

Demanding Justice



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Sabita Lahkar 22 November 2013 5106 views

To,

The Chairman,
National Human Rights Commission,
Manav Adhikar Bhawan Block-C,
New Delhi - 110023

Dated: Guwahati, 22nd November 2003

Subject: Demanding Justice

Dear Sir,

With due respect, I would like to inform you that I am a working journalist based in Guwahati of Assam in northeast India and want to place my grievances in front of you for justice.

Since yesterday, I have been looking the news related to Tarun Tejpal, the founder of Tehelka, who has been charged with sexual harassment and the editor-journalist is seemingly facing arrest soon.

The issue received massive media coverage after a young woman journalist alleged that Tarun Tejpal had sexually assaulted her few days back.

Media report says, “Mr Tejpal has also been charged with outraging a woman's modesty and rape by someone who had dominance and authority over the woman, which carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment and a minimum 10 years in jail.”

But with utter dismay I would like to inform you that I had similar experience of abuses by a senior editor of Assam in 2003 and I had publicly demanded actions against Homen Borgohain, editor of Amar Asom, a popular Assamese daily newspaper published from GL Publications, Guwahati.

I was then working as Chief Sub-Editor with Amar Asom and for three years I had to face repeated sexual and professional harassment from the said editor. I also organised a formal press conference in Guwahati Press Club on 10th September 2003, where I raised my demand for justice. I also had to resign from the newspaper after that.

Earlier, I registered a case in Assam State Commission for Women (case no: ASCW 44/2003) and another with Assam Human Rights Commission (case no: 4652/03).

I also sent letters to the Press Council of India and to the Editors' Guild of India. A protest meeting was also organized in the press club auditorium on 12th September 2003 by the Journalists Action Committee and the Journalists Union of Assam (affiliated to Indian Journalists Union) in association with the Assam Tribune Employees Union, the Assam Press Correspondents Union, and the National Federation of Newspaper Employees etc.

I also lodged an FIR on 17th September 2003 at Paltan Bazar PS (Guwahati-781001, case number: 321/17-09-03, section 354/509 IPC).

Following my complains, the Assam Human Rights Commission asked the management of Amar Asom to constitute a redressal committee in its office as per the landmark judgement of the Supreme Court of India on sexual harassment at the workplace (popularly known as the Vishaka case).

The management accordingly formed the redressal committee and I was called by the committee to record my grievances. However, the most amazing part was the fact that the same committee had never called the accused (Homen Borgohain)!

The police did not investigate the case properly and even they did not dare to call Homen Borgohain for interrogation.

I am waiting for the justice for ten years and do not know how many years I have to wait for the same.

Will you kindly take note of the case and take necessary actions.

Thanking you in anticipation.

With regards,

Sabita Lahkar,

Guwahati

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Sabita Lahkar

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