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Anitha, S. (2020) From #metoo to #himtoo in the academia: New forms of feminist activism to challenge sexual violence. In R. Lewis and S. Marine (eds.) *Collaborating for change: Transforming cultures to end gender based violence in higher education. Oxford University Press.*

Abstract

The #metoo movement has been celebrated for centering the voice of survivors of sexual violence, and the new visibility that it has brought to issues that have long been of marginal interest to mainstream media and public discourse. In the context of the limits of the #metoo movement, this chapter draws attention to a different kind of feminist internet activism—the #himtoo movement in India—which entailed the compilation and circulation of a list of predatory men in academia. Apart from the predictable backlash from anti-feminists that this list attracted, it was also denounced by self-proclaimed feminists for its abandonment of due process for institutional remedies in favour of what was deemed 'vigilante' action. In light of these debates, this chapter examines the limits and potential of emerging forms of collaborative feminist activism that seeks to transform violence-tolerant cultures and practices within educational institutions.

Keywords: feminist movement; internet activism; gender based violence; sexual harassment; academia; #MeToo

Introduction

The #MeToo movement has been celebrated for centering the voices of survivors of sexual violence, and the new visibility that it has brought to issues that have long been of marginal interest to mainstream media and public discourse. In the context of the limits of the nature of the silence-breaking and of the recognition rendered possible through the #metoo movement, this paper draws attention to a different kind of feminist internet activism that took place in academia (and elsewhere) - what was called the #HimToo movement in India. This entailed the compilation and circulation of lists of predatory men in academia in India based on crowd-sourced accounts where victims remain anonymous and the perpetrators are named, also known as LoSHA.

This chapter examines the context, nature, transformative potential and the limits of such collaborative acts upon cultures and practices that sustain gender based violence (GBV) in higher education. I draw upon the contestations among feminists in India in response to the list to explore three themes: the significance of the list in reversing the gaze from the victim/survivor to the (alleged) perpetrator, the unresolved gap between women's experience of continuum of harms and public discourses that treat each act of perpetration as distinct events; and the question of the role of law and due process in arbitrating on what sexual violence is and who the object of such violence can be. In doing so, this chapter advances our understanding of online feminist activism against violence in and beyond academia, as well as contributing to conceptual debates on naming and theorising GBV. .

From #MeToo to #HimToo: Feminist responses to the LoSHA in India

In October 2017, The New York Times and The New Yorker reported that Harvey Weinstein, leading US film producer, had been accused of sexual abuse by dozens of women

in the film industry, over several decades (Hillstrom, 2015). In the wake of the wave of allegations of sexual violence against Harvey Weinstein that followed these reports, on 15 October 2017, actor Alyssa Milano tweeted, "If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted, write 'metoo' as a reply to this tweet", thereby re-circulating Tarana Burke's hashtag #MeToo[1], which went 'viral'. Following the accusations and the media furor which followed, in this particular instance, the weight of the power shifted from the predator to his victims/survivors and Weinstein was dismissed from his company and from the American Academy of Motion Pictures before any legal proceedings to establish his guilt could commence.

At around this time, Christine Fair, a professor of South Asian Studies at the University of Georgetown, wrote an essay which was published in the Huffington Post in October 2017 recounting her experiences of sexual harassment and misogyny in academia. Detailing her experiences as a student at the University of Chicago, Fair (2017) accused Dipesh Chakrabarty, a well-known subaltern studies scholar, of sexual misconduct. Though her article, titled '#HimToo' was removed from the *Huffington Post,* it generated much discussion and commentary on social media. On October 24th, 2017, an anti-caste[2] Indian feminist and law student at the University of California Davis, Raya Sarkar, "…infuriated to know that Christine Fair's article was removed from *Huffington Post"* (Kappal, 2017) put out a call in a Facebook post asking fellow students to share their experiences with academics

[1] The hashtag #MeToo, was initiated by Tarana Burke more than a decade ago, with the intent of drawing attention to the plight of Women of Color whose experiences with sexual violence are often erased in mainstream media (Guerra, 2017).

[2] The caste system is a hereditary social stratification system based on endogamy which divides Indian people hierarchically. Originally an aspect of Hinduism, caste is also a feature of other religions in India. Traditionally, the caste system determined many aspects of life and was rigidly applied, including by the British colonial powers. With India's independence, the constitution outlawed discrimination on the grounds of caste, but inequality and social stratification as a result, partly, of the caste system, continues to exist.

"who have sexually harassed/were sexually predatory to them" (Kappal, 2017). Sarkar's call generated more than 300 responses from those who came forward to tell their stories and name their abusers. Starting off with just two names, the list quickly grew to 72 male academics at Indian universities, many of them prominent figures in liberal and progressive circles (Kappal, 2017). The list did not contain any detail about particular incidents and did not reveal the names of the accusers in order to protect their identity. Comments on social media in response to the list suggested that to many women in Indian academia, the list served as confirmation of the widely circulated off-line whispers or resonated with their own experiences.

LoSHA came under criticism by a group of feminists who published their concerns in the following statement on the progressive blog Kafila (Menon, 2017):

> We are dismayed by the initiative on Facebook, in which men are being listed and named as sexual harassers with no context or explanation. One or two names of men who have been already found guilty of sexual harassment by due process, are placed on par with unsubstantiated accusations. It worries us that anybody can be named anonymously, with lack of answerability. Where there are genuine complaints, there are institutions and procedures, which we should utilize. We too know the process is harsh and often tilted against the complainant. We remain committed to strengthening these processes. At the same time, abiding by the principles of natural justice, we remain committed to due process, which is fair and just. This manner of naming can delegitimize the long struggle against sexual harassment, and make our task as feminists more difficult. We appeal to those who are behind this initiative to withdraw it, and if they wish to pursue

complaints, to follow due process, and to be assured that they will be supported by the larger feminist community in their fight for justice.

This divide between Indian feminists was initially articulated as a difference between older, established, metropolitan *savarna* (upper caste) feminists who criticised the list and younger *dalit* (lower-caste) feminists who defended it. However, this divide is better characterised as differences about the nature and mode of feminist anti-violence activism. Critics of the list termed it vigilante justice and questioned the ethics of a crowd-sourced list of anonymous accusations. The criticism focused on the treatment by LoSHA of "those found guilty of sexual harassment by due process" as on a par with "unsubstantiated accounts" (Menon 2017), its rejection of existing mechanisms of due process to deal with GBV in favour of a trial by (social) media, and the lack of accountability or redress for individuals named as perpetrators.

What followed was a period of intense and public disagreement among feminists in India, which polarised feminists across the country on the axis of generation, caste, and netizen identities whereby these new modes of online feminist activism were deemed inappropriate to the task of bringing about real change (Chadha, 2017). Publication of the list and the subsequent debates about it revealed the intersectional divisions within feminism in India and raised important questions about legitimate responses to sexual violence in Indian universities, which mirror debates in other countries. Issues relating to the meaning and significance of unsilencing and issues of institutional betrayal have been explored elsewhere (Anitha et al, forthcoming). This chapter explores the significance of this list for collaborative feminist anti-violence activism in the academia. The following section begins by examining the broader context as well as the particular forms of online feminist activism against violence in and beyond university communities.

Feminist (internet) activism against sexual violence

The politics of the personal has been central to feminist understandings of violence, and to activism to challenge it by recasting it from a personal matter to a public issue of concern to the state. Though there have been several successes of the feminist movement across the world in changing policy to criminalise what was once the norm, as well as significant societal changes in how we conceptualise violence, these advances have failed to stem violence against women and girls. Despite huge changes, the criminal justice system in different parts of the world has often been experienced as a site of harm, injustice and dismissal by many victim/survivors of sexual offences (Herman 2005; Daly 2014). Given these limitations of what we have achieved so far, Daly (2014) argued that our focus should instead shift to what she terms pragmatic justice, "which relies on multiple pathways of formal and informal justice mechanisms, with an emphasis on victim participation" (p. 380). The 2010s have witnessed a burgeoning of feminist activism in online spaces across the world (Berridge & Portwood-Stacer, 2015) which marshall the politics of personal experience, and online justice is emerging as one such informal and innovative justice mechanism in the face of the shortcomings of the formal legal processes and mechanisms. The past decade has witnessed the emergence of numerous grass-roots online feminist activist groups such as *Hollaback!* and the *Everyday Sexism Project* in the UK/West and campaigns such as Pink Chaddi (Kapur, 2012), #IWillGoOut (Titus, 2018) and #HappyToBleed (Prasanna, 2016) in India aimed at tackling street harassment and the policing of women's sexuality/bodies.

Some of these campaigns have provided a platform for victims and survivors to document and share their experiences (Foster 2015; Wånggren 2016) through online storytelling technologies promoted by the movement. Scholarship from contexts as diverse

as US, Australia, Spain, and India (Fileborn, 2014; Powell 2015; Puente, 2011; Salter, 2013; Subramaniam, 2015) illustrate how online spaces can function as counter-cultural public spheres that seek to disrupt and challenge dominant representations of sexual violence, and as spaces where victim/survivors' justice needs can to some extent be met. Student communities and young feminists have often been at the forefront of this activism, some of which has been in response to GBV within student communities, while other campaigns have been initiated by students to challenge broader violence-tolerant cultures or gender norms.

Substantial evidence from across the world indicates a high prevalence of GBV in student communities, which includes high levels of GBV on university campuses (Anitha & Lewis, 2018). This research indicates that such problematic cultures affect women and sexual minorities' experiences in and around university campuses, in social spaces such as night clubs surrounding universities, in online communities and on social media (Jane, 2016), and in the teaching and learning contexts within universities where both male students' attitudes and behaviours towards female faculty (Jackson & Sundaram, 2015) and male staff abuses of their power against female students (Cantalupo, et al 2018; Stabile, 2017) have been the focus of research and student and faculty activism.

Sexual harassment and assault are longstanding social justice issues at universities and colleges around the world and have been the center of student and faculty-led organising since the 1970s (Rentschler, 2018; Heldman & Brown, 2014). Carrie Rentschler (2018) explores movements against sexual violence at McGill University in Canada, focusing on activists' use of survivor-centered media to intervene in campus cultures of sexual assault, and provide new models of redress and activist imaginations for violence-free campuses. She historicizes contemporary feminist student activism against rape culture in the context of longer local genealogies of shared forms of student activist practice in Canada. Recent

activist movements, including #MeToo and LoSHA, have drawn renewed attention to sexual violence in campus communities and academic departments. Through public testimony, survivors have made the widespread nature of assault and harassment in higher education undeniably clear.

In the Indian context, this activism has not only challenged sexual violence, but also the historical gender discriminatory restrictions placed by university hostels on women students who are imagined as victims (Gupta 2019, Lochan 2019) and as partial students and citizens through the use of institutional power mechanisms (Gupta 2019). Spanning online and offline spaces, these movements have had significant impact on public discourse on women's rights and bodily autonomy, and systemic inequality and discrimination against women in university spaces (Moraes & Sahasranaman, 2018). Mostly organised initially via Facebook, many of them—e.g. the Pink Chaddi Campaign and the Society of Painted and Dented Ladies, #happytobleed, Pinjra Tod, #IWillGoOut, and #MeToo have gone viral and transformed public discourse around these issues. Moraes and Sahasranaman (2018) note the effectiveness of online spaces as important sites for connecting, networking, and mobilising across and between universities, as well as connecting with non-university-based movements and initiatives.

Notwithstanding the role of social media in facilitating a newfound attention to women's experiences of violence and abuse, feminist and anti-racist scholars and activists have long known that which stories predominate and which are marginalised is always a question of power and authority—about who is entitled to speak, and who has the authority to decide the meanings of words and actions. In the Indian context, Tambe (2019) explores the elusive workings of sexism in intricate intersection with other axes of social power such as caste, and charts regimes of resistance that enable us to imagine and engage the University—

and indeed anti-violence activism - differently. Writing about the belated popular resonance enjoyed by the #MeToo movement in India in 2018, Kumar (2018) attributed this to the subordinate caste of Raya Sarkar who started the first articulation of this movement in the Indian context through the LoSHA. India's #MeToo reckoning finally came when a Bollywood actor tweeted her story of sexual harassment by a famous male actor, which was followed by allegations of abuse by well-known stand-up comedians, all from dominant castes and well-known within their spheres (Kumar, 2018). While the #MeToo movement arguably secured a particular brand of justice for victims and survivors, it shares with other avenues for formal-legal justice constraints that limit its accessibility for marginalised categories of women.

Drawing upon the experiences of street harassment victims in Australia, Fileborn (2017) considered the experiences of individuals who seek justice online and argues that what is at issue here is not *whether* online spaces can function as sites of justice, but rather for whom and in what circumstances. Achieving justice online requires users to negotiate and navigate online geographies of safety/unsafety. It is important to continue to question and identify who is able to effectively use online spaces as sites of justice and effectively negotiate emotional, mental or practical barriers which create different experiences, and legitimate some feminist voices, perspectives and experiences over others (Mendes et al, 2018; also see Baer, 2016). Jackson and Banaszczyk (2016) note how contemporary feminist discourse continues to reflect historical tensions in feminist movements, and how digital media platforms can equip feminist activists with new ways to upend mainstream narratives and elevate conversations within feminist sphere(s). It is to some of these historic tensions and productive conversations that I now turn, as encapsulated in the #MeToo movement and its corollary in India - the focus on #HimToo.

In the following sections I analyse both the implications of LoSHA and the problems posed by its approach for online feminist anti-violence activism in and beyond the academia. Three interconnected issues are explored in the subsequent sections: the significance of LoSHA's reversal of the gaze from the victim/survivor to the (alleged) perpetrator; how it foregrounds a larger narrative about the continuum of harms and cultures of sexism in academia by compiling a list of predatory men; and how the very existence of the list in contrast to seeking legal remedy for individual harms brings into sharp focus the limitations of existing range of remedies for sexual violence such as the role of law and due process.

From #MeToo to #HimToo: Reversing the Gaze

In the first 24 hours after actor Alyssa Milano's call for survivors to proclaim their victimisation by tweeting #MeToo, 500,000 people responded, making this the top-trending hashtag on twitter (Sayej, 2017) and the hashtag #MeToo appeared 12 million times on Facebook (Hillstrom, 2019). The #MeToo movement took off in countries across the world and led to public accusations of sexual violence against men in positions of power in countries such as South Korea, with a televised interview of the lawyer Seo Ji-hyun, who publicly accusing her former boss, the senior prosecutor Ahn Tae-geun, of sexual misconduct (He-rim, 2018), in Sweden with the high-profile case of Jean-Claude Arnault, which led to the cancellation of the 2018 Nobel Prize in literature (Henley and Flood, 2018), and belatedly in 2018, in India when public accusations against leading figures in the Bollywood film industry and against senior journalists led to a flurry of resignations (Kaur, 2018).

It could be argued that the power of the #metoo movement lies in the momentum generated by a multitude of women and girls speaking out, as if in unison, about the everyday experiences of sexual violence in their lives which reiterate the pervasiveness of this problem.

Through their digital activism, the women created a community of survivors who, by their collective voice, challenged the dominant culture of disbelief that often meets individual survivors' disclosure of sexual violence. As Gersen noted in New York Times (cited in Hillstrom, 2019: 1), "#MeToo itself constituted an evidentiary claim of sorts: what you say happened to you happened to me, too, and so it is more likely that we are both telling the truth." It has been noted (Fileborn, 2017, p. 1498) that online disclosure can function as a pathway to meet elements of victims' justice needs by enabling a sense of validation and affirmation, as well as collective support. Disclosing online also had an overt political element as a form of consciousness-raising and an educational tool that can challenge cultural norms that dismiss and downplay the harms of this behaviour.

The reaction of men to the ubiquity of sexual violence in women's lives has ranged from less commonly articulated sense of their own culpability and responsibility for sexual harassment (e.g. using the hashtag #HowIWillChange), surprise expressed at the level of women's victimisation by men who might see themselves as allies in the struggle for gender equality, to disbelief and claims of victimisation from those who see this new-found attention to women's victimisation as a threat to male privilege (PettyJohn et al., 2019). While the backlash is not unexpected, the surprise of well-meaning men is surprising, and brought into sharp relief the very different worlds men and women inhabit, as they walk the streets, go about their everyday work, study, socialise and engage in leisure pursuits.

This attention generated towards a collectivity of women's voices relies on the victim/survivor of sexual violence to speak out about her experience - and hopefully have the social (media) capital to be heard, retweeted and 'liked'- in order to generate public debate. It is not an accident that the face of #MeToo—both in India and globally—has been an urban, educated, articulate, upper caste or White, and privileged woman; the experiences of

marginalised women are notably absent. As Rose (2013) states, “it is clear that one’s position of power in society (marked by ‘race,’ class, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc.) influences whether one is seen as credible and authoritative” (83). Writing about the Indian context, Guha (2015) also points out the barriers for feminist internet activism through hashtags whereby creating a collaboration between social media and the news media is necessary to set the agenda and enhance public engagement. She draws attention to the strength of prevailing discourses on issues like sexual violence and victim blaming attitudes which often impede such alliance building, as in the case of India where the #metoo movement went through several fits and starts before being taken up in relation to some industries such as the media rather more than in others such as Bollywood, where victim blaming discourses prevailed.

While #MeToo has rejuvenated global feminist activism, the risks entailed in speaking out are entirely borne by victims/survivors, on whom lies the onus to challenge the silencing engendered by dominant victim blaming attitudes. As women seek to reclaim stigmatised narratives and reject victim blaming discourses through their disclosure, others nonetheless construct them as shamed and shameless. In contexts where initial disclosures or hashtags have not trended and the support derived from being part of a collective is not forthcoming (Guha, 2015), these risks are amplified for the individual who initiates the hashtag. Reclaiming and naming one’s experiences of sexual violence is also implicitly perceived as a signal of a shift in subject position from that of a victim to survivor by taking control of one’s voice and an exercise of agentic behaviour. Such binaries between victim and survivor construct the act of violence as a discrete-if repeated-event from which one recovers. However, for women and girls who have experienced sexual violence, the act of disclosing it, of reaching for help, of speaking out about it in wider circles and indeed on social media commonly results in re-victimisation in a context where the dominant response to disclosure is one of disbelief, invalidation, stigma and outright hostility. This was the case

for the #MeToo movement in India, where the first disclosures by a relatively less known Bollywood actor against a well known actor were met with hostility, disbelief and accusations of being an attention-seeker (Zonunmawii, 2018).

The #MeToo movement also arguably reflects a societal approach to this problem, where the focus is on women and girls as victims, often leaving as implicit the fact of men and boys as perpetrators. This silencing is reflected in our terms for such violence which variously gender the victims but not the perpetrators in terms such as violence against women and girls. Silencing is also reflected in other terms that name the act without gendering its victims or perpetrators, even though research indicates the gendered nature of the violations: domestic violence, intimate partner violence, street sexual harassment. It is uncommon for the perpetrators to be the focus within the names that we give such harms and violations in policy and media constructions of men's violence against women (Burrell, 2016; Frazer and Miller, 2009) where there is sparse information about the perpetrator, or passive sentence construction that renders the perpetrator invisible, deliberately or otherwise, and serves to obscure or elide who exactly perpetrated the violence and with what degree of intent. This invisibility of men and boys is mirrored in anti-violence activism-- such as Take Back The Night marches-- which exhort women and girls to reclaim their rights, rather than exhorting men and boys to give up their privilege, and to eschew violence and inequalities which underpin such violence. While women's speaking out about and validating their experiences is a crucial aspect of a feminist campaign, this approach is problematic when it invisibilises men and is not accompanied by a focus on perpetrators.

This chapter focuses on a variation of the #Metoo movement which in India was termed the #HimToo movement, whereby feminist internet activism turned the gaze on men/boys and their histories of violence and intrusions by calling them out in online spaces

where women and girls can remain anonymous. In France, the equivalent of #MeToo was the hashtag #BalanceTonPorc ("Expose Your Pig") which encouraged women to name their harassers, unlike the #HimToo movement in India, whereby a list of alleged harassers was compiled and circulated while keeping their accusers' names anonymous.

#HimToo goes beyond the marshalling of solidarity and the consciousness-raising that is enabled by the #MeToo movement because the public disclosure associated with #HimToo both minimises the risk for women and turns the focus on the men. In doing so, it requires men to examine their actions and explain themselves, and protects women from victim-blaming discourses that disclosures inevitably attract, as the gaze is now turned on the alleged perpetrators whose reputations are potentially at risk. Such lists are not in themselves new and have previously manifested in more localised offline settings through whisper networks and scribblings on toilet walls in universities to warn other women, but the public nature of these online allegations creates a potential for lasting reputational damage. The obvious problem with this list that has to be acknowledged is that those named did not have the charge against them laid out nor the mechanisms to establish their innocence; and this is a serious failing of the LoSHA initiative. And just as multiple axes of disadvantage serve to cast women as lacking credibility and authority to be believed when they disclose sexual violence, men from minority groups are more likely to sustain the fallout from a social media trial generated by any potential abuse of such lists. Though this form of feminist internet activism is not without its limitations, it also marks an important symbolic departure from previous campaigns through this reversal of the gaze.

An argument against discrete acts and a hierarchy of harms

One criticism of LoSHA was that it conflated different types of acts—what have been termed as "exploitative but consensual relationships", sexually suggestive messages, and

groping, with sexual assault and rape. The Kafila statement put forward by Menon (2017) and subsequent commentary noted that the LoSHA erased differences between categories of offenders and wrongfully merged "different degrees of harassment". Indeed Menon herself acknowledged this problem of naming sexual violence in her response to one of the comments posted under the original Kafila statement:

> Yes, the academy is rife with sexual overtones and patriarchal power, we have all experienced it. This is why we have struggled and continue to struggle to name the problem, and bring it to light and justice. We have tried to establish codes of conduct that say that even consensual romantic relationships between professors and current students are not acceptable. Surely we need to differentiate between sexual harassment and inappropriate consensual relations. But in this last we have been unable even to name the problem let alone have it addressed. As someone said elsewhere, who understands where the initiative is coming from and is generally in support of it: 'What makes me uncomfortable about this crowdsource Facebook list is that there is no description of the act of sexual harassment, so I can't help wondering whether all of these refer to acts of sexual harassment or whether some may be unethical or exploitative intimate-sexual behaviour which aren't necessarily non-consensual and so should not be called sexual harassment.

It is important to recognise the different categories of harm that arise from sexual assault, sexual harassment and sexist utterances; indeed legal systems and due process mechanisms are designed to respond thus. However, the failure of the list to differentiate between different degrees of harassment (other than against three names out of 72 that populate the list, where the nature of the abuse is mentioned), where the different categories

of offenders can also be understood by the aim of the list to draw attention to an endemic culture of harassment, predation and abuse in academia.

It has been more than three decades since Kelly (1988) argued that the names and categories that we create to define and disaggregate sexual violence seldom reflect women's experiences of harm from male violence. Kelly utilised the concept of a "continuum of violence" (Kelly, 1988, p.76) to draw attention away from one act of violence inflicted upon one woman or girl to recognising the different forms of violence against women and girls as "a continuous series of elements or events that pass into one another and that cannot be readily distinguished" (Kelly, 1988, p.76). This concept of continuum emphasises the way in which women experience violence: women encounter many forms of violence in their life-course and perceive a connection between them. The concept of a continuum also has a second meaning that draws attention to the commonalities that link these disparate forms of violence—"a basic common character" that underlies what may commonly be seen as disparate events (Kelly, 1988. p.76). These different forms of violence are underpinned by similar gender norms about women and girl's place in society and men's entitlement to women's and girl's bodies, are rooted in power differentials and hierarchies between genders, and both reflect and reinforce these hierarchies. A failure to see these connections risks the misstep of focusing our energies solely on what Stanko (1985) categorises as 'sledgehammer' intrusions, without addressing other more everyday, normalised forms of violence such as sexual harassment and men's sense of entitlement to women's bodies. The list thereby challenges traditional ways of understanding gender-based violence through implicitly adopting a continuum view of violence. This victim-centered way of conceptualising violence is a vital part of an approach that has the potential to transform gendered cultures and norms that sustain violence.

However, across the world, criminal justice systems have struggled to conceptualise gender-based violence as a continuum and instead focuses on the acts and harms at one end of the continuum— on rape and serious sexual assault—while everyday harms and violations often remain outside the purview of the criminal justice system. However, the cumulative harms generated by everyday expressions and behaviours such as subtle messages from a faculty member cajoling a student into a sexual relationship, or an ostensibly supportive hand on the shoulder that maintains contact for an uncomfortably long time are not always recognised in the legal binary of illegal and harmful or legal and not harmful. The victims'/survivors' desire for some sense of justice in relation to these violations is unlikely to be achieved through formal justice avenues which separate and categorise the degree of harm and can only focus on some discrete and evidence-able harms, and not other violations.

While it is evident that sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual comments and expressions of sexism are different behaviours which require different responses, there is also an underlying commonality to these behaviours and expressions which creates and reinscribes dominant sexual cultures. In the post Weinstein era, it is evident that the distinction between inappropriate sexual relations and sexual harassment is not a clear-cut one. In the context of unequal power relations, a sexual advance or the suggestion of a relationship from a university faculty to a current student cannot be unequivocally categorised as inappropriate but consensual, as the students' consent is indeed constructed in the context of coercive circumstances where a refusal could result in adverse grades or a lukewarm reference that could jeopardise future job prospects. While not all dubiously consensual sexual encounters can be criminalised, the LoSHA served to critique this sense of entitlement and the refusal to problematize one's power and privilege. It also served to start important conversations about dominant narratives of sexual relations and the cultures they foster, and a rethinking of sexual harms.

The women who responded to Raya Sarkar's call were clearly not seeking individual redress for discrete acts which would require logging the degree of harm and inviting scrutiny. Instead, through their collaborative act, they were arguably seeking to draw attention to and transform prevailing violence-tolerant cultures in academe. In adding their voices anonymously to compile a list, they were instead making a statement about the weight of navigating a world where these various harms come together to create a cumulative experience of subordinate citizenship. In disclosing the names of some of the men who had played a part—in different ways and in different measures—in creating and sustaining this oppressive cultural context within academia, the list also calls upon men to examine their contribution to this culture from the presumed rare 'sledgehammer' (Stanko, 1985) acts of their violence against women to the fleeting but sustained everyday intrusions, from behaviour that is intentional and evidently harmful to that which is so normalised through the lens of entitlement that it may seem to be unconscious and unplanned to those perpetrating it and not feature in the legal registers of harm.

What may seem to some as a weakness of the list—the conflation of behaviours and perpetrators and its inability to separate different degrees of harm—could be considered a challenge to the legal construction of sexual violence as discrete acts with a hierarchy of harms which require individual redress and a call to recognise and challenge the endemic sexist culture within academia. In contrast to top-down programmatic and legislative efforts to change violent tolerant cultures and practices through Title IX in the US (Klein, 2018), the UGC Regulations 2015 in India (John, 2019) and the recommendations of UUK, an organisation representing 136 universities in the UK (UUK, 2016), LoSHA constitutes an initiative from below to transform discourses about conceptualisations of sexual violence and possible responses to it.

Disconnections between experiences of violation and legal adjudication of harm

The biggest criticism of the LoSHA list was that it bypassed any due process and thereby rejected legal or institutional due process frameworks as the dominant pathway to justice. The assumption is that accusations should be actualised through filing a complaint to the academic institution or to the police against a named perpetrator and mustering evidence and going through a mechanism whereby the guilt (or not) can be ascertained and justice secured. In doing so, the detractors argued that the creators of LoSHA were endangering the long and hard fought efforts of feminists in India to strengthen legal mechanisms to deliver justice for victims of sexual violence (Menon, 2017).

Detractors argued that the lack of evidence, named victims and fuller account of the incidents risked "vengeance" upon innocent men. As Kavita Krishnan (2017), a well-respected and long standing socialist feminist argued, "The project of creating anonymous lists is, to my mind, akin to blackening faces, publicly parading and socially boycotting people based on anonymous allegations. And we know who, generally, wield the power to do so in our society and over whom." She rightly cited the frequency with which those at the receiving end of vigilante action are likely to be marginalised communities on the basis of caste, religion and class in order to articulate her discomfort with the abandonment of due process in favour of a situation where "the process of naming and shaming itself will be the punishment." While recognising the limits of LoSHA's naming and shaming approach, it is also important to understand the challenge it poses to prevailing cultures within academia and the context of the failings of due process which led to the creation of this list.

Despite recognition of sexual violence as a responsibility of the state and measurable gains from legal reforms in different parts of the world, conviction rates remain low worldwide, particularly for marginalised women (Daly & Bouhours, 2010). Beyond the

important failure of legal mechanisms in securing formal justice for victim/survivors, research also notes how the legal system is often experienced as a site of retraumatization and how the legal process results in secondary victimisation (Daly, 2014; Herman, 2005). This sense of betrayal results when instead of belief, validation, and protection, a survivor of sexual violence instead encounters victim-blaming attitudes, or her victimization is ignored or minimized, often due to inappropriate support from services or because of the workings of the criminal justice system such as adversarial rape trials (Campbell, 2008; Patterson, 2011) Despite all the effort to analyse and reform legal systems, these enduring limitations reveal that the limits of Anglo legal systems suggest that effective due process in a legal arena may be a mirage, unachievable.

Similar due process failures also dog academia as universities fail to hold perpetrators to account through internal institutional mechanisms in diverse contexts such as India (Kaur 2018), UK (Bull and Rye 2018) and elsewhere (Klein, 2018). Writing in the context of the UK, Sara Ahmed (2016) makes the observation that, when due process obscures justice, this is not a failure of the system but a sign that the university system *is* working–its very intention is to obfuscate.

Both within and outside academia, formal-legal processes remain largely unviable for most victims of sexual assault. They find their experiences far removed from the two overtly violent components of the "real rape" myth: the use of physical force and the occurrence of physical injury. They also fear they will be judged as far short of the "real victim" (Du Mont et al. 2003: 466), and this disjuncture is even more so for those who experience everyday forms of sexual violence for which there are seldom clear redressal mechanisms, such as sexual harassment. Though societal understandings are evolving towards an affirmative model of consent rather than one that presumes that sexual contact is the default option in the

absence of an explicit 'no', prevailing sexual double standards and gendered sexual scripts mean that women's accounts of refusing sexual activity are commonly deemed as lacking credibility or simply a consequence of miscommunication that any reasonable man might be prone to (Firth, 2009). There are additional barriers to being constructed as a credible and authoritative complainant for women who come from communities that have been historically oppressed by criminal justice systems such as black women, indigenous women, dalit women and religious minorities. In this context, Karasek (2018) argues that some women may desire to seek accountability and justice outside legal and due process mechanisms and their aims may be to stop the perpetrator in his tracks and protect other victims rather than to pursue the remote possibility of individual redress and punishment.

Beyond securing justice for individual victims, the role of formal-legal processes within and beyond universities lies in their capacity to express social norms, expectations and standards of behaviour that occur far outside any formal legal framework. Based on a definition of legality as the "meanings, sources of authority, and cultural practices that are commonly recognized as legal, regardless of who employs them or for what ends," Gash and Harding (2018: 1) argued that, in matters of sexual violence, the limits of the law and legal discourse also extend beyond the courtroom. Such limits have the potential to frame and constrain any attempt to discuss experiences of sexual violence by privatizing the experience of sexual assault and silencing its victims. In university contexts, this operates by constraining discussion about sexual violence and silencing victims through the use of non-disclosure agreements even when a due process finding upholds the victim's complaint (Batty, 2019). It was this privatizing that both the #MeToo and the LoSHA challenged—by proclaiming the victimization publicly, and by declaring the name of the perpetrators in a public forum. Understanding the context within which the LoSHA list was created and received such widespread support from feminist activists requires engaging with the limits of

the mechanics of legal justice and the processes whereby (only) certain subjects come to be recognised as experiencing harms and injuries that are deemed unjust, reparable and remediable. Kapur (2015) argues that not all subjects are recognisable as vulnerable to harm, and such recognition of the subject is premised upon certain gender arrangements and performances that are deemed legitimate. "Justice requires compliance and failure to comply renders an individual a deconstituted subject in law" (Kapur, 2015, p. 271). In the case of sexual violence, legal systems adjudicate harm based on the basis of their construction of what is reasonable to experience as harm, what is intentional or simply a matter of miscommunication, and who this harm can be experienced by/from.

Formal-legal mechanisms are indeed essential to signal the due diligence in relation to violence against women, and the strengthening of these mechanisms is necessary to secure justice for (some) victims/survivors as well to ensure due process for the accused. However, in the context of the extensive limitations of these mechanisms and processes, the success of the LoSHA list was in bypassing these individualised mechanisms of justice by which survivors remain so ill-served and in drawing attention to the pervasive sexist cultures within academic communities with the aim of transforming them.

Conclusion

Through a focus on LoSHA, this chapter has explored the nature and contributions of emerging forms of collaborative feminist activism in online spaces. It explores the challenges posed by these initiatives as well as their transformative potential both for how we imagine feminist activist and its contributions to long-standing goal of social and cultural change within the academia and beyond.

The first of these contributions include reiterating an understanding of sexual violence that moves away from discrete acts and recognises the continuums in women's experience of violence. Secondly, regarding women's account as self-evidently true, this list also represents a significant departure from the legal and due process systems where women's accusations are routinely disregarded compared to men's denials: it takes the weight of several women's remarkably similar claims against the same man to tip the scales of justice. What undid Weinstein also reaffirms that the worth of a single woman's account of sexual harassment equates to a fraction of a man's denials.

The final contribution of LoSHA is in creating a space for survivors of sexual violence to voice their experiences that does not entail engagement with the legal-formal processes. Given that the option of legal redress is so loaded against a woman and highly likely to produce neither justice, healing nor stop the perpetrator in their tracks, the list is a flawed and desperate but an understandable alternative that seeks social if not legal redress. It turns our focus on the perpetrators of sexual violence to protect other women and to mobilise social denouncement of such behaviour in the hope that it might check the perpetrator, draws attention to the endemic cultures of sexism and sexual harassment in academia and highlights the enduring gap between what is possible through legal recourse and what survivors need by way of justice and recovery/healing. The LoSHA serves as a stark reminder of the essential need for transformation, given the deeply inadequate responses available through existing procedures of redress.

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