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Sisters, Wake Up Now!

Grave questions were raised about women's safety across India when an innocent 23-year-old medical student was brutally assaulted in a private bus on 16th December 2012.

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The incident has shaken the soul of the nation, compelling us to examine the life we lead and the values we follow. Any kind of violence perpetrated on another is not a sign of power; it is a pointer to weakness and the lack of character that comes from the lack of direction.

The South Asian Women's Network (SWN) strongly condemns this heinous act. The victim was so bestially violated that her intestines turned gangrenous and had to be removed. More than bodily injuries, she was mentally shaken and shattered. She succumbed to her injuries despite fighting with strong will-power and never-say-die spirit.

All members of the SWN and the teaching community in India strongly feels that all the culprits involved should be given severe punishment as quickly as possible for killing her. SWN also feels and demands that there is an urgent need to tighten the anti-rape laws and calls for stricter punishment for rapists.

The SWN appeals to the government of India to acknowledge the sheer gravity of the problem. In combating this menace, the government needs to understand that this is not merely a law and order situation which can be controlled by the deployment of forces and shutting down everything.

There is a social and psychological aspect to the problem as well. Hence the curative approach has to be two-pronged. The laws against such heinous crimes definitely need to be made more stringent.

The SWN feels that crime against women cannot be de-linked from the larger problem of falling gender-ratio of women and call teacher organisations along with women's networks at various level to engineer an unprecedented campaign which travels to each and every school in the country exhorting girls to come out and report gender-based crimes. Education which dwells upon gender-crimes in an uninhibited manner could play a crucial role in changing the mind-set.

The brutality and horrific nature of the attack has led to a country wide protest and moved the entire nation.

The SWN urges all EI member organisations in India and South Asia to condemn and protest against this brutal and horrific act and join the movement initiated by civil society to protect women from all kinds of Violence Against Women (VAW) which has been rampant in one way or another in most of the South Asian countries.

The SWN acknowledge its appreciation to the several Indian states who announced measures to stop violence against women and support the demand made by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for harsher punishments for rape convicts



The SWN commends the stand taken by the lawyers at the Saket district court in South New Delhi, which is hearing the case and supports their decision for not defending the rape accused calling it “immoral” to defend the case.

The SWN expresses its deepest sympathy to the family of Jyoti and pays its tributes to her father, Shri Badri Singh Pandey for taking a brave decision of disclosing his daughter’s identity to give courage to other rape survivors.

Mr. Pandey said “My daughter didn’t do anything wrong. She died while protecting herself. I am proud of her. Revealing her name will give courage to other women who have survived these attacks. They will find strength from my daughter”.

Sisters and Brothers, It is high time, if we don’t act now the next victim could be anybody, just anybody including people dear to us.

SWN appeals to all of you to wake up and act immediately to stop such heinous crimes against women and not to allow such crimes to happen to any girl and / or again.