



Contact: [nwmichennai@gmail.com](mailto:nwmichennai@gmail.com)

---

### **NWMI condemns Governor Banwarilal Purohit's misconduct towards Lakshmi Subramanian**

The Network of Women in Media in India (NWMI), a collective of women media professionals across India, strongly condemns the patronising behaviour of Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit, towards a woman journalist, Lakshmi Subramanian, at a press conference held in Chennai on Tuesday, April 17. The Governor decided to pat Lakshmi on the cheek when asked a question by the journalist – an act that amounts to sexual harassment at the workplace under the laws of the country.

The Governor on Tuesday was addressing an unprecedented press conference in Chennai, which according to him was for his completing six months in office. During the press conference, the Governor was fielding tough questions from reporters regarding a sex-for-cash scandal at a college under the Madurai Kamaraj University, where he is the Chancellor. A controversial audio tape that has emerged has the voice of a woman professor trying to lure women students into sex work for 'high officials' in the University. In the course of the conversation, the professor also names the TN Governor, and says she knows him quite well.

In the course of the press conference, the Governor dismissed questions of his involvement, and did not have any answers to why, as a person named in the tape, he wasn't distancing himself from the investigation.

And right as the press conference was ending, Lakshmi, a senior journalist with The Week, asked him a question. Instead of answering it, he decided to touch her without her consent. NWMI strongly condemns the unprofessional behaviour of the Governor, and demand an unconditional apology from him to Lakshmi, and to women journalists across the country. Such misconduct from a top government official cannot be excused under any pretext.

We would like to reiterate what is understood world over about sexual harassment: The intention of the harasser does not count. What matters is how the person on the receiving end feels. So for the Governor, or any of his supporters, to dismiss any allegations of inappropriate conduct with statements like, "I am old enough to be your grandfather," cannot be excused. Does that mean that in every case where the accused is above a certain age, they should be automatically acquitted or forgiven?

This is not the first instance of a woman journalist being patronised on the field. Recently, Tamil Nadu Health Minister Vijayabaskar repeatedly told a woman journalist that she was beautiful to evade her questions.

[www.nwmindia.org](http://www.nwmindia.org)  
[nwmichennai@gmail.com](mailto:nwmichennai@gmail.com)

*A forum for women in media professions to share information and resources, exchange ideas, promote media awareness and ethics, and work for gender equality and justice within the media and society.*



NWMI stands with Lakshmi, and we hope that the Governor will apologise at the earliest. Further, we demand that all men in high offices follow decorum when meeting with women journalists, and condemn any attempts to trivialise such harassment.

NWMI Members

Chennai Chapter

18/04/2018