



Speed Post

भारतीय प्रेस परिषद

Press Council of India

सूचना भवन, 8 सी.जी.ओ. कॉम्प्लेक्स, लोधी रोड, नई दिल्ली-110 003

Soochna Bhawan, 8-CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi - 110 003

☎ 24366745-749 Ext. 210,315 Fax Ext. 224; Fax 24368723/726

Email : vibhab@nic.in ; pcibpp@gmail.com Website : www.presscouncil.nic.in

File No.14/99/07-08

Dated: 30.06.2008

✓ Shri Dendra Pathak, IPS,
Additional Commissioner of Police &
Chief Spokesperson, Delhi Police,
Office of the Commissioner of Police,
I.P. Estate, New Delhi- 110 002.

The Editor,
'Metro Now',
Express Building,
9-10, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg,
New Delhi- 110 002.

Subject:- Complaint of Shri Dendra Pathak, IPS, Additional Commissioner of Police, Chief Spokesperson, Delhi Police against 'Metro Now', New Delhi.

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to forward herewith a copy of the decision in the aforesaid matter rendered by the Press Council of India on June 12, 2008 at Guwahati for your information/necessary action/compliance.

Yours faithfully,

Manju Sharma
(MANJU SHARMA)
LAW OFFICER



भारतीय प्रेस परिषद्
Press Council of India

सूचना भवन, 8 सी.जी.ओ कॉम्प्लेक्स, लोधी रोड, नई दिल्ली-110 003
Soochna Bhawan, 8-CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi - 110 003
☎ 24366745-749 Ext. 210, Fax 24368723/726
Email : vibhab@nic.in ; pcibpp@gmail.com
Website : www.presscouncil.nic.in

Sl. No. 15

File No. 14/99/07-08 PCI

Shri Dependra Pathak,
Additional Commissioner of Police &
Chief Spokesperson,
Delhi Police.
Delhi.

Vs. Metro Now,
New Delhi.

Complaint

This complaint dated 16.5.2007 has been filed by Shri Dependra Pathak, Additional Commissioner of Police & Chief Spokesperson, Delhi Police, New Delhi against **Metro Now**, New Delhi alleging publication of defamatory, incorrect and mischievous news item captioned '**Sex on the Syllabus at Police Training College**' - '**Prostitution Training College**' in its issue dated 15.5.2007.

The impugned news item reported that a group of policewomen training at Delhi Police's Police Training College were caught in a South Delhi hotel minutes after they left the rooms of their satisfied clients and began to count the Rs.5,000 bundles they had just received. The sleazy sex racket was not limited to the trainee women cops, even their wardens, who were senior constabulary and sub-inspector level women officers, were involved, alleged the news item in question. It was further alleged that while the trainee cops have been thrown out of the training college, the wardens have been transferred to New Police Lines, Kingsway Camp, and disciplinary action against them has been initiated. It was also reported that the department's own sting reportedly revealed the PTC sex racket after senior police officers received information that some trainees were regularly 'leaving' college at night.

The complainant submitted that the contents of the news item were totally incorrect and mischievous. In the Police Training College of Delhi Police in the last one month, none of the trainees had been terminated. Neither any sting operation was carried out nor any warden or lady supervisory staff had been transferred or removed on such grounds as reported in the news item. Each and every aspect of the news content was false and fabricated, alleged the complainant and added that it was a character assassination of innocent girls undergoing training for public service and also of the premier training institute. It was highly uncalled for, slanderous, and defamatory in any civilized society, alleged the complainant. The complainant also alleged that the article was published by Metro Now without checking the facts from the concerned officials.

The complainant issued a letter dated 15.5.2007, rebutting the impugned news item but he neither received any reply nor any rejoinder was published. He has requested the Council to take necessary action in the matter.

Written Statement

A show cause notice was issued to the respondent on 14.6.2007. The respondent Editor, Metro Now in his undated written statement, received in the Secretariat of the Council on 2.7.2007, has submitted that not only did the incident take place as reported by them, but they can place the names of the two trainees who were subsequently terminated and belonged to the Rajasthan Armed Constabulary and other to the Manipur Police. The transfer of wardens to 9th & 10th Battalion was also a matter of record. The reporter had spoken to a very senior officer at the Police Training College, Shri Virender Chahal, who confirmed that the wardens had indeed been transferred but asked the reporter not to quote him or file the report.

The respondent has also stated that the contrary to the police submissions that no rejoinder was published, it was published next day on 17.5.2007 stating clearly that the police denies that incident. Thereafter they have again expressed regrets in the issue dated 26.6.2007 for having hurt the sentiments of readers and students by headlining the report as "Prostitution Training College".

The respondent further submitted that their intention has not been to defame anyone or malign anyone, thus they did not publish any further reports on the issue despite having more information. He has added that as an indication of their bona fide as far as honest intention goes, they have expressed their regret as having hurt the sentiments of the other trainees by the headline of the impugned reports. They are responsible newspaper and as such value the traditions of fair reporting and freedom of expression, but acknowledge their responsibility towards the truth and would never publish anything knowing it to be false, fictitious or fabricated.

A copy of the written statement was forwarded to the complainant on 3.7.2007 for information and counter comments.

Counter Comments

The complainant in his counter comments dated 25.7.2007 has submitted that the news item which appeared on 15.5.2007 in the respondent newspaper with the title "SEX ON THE SYLLABUS AT POLICE TRAINING COLLEGE" "PROSTITUTION TRAINING COLLEGE" does not depict the daily as a responsible newspaper and is totally false and fabricated. The very basis of their story that one of the girl belonged to Rajasthan Armed Constabulary and the second to the Manipur Police as mentioned in the reply of the respondent is false and fictional as there are so such trainees with them. He has added that no

woman recruit was terminated on such grounds till 15.5.2007 is a matter of official record and can be placed before the authorities and that no lady wardens posted since July 2006 to look after the women recruits were transferred to 9th & 10th Bns. of DAP is again a matter of official record and can be produced before the authorities. In its follow up report on 17.5.2007 the newspaper had tried to authenticate its false and fabricated story instead of tendering any apology or clarification as is evident from the language. The newspaper has instead re-confirmed that the Principal P.T.S. was their "source" for this information.

The complainant further stated that the apology was published after issue of notice by Press Council of India and also after the parents of the women recruits undergoing training in PTC contemplated legal action against the newspaper but the paper simultaneously reasserted that they have the names of the women students found involved in prostitution but did not produce even with the written statement.

The complainant further asserted that a reporter, Pradip R. Sagar spoke to the Principal/PTC Shri Virender Singh on 14.5.2007 on telephone and enquired whether some trainees have been terminated. The Principal/PTC briefly told him that 07 recruit constables were terminated on 9.5.2007. The reporter further enquired generally what are the grounds of their termination. On this, Principal/PTC replied that there are various grounds of their termination such as misconduct, indiscipline etc. In fact, these seven recruits were terminated on the ground that a report was received that they had submitted false sports certificates to gain unfair advantage at the time of their recruitment. It was also asserted that some other isolated incidents even otherwise could not be used to defame all the students and the department.

A copy of the Counter Comments was forwarded to the respondent on 31.7.2007 for information.

Appearance before the Inquiry Committee

The matter came up for hearing before the Inquiry Committee on 24.04.2008 at New Delhi. S/Shri Virender Singh and Rajan Bhagar represented the complainant, Delhi Police while Ms. Sangeeta Sobdhi, Advocate, Ms. Soni Sangwan, Deputy Editor and Shri Anil Sachdeva, Head Finance represented the respondent, Metro Now.

Submissions before the Inquiry Committee

The complainant's representative reiterated the averments made in the complaint objecting to the inaccurate reporting maligning the Police Training College and the trainees thereon.

The Counsel for the respondent submitted that the news report was prepared after thorough investigation and proper verification from the Senior

Police Officers with regard to the information that some trainee police women had been leaving the college at night. The Counsel further submitted that the response of the complainant-Delhi police had also been published in the subsequent report. The Counsel further submitted that the note from the editor on the subject had been carried by newspaper Metro Now regretting for inadvertently hurting the sentiments of the Police Training College pupils in the issue dated 26.6.2006 was also published. The respondent also submitted that the report was carried bonafide without any intention to hurt anyone.

Recommendations of the Inquiry Committee

The Inquiry Committee perused the record and heard the submissions made by the parties. It perused the impugned publication dated 15.5.2007 under the caption "Sex on Syllabus at Police Training College" followed by "Prostitution Training College" in which the first three letters had been highlighted to mark the institution's name. A further highlighted comment read "What are they teaching now a days". It next perused the report dated 17.5.2007 provided by the respondent to show that the version of the Delhi Police had been carried by them. This was followed by the "Letter from the editor" expressing regrets for having hurt the sentiments of readers and P.T.C. pupils. The Committee's examination of the matter centred around these three documents.

The Committee found the impugned report to be very reckless and mischievous judged on the scale of journalistic caution and responsibility. It noted the failure of the respondent to substantiate the assertion of truthfulness of the reported incident with any form of evidence despite the complainant's charge that whole story was fabricated. Such fabrication beyond doubt constituted a very grave misconduct which was compounded by the manner of presentation of the report that began with the caption and the sub-caption that boldly proclaimed "Sex on the syllabus" and made use of acronym of Police Training College i.e. P.T.C. to reword it as Prostitution Training College, with further sub-title 'what are they teaching now a days'. It was accompanied by a photograph of a girl in provocative clothing and wearing the police cap and carrying a baton and handcuffs. To hold that the sensational front paged report maligned the institute and its inmates in one sweep would not be wrong even without going into the contents of the report which the Metro Now has failed to substantiate.

In their defence they have referred to the police version carried on 17.5.2007. But an examination, this document appears to only compound the offence. This publication captioned 'Lecture session after prostitution expose' has been carried as a follow up of the impugned report to reassert the incident and report the repercussion of the report. A photograph of the impugned report has been reproduced in a central box. Towards the end of this long report, a short 6 line denial has been carried followed by the reply of Metro Now of considerable length.


The somewhat maligning factor is that the Editor of the paper accepted the protests received by them and published its regrets at the implication of use of term "Prostitution Training College."


However, in totality the Inquiry Committee cannot but hold the respondent Metro Now guilty of abdication of its journalistic responsibility of ensuring the accuracy of its reports; of refraining from sensationalising and wrongly mentioning and bringing to disrepute, a class of a person or an institute. For these reasons the Inquiry Committee recommend to the Council to **censure** Metro Now and direct it to publish prominently the gist of the adjudication in the paper within a fortnight from its receipt.

Decision of the Council

The Press Council, on consideration of the records of the case and report of the Inquiry Committee accepts the reasons, findings and the recommendations of the Committee and decides accordingly.

12 JUN 2008


(G. N. RAY)
Chairman
Press Council of India


KUMAR SINGH
Deputy Secretary
Press Council of India