



'You Have Betrayed This Student'

An Open Letter to the Delhi University Administration charging it with negligence to provide the rape victim necessary support during police investigation.

OTHERS, PRATI KSHA BAXI



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An Open Letter to the Delhi University Administration

We, the undersigned, wish to remind you that the University of Delhi is bound by the Policy on Sexual Harassment (Ordinance XV-D) to institute support mechanisms to any member of the Delhi University who is raped by any "third party" – i.e., person(s) not belonging to the Delhi University. The survivor of sexual assault must be provided legal and psychological assistance immediately.

It has been almost a week before the proctorial office, which does not know the identity or whereabouts of the student who was gang-raped in Dhaula Kuan last week, offered psychological assistance to the survivor through the Delhi police. While we agree that confidentiality of the survivor, as maintained by the police is of paramount importance, it is equally important for the University to activate and enable the experts on the "Apex Committee against Sexual Harassment", which has been formed under Ordinance XV-D, to provide the student the resources she is entitled to.

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The Indian Express has reported that the condition of the student has deteriorated to the extent that she has suffered a complete nervous breakdown (IE Newline May 13th, 2005, p1). This is criminal negligence on the part of the University of Delhi which is now bound by Ordinance XV-D to provide immediate psychological and legal assistance to any student who undergoes the trauma of rape by a third party.

The process of identifying the accused itself is extremely traumatic, and the survivor needs to have the support of family and/or friends, and counsellors lest lasting damage be done to her. We want to know why was the student not provided psychological and legal assistance during the police investigation? We demand an explanation as to why the Delhi University has failed to co-ordinate with the Delhi police on this issue soon



Apart from immediate intervention, the university is mandated to provide such student with safe accommodation. She must be given all facilities she needs to enable her to continue her education such as migration to another college, hostel seat, special assistance with academic work and tuition waiver or a fellowship to support her education. Her safety, in the aftermath of the police case, must be of paramount importance. In other words, the University is obliged to provide the conditions whereby the student who survives sexual assault can testify to rape in a court of law without being persecuted. The university is obliged to ensure that her education is not curtailed due to lack of support and assistance in the aftermath of violence.

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We urge the Apex Committee against Sexual Harassment, to look into the sexual violence, which women students from the Northeast face especially since they are targets of racist and sexist discrimination on an everyday level. Students from the Northeast are forced to live in areas where rents are low and security is negligent. They are often marginalised, lacking in resources, and endure everyday forms of linguistic and social exclusion. This marginalisation and stigmatisation is compounded by the systemic violence against women from the North East in Delhi.

The Apex Committee against Sexual Harassment must also take seriously the task of constituting a task force for evaluating the lack of security for women students. [X] Close

We demand that you:

1. Intervene immediately in the case of this Northeastern woman student and take up the issue of criminal negligence and dereliction of duty by the police with the Delhi administration and the Delhi Police.
2. Give the student all facilities she needs to enable her to continue her education such as migration to another college, campus-based accommodation, special assistance with academic work and a fellowship to support her education.

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3. Ensure her safety, provide the conditions whereby she can testify to rape in a court of law, should she want to, without being persecuted.
4. Set up different committees for the colleges in North, South, East and West Delhi in order to collate and redress lapses in security measures that have led to repeated sexual assault of students.
5. Be time-bound and institute the required security measures as a matter of urgent priority. Disseminating the policy, arranging for effective lighting, pruning of trees, speed breakers, traffic regulation, police patrolling and providing safe transport to women students fall within your duties.

For women students who live in Delhi, every day is a day spent taking a risk. They will not be safe unless this becomes a burning concern that sears the hearts and minds of every academic and administrator within the University. The university administration must act to provide a context that atones for the broken promise – of a safe work environment - where millions of young women students bring their aspirations and dreams to life.

In failing to do that, you have betrayed this student from the Northeast, whose breakdown is as much the result of the violence she has endured as of your negligence to provide her the necessary support during police investigation.

Dr. Pratiksha Baxi, Janaki Abraham and Suman Bisht, Forum against Sexual Harassment, Delhi University
Xonzoi Borbora and Dolly Kikon, North East Peoples Initiative, Guwahati



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This petition deserves immediate attention and action. The demands made by the petitioners are appropriate and reasonable. One has the right to expect the highest standards from both the University officials and the local police department.

MAY 17, 2005 12:02 AM | , ,

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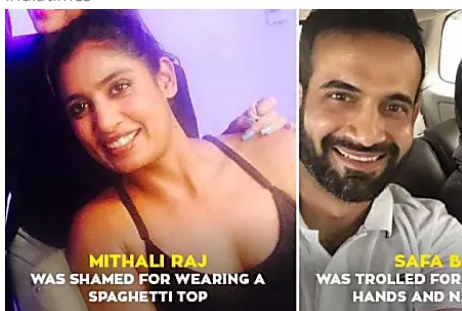
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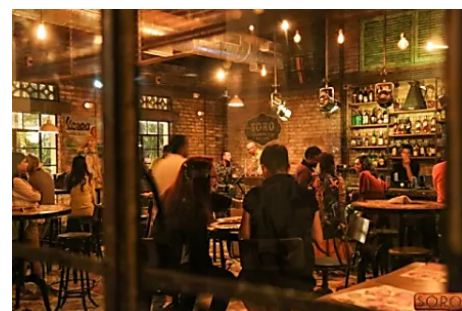
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