

# 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

## AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



2018 | Day 7

## REVICTIMIZING THE VICTIM | PART 2

### Scenario: Statement recording

#### Location: Police station

She and five other girls are rescued together from a brothel and brought to the police station for the recording of their statements. The accused are also called. The five girls are huddled into a corner of the room at the police station, they are standing even though there is an unoccupied bench next to them. They aren't sure if they can sit as no one had told them to sit. One of the accused arrives, he is their pimp. He goes straight to the police officer's chair and salutes him. The officer is busy writing something on a paper, as if by reflex the officer too returns the salute although he did not intend to do so consciously. The pimp's lawyer is already sitting in front of the officer. The pimp drags one more chair and sits aplomb in front of the officer. Without wasting a second the pimp spots a delivery boy from a nearby eatery who has come to the police station for a delivery and orders him, "Saahab ke liye masala chai leke aao.. adrak wali."

The girls are watching this. They further lose their already feeble hope for justice. The girls remember what the pimp had always said, "Ek baat theek tarah se samajh lo. Hamari pahunch bahot upar tak hai. Bahot upar tak"

### Scenario: The day of the trial

#### Location: Court premise

After a long wait, finally her case has come up for hearing. She didn't want the social worker to come all the way to her house to pick her up. She told the social worker "Meri maa mere saath court mein aayengi. Main seedhe court mein aap se milungi." It was a long way from her home to the nearest railway station, followed by a long journey in a crowded train and a walk from the station to the court. She has come without eating her breakfast.

The offender arrives in a police van, as soon as he gets off, he is quickly surrounded by his sidekicks who look equally dreadful. Their lawyer in a black-coat joins them. They occupy the court's passage almost blocking it. Each one of them giving her a threatening look. The sheer thought of coming across her offender invokes dread and paralysis. She is terrified.

She asks the social worker who is her lawyer was. The social worker points at the public prosecutor. She turns to the social worker and says "Dalal ka vakeel aur mera vakeel kitne acche tarah se baat kar rahe hain. Mujhe nyaay milega na didi?"

The social worker assures her that they might be consulting over something and that she should not be worried. She also assures her "Don't worry, your trial will be 'in camera', none of the unrelated people will be allowed inside the court room. Only their lawyer, the public prosecutor, the typist and the accused will be there." She looks numb. "What difference does it make? They are still all around, except for in the court during my trial".

Trial begins. The door of the courtroom isn't really a door, it's a thin linen sheet that serves as the curtain. Every two minutes some lay and sundry person passing by the trial room pushes the curtain aside to peep inside. **Her trial was supposed to be 'in camera' but what is the use when this privacy does not shield her from what lies outside the thin linen curtain.**



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