

Firstly, I want to thank each and every one of you who have called to check up on me, and sent me messages of encouragement, love and support in the past few days.

While it was intense and overwhelming, I am massively grateful that this conversation has sparked the realisation of the absolute need for stringent policies on harassment and abuse not just in newsrooms and media institutions, but in places of employment as a whole.

No one should feel threatened or face any sort of harassment in their place of employment or otherwise. No one should live in fear of being abused or harassed. No one should be subject to words or actions that propagate abuse or harassment.

My intention was simply to talk about the severe implications of an abuser's or harasser's words and/or actions, and the need to put an immediate stop to this, so people can live and work, free of the harm that places a threat to their life, and peace of mind. It was also hard and unfortunate to see my sharing distorted.

To the survivors of abuse and harassment, including the people who came forward with their experiences, I hope this enables the process of healing from your trauma, and hope that you will never, ever have to endure another experience of this nature again.

When a survivor chooses to share their story, believe them. It can't be an easy task, to share their trauma and make it public. Offer them support and strength, because they need it. They need to be believed, so they know that coming forward with their experience will not have been in vain.

To Aisha, thank you for working tirelessly in the last few days, speaking on behalf of victims, and making people aware of the dire situation that has long existed in our collective spaces in Sri Lanka.

To Jordana, thank you for your immense support, and for believing me, when, as survivors, we are crippled by the potentiality that we may not be believed. Choosing to bring to light a triggering experience is never an easy choice to make, and it is even worse, when words are constantly doubted by people.

To my closest friends, your advice and support has given me strength.

And lastly, thank you to my family, especially my mother, for answering countless calls of concerned friends, and for supporting me and believing me, and for quietly rallying behind me, offering nothing but love, support and ensuring that my peace of mind was retained. To my parents, your advice and strength has brought me here, and I am grateful.

I hope that all this contributes to safe and inclusive environments for people, regardless of their race, age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, economic status, and background.

Sarah Kellapatha

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