual harassment and assault to the forefront of public consciousness.	4.18	8.753	0.000
2	The movement has led to legislative reforms in several jurisdictions, which have enacted laws to protect victims of sexual harassment.	4.31	9.806	0.000
3	Many organizations have revised their policies on sexual harassment, including how allegations are investigated and how employees are trained on prevention.	4.40	10.625	0.000
4	The #MeToo movement has led to an increase in the number of victims reporting incidents of sexual harassment.	4.04	5.445	0.000
5	The movement has helped to hold perpetrators of sexual harassment accountable for their actions.	3.94	4.656	0.000
6	The movement has highlighted the intersectionality of sexual harassment, showing that individuals from marginalized communities are often disproportionately affected by harassment.	4.48	11.695	0.000
7	The #MeToo movement has sparked a cultural shift towards greater accountability for sexual harassment, with many people no longer accepting it as a normative behavior.	4.43	11.531	0.000
8	The movement has led to reforms in legal procedures related to sexual harassment, including making it easier for victims to pursue justice through the legal system.	4.13	8.640	0.000
9	The #MeToo movement has empowered victims of sexual harassment and assault, giving them a platform to speak out and share their stories.	3.81	4.046	0.000
10	The movement has had a global impact, with movements and initiatives springing up in many other countries, including India, France, and South Korea.	4.00	6.567	0.000

Table1 demonstrates the mean values for each of the statement of the study done on the “impact of the #metoo movement on sexual harassment law and policy”, examining the average scores, the statement that obtains the highest mean score can be described as “The movement has highlighted the intersectionality of sexual harassment, showing that individuals from marginalized communities

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are often disproportionately affected by harassment”, which has the mean score of 4.48, Looking at the next statement which is “The #MeToo movement has sparked a cultural shift towards greater accountability for sexual harassment, with many people no longer accepting it as a normative behavior” the mean score is found to be 4.43. Looking at the mean value of 4.40 for the statement “Many organizations have revised their policies on sexual harassment, including how allegations are investigated and how employees are trained on prevention” shows that policy Changes also impacts #metoo movement. Looking at the other impact of #metoo movement is, “The movement has led to legislative reforms in several jurisdictions, which have enacted laws to protect victims of sexual harassment” which displays the mean score of 4.31, and the statement “The #MeToo movement has helped to bring sexual harassment and assault to the forefront of public consciousness” showcase the mean value of 4.18. Then the statement “The movement has led to reforms in legal procedures related to sexual harassment, including making it easier for victims to pursue justice through the legal system” obtains mean value of 4.13 and the statement “The #MeToo movement has led to an increase in the number of victims reporting incidents of sexual harassment” has 4.04. The statement “The movement has had a global impact, with movements and initiatives springing up in many other countries, including India, France, and South Korea” showcase the mean value of 4.00. Therefore, the last two statements fall within the lowest category or level, “The movement has helped to hold perpetrators of sexual harassment accountable for their actions” mean value of 3.94, the statement “The #MeToo movement has empowered victims of sexual harassment and assault, giving them a platform to speak out and share their stories” has 3.81. The significance of the t-value for each statement in the investigation on the impact of the #metoo movement on sexual harassment law and policy is significant. The t-value statements were positive, and their significance value was less than 0.05, indicating a significant relationship between the two variables.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the #MeToo movement has had a significant blow on the way SH is perceived, addressed, and prevented. The movement has brought about increased awareness of the issue and spurred changes in SH law and policy. This analytical study aimed to investigate the blow of the movement on SH law and policy, examining the changes made in response to the movement and their effectiveness in preventing and addressing SH. The study found that the #MeToo movement has influenced the evolution of SH law and policy, with governments, organizations, and institutions responding to the call for action. However, the study also identified areas for improvement, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive approach to preventing and addressing SH. Overall, the study's findings are critical to ongoing efforts to address the problem of SH. The study provides insights into the strengths and limitations of current legal and policy frameworks, highlighting areas for improvement and future research. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to the development of more effective strategies to combat SH, ensuring a safer and more equitable society for all.

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