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‘I Would Have Taken This to My Grave Like Most Women’: Reporting Sexual Harassment During #MeToo in India

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Abstract

One core concern of workplace sexual harassment is the low rate of reporting, which arguably adds to its suppression and consequent individualization of harassment. The recent #MeToo movements across the globe have been focal points for women to report incidents of sexual harassment. I examined what it has meant for women in India to speak about their experiences of sexual harassment in broadcast media news interviews during the #MeToo movement. Discursive psychological examination showed that interviewers and interviewees (women who were reporting) attended to and managed issues with the perceived legitimacy of reporting sexual harassment. Interviewees had to account for their reporting in the context of the #MeToo movement while managing not to be seen as being swept up by it. Women treated these concerns as gendered phenomena rather than merely interpersonal in justifying their reporting and the #MeToo movement. These findings are discussed in relation to research on silencing of women’s voices in reporting, the role of media, and broadly addressing sexism and sexual harassment at the workplace.

*Keywords*: sexual harassment; #MeToo movement; silencing women’s voices; media; India; discursive psychology.
‘I Would Have Taken This to My Grave Like Most Women’: Reporting Sexual Harassment During #MeToo in India

India is routinely ranked as one of the most unsafe places for women (Reuters, 2018). Among the reasons cited are possibilities for violence and cultural norms and practices that widely oppress women. Several reports have shown that fewer women are literate, employed, or own land / have wealth (CSO, 2018; Mohan, 2017). Women are expected to act in ways that suit men, such as being less vocal in making household decisions and less visible in positions of power. Indian women also face sexual harassment in the workplace. One survey (PinkLadder, 2019) indicated that 53% of women in Indian workplaces have experienced sexual harassment. Further, reports have shown a 54% increase in registered cases of sexual harassment from 2014 to 2017 (Sarkar, 2019). Of course, reports of sexual harassment vary across industries: one-third of women in domestic labour have reported sexual harassment (Bhattacharya, 2018) and 88% of women in information technology and related occupations have reported suffering some form of sexual harassment (Sharma, 2010). These numbers may underrepresent the extent of the problem given the types of processes in place (if any) for women to report harassment and how those reports are handled by organizations. For instance, the Garment Workers’ Union reported that for 75% of women, there was no mechanism in place for reporting harassment. Indeed, a recent survey indicated that 70% of women in India do not report sexual harassment (Chahra, 2017).

India, however, also has had a plethora of feminist and women’s rights movements since before its independence. Earlier these were embedded in anti-colonial struggles and brought education, political participation, and ‘modernisation’ to women. In the 1970s through 90s, disparate movements were under the umbrella of the Indian women’s movement that effected
legal changes such as reservations in locally elected bodies and the setting up of the National Women’s Commission in 1990 (Roy, 2015). More recently, online and digital spaces allowed for collaborative movements involving activists, women’s organizations, and journalists resulting in movements that lasted longer than the specific events that started them (Poell & Rajagopalan, 2015). Such engagement resulted in broader awareness and specific legal instruments, such as the Nirbhaya or Criminal Law Amendment Act of 2013 (Times of India, 2019). In addition, there have been digital campaigns such as #pinjratod, #IWillGoOut, or #whyloiter, which similarly addressed specific issues of misogyny and restrictions for women (Das, 2019).

The #MeToo movement in India can be understood in light of these movements and their implications for gender (in)equality. The #MeToo movement originated in the U.S. by Ms. Tarana Burke in 2006 (Burke, 2019) as a way of fostering affiliation among women of color and others who had suffered sexual abuse and harassment and has had a notable impact in India where it started in late 2018 (Mishra, 2020). The movement offered not only opportunities but also a sense that individual women reporting harassment were not alone (Castells, 2015). Indeed, it affirmed that experiences of sexual harassment were widespread and routine for women.

The purpose of the present research was to examine women’s reports of sexual harassment in India during the #MeToo movement. More specifically, I conducted a fine-grained discursive analysis of interviews in Indian broadcast news media programs in which women participated in discussions about their experiences of workplace sexual harassment. My goal was to identify practices that may have undermined and delegitimized women’s attempts to report sexual harassment and how women managed these barriers to reporting.
Sexual Harassment

Social scientists offer various explanations for the prevalence of sexual harassment, such as intra- and interpersonal characteristics based in anti-women attitudes (Pryor, LaVite, & Stoller, 1993). Researchers, however, have also shown that characteristics of the workplace and/or occupation, such as skewed gender ratios, duties that are stereotypically masculine, and tolerance of sexism, are stronger contributors (Willness, Steel, & Lee, 2007). Others argue that broader societal conditions and practices, for example, patriarchy or misogyny are central (for an overview, see Fitzgerald & Cortina, 2018). The identification of these various possible contributors has unfortunately not resulted in any notable decrease in the prevalence of sexual harassment (Fitzgerald, 2018). However, Toosi, Voegeli, Antolin, Babbitt, and Brown (in press) show that financial literacy contributes to more awareness of pay equality and enhances possibilities for countering abuse.

Certainly, difficulties reporting harassment contribute to the prevalence of sexual harassment. Research has shown that targets of systemic problematic behaviour, such as sexism and racism, find it extremely troublesome to report such instances or fashion them so that they are accepted by others (Louw-Potgeiter, 1989; Parker, 2018; Shelton & Stewart, 2004). For instance, complaints about sexual harassment can be recast as those about uncivil or unprofessional behaviour (Shelton & Stewart, 2004).

Often those who report sexual harassment are criticized for doing so. For example, Worth, Augoustinos, and Hastie, (2015) examined how Julia Gillard, who was Australia’s first female Prime Minister, managed sexism. They showed that media reports in the aftermath of her public confrontation of sexism and misogyny not only dismissed and suppressed the role of sexism, but also construed speaking against or challenging sexism as ‘extreme and abnormal’ (p. 68). The
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reports privileged silence by normalizing those who accepted and moved on, while problematizing those who spoke up and protested. Other research shows that women who take offense at sexist comments might be perceived as humourless (Gill, 2007). This research under the broader rubrics of ‘new sexism’ (Gill, 1993; Riley, 2002) and ‘new racism’ (Augoustinos & Every, 2007; Barker, 1981), respectively, because of their relatively implicit nature indicate that instances of racism and sexism are minimized, suppressed, or denied in favour of alternative explanations for the problematic behaviour.

In interviews with female academics in the United Kingdom, Fernando and Prasad (2018) argued that silencing of sexual harassment was an outcome of specific discursive practices of those in human resources teams who were expected to receive such reports. Women’s complaints were invalidated or downplayed in favour of another version of how the events took place. Fernando and Prasad argued that sexual harassment and how it is addressed within organizations need to be understood as collaborative practices that involve the target and relevant ‘third-party’ actors.

A notable set of findings points to the role of broader structures such as the changing nature of the workplace and the global economic order (Brunner & Dever, 2014; Folgerø & Fjelstad, 1995). For instance, Gekoski et al (2017) noted that emerging economies report higher levels of sexual harassment than do more industrialized economies. Gill (2011) argued that prevalent notions and ideologies of neoliberalism, which emphasize individual identification over that based on gender or other social categories, may contribute to an understanding of sexual harassment as individual concerns rather than concerns based on gender, across cultures.

Relatedly, research on reporting instances of sexual harassment (e.g., Fitzgerald, Swan, & Fischer, 1995; Cortina & Berdhal, 2008) has generally relied on samples from Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) societies (Heinrich et al., 2011). This research
suggests that maintaining silence is the norm when it comes to instances of sexual harassment (Good & Copper, 2014; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Reports are either explicitly silenced (Kelly & Radford, 1990) or rationalized (Kensbock, Bailey, Jennings & Patiar, 2015).

Thus, there are strong reasons to consider the role of culture in both the occurrence and reporting of sexual harassment (Ng & Othmand, 2002). Adikaram (2014) examined sexual harassment in a Sri Lankan context and argued that women interpreted and made sense of sexual harassment in the backdrop of their culture. She argued that specific features of the Sri Lankan culture, such as being silent about sexual matters, was central to understanding these issues (Adikaram, 2016). Women are encouraged to retain sexual ignorance and innocence. Consequently, reporting sexual harassment in itself becomes taboo. Ghasemi (2020) in this special issue shows that, in Iran, broader societal gender relations, seep through and strongly influence workplace relations leaving women in positions of less power and influence. Women then have to adopt various strategies in navigating their roles and performance.

It is thus crucial to take into account the cultural norms and practices that may influence the reporting of sexual harassment, including the reporting or complaining process itself and the issues that women face and how they might manage these issues. To my knowledge, no research has examined how sexual harassment complaints are offered and received in India. Rather, the use of discursive approaches, as I used in the present research, to examine reporting and complaining have examined sexism and racism as more broadly conceived (for an overview, see Tannen, Hamilton, & Schriffrin, 2015).

**Workplace Sexual Harassment in India**

Similar to other settings, in India, Sarpotdar (2013) argues that issues with a drawn-out bureaucratic process that cost time and resources means that women treat complaining about
sexual harassment as the ‘last option’. Sharma (2005) argues that sexual harassment must be understood in the context of wider status of women in the Indian society, such as the widespread violence against women in India where women also refrain from reporting domestic abuse (Bhattacharyya, 2013).

In India there are two sets of policies in place: the Vishaka Guidelines of 1997 and the updated Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act of 2013. While the former were the first to impose some responsibility on the employer to observe and consequently ‘prevent, prohibit, and redress’ sexual harassment, the latter Act defines sexual harassment as a crime and enforces compliance in various workplaces in the form of practices for complaining and follow-up inquiry (Mazumdar, 2018). Notably, the latter update requires organizations with more than 10 employees to set-up an internal committee, which would monitor and investigate relevant issues. Thus, a vast majority of organizations should have such committees. However, reports show their absence (Saha, 2017). A survey by the Indian National Bar Association reports that over 65% of respondents do not feel that organizations follow these guidelines or address complaints in a manner that is procedurally just (Saha, 2017). However, Cheria (2019) argues that these acts do not address a core issue with sexual harassment at the workplaces, namely, reporting sexual harassment.

Barriers to reporting often vary across types of workplaces (Sahgal & Dang, 2017). Chaudhri (2007) examined sexual harassment of women healthcare workers in Kolkata West Bengal and showed that women treated issues with reporting as embedded in the prevalent cultural norms, such as those of shame for the family and impact on marriage alongside those dealing with power imbalances inherent to the occupation. In contrast, in information technology and business process outsourcing sectors, reasons have included a reluctance on the part of the companies to
allow and/or respond to reports and treating sexual harassment as unexpected for women workers (Ahuja, Padhy, & Srivastava, 2019).

Women also want to avoid accusations that their own actions in some form were responsible for the events in question – that they indulged in ‘bad’ behaviour or were ‘characterless’ (Bhattacharya, 2018). In any cultural context, these accusations would mean embarrassment for persons involved. Bhattacharya (2015) argues that in settings like India where patriarchy means that women face more of the blame than men, reporting harassment could readily result in blaming the victim for those events. Women then do not readily or frequently report sexual harassment to avoid ‘victim blaming’.

Research has shown that news media are also far from ideal in empowering or platforming concerns for women (Gill, 2007; Guha, 2014). De Benedicts, Orgad, and Rottenberg (2019) argued that while print news coverage of the #MeToo movement in the United Kingdom was broadly positive, it individualized and de-politicized sexual harassment by focusing on specific individual cases. In Indian newsrooms, journalists have offered broadly positive views about the movement while minimizing the relevance of it for their own profession (Sreedharan, Throsen, & Gouthi, 2019). Media spaces and the interactions here could crucially act as potential ‘third-party’ agents (cf. Fernando & Prasad, 2018) in bringing up issues of legitimacy with issues such as sexual harassment and their uptake.

**Discursive Psychology of Complaining**

The present research involved a discursive analysis of media interviews. Discursive psychologists are primarily concerned with ‘discourse as a topic of study in its own right’ (McKinlay & McVittie, 2008, p. 21). Researchers examine how social action is accomplished in and through discourse: language use in the form of talk or text. Researchers focus on practices
through which descriptions and accounts about the external social world and inner mental world are assembled and used on specific occasions and in contexts to accomplish actions such as reporting, complaining, or downplaying complaints. A pervasive concern for participants in any interaction is that of ‘accountability’ (Buttny, 1996; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Sacks, 1995): what it is that participants are doing, what drives their actions, and whether those actions are perceived as ‘proper’ with respect to cultural norms and practices. We perform and organize our actions, in a range of settings and platforms, in ways to attend to the possibilities for being asked to explain ourselves and the actions that we do (Buttny, 1996, p. 2).

Complaining is a unique set of actions where concerns about accountability are particularly salient – why is one complaining? Is it based in self-interest? Discursive psychologists have extensively examined complaints as a form of social action (Edwards, 2005). Researchers have shown that complaining is not an easy task. The complainer could be seen as motivated, unreasonable, or merely moaning (Edwards, 2005). This attends to a broader concern that speakers have in accomplishing any action: their actions can be seen as motivated by their own personal interests or stake (Potter, 1996). Speakers then must produce complaints in ways that manage such inferences or inoculate against perceptions that they are motivated by strictly personal interests. This is particularly the case for complaints about being victims of racism or sexism (Louw-Potgieter, 1989; Worth et al., 2015) as women who confront sexism and harassment are often seen as difficult, trouble-makers, or complainers (Shelton & Stewart, 2004).

Researchers have also shown that complaints can be readily attributed to the complainers’ identity or category membership, in ways that either legitimate or undermine the complaint (Stokoe & Edwards, 2007). Complainers then attend to and manage these concerns. Women’s reports of sexual harassment can be treated as unreasonable or unimportant or as emanating from
ulterior motives. However, this is complicated in the context of the #MeToo movement where a prominent concern is with doubting or disbelieving reports of sexual harassment (Langone, 2018). In other words, the movement put pressure on public officials to at least appear that they were taking complaints of sexual harassment seriously even if they doubted the veracity of those complaints.

**The Present Study**

The #MeToo movement and the increasing reporting of women’s suffering of sexual harassment were prominently featured in the Indian news broadcast media (Mishra, 2020) and involved public debate about sexual harassment and wider rape culture (Mendes & Ringrose, 2019). Since many of the women initially speaking out were public figures, their reports were particularly subject to debates and discussions in the media. Their reports implicated other well-known persons in film, media, and politics (Mishra, 2020). These reports and their discussions thus involved high stakes (Stokoe, 2010) and dealt with issues that women faced in reporting sexual harassment and how such reports were responded to by other parties, such as media persons, activists, advocates of those accused, and the wider public. In the present research, then, I used discursive analysis to examine how reports of sexual harassment were undermined and challenged, and how those reporting attended to and managed the legitimacy of their reporting.

**Method**

**Data and Participants**

The data for this study come from transcripts of publicly broadcast news media programs from Indian media organizations that focused on the #MeToo movement in the Indian context. These programs involved several participants: women who had experienced sexual harassment in various types of workplaces, legal professionals who were either defending the accused or invited
as experts, activists, and members of the public participating as in-house audiences. Using Google Video Search Engine programs, I searched the two-year period between September 2017, when the first public reporting of sexual harassment was made under the banner of #MeToo, and September 2019, for videos that were discussions or debates in English, and were produced by recognizable media organizations. This procedure yielded 35 videos that ranged from 10 minutes to about an hour in length. These videos were watched several times and transcribed using Jeffersonian transcription guide (Jefferson, 2004; Poland, 2001), which aims to translate into written form various sounds, pauses, intonations, and other pronunciation effects that render the transcripts very different from a mere sound-to-word transcription (see Appendix II). The transcripts were read and re-read to gain a close sense of participants’ concerns.

Talk in these programs addressed a range of issues that included details about specific incidents, issues of the timing of complaints or speaking-out, reception, challenges, and denials, among others. I focused on participants’ concerns about reporting sexual harassment in the context of #MeToo. These parts of the videos were transcribed for fine grained discursive analysis.

Analytic Procedure

The data were examined using discursive psychological approaches to social psychological phenomena of complaining and negotiating arising issues (McKinlay & McVittie, 2008; Potter & Edwards, 2001). Talk here was examined for how reports about sexual harassment were offered by women and responded to by organizations. The coding process involved first focusing on constructions of specific versions of reporting, such as that the reports were merely comments that

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1 There are currently 15 major English news channels operating in India. On Google video search, however, several other agencies and organizations came up whose authenticity could not readily be validated.

2 Without these limits, Google results gave 10 per page for more than 25 pages with duplicate, truncated, and at times irrelevant results.
were made in haste (‘just naming and shaming’; ‘I have to verify it’), were deliberated (‘is this harassment or is this not’), or merely influenced by the #MeToo movement (‘women reporting through social media in this movement’). Second, I examined how the speakers, interviewers and interviewees, managed their stake and interest (Potter, 1996) in questioning and managing the legitimacy of reports. This process involved identifying constructions of the mental states of those reporting, relevant others (e.g., perpetrators), and external events, such as the #MeToo movement. Third, the focus was on the role of gender as a relevant attribute of those reporting and the phenomena in question (cf. Stokoe & Edwards, 2007). In these ways, the analysis foregrounded concerns with accountability (Buttny, 2006; Potter, 1996) for reporting sexual harassment. Overall, the analysis examined how the act of reporting sexual harassment both as an event outside of the present interactions and within the ongoing news interviews, was treated as potentially illegitimate and managed by both interviewers and interviewees.

Results

The analysis indicated that women’s reporting of sexual harassment at the workplace was treated as accountable in a highly specific manner: that women reporting now instead of at the time of the incident was treated as potentially undermining the legitimacy of their reports. At the same time, attributing their reporting to the #MeToo movement raised concerns that they were influenced by the movement. Interviewees managed these concerns through descriptions of sexual harassment as routine for women and that the #MeToo movement was merely giving women the opportunity to report. Below I examine extracts from the five interviews listed in Table 1 to illustrate the two discursive themes I identified: ‘Negotiating reporting ‘now’ and ‘#MeToo itself as problematic for complaining’.
Negotiating Reporting ‘Now’

In the following extracts, interviewers treated reporting about sexual harassment at this moment than earlier as unique to the interviewees’ situation.

Extract 1 comes from a news program published by the channel ‘NewsMo’, titled ‘Chinmayi Sripaada opens up about being sexually harassed by Vairamuthu’ on October 10, 2018. The female interviewer is unnamed and the interviewee, Chinmayi Sripaada, is a notable singer across South Indian film industries who had accused a famous lyricist, Vairamuthu, of sexual misconduct. The interviewer treats Sripaada’s case as unique to her in setting up an explanation for her reporting much later than the incident.

Extract 1 – ‘I’m ready now’

1 IR Chinmaya thanks so much for speaking to us on India today >first of all< why
don’ you tell us what happened an an what happened WHY did you decide to
3 speak about the incident now
(3.0)
5 Sripaada because this is the right time I’m ready now. h if may be this de hadn't this hadn't
6 been such a huge people’s movement .h I wouldn't have gotten the guts to speak
7 up and I would have taken this to my grave .h like most women and me do about
8 their own sexual assault stories

The interviewer treats Sripaada as having unique access to (Heritage, 2010) the problematic events in question, rather than as merely confirming or disconfirming already known-about events. This approach allows for space to inquire about the possible reasons that Sripaada might have for not complaining then but doing so now: ‘WHY did you decide to speak about the incident now’ (line
2). There are several noteworthy points here. First, the interviewer treats Sripaada as a responsible agent in both having unique information about the incident and deciding when to report it. She treats it as an event about her. Second, the deictic referent (‘now’) marks the relevance of reporting harassment in the current period than earlier.

In her response, Sripaada attends to the issue of reporting ‘now’ through a favourable evaluation of the #MeToo movement: ‘huge people’s movement’ and ‘this is the right time’ (line 5). The evaluation ‘right’ is further explicated through descriptions of herself in terms of her psychological states: ‘I’m ready now’ (line 5) and ‘guts to speak up’. Together, she develops the inference that the #MeToo movement impacted her mental readiness in being able to report sexual harassment.

Sripaada further constructs the movement as opportune in preventing an extreme alternative of never speaking: ‘taking this to my grave’ (line 7). Notably she presents this as the case for other women who similarly do not report: ‘like most women’. Here the descriptor ‘most’ works to amplify the scale of the issues at hand in ways to suggest that it is routine for women to not report sexual harassment. The #MeToo movement then mitigated such outcomes and offered opportunities that allowed her to report. In this way, Sripaada minimizes the role of her own decision to report at this time and offers the context of the #MeToo movement as ideal to report sexual harassment for any woman.

Extract 2 comes from the program titled ‘Will #MeToo Naming & Shaming Lead To Real Change? | Rajdeep Sardesai's News Today’ published by India Today on October 10, 2018. The interviewer, Rajdeep Sardesai, similar to the interviewer above asks about the reasons for reporting now. The interviewee, Sandhya Menon, was a journalist and author who had reported her
experiences of sexual harassment at her workplace involving editors Gautam Adhikari, KR
Sreenivas, and Manoj Ramachandran.

Extract 2 – ‘Why so late’

Sardesai  how will you respond to those then Sandhya who will say Why so late why
1       didn't Sandhya MEnon raise her voice ten twelve years ago: why now
2       Menon  uh: the EAsy way out for me: uh:: Rajdeep is to sa:y >I won't dignify that
3       question with an answer becos there are several reasons< an- it's out there why
4       women do NOT complain .h because I was worried about my jo:b .hh I was
5       worried about uh being sidelined which I was when I compl- when I did
6       complain .h I was <worried about> u:hm () I was worried about disappointing
7       my perpetrator >as terrible as that sound sounds< ss at twenty fi:ve .h u::hm I
8       didn't have better sense to think that this person has behaved this way with me
9       he's thirty years older than I am he's behaved this way with me and he doesn't
10      deserve more respect than I'm .h THAN THIS u:hm >he was really nice<
11      otherwise >an I was like< O:H you know what (. ) I don't wanna ruin his life I
12      don't wanna make things difficult .h u:hm that’s why I didn't report it then WHy:
13      now. because I think <it's about time> an:: I think all of us including me have
14      had enough
15

Sardesai’s question is somewhat similar to the question in Extract 1 in treating Menon’s reporting
of her sexual harassment as needing an explanation. However, Sardesai includes further elements
that treat Menon’s reporting as open to doubt. First, he introduces the question on behalf of
unspecified others (Goffman, 1979) in ways that treat the question and the concerns as held by a
wider set of persons than Sardesai himself (also see Clayman & Heritage, 2013). This shift in footing, allows for the introduction of a wider concern about Menon’s complaints about sexual harassment. Second, he offers an alternative candidate time for appropriate reporting – ‘ten twelve years ago’ (line 2) – in contrast to ‘now’ to develop the characterization of her reporting as ‘late’ (line 1). Sardesai’s question sets-up a justification for Menon’s current reporting of sexual harassment as the response. This however does not involve questioning the credibility of the events, which might explicitly be taken as suppressing women’s voices.

As a complainer, Menon faces the potential concern that she must justify her act of complaining (Edwards, 2005) and the additional aspect of complaining much later. Menon treats her own concerns and worries as coming in the way of reporting earlier. Menon treats these as common to women, which allowed her claims about the relevance of the #MeToo movement for her complaining now rather than aspects that could be unique to her.

Initially, Menon characterizes the question being asked of her and possibilities for response as those that are routinely relevant for women and not just herself. Her formulation of a possibly ready action that was open to her – ‘I won’t dignify that question with an answer’ (lines 3-4) – and the reasons given for this, namely that it was widely known ‘why women do NOT complain’ (lines 4-5), furthers the problematic characterization of the question. However, she treats this possible action as unfavourable – ‘[E]asy way out’ (line 3) – and proceeds to give reasons that demonstrate problems that she as a ‘victim of sexual harassment’ faced in proceeding to complain.

Menon offers a three-part listing (Jefferson, 1999) of reasons that are suggestive of unfavourable mental states: ‘I was worried about mu jo:b’ (line 5), ‘I was worried about uh being side-lined’ (line 6), and ‘I was worried about disappointing my perpetrator’ (lines 7-8). The first item in introducing ‘jo:b’ treats workplace as the frame in which matters of the incident and her
complaining about it are to be received. Significantly then, the first two concerns have in common aspects around her employment position: ‘job’, and ‘being side-lined’.

Menon, however, expands on the final item, namely ‘disappointing her perpetrator’ and herself treats it as: ‘as terrible as that sound sounds’ (line 8). The category ‘perpetrator’ sets up a range of inferences about that person and relations with the victim, such as anger, avoidance, and a desire to seek revenge, and normatively excludes ‘disappointment’ (Sacks, 1992) (but also see Ullman, 2007; 2014). In the present case however, Menon includes alternative features that explain how come she did not readily complain. First, Menon categorizes herself and the perpetrator in terms of age: ‘twenty-five’ and ‘thirty years older than I am’. These categorizations are mobilized to account for her own actions – ‘I didn’t have better sense’ (line 9) – and her inability to offer a problematic evaluation of the act: ‘he’s behaved this way with me and he doesn’t deserve more respect than uhm THAN THIS’ (lines 10-12). The age categorization then offers one reason Menon did not perceive her perpetrator in problematic ways. In conjunction, descriptions that offered a favourable view of the perpetrator – ‘>he was really nice< otherwise’ (line 12) – showed that she could not arrive at a straightforward evaluation of him and his actions at that time. Second, she describes her verbalized thought process (Edwards & Potter, 1992) – ‘an I was like’ – in ways that demonstrate her evaluation: ‘O:H you know I don’t wanna ruin his life’ and ‘I don’t wanna make things difficult’ (lines 12-13). In combination with her own other worries, these verbalizations show that as a survivor of sexual assault, she could not readily come to see her perpetrator in negative ways and problematically saw herself as potentially at fault. It is this that she treats the current #MeToo movement as having changed.

Subsequently, she proceeds to account for what had changed in the current period: ‘<it's about time> an:: I think all of us including me have had enough’ (line 14-15). Specifically, she
indexes the suffering that women, including herself, had to endure as a result of harassment. However, the description is notable in treating changes within herself as co-occurring with other women: ‘all of us’. The use of the extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) ‘all’, treats sexual harassment as routine for women and not herself. In doing this, Menon offers a ready justification for reporting in this context in terms of allowing her and women in general to manage their worries and concerns that had prevented them from reporting sexual harassment earlier.

In Extract 3, the interviewer’s (D’Souza) question focuses on the possible reasons for reporting now, such as that of obtaining some form of legal redress. The interviewee, Ms. Vinta Nanda, had accused an actor, Mr. Alok Nath, of raping her in 1999; the charges, however, were dismissed for lack of evidence. In her response, Nanda describes the movement in ways to locate her reporting in it rather than as an act arising out of her individual decision. The extract comes from a news program titled ‘The unsparing ‘#MeToo' storm hits India | The Urban Debate With Faye D'Souza’ published by Mirror Now on October 10, 2018.

Extract 3 – ‘The movement had come’

1 D’Souza  misz nanda first of all .hh uh I wan I want to acknowledge your bravery I want
2 to acknowledge .h the power with which you have come out and you have told
3 your story and you've stood by your story .h on a day like today which is also
4 world mental health day and you have dealt with some of that when you've told
5 your story > on facebook about< .h the trauma that you've had to carry for the
6 last nineteen years .hh (.) do you- what is your response right now to those who
7
say that nineteen years down the line none of this can be proven so it doesn't hold up in court

Nanda 3.0

U::h very frankly I doesn't matter to me (.) I got a moment an I: spoke up .h I :
in that moment when I spoke up and I wrote that uhm piece and posted in on facebook .h I was only thinking of one thing and that was now or never because the movement had come I knew it was supportive I knew that it was going to stand by me .h and I knew that this was going to make me throw a weight of over a hundred kilos that I had been carrying on my shoulders for the last nineteen years

D’Souza’s question to Nanda is distinct from the questions in Extracts 1 and 2 in two notable ways: one, it involves a favourable version of Nanda’s actions that counter possible undermining of Nanda’s reporting of sexual harassment in the current time, and, two, it offers a specific motive, seeking legal redress, to which others might attribute Nanda’s actions.

D’Souza’s question, however, treats the possibilities for obtaining legal redress as minimal – ‘nineteen years down the line none of this can be proven’ (lines 7-8) – and therefore develops a problematic inference about Nanda’s current complaints. The use of the extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) – ‘none of this’ – characterizes the possibilities for obtaining legal redress as non-existent and consequently that her complaint perhaps had ulterior motives. Together then, it creates a unique form of accountability for Nanda in respect of possibly complaining because she desired some outcome instead of legal redress.
In response, Nanda offers an alternative account for reporting her harassment that minimizes the role of seeking legal or other outcomes. Rather, her account foregrounds the role of the #MeToo movement in offering an opportunity that allows her to speak about her experiences and obtain some personal mental relief: ‘throw a weight of over a hundred kilos’ (line 15). Her account then prioritizes motives directed at herself rather than at any public or other forms of redress.

First, Nanda offers a situated description of her inner mental events (Edwards, 1997) at ‘that moment’ (line 5): ‘when I spoke up and I wrote that uhm piece and posted it on Facebook’ (lines 5-6). The details (Potter, 1996) in the description serve to mitigate alternative accounts of planning and searching and waiting for an opportune moment to take legal course. Rather, these offer the inference that, for her the action arose from events happening at that moment. Second, she identifies ‘only one thing’ as the main thought in her: it ‘was now or never because the movement had come’ (lines 12-13). The formulation ‘now or never’ indicates that her decision to speak out about her harassment was a situated action based on the movement rather than on her own planning. This framing again serves to minimize the possibility that others might treat her report of sexual assault as an action specific to her.

Third, she describes features of the unspecified, but what sounds like, the #MeToo movement in a three-part listing (Jefferson, 1990) at lines 13-15: ‘I knew it was supportive’, ‘I knew it was going to stand by me’, and ‘I knew that this was going to make me throw a weight of over a hundred kilos that I had been carrying on my shoulders for the last nineteen years’. The last item treats her experience of harassment and the consequences of not having shared it as deeply problematic to her through the metaphor of carrying heavy weight on her shoulders for an extended
period. Metaphors used in interaction serve to package and convey meaning in culturally salient terms (Billig & MacMillan, 2005).

Together then, the listing develops the movement as giving her opportunities to deal with a problem in personal terms of concerns and worries. This is given in counter to the proposed view that Nanda wishes to obtain some form of legal or public redress. Nanda’s reporting and the reasons for doing it ‘now’ were then attributed to wider processes of support and mobilization rather than as outcomes of deliberation and planning.

Thus, participants attended to and managed how reporting sexual harassment was a potentially accountable action since it perhaps derived from questionable motives on the part of the complainer. Interviewees offered accounts that identified personal psychological concerns and worries as reasons for not reporting earlier. They also located their current reports in the context of the #MeToo movement in a very specific way: the movement showed that sexual harassment and issues with reporting were routine for women and not just themselves. A concern, then, is that women reporting now were swept up in, that is, unduly influenced by, the movement.

#MeToo Itself as Problematic for Complaining

In the extracts below, participants were directly concerned with reporting in the context of the #MeToo movement and what it meant for the uptake of their reports.

In Extract 4, participants discussed the role of the #MeToo movement as possibly enabling women to report their experiences of sexual harassment. This extract comes from the transcript of a program titled ‘We the People: Will India Ever Have a #MeToo Moment?’, published by New Delhi Television on September 30, 2018. The interviewer, Gargi Rawat, was discussing issues of power that limit possibilities for women to complain and the point was taken up for discussion by panellists: Ms. Geeta Luthar, an advocate who represented Tarun Tejpal, the former editor-in-chief
of Tehelka magazine, on charges of sexual harassment; Mr. Ashish Dixit, an advocate who represented R. K. Pachauri, the former chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, on charges of sexual harassment; and Ms. Anna Vetticad, an Indian film critic.

Extract 4 – ‘forget me too movements’

(To enhance readability, the extract below uses a much more simplified notation. A more complete transcript is given in Appendix II)

1. Luthra one minute you can't damn a man just because he's powerful you can be you can
2. Rawat be vigilant
3. Rawat I I am not saying that but but I'm saying very often women have not been able
4. Luthra to speak out because maybe they’re not they’re not as powerful as people they're
5. Rawat accusing
6. Luthra that's true that's true but that's true that's but that can't be a reason yes that's true
7. Rawat and now we're seeing that changing we're seeing that women in through social
8. Gargi: Gargi: Gargi: Gargi the [problem is
9. Vetticad May I just respond to this
10. Dixit Gargi if I may respond to what you particularly ask our powerful men we are
11. Dixit discussing Tanushre Tanushree's case do you think eight years ago Tanushree
12. Rawat was not having access to law or was not having access to meDIA do you think=
13. Rawat well in the last two years we've seen the whole mee too movement we've seen
14. Dixit Harvey Weinstein go down
15. Dixit do you no no hold on forget me too movements
Dixit undermines the #MeToo movement in response to Gargi’s construction of the movement as empowering and offering opportunities for women to report and talk about their experiences of sexual harassment.

As advocates representing men in prominent positions who were accused of sexual harassment, Luthra and Dixit have a stake in undermining complaints and the very act of complaining about sexual harassment (Potter, 1996). At the same time, however, they face the problem that their accounts about women’s reporting could be taken as misogynistic or sexist (Speer, 2005). They then have to manage these concerns. At lines 1-2, Luthra rejects Rawat’s earlier claim that women’s reports should be encouraged and not undermined. Her rejection takes the form of undermining reports against ‘powerful’ men suggesting that those reports are possibly motivated by ulterior concerns rather than mere reports of sexual harassment.

Luthra, however, accepts Rawat’s reformulation that wider societal marginalization of women meant that they have ‘not been able to speak out’ (lines 3-4). In doing so, Rawat supplies a justification for encouraging women to report sexual harassment at any time. Rawat further offers ‘social media’ as allowing women to report and deal with sexual harassment much better than other platforms: ‘we’re seeing more and more women’ (line 9). Using social media, however, is treated as potentially problematic by Dixit: ‘the problem is’ (line 11). Dixit particularly treated the notion of access to ‘power’ as problematic. Here, he uses the specific case of Tanushree Dutta, a
model and actor who had accused a prominent male actor, Nana Patekar, of sexual harassment. Dixit trades on the commonly known features of actors as applicable to Ms. Dutta, namely that of her access to ‘law’ or ‘media’. In doing so, he undermines claims that someone like Dutta had to wait for other opportunities for her to enable reporting sexual harassment. Rather he allows for the inference that such reports coming up now are less to do with justice and are perhaps motivated by other concerns.

Rawat intervenes with a reference to the #MeToo movement (line 18) and its notable consequence, such as that of the charges against ‘Harvey Weinstein’. Reference to such a prominent case in this specific instance in the interaction, shows that reporting in the context of the movement can and does result in justice. In doing so, she points to the very likely possibility that women are complaining to achieve justice. For Dixit, accepting this possibility would mean that Dutta herself has reported in the context of the movement to obtain some form of justice and not for other reasons. Dixit then, rejects the relevance of such movements by characterizing them as ‘all social media’ (line 21). Including the extreme case formulation ‘all’ treats this movement as unrelated to goings-on in spaces outside social media, which are subsequently introduced: ‘a[n] offence has been committed’ (lines 21-22). Dixit then develops the current #MeToo movement and the associated reports of sexual harassment as arising from motives other than seeking justice. Rather he treats such activities as opportunistic and arising only in the context of a movement rather than genuine concerns.

Extract 5 comes from a video titled ‘We The People: India's #MeToo Moment’ published by New Delhi Television on October 7, 2018. The interviewer, Rawat, invites the interviewee, Sandhya Menon (same as in Extract 2), to explain her reasons for reporting about sexual harassment now.
Extract 5 – ‘there’s stories all over the place’

1. Rawat: Tell us what made you finally speak out.
2. Menon: Uhm, it isn't quite so much that I've shared it for the first time. I've talked about it on my blog in 2011, so it's not like I've been keeping quiet about it. And was just waiting to get it out. Speaking to my colleagues, warning them all off. Hmm, I think what set it off was for the past year I've been trying to make up my mind about what constitutes harassment at work and what just counts as bad sexual behaviour. For the past year, me too movement in the West has been this—

Here again, the interviewer, Rawat, treats Menon’s reporting of sexual harassment at this moment and not earlier as explainable. In response, Menon develops an alternative version of her reporting than the one offered by Rawat, which is that her reporting about sexual harassment is not ‘the first
time’. In doing so, she rejects the inference that she was swept up in the movement. Rather she treats sexual harassment as routine for women and indicates that the movement was merely giving opportunities for reporting.

Menon, in response, develops a narrative of what led her to report harassment in the current period. In addition to rejecting the claim that this is her first-time reporting harassment, she offers a narrative about how she was deciding about harassment and reporting it. She identifies similar instances – ‘there’s (. ) a:LL those stories all over the place’ – as triggering her to further engage with harassment and reporting it. It is here that she introduces the #MeToo movement in ‘the West’ as relevant. Initially, she treats the movement as having ‘inspired’ her through descriptions of the outcomes of the movement in the ‘West’, such as consequences for ‘Harvey Weinstein’ (line 15) and other unspecified goings-on: ‘every f few months there’s something or the other coming up’ (line 13). Together, Menon constructs instances of harassment as routine for women and that it was their prevalence that was behind her reporting.

However, she is careful to manage the inference that her reporting was solely due to the movement: ‘not that I took inspiration’ (line 15). Rather, she treats the movement in the ‘West’ as having ‘primed us and prepped us’. This formulation softens the inferences about the potential influence of the #MeToo movement elsewhere on her actions.

In these ways, she develops an alternative account for her decision to talk about sexual harassment than that of merely following the events of #MeToo in other places. For Menon, the prevalence of sexual harassment in India, her access to those events, and deliberation with relevant others were reasons for her reporting rather than merely that there was a #MeToo movement ongoing.

**Discussion**
In this article, I examined how reporting of sexual harassment in the workplace is understood in the context of the #MeToo movement in the Indian public sphere. Sexual harassment is often unreported (Fitzgerald & Cortina, 2018). Research particularly points to pervasive ‘silencing’ of women’s voices (Fernando & Prasad, 2018; Worth et al., 2015). The #MeToo movement started in 2006 as a conduit for reports of sexual harassment and other concerns for women, especially for women of colour (Langone, 2018). Reports suggest there was an increasing number of reports and engagement with issues of sexual harassment in the context of the #MeToo movement.

The present analyses of media discussions on reporting sexual harassment in the context of the #MeToo movement show two sets of findings: first, they show that reporting sexual harassment was treated as specific to the individual – individualized – in terms of specific motives (cf. Edwards, 2005) to potentially invalidate women’s experiences and reporting (cf. Gill, 2011). Those reporting, then offered their lack of courage or other worries as reasons for not reporting earlier (Edwards & Potter, 1992). In juxtaposition, the period of the #MeToo movement was constructed as that where women’s concerns and worries were addressed through the realization that sexual harassment and issues with reporting were routine for women and not unique to themselves, which enabled them to report. In this way, the women mitigated concerns over the legitimacy of reporting sexual harassment.

Second, the very aspect of reporting sexual harassment in the context of the #MeToo movement was treated as potentially problematic for the implication that women were ‘swept-up’ in the movement and therefore their reports were not genuine. Women reporting were careful in offering their reports as not directly influenced by the #MeToo movement and again indicated that sexual harassment and issues with reporting it were routine for women. In managing the legitimacy
of their reports, women couched their reporting in the realization that sexual harassment and the consequences they faced are gendered phenomena, which allowed them to make their complaints public.

These findings are notable in three respects. First, the findings show the relevance of treating sexual harassment as a category-based concern in contrast to an individual or interpersonal concern. Previous research has revealed a range of concerns and problems that women face in reporting sexism and sexual harassment (Gil, 2007; Worth et al., 2015). Discursive psychologists have shown that complaints are routinely undermined for reasons arising from the category-membership of the complainers, such as the target’s gender or race (Stokoe & Edwards, 2007). The present findings, however, show that reporting sexual harassment can be subject to similar forms of doubt. In the present case, these were individualized – reasons for reporting were treated as specific to the individual rather than as those that relate to their category membership. The individualized reasons allowed interviewers and others (Extract 4) to side-step concerns that they were contributing to the disbelief of women’s reports, which was central to the #MeToo movement.

Interviewees, however, treated reporting now as grounded in the realization that sexual harassment and related issues were bound up with them being women rather than as just for themselves as individuals. Their experiences and concerns that prevented them from reporting earlier were treated as less constraining in the context of the movement. Jointly, issues with possible disbelief and undermining of their reports were thus managed.

Second, the present findings show how personally experienced harms and mistreatment, such as sexual harassment, relate to the broader societal structures or events, such as the #MeToo movement or culture. Researchers have emphasized the networked aspects of social movements
for the solidarity and hope they give to those targeted and suffering (Castells, 2015; Suk et al., 2019). In interactions, however, these possibilities can take different forms. Here notable women and others treated the #MeToo movement as conferring credibility to their experiences of sexual harassment. At the same time however, women were also careful to avoid coming across as merely influenced by the movement (Extract 5). Rather, constructing the movement as articulating a concern routine for women allowed those complaining to manage implications that the movement was the main driver of their decisions to report.

Participants did not explicitly treat sexual harassment or issues with reporting it as culturally specific to India or South Asia. Although previous studies have shown the relevance of cultural concerns (Adikaram, 2016), such as bringing shame to the family (Chaudhri, 2007) or the widespread mistreatment of women in India (Bhattacharya, 2018), in the present case, sexual harassment and issues with reporting it were negotiated in individual versus category-based terms. Together then, these findings suggest that although social movements or culture might influence specific actions and behaviours, the possibilities for such influence are ultimately concerns for participants themselves (Potter, 1996). Rather, women were more concerned with the credibility of their reports.

Third, the present findings show the role of media and its practices in the articulation and suppression of sexism (Gill, 2007). In these interactions, media persons acted as relevant ‘third-party’ agents (Fernando & Prasad, 2018) who could raise doubts about the legitimacy of reporting sexual harassment and address these concerns themselves (Extract 4). Media practices then are implicated in contributing to a wider discussion on the legitimacy of women’s reports of sexual harassment and issues in doing so (Guha, 2014). Although journalists in Indian newsrooms were ambivalent about the #MeToo movement (Sreedharan et al., 2019), the platforming of concerns
about the legitimacy of those reporting further burdened those who were targets or victims. These practices then did not enable women to report sexual harassment. Together, the findings show that gendering of sexual harassment allowed women to manage concerns over the legitimacy of their reports. Women not only situated their reporting of sexual harassment in the period of #MeToo movement, but also developed the central relevance of the gendered nature of these problems in counter to individualized versions. In the wider societal context in India, policies in place allow for complaining and subsequent action, but do not explicitly recognize the gendered aspect of sexual harassment and treat credibility of the person complaining on par with other forms of complaints. Gendering sexual harassment and issues with reporting it allowed for overcoming issues with the credibility of reports and reporting it in the context of the #MeToo movement.

**Limitations**

These data come from a select corpus of media news interviews conducted in English in India, with women interviewees in relatively privileged positions. Since English news media routinely address nation-wide issues more regionally salient framing of #MeToo movement are missed. Moreover, the majority of women who experience sexual harassment and are unable to report it rarely experience media attention. Issues of how the #MeToo movement has impacted women in other socio-economic classes and those from oppressed castes is beyond the remit of this article, which future studies must examine.

However, the present findings show that even for women with relative privilege reporting sexual harassment is problematic. It would be useful to understand other practices of taking-up reports of sexual harassment on other platforms, such as social media, which might offer more or alternative opportunities for reporting sexual harassment in workplaces.
Conclusions and Policy Implications

The present findings from broadcast media news interviews offer specific implications. Although media debates and discussions offer unique opportunities to spread information, practices within these can have a range of outcomes (Gill, 2007; Guha, 2014). In the present case, issues of legitimacy in reporting sexual harassment were matters for discussion. It is crucial to interrogate and reflect upon how overtly unproblematic practices can contribute to and maintain unequal gender practices. The broadcast media and interviewers may then consider the gendered aspect of sexual harassment and issues with reporting it rather than treating sexual harassment and the consequent reporting of it as concerns that are specific to the survivors.

Overall, the findings show that when women who report sexual harassment are questioned for possible ulterior motives for their reports, they may couch their actions in specific mental states that they as survivors go through in addition to noting the relevance of wider social movements, such as #MeToo. Together they treat their experiences as gendered rather than as unique to them as individuals. The act of reporting sexual harassment needs to be considered from the perspective of their gender instead of as experiences that are unique to them as individuals.

Policies about sexual harassment in various countries are aimed at preventing sexual harassment. In India the two notable acts in place - the Vishaka Guidelines of 1997 and the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) of 2013 – address issues of defining and acting against possibilities of sexual harassment. However, neither of these emphasizes issues with reporting sexual harassment (Cheria, 2019). The gendered nature of harassment and issues with reporting it are not considered. The present findings show that the act of reporting sexual harassment in itself is treated as potentially suspect by treating it as an
interpersonal concern rather than as a routine concern for women. Policies then need to treat sexual harassment as a gendered phenomenon inclusive of issues with reporting such experiences.
References


### Table 1

*The Five Videos Used to Illustrate Primary Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NewsMo</td>
<td>Unnamed</td>
<td>Ms. Chinmayi Sripaada</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPgVYJkv9W8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPgVYJkv9W8</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>India Today</td>
<td>Rajdeep Sardesai</td>
<td>Ms. Sandhya Menon</td>
<td>40 mins</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqsTbC8zjhY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqsTbC8zjhY</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mirror Now</td>
<td>Faye D’Souza</td>
<td>Ms. Vinta Nanda</td>
<td>50 mins</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oL7uh1tkMyA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oL7uh1tkMyA</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>New Delhi Television</td>
<td>Gargi Rawat</td>
<td>Several</td>
<td>50 mins</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOneP57raak">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOneP57raak</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>New Delhi Television</td>
<td>Gargi Rawat</td>
<td>Ms. Sandhya Menon</td>
<td>50 mins</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybjJgHZD-EI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybjJgHZD-EI</a></td>
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### Appendix I - Jeffersonian Notation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ text ]</td>
<td>Brackets</td>
<td>Indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Equal Sign</td>
<td>Indicates the break and subsequent continuation of a single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>interrupted utterance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(# of seconds)</td>
<td>Timed Pause</td>
<td>A number in parentheses indicates the time, in seconds, of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a pause in speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.)</td>
<td>Micropause</td>
<td>A brief pause, usually less than 0.2 seconds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. or ↓</td>
<td>Period or Down Arrow</td>
<td>Indicates falling pitch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>? or ↑</td>
<td>Question Mark or Up Arrow</td>
<td>Indicates rising pitch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>,</td>
<td>Comma</td>
<td>Indicates a temporary rise or fall in intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Hyphen</td>
<td>Indicates an abrupt halt or interruption in utterance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;text&lt;</td>
<td>Greater than / Less /</td>
<td>Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Less than symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;text&gt;</td>
<td>Less than / Greater /</td>
<td>Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>°</td>
<td>Degree symbol</td>
<td>Indicates whisper or reduced volume speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL CAPS</td>
<td>Capitalized text</td>
<td>Indicates shouted or increased volume speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>underline</td>
<td>Underlined text</td>
<td>Indicates the speaker is emphasizing or stressing the speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>::: Colon(s)</td>
<td>Indicates prolongation of an utterance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(hhh)</td>
<td>Audible exhalation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>? or (.hhh) High Dot</td>
<td>Audible inhalation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( text ) Parentheses</td>
<td>Speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(( italic text )) Double Parentheses</td>
<td>Annotation of non-verbal activity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix II

Extract 4 – transcribed in line with the Jeffersonian Transcription (2004).

1 Luthra one minute you can’t damn a man just because he’s powerful
2 [you can be you can be vigilant
3 Rawat I I am not saying that but] but I’m saying very often women have not been able
4 to speak out because maybe
5 [they’re not [they’re not as powerful as people they’re accusing
6 Luthra that's true] that's true] but that's true that's] but
7 [that can’t be a reason [yes that's true
8 Rawat and now we’re seeing that] changing] we’re seeing that women in through
9 social media >we’re seeing more and more women in
10 [power< to speak out
11 Dixit Gargi: Gargi: Gargi the [problem is=
12 Vetticad May I just respond] to this
13 Dixit =Gargi if I may respond to what you particularly ask our powerful men we are
14 discussing Tanushre Tanushree's case (.) do you think eight years ago Tanushree
15 was not having access to law or was not having access
16 [to meDIA do you think=
17 Rawat well in the last two years we've seen]
18 [the whole mee too movement we've [seen Harvey Weinstein go down
19 Dixit =do you >no no< hold on forget me too movements]=
20 Rawat
Dixit so maybe she felt more empowered she felt that may be the industry see these things are all social media when we are discussing a offence has been committed when you are discussing

Author bio:

Dr. Rahul Sambaraju is a social psychologist who uses discourse analytic methods to examine issues for marginalized persons. His work examines topics of identities, category memberships, and prejudice and discrimination. He examines concerns for migrants and refugees, women, and other oppressed persons. He routinely publishes in premier social psychology journals. He currently works as an Assistant Professor in the School of Psychology, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.